

## Moral Values and Local Culture in Majasari Folklore: Strengthening Contextual Literacy in Indonesian Classrooms

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### ABSTRACT

The Majasari folklore is a rich cultural heritage imbued with moral and local cultural values, yet it remains underutilized in school-based literature education. This study aims to explore these values and integrate them into contextual literacy-based Indonesian language instruction. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and case study design, data were collected through interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving community leaders, teachers, and students. The findings reveal that Majasari folklore contains moral values such as sincerity, visionary leadership, social justice, mutual cooperation, and religiosity, alongside cultural elements like coarse Sundanese language, pencak silat tradition, Sanskrit-based village block names, and oral tradition continuity. Integrating this folklore into literature learning enhances student engagement, strengthens character development, and enriches cultural literacy. The study recommends utilizing local folklore as contextual teaching material to support the Pancasila Student Profile and cultural preservation.

**Keywords:** Majasari folklore, moral values, local culture, contextual literacy, Indonesian language education

### ABSTRAK

Cerita rakyat Majasari merupakan warisan budaya lokal yang sarat nilai moral dan budaya, namun belum banyak dimanfaatkan dalam pembelajaran sastra di sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji nilai-nilai tersebut serta mengintegrasikannya dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia berbasis literasi kontekstual. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan rancangan studi kasus, data diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi terhadap tokoh masyarakat, guru, dan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa cerita rakyat Majasari mengandung nilai moral seperti ketulusan, kepemimpinan visioner, keadilan sosial, gotong royong, dan religiusitas, serta nilai budaya lokal berupa bahasa Sunda kasar, tradisi pencak silat, penamaan blok desa dengan istilah Sanskerta, dan keberlanjutan tradisi lisan. Integrasi cerita ini dalam pembelajaran sastra terbukti meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, memperkuat karakter, dan memperkaya literasi budaya. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pemanfaatan cerita rakyat lokal sebagai bahan ajar kontekstual yang mendukung Profil Pelajar Pancasila dan pelestarian budaya.

**Kata kunci:** cerita rakyat Majasari, nilai moral, budaya lokal, literasi kontekstual, pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Folk tales are a form of oral literature passed down from generation to generation, serving as a medium for education, cultural preservation, and the legitimization of social norms (Bascom, 1965; Danandjaja, 1984). However, amid the rapid currents of globalization, the existence of folk tales is increasingly under threat. The UNESCO (2023) Periodic Reporting on the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage places Indonesia among the 15 countries with the highest levels of oral tradition extinction in the world. Ginanjar (2023) notes that each year at least two to three folk tales disappear as they are no longer recognized by younger generations. This phenomenon reflects the severing of the cultural heritage chain that should serve as a source of collective identity for society.



Previous studies have emphasized that folk tales are rich in moral and cultural values relevant to character education. For example, Nanda et al. (2021) identified values of tolerance, hard work, and solidarity in the folk tale *Cucumber Mas*. Kusuma Wardani et al (2022) highlighted the importance of moral, religious, and ethical values in the folk legends of Mount Kelud and Sapi Suro through a mimetic approach, while A. Rakhmatullina et al (2019) limited their analysis to the folkloric elements in the works of G. Bashirov. These findings demonstrate the significant potential of folk tales as a medium for literature learning and character building.

In the educational context, contextual-based learning has proven effective in improving students' literacy and literary appreciation. Servista Bukit (2022) reported that a contextual learning approach can enhance creative writing skills through meaningful learning experiences. Syahwardi et al. (2023) demonstrated the significant influence of contextual approaches on Indonesian language literacy, while Hakim and Sari (2022) affirmed consistent improvement in learning outcomes through similar instructional models.

Unfortunately, most previous studies have focused only on popular folk tales, such as *Malin Solihah* (2020) or *Cucumber Mas* Nanda et al. (2021). Folk tales from small villages, such as *Majasari*, have rarely been explored, despite possessing distinctive historical and cultural uniqueness. The *Majasari* folk tale is rooted in the relocation of the residents of Nunuk Village during the Dutch colonial period in 1932, which gave rise to a new community with a distinctive social structure and language. This story contains moral values (sincerity, visionary leadership), social values (mutual cooperation, solidarity), and cultural values (Sundanese coarse language, use of Sanskrit terms), with a complete narrative structure in accordance with Todorov dan Weinstein (1969) and Nurgiantoro (2002).

This research emerges as a response to three main issues: the fading of folk tales as local cultural heritage, the underutilization of local folk tales in school literature learning, and the weakening of cultural identity among the younger generation. By integrating philological analysis and pedagogical approaches, this study aims to elevate the folk tale of the origins of *Majasari Village* as contextual literary teaching material that strengthens students' cultural literacy, character, and literary appreciation.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in depth in a natural context Miksza et al. (2023). In this study, the object studied is *Majasari* folklore and the local moral and cultural values contained in it, as well as its implementation in Indonesian language learning. Case study designs are used because research focuses on one particular subject or case that has a peculiarity (Backman dan Harris 1999), namely folklore that develops in *Majasari Village* and has not been widely researched academically.

The source of the research data consists of two data, namely primary data, in the form of in-depth interviews with community leaders, Indonesian language teachers, and students who have a connection with *Majasari* folklore. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner to provide a wider space for data exploration (Barrick 2020). Secondary data is in the form of village archive documents, historical records, existing folklore manuscripts, and scientific literature related to folklore studies, cultural values, and contextual literary learning. Data collection techniques refer to Morse dan Field (1996) which includes interviews, participatory observations, and documentation.

- a. Interviews, used to obtain detailed information about the origins, moral values, and culture in *Majasari* folklore.
- b. Participatory observation was carried out to understand the social and cultural context of the *Majasari* community and the application of folklore in classroom learning.
- c. Documentation, includes photo collection, written archives, and relevant audio-visual recordings.

Data analysis was carried out with a proprietary interactive model Ravindran (2019) which

consists of:

- a. Data reduction, namely the selection process, concentration, and simplification of raw data obtained from the field.
- b. Presentation of data in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or charts that facilitate interpretation.
- c. Drawing conclusions and verifying to find patterns, meanings, and implications of data on research objectives.

The validity of the data was tested through source triangulation techniques and methods (Erzberger dan Prein 1997), by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, and conducting member checks on resource persons to ensure the suitability of the researcher's interpretation with the reality intended by the informant.

This method is able to produce a comprehensive picture of local moral and cultural values in Majasari folklore and provide applicative recommendations for strengthening contextual literacy in Indonesian classes.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Moral Values in Majasari Folklore**

Majasari folklore contains strong moral values, especially in describing the community's attitude towards forced relocation by the colonial government. The sincerity of the residents of Nunuk Village in accepting the transfer without resistance reflects the value of sincerity and social responsibility. In the context of character education, this value is important to form a resilient and adaptive attitude in students. Lickona (1991) stated that strong character is built from values such as responsibility, honesty, and concern for others.

Kuwu Suminta's leadership as the main character in the story shows moral values in the form of visionary leadership and public service. He not only leads administratively, but also builds the education and spirituality of the community. This value is in line with the findings of Tadulako et al. (2025) which emphasize the importance of the figure of leaders in folklore as a character model for students.

In addition, this story contains a message about social justice. The proportional distribution of land to the relocated residents shows respect for individual rights and the principle of equality. This value can be internalized in learning as part of literature-based civic education. Nasution (2024), also found that folklore, such as Timun Mas contains values of justice and responsibility that are relevant to the formation of students' character.

Another moral value is the spirit of mutual cooperation which is reflected in the development of new villages. Residents work together to clear land, build houses, and form new social structures. Gotong royong as a collective moral value has long been recognized as the foundation of Indonesian society and an important part of character education based on local culture Nasution (2024).

Finally, this story teaches the importance of religiosity as a moral foundation. The figure of Hasan Toyib as a religious leader is a figure who moves the community to accept change with a spiritual foundation. This religious value strengthens the moral dimension in the story and can be used as teaching material to shape students' spiritual attitudes contextually (Marhayati 2021).

#### **3.2. Local Cultural Values**

Majasari folklore represents a distinctive and authentic local cultural richness. The use of rough Sundanese as the everyday language of the Majasari people shows the courage to maintain local linguistic identity in the midst of the dominance of the Priangan dialect. Language in folklore is not only a means of communication, but also a symbol of culture and the way of thinking of society (Eugenio, 1982).

The pencak silat tradition mentioned in the story is proof that the physical and spiritual culture of the Majasari people is still alive and passed down through generations. Pencak silat is not only a

martial art, but also a means of character building, discipline, and social solidarity. In the context of education, these traditions can be integrated as part of culture-based learning to reinforce local values (Widiyanto 2022).

The naming of village blocks with Sanskrit terms such as Eka Sari and Panca Sari shows the existence of cultural acculturation between Sundanese localities and the classical heritage of the archipelago. It reflects people's awareness of noble values and the long history of civilization. According to Samsudin et al (2025), the use of cultural symbols in learning can strengthen students' cultural literacy and build a connection between the text and the context.

Majasari folklore also shows an egalitarian and deliberation-based social structure. The formation of new villages is carried out in a collective and participatory spirit, reflecting the value of local democracy that can be used as a model in civic education. This is in line with the findings Bustari, et al (2025) that learning based on the environment and local culture is able to improve social literacy and student participation in community life.

Another cultural value is the sustainability of oral traditions as a medium of knowledge inheritance. Although this story has not been extensively documented, its existence in the collective memory of the community suggests that oral tradition is still a legitimate and meaningful source of knowledge. According to Allergy (2020), narrative structures in folklore have aesthetic and educational functions that can be adapted in literary learning.

### **3.3. Strengthening Contextual Literacy in Indonesian Classroom**

The integration of Majasari folklore in Indonesian language learning, especially in phase E of the Independent Curriculum, has great potential in strengthening students' contextual literacy. Contextual literacy emphasizes the connection between texts and students' life experiences, so that learning becomes more meaningful and relevant (Johnson, 2002).

Majasari folklore has a complete narrative structure and is easy for students to analyze. Elements of the background, plot, characters, point of view, language style, and theme can be used as material for contextual literary studies. Todorov (1977) stated that the narrative structure has five stages, namely initial balance, disruption, conflict, resolution, and recovery, making it easier for students to understand the dynamics of the story and relate it to real life. The sedan thing is also said to be (Alleria 2020).

Local story-based learning also increases student motivation and engagement. The results of the interviews showed that students were more enthusiastic when the teaching material came from their own environment. This is in line with the findings Syahwardi et al. (2023) that the contextual approach is able to significantly increase students' literacy and literary appreciation (Nanda et al. 2021).

The teaching modules developed from Majasari folklore have been tested for readability and received positive responses from teachers and students. The teacher stated that local stories are easier to understand and more effective in instilling character values. Students also show a high interest in stories that reflect their own culture. This supports the theory of experiential learning that emphasizes the importance of real experience in learning (Kolb, 1984).

Finally, the use of Majasari folklore in learning supports the principles of the Pancasila Student Profile, such as noble character, independence, mutual cooperation, and critical reasoning. With a local culture-based approach, students not only learn literature, but also build identity, empathy, and reflective thinking skills. Folklore becomes a bridge between text and context, between the past and the future of character education.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the folklore of the origin of Majasari Village contains significant local moral and cultural values for strengthening contextual literacy in Indonesian learning. Moral values such as sincerity, visionary leadership, social justice, mutual cooperation, and religiosity are reflected

in the narratives of historical figures and events that shape the identity of the Majasari people. Meanwhile, the value of local culture is seen through the use of the rough Sundanese language, the preservation of the pencak silat tradition, the naming of village blocks with Sanskrit terms, and the sustainability of oral traditions as a medium of knowledge inheritance.

The complete and contextual narrative structure of the story makes it a potential teaching material in the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in phase E. The integration of Majasari folklore in literary learning has been proven to increase student engagement, strengthen the understanding of values, and encourage creative expression relevant to their lives. This story not only enriches the teaching material, but also functions as a medium for cultural preservation and character formation of students.

Thus, Majasari folklore deserves to be used as a source of literary learning based on local wisdom that supports the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile. This research emphasizes that the revitalization of folklore through formal education is a strategic step in preserving cultural heritage while building meaningful and transformative literacy.

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