

Utilizing Folklore for the Formation of Wetland AMIN Character of Students

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Abstract

This community service activity utilized South Kalimantan folklore to instill character values in students at SMAN 7 Banjarmasin, focusing on developing AMIN character values (Religious, Independent, Innovative, and Nationalistic). The urgency of character education for students—particularly in introducing local wisdom and culture that supports their moral and social development—underlies this initiative. The method applied is a folklore-based approach involving explaining, reading, and discussing South Kalimantan folktales. Evaluation was conducted through a test containing 10 questions related to the AMIN values found in the stories. The results showed that most students performed well: 8 students scored 70, 30 students scored 80, 20 students scored 90, and 15 students scored 100. These results indicate that folklore-based learning enhances students' understanding of character values. Based on these findings, South Kalimantan folklore-based learning is an effective model for character education. It not only conveys moral values but also strengthens students' connection to local culture

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INTRODUCTION

Social phenomena such as student brawls, bullying, misuse of social media, and environmental destruction reflect a moral degradation in Indonesia. These social deviations occur across various social levels, signaling a moral crisis that contradicts the values of Pancasila. Society often neglects the "Unity of Indonesia" principle, replacing it with provocation and hostility. In addressing this, the next generation must be built with a character that embodies the nation's ideology—Pancasila. The Indonesian nation's worldview recognizes divinity, humanism, and nationalism, which must be applied daily to create a just and harmonious society ([Kaelan, 2016](#)).

The development of technology, which should be used to improve welfare, is instead often misused to spread hate speech. As Rumetra explained, the growth of information and communication technology has resulted in positive and negative impacts. One major negative effect is the spread of hate speech through social media. This is especially evident in modern society, where information spreads rapidly and easily. Although technology can foster welfare and positive interaction, many individuals and groups use it to spread hate, slander, and defamation ([Mulyono, 2017](#); [Pakpahan, 2020](#); [Rumetna, 2018](#)). This underscores the urgent need for character education to counter the moral crisis. Character education is the effort to instill moral values in individuals so that good behavior arises naturally ([Al-Ghazali, 2016](#)). This is in line with Sukarno's view that

character education aims to build students capable of embodying normative values ([Sukarno, 2020](#)).

The national character, reflecting Pancasila ideology, must be instilled in the younger generation. Folklore is an effective medium to convey moral values, as it is rich in culture and social norms. As a form of oral literature, folklore serves educational, social control, and character-building functions ([Emzir & R, 2015](#)). Folktales contain noble values such as honesty, politeness, and compassion, which students can emulate ([Sa'ida, 2022](#)). Folklore is integral to Indonesia's cultural heritage, preserving moral values, social norms, and local history passed down through generations. These stories serve as entertainment and a medium of character education for youth, playing a vital role in shaping national identity and preserving culture ([Hasibuan et al., 2024](#)).

Folklore can be used to convey moral values and foster character development. This aligns with the notion that education aims to develop a person intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, thereby humanizing individuals at the highest level through creativity and initiative ([Erni & Herwandi, 2018](#); [Luthfiani et al., 2021](#); [Taqwim et al., 2022](#)). The essence of education is to humanize individuals, placing humanity at the highest degree through the maximization of creativity and conscience. In line with Adyatama, moral education is inseparable from education at any level. Essentially, moral education is ethics education, enabling individuals to follow positive principles in life ([Adyatama, 2022](#); [Erni & Andriyani, 2022](#); [Taqwim, 2017](#)).

Wetlands are crucial ecosystems that are vital in maintaining environmental balance and sustainability. However, wetlands face numerous threats, such as pollution, land conversion, and climate change. Therefore, it is important to instill awareness and concern for wetlands early on, especially among the younger generation. Wetland character education is essential to nurturing environmentally conscious youth who are responsible for nature conservation. This initiative will positively impact students, the environment, and the planet's future.

The implementation of this community service, which applies folklore to develop the AMIN (Religious, Independent, Innovative, Nationalistic) wetland character in high school students, is a valuable and strategic effort toward achieving national education goals and supporting the MBKM (Freedom to Learn - Independent Campus) program. For example, students can conduct thematic community service (KKN) focusing on using folklore to develop AMIN wetland character in high schools; lecturers can conduct community service projects (PkM) aimed at developing innovative learning models based on folklore to enhance AMIN wetland character; and students can develop creative businesses that promote cultural values and local wisdom from folktales.

This community service is expected to impact high school students in Banjarmasin positively. These positive impacts include improved student understanding of the religious, independent, innovative, and nationalistic values found in folklore; the cultivation of patriotism, cultural pride, and environmental awareness; the development of critical, creative, and innovative thinking skills to solve various wetland-related problems; the strengthening of national unity among students through collective efforts to preserve wetlands; and the formation of resilient, moral, and high-integrity students who are committed to conserving wetlands. Furthermore, with collaboration and mutual support from all parties, this community service project is expected to contribute significantly to developing an outstanding, noble, and environmentally conscious young generation.

METHODS

The training was held on August 6, 2024, in the Hall of SMAN 7 Banjarmasin, with 73 student participants. This community service activity employed the service learning method, which combines character education and cultural approaches through folklore. The service learning method integrates academic objectives with efforts to raise awareness in solving real-world problems ([Setyowati & Permata, 2018](#)). After delivering the material, the facilitators guided students in identifying and understanding the positive values embedded in the folklore. The stages of the activity included identifying and selecting folktales aligned with the targeted character values. The team prepared the materials and selected folklore examples to be discussed with the students. This was followed by discussions and in-depth comprehension of the values within the folktales and their applications in daily life. The implementation process consisted of three stages:

a. Preparation

In this phase, the community service team planned the activity, conducted observations at SMAN 7 Banjarmasin as the implementation site, discussed with the principal and the Indonesian language teacher, and prepared materials and necessary facilities.

b. Implementation

The main activity involved delivering content focused on folklore. The materials presented centered on folktales relevant to the service project's objectives.

c. Evaluation

The evaluation phase included a test of 10 questions, each worth 10 points, with a maximum total score of 100. The questions were designed to assess students' understanding of the religious, independent, innovative, and nationalist character values found in South Kalimantan folklore. Results were processed and visualized using bar charts to show the distribution of student scores. The diagram illustrates variations in student achievement, from high to moderate and low scores. This visual representation helped identify the effectiveness of folklore as a medium for character education based on the local wisdom of wetland environments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service aimed to integrate character values into learning through folklore, leveraging the rich cultural heritage of South Kalimantan. This initiative focused on using folktales to convey moral messages and local wisdom that could shape students' character. Folklore refers to traditional stories from a specific region with cultural values such as customs, habits, and morals representing societal norms ([Agustian, 2018](#)). These culturally rich stories not only introduce students to local traditions but also instill positive values that foster the development of well-rounded personalities. Every literary work, including folklore, contains values that teach wise behavior in daily life ([Supriyadi et al., 2020](#)). This aligns with Safira and Erni's view that literature offers ideal life models, encompassing thinking, acting, feeling, and interacting ([Safira & Erni, 2022](#)). Therefore, this activity served as a tool for cultural education and a strategic effort to build strong character among the younger generation, enabling them to face modern challenges with integrity and emotional intelligence.

Character education plays a vital role in individual development. It is a foundational element that shapes a person's personality ([Anwar & Tobroni, 2023](#)). Good character reflects a well-integrated everyday thinking, feeling, and behavior pattern. Character education goes beyond academic achievement and focuses on the formation of noble character, which is essential for creating competitive, moral, and responsible future

generations. As [Bahri \(2022\)](#) states, character education seeks to develop individuals who live by noble values and demonstrate good morals in society, nationhood, and the state.

The content delivered during this community service was carefully designed to introduce the cultural wealth of South Kalimantan through its folktales. Each selected story embodied character values aligned with the Wetland AMIN concept: Religious (*Agamis*) values were depicted through characters who remained steadfast in their faith and moral principles when facing life's challenges. Independent (*Mandiri*) values were illustrated by characters who solved problems independently without relying on others. Innovative (*innovative*) values were shown through creative thinking and courage to find effective, unconventional solutions. Nationalist (*Nasionalis*) values were reflected in the characters' commitment to preserving culture, the homeland, and local identity. The presentation of material to the students of SMAN 7 Banjarmasin is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1 The community service team delivering the material

Through this activity, students became familiar with folktales and explored the moral messages within, and connected them with the AMIN wetland character values. This approach provided a unique and enjoyable learning experience, as students were encouraged to appreciate local cultural wealth while developing positive character traits. This is in line with Hadisi, who stated that personal development occurs through training, guidance, and teaching efforts that help individuals become more mature ([Hadisi, 2015](#)). The maturity referred to here is not physical but relates to good attitudes and behavior. Good behavior or noble character (good character) involves knowledge of goodness that fosters a commitment to do good and carry out good actions. Lickona (2015) states that good character encompasses knowledge (cognitive), attitudes, motivation, behavior, and skills.

The students' responses to this activity were very positive, as evidenced by their enthusiasm during the event. They showed great interest in listening to the folktales from South Kalimantan and actively participated in discussions exploring the local wisdom values. Additionally, they felt they gained new insights that enriched their knowledge and

strengthened their awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. The discussion session can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Discussion with community service participants

The results of the community service showed that the folktale-based approach effectively enhanced students' understanding of folktales while also developing character. This success was reflected in the evaluation conducted by the team through a cognitive-based test explicitly designed to measure students' ability to identify the AMIN values contained in South Kalimantan folktales. The test also aimed to assess how well students could connect the moral messages from the stories with their application in daily life. The evaluation results indicated that students understood the folktales' content and could internalize the values into their mindset and behavior. This confirms that folktales are a relevant, contextual, and effective learning medium to support character education based on local wisdom.

[Komariah and Nihayah \(2023\)](#) emphasize that character education involves three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Moral knowing includes the ability to evaluate one's behavior and understand what is right and wrong. Moral feeling involves six key aspects: conscience, self-respect, empathy, love of goodness, self-control, and humility. Moral action manifests moral knowing and feeling involving competence, the desire to uphold moral values, and the habit of acting ethically. By integrating these elements, character education based on folktales, as implemented in this community service program, becomes an effective way to encourage students to understand moral values and make them part of their daily behavior.

Figure 3 shows the diagram of the student evaluation results after answering 10 questions related to South Kalimantan folktales.

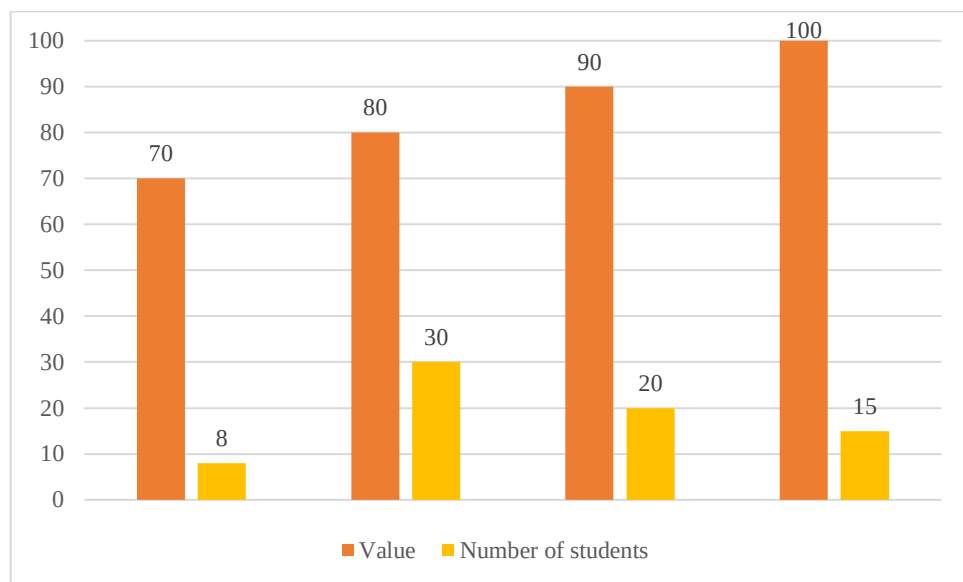


Figure 3 Student evaluation results

Each question in the test was designed based on South Kalimantan folktales. The evaluation results were visualized in a bar chart to provide a more structured overview of the student score distribution. This visualization helps analyze the success level of the community service program and identify areas needing further development. Students scored between 70 and 100. The chart indicates that the folktale-based learning approach was highly effective in delivering the AMIN values. This is concrete evidence that local wisdom can be a relevant medium for school character education.

The students who participated in the evaluation demonstrated excellent results, reflecting the success of the folktale-based learning approach in shaping student character. A total of 30 students scored 80, indicating a strong understanding of the values taught. Additionally, 20 students scored 90, and 15 earned a perfect 100. These figures show that most students could understand and internalize the values of trustworthiness, independence, innovation, and nationalism embedded in the South Kalimantan folktales. This success indicates that folktales are effective in helping students understand and apply real-life character values.

However, the evaluation also revealed that eight students scored 70. Although this score still falls within a good category, their presence in this lower group is a reflection point for improving future activities. A more inclusive approach is needed so all students, including those struggling with the material, can have equal learning experiences. More varied strategies, such as using educational games, role-playing, or individualized approaches, could be implemented to address diverse student learning needs. Additionally, incorporating technology, such as interactive videos or educational apps, could be an alternative to enhance the appeal and effectiveness of learning.

These evaluation results also confirm that folktales are a source of entertainment and a contextual and meaningful learning medium. Through integrating AMIN character values into folktales, students gain new knowledge and are motivated to apply these values in everyday life. For instance, the value of Trustworthiness is emphasized through stories about main characters who uphold promises. Independence is illustrated by characters who rely on their courage and creativity to solve problems. Innovation is exemplified through unique solutions found in the stories, and Nationalism is instilled through narratives highlighting the importance of unity and respect for local culture.

Overall, this program has significantly contributed to character development in students, particularly within the context of wetland local wisdom. The use of South Kalimantan folktales as a learning medium allows students to connect with local culture and traditions while gaining a deep understanding of moral values relevant to life. The program also reinforces students' awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. The team and participants' documentation is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Community service team and participants

Based on these excellent evaluation results, the folktale-based approach can be considered a relevant and applicable learning model for character education development in South Kalimantan. Further development is needed to enhance its positive impact, such as increasing the variety of folktales used, involving students in collecting stories from local communities or encouraging them to create new stories that convey moral values. Consistent implementation supported by innovative teaching methods will further strengthen the role of folktales as an effective, meaningful, and sustainable learning medium.

CONCLUSION

The community service activity titled "Utilization of Folktales for the Development of AMIN Wetland Character Values among Students of SMAN 7 Banjarmasin" successfully demonstrated that folktale-based learning from South Kalimantan helps students better understand the values of trustworthiness, independence, innovativeness, and nationalism embedded in these stories. This success proves that folktales are not merely a form of entertainment but also an effective medium for teaching moral values relevant to everyday life. Although some students scored below 80, this approach has proven effective in shaping students' character while fostering awareness and appreciation for local wisdom. To enhance the effectiveness of this program, it is recommended to implement more inclusive and varied approaches in the learning process. Methods such as group discussions, educational games, or educational technology applications can help create more engaging and diverse learning experiences, ensuring that all students are actively involved. Additionally, expanding the variety of folktale materials can enrich the learning process and deepen students' engagement with local culture. Consistent and innovative implementation will further strengthen the positive impact of this program in character education.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Conceptualization: J and F; methodology: LL; formal analysis: AT; writing—preparing the original draft: LL.

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