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## The Role of Parents in Children's Christian Faith Education Through the Tandak Timang Tradition in Batu Badinding Village

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### Abstract

*The Tandak Timang tradition is an oral cultural heritage of the Dayak Ngaju community which contains moral, spiritual, and character education values that are relevant to the development of Christian children's faith. This study aims to describe the role of parents in children's Christian faith education through the tradition of Tandak Timang in Batu Badinding Village. The research approach used is qualitative descriptive with interview, observation, and documentation techniques. The results of the study show that parents play an important role as heirs of cultural values, interpreters of spiritual meaning, exemplars of faith, and preservers of traditions that are loaded with the values of love, loyalty, responsibility, and respect for ancestors. Through the active involvement of parents, Tandak Timang functions not only as a cultural expression, but also as an effective means of forming children's character and spirituality in the light of Christian teachings. Thus, the integration between faith and culture through the role of parents strengthens the identity of Dayak Ngaju faith and culture in the midst of modernity.*

**Keywords:** child; faith education; parent; tandak timang

### Introduction

The family is the first place for children to get education and life values. Parents are the first person who is fully responsible for the development of children's education, both physically and spiritually (Nainggolan & Sukri, 2022). Parents are called the first and foremost educators of children's faith because parents are the source of faith, morals, knowledge and skills for their children. Children's faith education is given so that children have knowledge and attitudes that show responsibility in the family, church, and society.

The education of the Christian faith in children is initiated and practiced consistently in the home environment by parents as a "small church" of parents acting as role models, teachers of the word, habituating prayer, and shaping Christian character from an early age (Mandasari, 2022). In this ideal context, positive local traditions and wisdom are seen as strategic mediums to convey faith values so that religious messages become more contextual, easily accepted, and strengthen children's cultural-faith identities. Studies in religious

education show that when parents are active as models of faith and practice religious routines at home, the growth and development of children's faith becomes more consistent and rooted.

However, in actual conditions in many villages and communities (including small villages in regions that maintain local traditions), the reality is often different: limited parental time (work/region), shifting values due to modernization, and lack of formal integration between local cultural practices and ecclesiastical faith education mean that the potential of local traditions is rarely systematically utilized as a means of faith education. Especially for the *tradition of Tandak Timang*, a form of karungut/karawitan and ritual known in several communities (often appearing in the context of thanksgiving, celebrations, and Dayak cultural practices), this practice is widely maintained verbally and performatively, but has not been widely inventoried, understood for its function in the formation of children's faith, or deliberately used by parents as a Christian pedagogical strategy. Ethnographic/popular cultural documentation sources describe *Tandak Timang* as a local performative part, but its academic documentation is limited.

Previous studies on the role of parents in faith education have emphasized the importance of the home as a key arena for faith formation (Maya, & Tafonao, 2021), and a number of studies have also highlighted the benefits of integrating local wisdom into religious education to increase the relevance of teachings (Mithunayon & Waruwu, 2024). However, a literature review shows a lack of empirical research that specifically examines how parents utilize *one* particular local tradition, in this case *Tandak Timang*, as a medium or practical strategy for Christian faith education at the family level, especially in specific locations such as Batu Badinding Village.

Based on this gap, this research has a novelty and a clear scientific contribution, namely being the first empirical study that focuses on the role of parents in using the Tandak Timang tradition as a means of Christian faith education in Batu Badinding Village. With a qualitative approach (participatory observation, parent/pastor/teacher interviews, and analysis of traditional songs), this research is expected to fill the literature gap while providing a practical model of cultural-local reconciliation and faith education. Based on the background of the problem, the researcher wants to conduct research with the question What is the Role of Parents in the Context of Fostering the Faith of Children Aged 1-5 Years Through the Tandak Timang tradition in Batu Badinding Village, Central Katingan District?

## Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach, because it is oriented towards a deep understanding of the meaning and life experiences of research subjects in certain socio-cultural contexts. According to Kriyantono (2012), the qualitative approach aims to explain phenomena in depth through the collection of rich and detailed data, not just measuring the magnitude of the phenomenon. This approach allows researchers to understand how faith values, cultural traditions, and the role of parents interact in the daily lives of children in Christian family settings. The type of research used is qualitative descriptive. Descriptive research aims to describe systematically and factually the reality that occurs in the field without manipulating variables.

In this context, the researcher seeks to explain in depth how the role of parents in

fostering the faith of children aged 1–5 years through the Tandak Timang tradition in Batu Badinding Village, Central Katingan District. The focus of the research includes the form of parental involvement, the values of faith instilled through Tandak Timang, and the meaning of these traditions for the development of children's faith in the local Christian family environment. The location of the research was determined in Batu Badinding Village, Central Katingan District, Katingan Regency, with the consideration that this area still maintains the Tandak Timang tradition actively in the social and religious life of its people. The subjects of the study were Christian parents who had children aged 1–5 years, as well as traditional leaders, Sunday school teachers, and church leaders who understood the function of the tradition. The determination of informants is carried out by purposive sampling technique, which is to select informants who are considered to best understand the phenomenon being studied (Moleong, 2017).

The data collection technique was carried out through three main ways: (1) in-depth interviews with parents and community leaders; (2) participatory observation of the implementation of Tandak Timang in the context of family or socio-religious activities; and (3) documentation, including song recordings, lyric scripts, and notes or photos of relevant activities. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner so that researchers can explore the meaning and personal experiences of informants more openly (Sugiyono, 2016). The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive analysis technique of Miles and Huberman (1994) which included three stages: (1) data reduction, namely the selection and simplification of data according to the focus of the research; (2) the presentation of data in the form of a narrative or thematic matrix; and (3) conclusion and verification. The analysis is carried out simultaneously from the beginning of data collection to ensure accurate and contextual interpretation. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used *source and method triangulation techniques*. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews between informants (parents, traditional leaders, Sunday school teachers), while the triangulation method was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation (Moleong, 2017). In addition, *a member check* is carried out by confirming the provisional results to the informant so that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with the reality intended by the source.

## Results and Discussion

### *Stages of Implementation in Conducting Tandak Timang*

Based on the results of interviews and observations, data from the research were obtained that illustrated that the people in Batu Badinding Village still maintain the traditions of their ancestors in terms of raising children using the manimang or Tandak Timang tradition which is still carried and passed down from generation to generation (Toreh, Pasandaran, & Supriatun, 1996). For some members of the congregation it is considered a deviation of the order of the Christian Faith. Karungut is an art of the Dayak oral tradition of Central Kalimantan, has a strong function in fostering children's faith, especially in the context of instilling cultural and moral values, advice and warnings, Karungut is an effective vehicle to educate children about the values of cultural nobility, as well as strengthen love and pride in traditions.

The functions of karungut in fostering children's faith include (Rahmawati, 2017): first, instilling cultural values; karungut contains moral values, customs and struggles that can shape the character of children from an early age. Second, teaching wisdom; Through Syair Karungut, children can learn about advice, reprimands, and warnings about daily life. Third, strengthening pride; karungut can be a means to convey moral messages that build society, as well as strengthen cultural heritage. Fourth, developing thoughts; Karungut can also develop children's thinking skills because it involves understanding and appreciating the values conveyed in the poems.

Karungut, a typical oral art of the Dayak Ngaju tribe in Central Kalimantan, has stages of implementation that involve several aspects (Asi & Poerwardi, 2024). In general, the stages of implementing karungut / tandak timang include preparation, core implementation, and closing. First, preparation. The selection of the theme or message to be conveyed through karungut, as well as determining the purpose of karungut, whether for entertainment, education, or the delivery of traditional messages. The preparation of lyrics or poems that are adjusted to the theme and purpose. Lyrics usually contain cultural, moral values or messages of life. The singer of karungut (pengarungut) trains intensively to master the right lyrics, rhythm, and vocal technique.

Second, core implementation. The karungut begins with an intro or opening which is usually played with an accompaniment. The complainant chanted the lyrics of the Karungut with a distinctive rhythm and style. The lyrics are delivered sequentially according to the predetermined song structure. Accompanying musical instruments are played harmoniously to accompany the karungut chant, providing a nuance and atmosphere that supports the message conveyed. Third, Closing. The closing part of the poem often re-emphasizes the important messages contained in the lyrics, as well as providing motivation or appeal to the listener. The accompanying music gradually subsided, signaling the end of the karungut performance.

### ***The Values Contained in the Construction of Children's Faith Through the Tandak Timang Tradition***

The Tandak Timang *tradition* is a form of oral literature of the Dayak Ngaju community that has a strong social, moral, and spiritual function. According to Riwut (2007), *Tandak Timang* not only acts as a people's entertainment, but also as a medium for inheriting the noble values of life that are rooted in the Dayak cosmological view of the balance between humans, nature, and the Creator. This tradition conveys moral messages through meaningful verses, songs, and rhythms, so that it has great potential as a medium for fostering children's faith in the context of Christian families. The values contained in it include ancestral values, moral and ethical values, cultural values, and spiritual values.

First, ancestral values. The ancestral value in *Tandak Timang* can be seen from the stories that describe the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the guardian spirits of life. This value teaches children to respect their ancestors as moral guardians and protectors of the social order. According to Sillander (2016), the concept of *ancestors* in Dayak culture is not only related to the spirits of the dead, but also a symbol of wisdom and responsibility for the sustainability of community life. In the context of faith building, these

values can be transformed into respect for parents (Ex. 20:12) and responsibility as guardians of God's creation (Gen. 2:15). Thus, *Tandak Timang* instills the awareness that respecting ancestors means respecting life, culture, and divine will as reflected in creation.

Second, Moral and Ethical Values. Through his poems, *Tandak Timang* teaches moral values such as honesty, loyalty, courage, and wisdom. These values are universal principles that are in line with the teachings of the Christian faith. As stated by Sedyawati (2010), oral tradition art functions as a vehicle for internalizing social norms that are conveyed symbolically and aesthetically. For children, exposure to moral values through narratives and songs is a natural way to instill good behavior without heavy cognitive pressure (Tilaar, 2012). Thus, *Tandak Timang* is an effective means of forming Christian character from an early age, especially in the context of families who respect local wisdom.

Third, Cultural Values and Identity. Cultural values in *Tandak Timang* are related to efforts to maintain ethnic identity and pride in ancestral heritage. This tradition introduces children to the history, language, and philosophy of life of the Dayak Ngaju community. According to Hidayah (2013), the preservation of local culture through family education can strengthen children's identity and prevent identity crises in the midst of globalization. In the framework of faith education, the introduction of local culture does not contradict Christian teachings, but rather becomes a concrete context to understand the values of love, loyalty, and appreciation for the diversity of God's creation. Children who know their traditions will find it easier to appreciate the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation, values that are also in line with the principle of fellowship in faith (Acts 2:42–47).

Fourth, Spiritual Values. Some versions of *Tandak Timang* contain a spiritual dimension that reflects man's relationship with divine power. Although rooted in local beliefs, the spiritual values contained in them, such as gratitude, prayer, and recognition of the power of the Creator, can be used as a means to introduce positive religious values to children. According to Kusnadi (2015), religious elements in local traditions act as vehicles to transfer higher spiritual awareness, especially if interpreted contextually in the light of the Christian faith. Thus, *Tandak Timang* is not only a cultural heritage, but can also be a pedagogical means to build awareness of God's love through language and symbols that are familiar to Dayak children.

From these four values, it can be understood that *Tandak Timang* has great potential as a contextual medium in children's faith education. It instills respect for ancestors (ethical and spiritual values), forms children's morals (character values), and fosters love for cultural identity (national values). With this contextual approach, Dayak Christian families can harmoniously integrate faith and culture, so that children's faith education becomes more meaningful, rooted, and relevant to their lives.

### ***The Role of Parents in the Framework of Child Faith Building Through the Tandak Timang Tradition***

In the context of Christian faith education, parents have the primary role as the first and foremost educator for their children. Deuteronomy 6:6–7 affirms this responsibility with the command that the Lord's word be taught to children "when you sit in your house and when you are on your way." The role of parents is not only limited to the verbal transmission

of the teachings of faith, but also through real actions, customs, and cultural symbols that live in society. Therefore, the use of the *Tandak Timang* tradition as a means of fostering children's faith is a tangible manifestation of integration between faith and local culture.

First, parents play the role of successors and guardians of faith values through oral traditions. In the Dayak Ngaju community, *Tandak Timang* is a medium for inheriting knowledge and life values. Parents who say or sing *Tandak Timang* to their children are indirectly transferring the spiritual, moral, and social values contained in it. According to Groome (2011), effective faith education is a participatory process in which faith is lived, not just taught. Through the practice of *Tandak Timang*, parents provide a contextual and fun experience of faith for their children—for example, by associating ancestral stories with the value of love, obedience, or responsibility for creation. Thus, children learn to connect cultural values with the teachings of the Christian faith.

Second, parents function as facilitators and interpreters of cultural meaning of faith. In Lokokada (2023) research, it was explained that Christian families who are able to interpret local cultural symbols and practices in the light of the Gospel will help children understand faith contextually. In this case, *Tandak Timang* is not just a tradition, but a means of reflection on faith. Parents can interpret the moral message in the poem *Tandak Timang* as a form of call to live righteously before God and others. For example, the value of loyalty in *Tandak Timang* can be explained as a form of obedience to God; the value of courage is interpreted as steadfastness of faith; and the value of respect for one's ancestors is associated with respect for one's parents as commanded in the Bible (Yuel, 2023).

Third, parents play the role of role models of faith and cultural preservation. According to Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008), children learn faith primarily through the consistent life example of their parents. In the context of Dayak Ngaju, when parents participate in singing *Tandak Timang* with their children or practicing their values in their daily lives, they are affirming their faith and family cultural identity. This tradition strengthens the sense of togetherness, strengthens family relationships, and instills pride in the unique Christian-Dayak identity. As stated by Tilaar (2012), local culture-based education strengthens children's awareness of their social roots while opening up space for the development of religious and cultured characters.

Fourth, parents act as mediators between faith and modernity. In the midst of globalization and digitalization that can erode traditional values, the existence of parents is the key to maintaining the continuity of faith and cultural values. By introducing *Tandak Timang* as part of family spiritual activities, for example through evening prayer, family fellowship, or teaching Christian moral values (Pradita, et al., 2024), parents help children balance between the modern world and local wisdom. This is in line with the view of Lumbantobing (2020) that the integration of local wisdom into religious education helps students understand faith in the context of daily life that is constantly changing.

Thus, it can be concluded that the role of parents in fostering children's faith through *Tandak Timang* includes four main functions: (1) inheriting faith and cultural values; (2) the interpretation of the meaning of tradition in the light of faith; (3) an example of life that lives the values of *Tandak Timang*; and (4) a guardian of harmony between the Christian faith and the local wisdom of Dayak Ngaju. Through these four roles, children's faith education is no

longer abstract or just a religious ritual, but becomes a life experience rooted in culture, a spirit of faith, and useful for the formation of the Christian character of Dayak children.

### Conclusion

The results of this study show that the *Tandak Timang tradition* has a strategic function in fostering children's faith if it is consciously and reflexively integrated by Christian parents in the context of the Dayak Ngaju family. The main findings of the study confirm that the role of parents is not only as an inheritor of cultural traditions, but also as an agent of active faith formation through the interpretation of *Tandak Timang values* in the light of Christian teachings. First, parents play the role of successors to faith and cultural values, by transmitting the moral and spiritual teachings contained in *Tandak Timang* to children through the practice of speech and singing. Second, parents function as interpreters of the meaning of culture in the light of the Gospel, namely by explaining the *messages of Tandak Timang* as values of faith such as love, loyalty, obedience, and responsibility before God. Third, parents become role models of faith and cultural preservationists, who present the values of *Tandak Timang* in their daily life actions, so that children get concrete examples of living in faith in their cultural context. Fourth, parents play the role of mediators between faith and modernity, by introducing *Tandak Timang* as part of family faith education in the midst of the challenges of globalization and changes in modern values.

Thus, the findings of this study show that fostering children's faith through *Tandak Timang* not only strengthens children's spirituality in the family, but also strengthens the identity of Dayak Ngaju culture based on Christian faith. The integration between faith and culture through the active role of parents is the key in growing a young generation that is rooted in local wisdom, has a Christian character, and is able to face the changing times without losing their identity.

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