

# The Role of Air Dohot as a Culinary Heritage of Penyengat Island, Riau Archipelago Province, in Shaping the Character of the Younger Generation

*Robby Patria, Zaitun Zaitun\*, Atmadinata Atmadinata, Encik Abdul Hajar, Hendra Hendra*

Faculty Of Teacher Training and Education, Raja Ali Haji Maritime University, Tanjungpinang 29411, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This research examines the role of Air Dohot as a culinary heritage of Penyengat Island, Riau Archipelago Province (KEPRI), in shaping the character of young generations. Air Dohot is a traditional beverage that holds profound historical and cultural values for the Penyengat Island community. This study aims to analyze the cultural values embedded in Air Dohot, identify preservation and development strategies, and evaluate their impact on young generation character formation. The research employs a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach, involving in-depth interviews with 20 informants comprising traditional Air Dohot makers, cultural figures, and young people from Penyengat Island. Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, structured interviews, and documentation studies from January to Agustus 2024. The findings reveal that Air Dohot plays a strategic role in young generation character formation through three main aspects: (1) transfer of cultural values and local wisdom, (2) development of entrepreneurial skills and spirit, and (3) strengthening of cultural identity. The established educational programs, documentation efforts, and innovations have positively contributed to preserving this culinary heritage while simultaneously fostering character development among young generations who appreciate local culture. This research recommends the importance of integrating Air Dohot values into character education based on local wisdom and developing sustainable preservation strategies.

## 1 Introduction

The Riau Archipelago (Kepri) is a province in Indonesia that holds a strategic location, directly bordering Singapore and Malaysia [1]. This province possesses unique characteristics, where 96% of its area consists of ocean, encompassing a total area of approximately 252,601 km<sup>2</sup> [2]. Kepri has significant potential in various aspects, particularly in the preservation of Malay culture. The majority of the population in Kepri originates from the Malay ethnic group, making this province one of the centers of Malay culture in Indonesia [3]. Efforts to preserve and promote Malay culture are actively pursued by both the provincial government and the local community. One of the most prominent cultural promotion efforts is the Kepri Maritime Festival. This annual event has successfully garnered international attention by showcasing the richness of Malay culture and cuisine [4]. The festival serves not only as a means of promoting tourism and culinary

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\* Corresponding Author: [zaitun@umrah.ac.id](mailto:zaitun@umrah.ac.id)

arts but also plays a vital role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Malay people in the modern era.

The Riau Archipelago consists of a total of 1,796 islands, reflecting the geographical richness of this province. Of this number, 394 islands are named and inhabited, while the remainder remains unnamed or uninhabited [5]. The development of tourism and economic sectors has become a focus for the provincial government in its efforts to enhance the welfare of the community and strengthen Kepri's position as one of Indonesia's primary maritime provinces.

Based on the latest census data and demographic projections up to 2024, the predominant ethnic groups in Kepri have been identified, with the Malay ethnic group dominating the ethnic composition of the province [6]. The Malay ethnic group is the largest in Kepri, accounting for approximately 35-40% of the total population [7]. The dominance of the Malay ethnic group is closely related to Kepri's geographical position, which lies at the heart of the Malay cultural region [8]. The Malay population is spread across the entire region of Kepri, but the largest concentration is found in three main areas, one of which is Tanjungpinang. As the provincial capital, Tanjungpinang serves as an administrative and cultural center that attracts many Malays [9]. The concentration of the Malay ethnic group in these areas not only reflects historical settlement patterns but also demonstrates the significant role of this ethnic group in shaping the cultural and social identity of Kepri [10].

Since the era of the Malay Sultanate, Islam has served as the foundation of the spiritual and social life of the people in the Riau Archipelago [11]. Islamic values are deeply reflected in the customs, arts, and traditions practiced by the local community [12]. The influence of Islam can be observed in various aspects of daily life, ranging from the implementation of traditional ceremonies to social ethics [13]. The Riau Archipelago province is rich in historical destinations and cultural heritage, including culinary heritage, one of which is Penyengat Island. One culinary heritage that is still preserved to this day is Air Dohot, a traditional beverage that carries deep historical and cultural significance [14]. Air Dohot has become an integral part of the life of the people of Penyengat Island since the era of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom, and its production process involves local wisdom values that can shape positive character traits [15].

In the era of globalization, the greatest challenge in preserving culinary heritage is the influx of various modern products that displace the existence of traditional cuisine. The younger generation tends to be more attracted to modern products that are considered more practical and aligned with contemporary lifestyles [16]. This situation raises particular concerns, considering that traditional culinary heritage like Air Dohot not only possesses historical value but also contains important character values for the development of the younger generation [17].

In the context of character education, Air Dohot can serve as an effective medium for teaching local values. By introducing and engaging the younger generation in the process of making Air Dohot, positive values can be instilled naturally. This aligns with government programs aimed at strengthening character education based on local wisdom [18].

Research on the role of Air Dohot in the character formation of the younger generation is essential to conduct as an effort to document culinary heritage and simultaneously study its effectiveness as a medium for character education. The findings of this research are expected to serve as a reference for the development of culinary heritage preservation programs and character formation based on local wisdom [19].

Based on the above exposition, the researcher is interested in describing the Role of Air Dohot as Culinary Heritage of Penyengat Island, Kepri, in the Character Formation of the Younger Generation.

## 2 Research Problem

What is the Role of Air Dohot as Culinary Heritage of Penyengat Island, Kepri, in the Character Formation of the Younger Generation?

### 2.1 Research Objectives

This study aims to describe the Role of Air Dohot as Culinary Heritage of Penyengat Island, Kepri, in the Character Formation of the Younger Generation.

### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

#### 2.2.1 Regional Special Beverages in the Context of Culinary Arts

There are four main theories that explain the position and significance of regional special beverages in the context of culinary arts. The discussion includes the theory of cultural gastronomy, culinary identity theory, culinary diffusion theory, and the theory of symbolic food value, which provides a conceptual framework for understanding traditional beverages as culinary heritage.

The Cultural Gastronomy Theory, developed by Roland Barthes (1997), posits that food and beverages serve not only as sources of nutrition but also as systems of communication and cultural representation[20]. In the context of regional special beverages, this theory explains that:

- The production techniques reflect local knowledge,
- The ingredients demonstrate wisdom in resource utilization,
- The presentation methods embody social values, and
- The drinking rituals reflect the social structure of the community.

In its application, traditional beverages encompass three dimensions:

1. Material Dimension (ingredients and techniques),
2. Social Dimension (functions and roles), and
3. Symbolic Dimension (meaning and values).

The Culinary Identity Theory, developed by Sidney Mintz (2009), explains how food and beverages serve as markers of the identity of a community group[21]. The key components of this theory include:

1. Distinctiveness: Uniqueness of ingredients, production methods, presentation styles, and consumption contexts.
2. Authenticity: Traditional recipes, production techniques, special equipment, and serving rituals.
3. Continuity: Transmission of knowledge, modern adaptation, and preservation of values.

The Culinary Diffusion Theory, developed by Feby Kendra (2018), explains how traditional beverages spread and adapt[22]:

1. Diffusion Stages: Introduction, adaptation, integration, and transformation.
2. Influencing Factors: Population migration, trade, colonialism, and modernization.

This theory also describes diffusion patterns, including hierarchical diffusion, contagious diffusion, relocation diffusion, and stimulus diffusion.

The Food Symbolic Value Theory, developed by Mary Douglas (2013), elucidates the system of meanings in culinary arts[23]:

- Symbolic Dimensions: Religious value, social status, cultural identity, and social relations.

The symbolic functions within this theory encompass:

- Ritual markers,
- Media of communication,
- Status symbols, and
- Cultural representation.

In the context of traditional beverages, this theory explains how traditional drinks function as:

1. Symbols of collective identity,
2. Markers of rituals and ceremonies,
3. Media for social interaction, and
4. Representations of cultural values.

### *2.2.2 Origin and Early Development of Air Dohot*

Air Dohot has a history that can be traced back to the early 18th century, coinciding with the golden age of the Riau-Lingga Sultanate[24]. This beverage was first introduced in the court of Yang Dipertuan Muda Riau IV, Raja Haji Fisabilillah (1777-1784). Historical records indicate that Air Dohot was initially served as a special drink to welcome noble guests and foreign diplomats visiting the palace.

#### A. Sultanate Era (1777-1911)

##### 1. Early Period (1777-1800)

During this period, Air Dohot held a special position as a royal beverage. Its preparation was carried out by a special palace cook known as "Tok Dohot"[25]. Several important characteristics of this era include:

1. The use of premium ingredients sourced from maritime trade.
2. Serving in special ceramic wares imported from China.
3. A highly structured serving ritual.
4. Diplomatic functions in inter-kingdom relations.

##### 2. Middle Period (1800-1857)

This period is marked by the beginning of Air Dohot's spread among the middle nobility and wealthy merchants. Key developments during this time include:

1. Recipe modifications to accommodate local ingredients.
2. Simplification of serving rituals.
3. Emergence of new variants to suit local tastes.
4. Development of serving containers made from local materials.

##### 3. Late Sultanate Period (1857-1911)

This phase signifies the democratization of Air Dohot, where the beverage began to be adopted by the general public[26]. Characteristics of this period include:

1. Dissemination of knowledge about its preparation to the broader community.
2. Adaptation of ingredients and methods according to economic capabilities.
3. Integration into the socio-cultural rituals of the community.
4. Emergence of Air Dohot stalls.

##### 4. Transitional Era (1911-1945)

Following the end of the Riau-Lingga Sultanate, Air Dohot underwent transformation into a symbol of cultural identity, characterized by:

1. Institutionalization within customary rituals.
2. Development of new social functions.
3. Standardization of traditional recipes.
4. Emergence of communities dedicated to preserving the tradition.

##### 5. Modern Era (1945-present)

In the modern context, Air Dohot has undergone various adaptations while maintaining its cultural essence, including:

1. Modifications in serving methods.

2. Use of modern equipment.
3. Adaptations to contemporary tastes.
4. Revitalization as a tourist attraction.

### **3 Research Methodology**

The research method employed in examining the Role of Air Dohot as Culinary Heritage of Penyengat Island, Kepri, in the Character Formation of the Younger Generation is a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining a deep understanding of its cultural aspects, meanings, and social functions. This ethnographic study emphasizes the direct involvement of researchers in the field to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural practices performed by the community [27]. In this study, four main data collection techniques are used: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, video documentation, and literature review [28]

## **4 Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Character Values That Can Be Learned from the Culinary Drink Air Dohot and the Mechanism of Character Formation**

#### *4.1.1 Character Values in the Tradition of Air Dohot*

1. **Value of Discipline**
  - Accuracy in the production process
  - Consistency of quality
  - Time management[29]
2. **Value of Cooperation**
  - Division of tasks
  - Team coordination
  - Collaboration across generations
3. **Value of Creativity**
  - Recipe innovation
  - Development of presentation
  - Modern adaptation
4. **Value of Responsibility**
  - Maintaining quality
  - Preservation of tradition
  - Cultural sustainability

#### *4.1.2 Mechanism of Character Formation*

1. **Direct Learning**
  - Apprenticeship with senior Air Dohot makers
  - Hands-on production practice
  - Structured tutorials[30]
2. **Indirect Learning**
  - Observation of presentation rituals
  - Listening to stories and history
  - Participation in customary events

## **4.2 Strengthening Strategies for the Role of Air Dohot as a Culinary Heritage of Pulau Penyengat, KEPRI in Character Formation of the Younger Generation**

The strengthening strategies that can be implemented include educational programs, documentation, and innovation explained as follows: Educational programs include:

### **1. Workshops [31]**

- Conducting traditional Air Dohot production training for the younger generation
- Involving local culinary maestros as instructors
- Providing knowledge about ingredients, measurements, and proper production techniques
- Hands-on practice of making Air Dohot from start to finish
- Packaging and marketing strategies for Air Dohot to support creative economy development
- Documentation of recipes and production processes for cultural archives

### **2. Cultural Seminars [32]**

- Inviting cultural experts and historians to discuss the philosophical values of Air Dohot
- Discussion about the history and development of Air Dohot on Pulau Penyengat
- Examination of the role of Air Dohot in community rituals and traditions
- Socializing the importance of preserving culinary heritage to the younger generation
- Sharing sessions with successful Air Dohot entrepreneurs
- Providing certificates to seminar participants

### **3. Culinary Festivals [33]**

- Exhibitions and demonstrations of Air Dohot production from various regions in KEPRI
- Competitions for creative Air Dohot with various modern variants
- Traditional culinary bazaars showcasing Air Dohot
- Cultural arts performances related to the tradition of drinking Air Dohot
- Launching recipe books and historical documentation of Air Dohot
- Awarding those who preserve Air Dohot

Documentation programs include:

### **1. Recipe Books [34]**

- Documentation of authentic and original Air Dohot recipes
- Detailed explanations of ingredients and proper measurements
- Illustrations of the production process that are easy to understand
- Information about the history and philosophy of Air Dohot
- Inclusion of photos of the production process
- Tips and tricks from expert Air Dohot makers

### **2. Video Tutorials [35]**

- Recording the complete process of making Air Dohot
- Detailed explanations of each production stage
- Interviews with Air Dohot maestros
- Distributing videos through digital platforms

- Adding subtitles in various languages
  - Using interesting cinematographic techniques
3. **Digital Archives [36]**
- Creating an online database about Air Dohot
  - Digitizing historical documents related to Air Dohot
  - Developing a dedicated website for Air Dohot
  - Storing photos and video documentation
  - An organized cataloging system
  - Public access for educational purposes

Innovation programs include:

1. **Modernization of Presentation[37]**
  - Using attractive modern packaging
  - Designing contemporary logos and branding
  - Presenting in special glasses or containers
  - Developing an Air Dohot café concept
  - Standardizing quality and presentation
  - Integrating with modern culinary concepts
2. **Development of Variants[38]**
  - Creating new flavor variants while maintaining the original taste
  - Developing Air Dohot in instant powder form
  - Making non-alcoholic variants for all ages
  - Innovative mixtures with other local ingredients
  - Developing premium variants
  - Creating fusion drinks based on Air Dohot
3. **Technology Adaptation[39]**
  - Using modern equipment in the production process
  - Implementing a quality control system
  - Developing a mobile app for ordering
  - Utilizing social media for promotion
  - Implementing a tracking system for distribution
  - Integrating with e-commerce platforms

## 5 Conclusion

The conclusions from this research include: First, Air Dohot as a traditional beverage from Pulau Penyengat holds significant historical and cultural value in shaping the character of the younger generation. This drink, made from a mixture of young coconut water, palm sugar, and spices, symbolizes the hospitality and warmth of the local community, while also teaching values of simplicity, togetherness, and appreciation for ancestral heritage. Second, the research indicates that the process of making Air Dohot, which requires patience, precision, and cooperation, can serve as a medium for character education for the younger generation. By engaging in the production and presentation of Air Dohot, the youth learn not only traditional culinary skills but also develop a sense of cooperation, responsibility, and appreciation for local wisdom. Third, efforts to preserve Air Dohot as a culinary heritage positively contribute to fostering pride and cultural identity among the youth of Pulau Penyengat. The existence of Air Dohot not only serves as a culinary product but also as a medium for transmitting cultural values that can shield the younger generation

from the negative influences of globalization while simultaneously strengthening character based on local wisdom.

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