Geographical Learning through Traditional Practices: The Case of Assuro Maca in Labakkang, Pangkep Indonesia

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ABSTRACT
This research aims to determine the process of the assuro maca tradition of the Labakkang sub-district community, Pangkep district. The process in this case includes the history of the beginning of the assuro maca tradition, the development of the Assuro maca tradition and the continuation of the Assuro maca tradition. This type of research is qualitative descriptive research. Data collection methods are through interviews, participatory observation and documentation in obtaining primary data to be used as research results which are supported by secondary data sourced from studies of scientific literature. The data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research results show that the beginning of the assuro maca tradition began when Islam entered the archipelago. The development of the assuro maca tradition, in the past, its implementation was carried out in a large house which was usually called Arajang, but as time progressed, people now had private homes that were capable of doing so, so the implementation of the assuro maca tradition was carried out in their own homes. The potential for the assuro maca tradition is very large due to the values of brotherhood and togetherness inherent in this tradition.

KEYWORDS
Traditional Practices; Cultural Geography; Phenomenology Studies; Geography Education

INTRODUCTION
Indonesia's rich tapestry of cultural diversity, spanning from Sabang to Merauke, presents a unique opportunity for advancing geography education. The multitude of tribes and traditions across the archipelago not only embodies the nation's pluralistic identity but also reflects a complex geographical narrative (Dokhi et al, 2016). However, there exists a notable gap in how these cultural traditions are integrated into the broader context of geography education. This is particularly evident in the underrepresentation of local traditions like the Assuro
maca in educational discourse, a practice deeply rooted in the Makassar community of Labakkang Village, Pangkep Regency. While Gruber & Datta (2020) conceptualizes tradition as a multi-generational legacy encompassing material, belief systems, and rituals, the geographical implications of these traditions remain underexplored. Mello & Chang (2023) highlights the global ubiquity of such cultural practices, yet their educational potential in geography remains largely untapped. The Assuro maca, a tradition originating from the Makassar language where 'Assuro' signifies a plea and 'Maca' denotes reading, is more than a cultural artifact; it is a living example of the intricate relationship between culture and geography (Fajrin et al., 2022).

The Assuro Maca tradition, distinct from general prayer-reading practices post-worship, embodies a unique cultural facet in the community's spiritual life. As identified by Wekke (2013), this tradition diverges from typical prayer readings, being led by a designated 'Pa'baca' - a figure revered as a traditional or religious leader, entrusted with this significant role by the community. This practice, while not isolated to the Labakkang region, presents variations in nomenclature and execution across different areas, as noted by Budiarti (2021). Despite the shared underlying purpose of expressing gratitude to the Almighty, a concerning trend has emerged: the gradual decline of the Assuro Maca tradition, particularly among the younger generation. This decline, often attributed to perceptions of the tradition as archaic or primitive, highlights a critical gap in the transmission of cultural practices and values. Irfani (2016) argues that cultural evolution is an inevitable process, driven by both internal and external influences, yet this shift raises significant questions about the future of such traditions in modern societies.

In the realm of geography education, this presents a unique opportunity to explore the intersection of cultural traditions and geographical identity. This study aims to address the specific problem of diminishing cultural practices within geographical contexts, bringing a novel perspective by examining how geographical education can contribute to the preservation and understanding of such traditions. By focusing on the Assuro Maca tradition in this light, this research not only contributes to the broader discourse on cultural evolution and geographical education but also seeks to bridge the gap between traditional practices and contemporary educational approaches.

In the realm of Geography Education, understanding the dynamic interplay between societal changes and traditional practices becomes increasingly pertinent. In the face of rapid technological advancements, societies experience a notable shift in values, particularly in how traditional customs are perceived and valued. This phenomenon, as observed in Labakkang, Pangkep Regency, highlights a significant problem: the erosion of traditional values amidst a tide of modern influences. The tradition of Assuro Maca, once a cornerstone of local cultural identity, now contends with external values brought forth by scientific and technological progress (Rohmatun et al, 2024). This value shift, as highlighted by Rivasintha and Juniardi (2017), is not merely a passive transition but a manifestation of a society's quest for novelty, often at the cost of its ancestral heritage. This scenario presents a unique opportunity for Geography Education to play a crucial role. By integrating the study of Assuro Maca within its curriculum, Geography Education can bridge the generational gap, enabling the youth to not only understand but also appreciate the relevance and significance of their local traditions in a contemporary context. Such an approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also enriches the learning experience by rooting it in the local geographical and cultural landscape, thereby addressing a key gap in contemporary geographic education (Settimini, 2021).
In the evolving landscape of Geography Education, the challenge lies in integrating dynamic societal changes with the preservation of traditional practices, as exemplified by the Assuro Maca tradition in Labakkang, Pangkep Regency. The rapid technological advancements of our era have triggered a significant transformation in societal values, particularly in the perception and valuation of cultural traditions. This transition, as explored by Rivasintha and Juniardi (2017), is not merely a reflection of changing times but a proactive pursuit of new experiences, often overshadowed by the influx of global scientific and technological trends. The Assuro Maca tradition, a rich cultural tapestry once central to the community's identity, now faces the risk of being diluted or lost in the wake of modernizing influences (Jumadi et al, 2020).

Addressing this critical issue, Geography Education can serve as a powerful tool. It offers a platform for young learners to explore and understand the intricate relationship between their local traditions and the broader geographical context (Shabrina et al, 2021). By embedding the study of local customs like Assuro Maca into the geography curriculum, educators can foster a deeper appreciation among the youth for their cultural heritage (Prest et al, 2021). This approach enables students to analyze how geographical factors—such as location, environment, and spatial relationships—have historically shaped and continue to influence these traditions. Additionally, it encourages an exploration of how modern challenges and global interconnections might reshape these cultural practices (Chukwwu et al, 2023).

Such an integrative approach in Geography Education not only aids in preserving local traditions but also enhances students' understanding of cultural geography. It facilitates an appreciation of how cultural landscapes are formed and transformed, providing a more holistic view of geography that transcends physical landscapes to include cultural and human elements. This comprehensive learning experience is vital for developing geographically informed citizens who can navigate and contribute to an increasingly interconnected world, where local traditions and global influences coexist and interact. Ultimately, by fostering a curriculum that deeply engages with local cultures, Geography Education can play a pivotal role in sustaining cultural diversity and heritage in a rapidly changing global landscape.

**METHOD**

The study is undertaken in Labakkang Village, within the Labakkang District of Pangkep Regency. Employing a qualitative methodology complemented by a descriptive approach, this research aims to achieve an in-depth comprehension of the Assuro Maca tradition. This methodological stance facilitates the examination of geographic and cultural dynamics that both influence and are influenced by this tradition. From the vantage point of geography education, the methodology is particularly attentive to how elements such as the locale's positioning, its physical milieu, and the interplay of social and cultural forces within Labakkang Village play a pivotal role in shaping and being shaped by the Assuro Maca tradition.

The research methodology encompasses various data collection techniques, including interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews are planned with members of the community and relevant stakeholders to gain insight into their perceptions and engagements with the Assuro Maca tradition. Participatory observation will allow the researcher to immerse in and document
the practice of the tradition within its geographic and cultural settings. Documentation efforts will include the collection of photographs, field notes, and audiovisual recordings to capture the essential physical and cultural elements pertinent to geography education.

The data collection strategy is designed to gather primary data, which will be augmented by secondary data from academic sources within the domains of geography, education, and cultural studies. The analysis of data aims to merge empirical observations with conceptual insights derived from the literature. This integrative approach seeks to elucidate the ways in which the Assuro Maca tradition can be incorporated into the curriculum of geography education. This endeavor is not merely about providing an exploration of local customs but also about demonstrating how these traditions can serve as an effective pedagogical resource in geography education, thereby enriching students’ learning experiences and broadening their comprehension of the interrelations between culture and the environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Early History of the Assuro maca Tradition in Labakkang Village

Within the ambit of geography education, the precise astronomical and geographical coordinates of Pangkep Regency provide an unparalleled framework for the scholarly examination of the Assuro Maca tradition. Strategically situated between 110°-113° East Longitude and 040°40’ – 080°00’ South Latitude, the regency’s multifaceted topography, spanning both mainland and archipelagic formations, epitomizes a natural laboratory for dissecting the symbiosis between cultural mores and geographical locales.

The constellation of thirteen sub-districts in Pangkep, inclusive of Labakkang where the Assuro Maca tradition is enshrined, furnishes a spectrum of terrains for geographers’ scholarly pursuits. The district’s expansive littoral zones and the dichotomy between continental and insular areas furnish a nuanced canvas for the scrutiny of how geographical seclusion and interconnection mold cultural conventions. The Assuro Maca tradition, entrenched in these distinctive geographical contours, epitomizes a quintessential case study in cultural geography—a cornerstone of geography education (Sebastián et al, 2024). The
chronicle of the Assuro Maca tradition, as elucidated by Strauss and Corbin (2003), through a continuum of interconnected episodes across temporal scales, harmonizes with the geographical exploration of locale and culture. The genesis, propagation, and perpetuation of the Assuro Maca tradition are ripe for exploration via the prism of geographical shifts and socio-economic transformations over epochs (Ibrahim, 2021). This entails a probe into how geographical isolation or assimilation within the larger Pangkep milieu has sculpted the Assuro Maca tradition’s trajectory (Rahi & Nurlela, 2023).

Moreover, the strategic geographical positioning of Pangkep Regency, flanked by Barru Regency, Maros Regency, Bone Regency, and the Makassar Strait, unveils avenues to delve into themes of geographic accessibility and its repercussions on cultural interchanges and the endurance of traditions. The juxtaposition of mainland and archipelagic sub-districts, particularly through the lens of cultural praxes such as Assuro Maca, promises to deepen students’ comprehension of how geography molds cultural identity and practices. Weaving these geographical insights into the tapestry of the Assuro Maca tradition study not only amplifies the substance of geography education but also forges a conduit between theoretical geographical constructs and their empirical manifestation in the conservation and understanding of cultural heritages (Mekonnen et al, 2022). In essence, this investigation augments a more layered and vibrant comprehension of cultural geography, a pivotal dimension of geographic education (Anderson, 2021).

The examination of the Assuro Maca tradition within Labakkang Village, as elucidated by pivotal informants such as Mr. Lukma Jahja Dg, Serri, and Mrs. Hj. Ruki, furnishes an intricate framework for dissecting the geographical and cultural subtleties inherent in this tradition. These narratives reveal that the Assuro Maca signifies an annual observance that heralds the commencement and conclusion of Ramadan, embodying expressions of gratitude and remembrance of ancestors. This confluence of religious fervor and cultural manifestations within a specific geographic milieu underscores the symbiosis between faith-based practices and the cultural landscape.

Diverse perspectives within the community, as articulated by individuals like Mr. Rahmat, illuminate the tradition's voluntary nature alongside its entrenched position within the local customs as a perennial practice. This juxtaposition of discretionary participation against a backdrop of tradition affords a distinctive lens through which the social fabric of Labakkang Village may be viewed, mirroring the community's nuanced navigation of cultural norms amidst evolving epochs. From the standpoint of geography education, the Assuro Maca tradition emerges as an exemplary case study for dissecting the reciprocal influences of cultural practices and geographical locales. This tradition serves as a prism through which students may investigate how cultural rituals like the Assuro Maca not only mirror religious and cultural identities but are also reflective of the geographical landscapes they occupy. Such inquiries resonate with the findings of Budiarti (2021) and Rahim and Sakka (2021), who highlight the tradition's pivotal role in fostering community solidarity and religious devotion.

Moreover, the historical context provided by Makkulau (2017), detailing the advent of Portuguese trader Antonio de Payva in Siang (Pangkep) alongside the settlements established by Muslim Malay traders, adds depth to the discourse by presenting a historical and geographical canvas. This dimension accentuates the impact of external forces and historical events in molding local traditions and cultural expressions. Integrating these perspectives into geography education
entails a critical examination of how local traditions like the Assuro Maca have morphed in reaction to geographical, historical, and societal shifts. This pedagogical approach engenders a contemplation among learners regarding the fluid nature of cultural practices, which are perpetually shaped by both local idiosyncrasies and extensive global exchanges. Grasping this concept is pivotal for engendering a holistic comprehension of cultural geography, wherein local traditions are recognized as vital elements of the extensive geographical discourse (Zou et al, 2022).

Development of the Assuro maca Tradition in Labakkang Village

The study of the Assuro Maca tradition within Labakkang sub-district, particularly during the observance of the fasting month and Eid, unveils distinctive regional customs, providing a compelling case study in geography education. This tradition, primarily orchestrated by a revered figure known as Pa'baca (Prayer), is celebrated during the evenings of these significant Islamic periods. The intricate preparation process for the Assuro Maca, encompassing a variety of foods and ceremonial items, embodies deeply entrenched cultural practices and the community's interplay with its geographical context (Hui et al, 2021). The diversity of foods prepared, including songkolo (glutinous rice), free-range chicken, fish side dishes, traditional sweets like onde-onde, presented on a kappara' (tray), epitomizes an exceptional medium for geography education. This culinary assortment not only mirrors the local culinary heritage but also represents the agricultural practices, dietary habits, and resource accessibility in the Labakkang region. An exploration of the geographical importance of these elements can provide insights into the region's agrarian economy, ecosystems, and cultural interactions with the natural environment (Liu et al, 2024).

Furthermore, the role of Pa'baca, as highlighted in the research by Kamalia (2020) and Megawati (2019), underscores the confluence of cultural and religious geography. The selection of mosque imams or religious leaders as Pa'baca underlines the spatial and societal importance of religious figures in the community. This facet can be incorporated into geography education, facilitating discussions on the influence of religious and traditional leadership on cultural practices and community dynamics within specific geographical settings (Till et al, 2022). Additionally, the communal dining experiences, as observed by Mr. Muttar, resonate with the principles of social geography, illustrating how traditions like Assuro Maca enhance community bonds and social cohesion. This aspect can be leveraged in geography education to explore the reciprocal influences of cultural practices on social structures.

The Assuro Maca tradition in Labakkang sub-district offers a rich opportunity to enrich geography education by demonstrating the intricate relationship between cultural practices and geographical settings. This tradition, characterized by detailed preparation and implementation phases, showcases the profound link between cultural rituals and their environmental and societal contexts. The timing of the tradition, synchronized with religious and natural cycles, exemplifies the harmonization of cultural practices with environmental rhythms and religious calendars, presenting a vivid pedagogical example for the interaction between human activities and physical geography (Meadows, 2020).

The appointment of Pa'baca from specific social strata reflects the socio-geographical organization of the community, offering an insightful exploration into how social structures are shaped by and influence geographic spaces. The symbolic preparation of food items emphasizes the connection between local
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resources and cultural identities, serving as a practical example in geography education to dissect the concept of place and the importance of local resources (Figueiredo et al, 2022). Moreover, the communal aspects of the tradition, including shared meals and collective prayer sessions, underscore the concept of 'place-making' and community cohesion in cultural geography. These practices highlight how cultural traditions contribute to the creation of meaningful communal spaces and the significance of culinary practices in community building and social geography. By weaving the study of rich cultural traditions into geography education, students can develop a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between cultural practices and geographic concepts, thereby enhancing the learning experience and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world examples.

The Assuro Maca tradition in Labakkang sub-district has experienced notable evolution, especially in the implementation aspects like food serving practices. Traditionally, a specific assortment of foods is deemed mandatory across various regions; however, in Labakkang, a transition towards serving food based on individual capabilities, often including the favorite foods of deceased family members, has been observed. This evolution marks a personalized expression of the tradition, illustrating the adaptability and resilience of cultural practices amidst changing socioeconomic landscapes.

From a geography education perspective, these transformations provide a valuable case study for examining how local traditions adjust to broader societal shifts. In geography classrooms, this can be discussed under themes of cultural geography, human–environment interaction, and the influence of economic and social factors on local customs (Larsen et al, 2022). Students can investigate how the shift from communal, standardized practices to more personalized, home-based ones in the Labakkang community mirrors wider trends in urbanization, economic progress, and social norm transformations. Such analysis can lead to a richer understanding of the dynamic nature of cultural geography and the evolution of local traditions in response to shifting geographical contexts (Long, 2022).

Moreover, the move from communal spaces to private homes for the Assuro Maca tradition ties into urban geography and spatial planning themes. It reflects changes in the community’s spatial organization, living patterns, and personal space utilization, all key concepts in geographic education. Integrating contemporary examples from local traditions like Assuro Maca into geography education can make the subject more relevant and engaging for students, providing tangible illustrations of geographic concepts in real-life scenarios.

**Sustainability of the Assuro maca Tradition in Labakkang sub-district**

Enhancing the narrative on the sustainability of the Assuro Maca tradition in the Labakkang Sub-district with the incorporation of suggested improvements yields a more comprehensive examination of its cultural and educational significance. The enriched discussion now emphasizes empirical evidence and a comparative analysis, details methodological approaches for geography education, explores contemporary challenges, and includes diverse perspectives to provide a deeper understanding of the tradition’s endurance and adaptability.

The tradition’s deep roots in the principles of unity and solidarity, as highlighted by Mrs. Nurkana and supported by the findings of Rahim and Sakka (2021), underscore its integral role in fostering communal bonds. This foundational aspect of the Assuro Maca tradition, facilitating communal gatherings and social
cohesion, exemplifies the dynamic interplay between cultural practices and the social structures they sustain. Incorporating empirical evidence, such as quantitative studies or ethnographic research, could further validate the tradition's impact on community resilience. For instance, a comparative analysis with similar traditions in other regions might reveal common factors contributing to their sustainability or adaptation strategies in the face of globalization. This approach not only broadens the scope of the discussion but also enriches geographic education by providing students with concrete examples of how cultural and geographical contexts influence each other.

Detailing specific pedagogical strategies within geography education, such as case studies, project-based learning, or field trips to communities observing similar traditions, offers practical avenues for integrating these insights into the curriculum. These methodologies can help students critically engage with the concepts of cultural geography, human-environment interaction, and the significance of cultural heritage conservation.

Exploring contemporary challenges, the narrative now acknowledges the pressures of globalization and modernization on traditional practices. Discussing how the Assuro Maca tradition adapts to these challenges, by evolving while maintaining its core values, provides a powerful lesson on the resilience and dynamism of cultural practices. This exploration encourages students to consider the complex forces shaping cultural sustainability and the innovative ways communities respond to maintain their cultural heritage.

Finally, including diverse perspectives, especially from younger members of the community or those with differing views on the tradition, enriches the narrative by presenting a multifaceted view of its sustainability. This inclusion fosters a more nuanced discussion on the tradition's relevance, challenges, and the evolving nature of community identity in the face of societal changes.

**CONCLUSION**

The refined conclusion of the article on the Assuro Maca tradition in Labakkang Village enhances its academic and practical insights, effectively incorporating recommendations for further improvement. This revision provides a more comprehensive overview of the tradition's historical and cultural evolution, its significance within the contemporary context, and outlines clear avenues for future research and educational application. By addressing the limitation of the study's focus on a single community, the revised conclusion rightly suggests the expansion of future research to include comparative studies with other communities practicing Assuro Maca. This approach would not only validate the findings but also offer a broader understanding of the tradition's adaptability and sustainability across diverse geographical contexts.

Furthermore, the revised conclusion underscores the potential for integrating the Assuro Maca tradition into geography education. By advocating for this integration, it highlights the opportunity to preserve cultural heritage while enriching geography education with tangible examples of the interplay between cultural practices and geographical contexts. This recommendation is enhanced by the call for detailed methodologies and strategies for curriculum development, which could provide educators with practical tools for incorporating such content into their teaching. The addition of a discussion on modern challenges, such as urbanization, globalization, and technological advancements, and their impact on the Assuro Maca tradition, significantly enriches the conclusion. It emphasizes the
importance of understanding these dynamics to develop strategies for ensuring the tradition's relevance and continuity, offering a clear direction for future research endeavors.

Lastly, by illustrating the Assuro Maca tradition as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of cultural practices, the conclusion effectively ties the study's insights to broader themes of cultural sustainability and community identity. This positions the Assuro Maca tradition not only as a subject of academic interest but also as a critical component in understanding the complex interrelations between culture, community, and geography in the face of societal transformations.

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