Indonesian and World Folklore from a Critical Literacy Perspective: A Comparative Analysis of Cultural Values and Social Identity

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Folklore plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity and serves as a medium for transmitting moral, ecological, and social values across generations. This article examines Indonesian (Nusantara) and world folklore from a critical literacy perspective, emphasizing how narratives function as cultural texts laden with ideology, representation, and power relations. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study purposively selected ten folklore texts—five from Indonesia and five from global traditions (European, African, Greek, and Norse)—to ensure thematic and cultural comparability. Data analysis followed four stages: narrative structure and symbolism, contextual interpretation, critical interrogation of ideological positioning, and comparative synthesis. Findings reveal that Indonesian folklore highlights ecological wisdom, local spirituality, and communal values, whereas global folklore tends to stress moral order, universal justice, and cosmological struggles. Both traditions, however, converge in their role as instruments of moral education and cultural preservation, though with divergent orientations. Gender representations across cultures show ambivalence, reflecting both marginalization and symbolic empowerment. The study underscores the pedagogical potential of folklore in formal education and advocates for its revitalization through digital media and community participation. Ultimately, folklore is conceptualized as a living, adaptive tradition that negotiates values and identities, sustaining its relevance in contemporary globalized contexts.

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1. Introduction

Folklore plays a vital role in preserving and transmitting cultural identity, functioning as both a repository of collective memory and a medium for conveying values, beliefs, and social norms. Across generations, myths, legends, songs, and rituals have reinforced moral teachings, cultural belonging, and social cohesion. More than entertainment, folklore operates as a pedagogical resource, shaping ethical reasoning and cultural empathy while sustaining communities' historical consciousness.

In Indonesia, a nation of vast cultural diversity, folklore manifests through varied oral traditions such as myths, folk songs, and ceremonial practices. Works like the Riau folk song *Soleram* or Java's traditional mortar music reveal how narratives intertwine with moral education, ecological awareness, and communal identity (Setiawan, 2021; Primamona, 2020). This richness has attracted increasing attention in education and cultural policy. The Indonesian government's literacy movement, for instance, has underscored folklore's role in nation-building, while regional initiatives link folklore with creative economies and tourism (Novianti, 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2023).

Beyond Indonesia, folklore has long served as a mirror of cultural ethos and human values. Cross-cultural traditions such as Greek myths, Norse sagas, European fairy tales, and Middle Eastern folktales illustrate both shared human concerns and distinct cultural worldviews. Scholars highlight folklore's role in shaping leadership norms, sustaining moral wisdom, and preserving intangible heritage (Wong-MingJi et al., 2014; Rijoly, 2022). UNESCO's 2003 Convention further emphasizes its global significance, while recent studies confirm its relevance for fostering empathy and intercultural understanding in contemporary classrooms (Wahyuni & Hussain, 2025).

To analyze these functions, this study adopts a critical literacy perspective. Moving beyond decoding texts, critical literacy interrogates power relations, cultural representation, and ideological constructions embedded in narratives (Luke, 2012). Rooted in Freire's (1970) principle of "reading the word and the world," this framework emphasizes storytelling as a transformative act. Molin et al.'s (2018) four-dimensional model—power, access, diversity, and design/redesign—further guides analysis by linking deconstruction of texts with the creative reimagining of inclusive, equity-oriented narratives. Applied to folklore, this approach illuminates how stories affirm or contest cultural values, amplify or silence voices, and transmit ecological wisdom.

Despite growing interest, several gaps remain in the literature. First, empirical evidence on the measurable impact of folklore-based pedagogy on identity formation, intercultural competence, and literacy remains limited. Second, practical models for curricular integration and teacher training are underdeveloped, constraining scalability. Third, the role of digital platforms in mediating access, quality, and representation of folklore has been insufficiently studied. Finally, inclusion and ecological dimensions—particularly Indigenous voices and eco-folklore—are often marginalized or undertheorized.

Addressing these issues, this study aims to (1) describe the distinctive features of Indonesian (Nusantara) folklore, (2) investigate common characteristics in world

folklore traditions, and (3) identify convergences and divergences in the cultural values they reflect. Grounded in critical literacy, the study contributes by synthesizing evidence on learning outcomes, proposing an implementation-oriented framework for pedagogy, and outlining inclusive approaches that foreground marginalized narratives and ecological knowledge. In doing so, it positions folklore as both a cultural artifact and a dynamic resource for education, intercultural understanding, and sustainable identity formation in contemporary contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept and Scope of Folklore

Folklore, as a rich body of cultural heritage, encompasses oral traditions, customs, beliefs, and symbolic practices that are passed down through generations within a community. It serves not only as a vessel for preserving cultural memory but also as a reflection of how communities interpret their social realities and spiritual values. According to Danandjaja (in Saniro, 2023), folklore includes myths, legends, rituals, songs, and stories that function as important markers of national and ethnic identity. Within the context of the Indonesian archipelago (Nusantara), folklore exemplifies the country's vast cultural diversity and is instrumental in reinforcing local identities and educational values (Idham, 2018).

For the purposes of this study, folklore is operationalized primarily through narrative genres, namely myths, legends, and folktales. Myths are sacred narratives that explain origins, cosmology, or divine-human relations; legends are stories rooted in historical figures, places, or events, often blending fact with imagination; and folktales are fictional narratives that transmit moral lessons, social norms, and communal wisdom. By narrowing the scope to these narrative forms, the study highlights folklore as a linguistic and literary construct that encodes cultural values while remaining open to reinterpretation across contexts.

This operationalization is particularly significant within the framework of critical literacy, which views texts not as neutral carriers of meaning but as socially and ideologically charged discourses. Myths, legends, and folktales often embody power relations, cultural hierarchies, and ideological assumptions, making them suitable objects for critical inquiry. Through critical literacy, folklore can be analyzed to uncover how traditional narratives perpetuate or challenge dominant worldviews, how marginalized voices are represented or silenced, and how readers can position themselves as active interpreters rather than passive recipients of cultural heritage.

For instance, in the folktale of Malin Kundang, the central theme of filial piety reinforces patriarchal family norms, but critical literacy invites questions such as: *Whose voice is prioritized in the story? How are women (like Malin's mother) positioned in relation to male authority?* Similarly, the legend of Sangkuriang, which tells of a son's forbidden love for his mother, can be read as more than just a moral warning; it can be interrogated for how it encodes anxieties about lineage, taboo, and the regulation of sexuality. Meanwhile, the myth of Nyai Roro Kidul, the Queen of the

Southern Sea, can be examined in terms of gender and power: *Does she represent female empowerment as a spiritual ruler, or does her portrayal as dangerous and uncontrollable reflect patriarchal fears of women's autonomy?*

Although this study emphasizes narrative folklore, it acknowledges that such stories are frequently intertwined with rituals, performances, and oral traditions more broadly. For example, artistic expressions such as *ibing penca*, a traditional Sundanese martial dance, illustrate how folklore extends beyond narrative into embodied performance (Azzahra et al., 2023). Nonetheless, by centering myths, legends, and folktales, this research establishes a clearer analytical boundary for examining folklore as discourse, particularly in relation to issues of cultural values, social identity, and ideological critique.

In the face of globalization, folklore confronts both threats and possibilities: while modern influences can erode traditional forms, they also create opportunities for innovation and intercultural exchange. As noted by Ramadhan and Prihatmaji (2023), folklore remains adaptive, maintaining its core functions even as it evolves. The digital era, in particular, has enabled wider dissemination and preservation through digital platforms, increasing accessibility and engagement among younger audiences (Nordin & Lada, 2019).

2.2 Types of Folklore

Folklore comprises a wide variety of genres, including folktales, myths, legends, fables, proverbs, traditional songs, and oral expressions. Each type serves specific cultural purposes and conveys distinct values. Folktales often transmit social norms and historical consciousness; for example, multiple versions of the Nyi Roro Kidul legend across Indonesian regions illustrate how folktales adapt to local contexts while maintaining shared moral messages (Saniro, 2023). Myths typically provide cosmological explanations of natural and supernatural phenomena, often involving ancestral spirits and serving as repositories of collective anxieties and beliefs (Saefudin et al., 2024). Legends, such as the tale of Tangkuban Perahu, combine historical narratives with imaginative elements to instill respect for nature and cultural lineage (Rawanda et al., 2020).

Fables utilize animals with human traits to deliver ethical instruction, as seen in the story of Kancil and the Crocodile, which promotes critical thinking and moral insight (Yetti, 2019). Proverbs and idiomatic expressions, meanwhile, distill cultural wisdom into concise linguistic forms that guide social interactions and ethical conduct. Traditional songs—including ballads, chants, and ceremonial music—play an essential role in expressing collective emotions and spiritual identities. For instance, Balinese music integrates ritualistic functions, aesthetic beauty, and cultural symbolism (Yetti, 2019). These genres are deeply embedded in local ecological consciousness and often embody environmental wisdom, making them valuable tools for sustainable education and cultural continuity (Rawanda et al., 2020).

2.3 Functions and Roles of Folklore in Society

Folklore performs diverse and dynamic roles in society, cutting across educational, cultural, social, and spiritual domains. As an educational tool, oral literature such as tula-tula and kabanti in Wakatobi is employed to teach moral and ecological principles, facilitating intergenerational transmission of knowledge and values (Alifuddin et al., 2022). Folklore also contributes to cultural preservation, with its repetitive performances and ritual enactments helping communities retain their cultural memory and identity (Rawanda et al., 2020). In plural societies, shared folklore becomes a mechanism for identity formation and social cohesion, as demonstrated by the Kadazandusun people's use of folktales for community education and unity (Jumil & Taisin, 2017).

Beyond these, folklore functions as a medium of cultural expression, articulating communal beliefs, cosmology, and emotional life while documenting changes within society (Yetti, 2019). Its presence in everyday life—through rituals, chants, and ceremonies, such as those practiced in Pelalawan—serves to foster spiritual connection and promote social harmony (Arofat & Indrastuti, 2022). Moreover, in the face of cultural homogenization brought by globalization, folklore becomes a form of resistance and a repository of cultural capital. Institutions such as the Adityawarman Museum in West Sumatra exemplify efforts to preserve and promote ethnic identities, such as that of the Minangkabau people (Saputri & Syafrini, 2023).

2.4 Folklore Studies in Global and Local Contexts

From a global perspective, folklore is closely tied to national identity formation and intercultural communication. Stories by Grimm and Andersen, for instance, shaped European moral values while reflecting broader societal consciousness (Althobaiti, 2023). Folklore has also been leveraged in cultural tourism for community empowerment and sustainability (Pantović et al., 2023), and the rise of digital folklore offers new avenues for youth engagement, blending traditional narratives with contemporary media (Diko, 2023).

In Indonesia, folklore remains deeply embedded in community life, spirituality, and environmental ethics. Narratives like Nyi Roro Kidul in Yogyakarta encode local wisdom on disaster preparedness and ecological balance, while oral traditions among Samin communities in Bojonegoro foster cultural resilience and ethical autonomy (Khasanah et al., 2022). Folklore-based pedagogical approaches have also enhanced intercultural and linguistic competence among learners (Farisi et al., 2024).

Across contexts, folklore demonstrates remarkable adaptability. Reinterpreted myths, such as Australia's drop bear legend (Livingston et al., 2017), or storytelling initiatives in Ghana (Asamoah-Poku, 2024), show that narratives remain relevant for identity formation and cultural continuity despite social change.

Synthesizing these insights, folklore can be seen as a dynamic medium that mediates cultural values, social identity, and intercultural understanding. A comparative lens—examining both global and Indonesian examples—allows this study to critically

explore how folklore reflects, negotiates, and transforms societal norms, providing a foundation for analyzing cultural literacy, identity construction, and intercultural communication.

3. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design within a critical literacy framework, which emphasizes the role of texts in shaping, reinforcing, or contesting cultural values and identities (Luke, 2012; Janks, 2014). A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as the aim was not statistical generalization but the exploration of how folklore encodes meanings and transmits moral and ideological positions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The primary data consisted of ten folklore texts purposively selected for their thematic richness and cultural significance. These included five Indonesian items—two myths, two legends, and one folktale from Java, Sumatra, and Kalimantan—and five global items, comprising two Grimm's fairy tales, two Andersen's tales, and one African folktale. This balanced sample ensured comparability across cultural contexts and genres. Secondary data included peer-reviewed articles, published folklore compilations, and digital archives curated by cultural institutions, which were used to contextualize the primary texts within broader sociocultural and educational discourses.

Data collection was carried out by compiling a diverse corpus of folklore texts from credible and authoritative sources, such as national folklore databases, scholarly publications, and cultural repositories. The inclusion criteria focused on the cultural origin of the texts, the type of folklore represented, and the thematic alignment with values such as morality, environmental consciousness, and spirituality. Each selected story was segmented into meaningful narrative units to facilitate systematic and detailed analysis.

Data analysis followed four interconnected stages, each aligned with the research aims: (1) textual analysis of narrative structures, symbolism, and moral lessons, which directly supported Aim 1 by classifying folklore texts to reveal core cultural values; (2) contextual interpretation within cultural and historical settings, advancing Aim 2 by situating the texts within their socio-historical realities to trace how they function in shaping identity; (3) critical interrogation of how texts position readers and negotiate ideologies, furthering Aim 2 by uncovering the ideological underpinnings that guide interpretation and meaning-making; and (4) comparative synthesis across Indonesian and global traditions, fulfilling Aim 3 by mapping similarities and differences that highlight the shared and divergent trajectories of cultural identity formation. This multi-layered procedure facilitated a critical understanding of folklore as both a repository of communal heritage and a medium of ideological negotiation.

The findings were presented through descriptive narratives, enriched with comparative tables, coded thematic summaries, and illustrative excerpts from the texts under study. Each folklore item was examined in terms of its storyline, symbolic meaning, and broader sociocultural function. By doing so, the study aimed to reveal

both the distinctive features of localized traditions and the universal values that transcend cultural boundaries. In conclusion, this methodological approach offered a holistic perspective on folklore as a dynamic and meaningful cultural artifact that contributes to the shaping, transmission, and negotiation of identity and values across generations and societies.

4. Research Results

4.1 Distinctive Features of Indonesian Folklore

The distinctive features of Indonesian folklore—moral education, ecological wisdom, and spiritual authority—reflect its role as a living tradition that both preserves and adapts cultural identity. Critical literacy highlights how these stories reinforce power hierarchies (e.g., filial piety and patriarchy) while also offering sites of resistance, particularly in the valorization of ecological knowledge and community resilience. Compared to existing literature (e.g., Setiawan, 2021; Hilmi et al., 2024), these findings confirm that Indonesian folklore remains pedagogically potent, serving as both cultural memory and ideological negotiation.

4.2 Characteristics of Global Folklore

The analysis of global folklore traditions underscores their emphasis on moral order, cosmology, and communal values. Critical literacy allows us to see how these stories encode dominant ideologies—Christian ethics in European tales, cosmological determinism in Norse and Greek myths, and communal solidarity in African folktales. These findings extend prior scholarship (e.g., Althobaiti, 2023; Wong-MingJi et al., 2014) by situating folklore not only as cultural heritage but as discourse that positions readers within specific moral and ideological frameworks.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of Indonesian and Global Folklore

The comparative synthesis highlights both the universality and specificity of folklore traditions (Table 1). Universally, folklore encodes moral education and cultural identity formation; specifically, Indonesian folklore foregrounds ecology and local spirituality, while global traditions often emphasize abstract moral order and cosmological struggles. Critical literacy frames this divergence as evidence of how different societies negotiate identity, power, and morality through narrative. This confirms Rijoly's (2022) claim that folklore encapsulates both moral wisdom and social critique, but it also demonstrates how ecological and gendered dimensions provide unique insights into Indonesian contexts.

Table 1. Comparative Themes in Indonesian and Global Folklore

Theme	Region/ Tradition	Supporting Studies	Key Findings	Implications
Moral Education & Identity	Indonesian & Global	Wedawati, et al. (2023)	Both Indonesian and global folklore transmit moral values and reinforce cultural identity; however, moral emphasis differs in scope and content.	Folklore can be mobilized as a pedagogical tool, but with attention to cultural contexts of morality.
Ecological Wisdom	Indonesian (Banyumas, Sentani, Maluku, Kalimantan)	Sultoni, et al. (2022); Yulisetiani & Sutrisno (2022).	Narratives encode ecological taboos (e.g., sacred forests, water sources) and local cosmologies that regulate human–nature relations.	Folklore can inform culturally rooted environmental education and conservation strategies.
Moral Order & Justice	European (Grimm, Andersen, Celtic traditions)	Wedawati, et al (2023)	Stories emphasize binary morality (virtue rewarded, evil punished), reinforcing hierarchical order and universal justice.	European folklore supports moral formation in childhood but may neglect ecological/local concerns.
Gender Representation	Indonesian & Global	Wulandari, et al (2025); Rhubido, et al. (2024)	Women depicted as both powerful (guardians, prophets) and marginalized (victims, sacrifices); men dominate as agents of change.	Reveals persistence of patriarchal norms but also potential sites of symbolic resistance.
Gender Bias in Narrative Structure	Comparison of Cinderella (Europe) and Bawang Merah Bawang Putih (Indonesia)	Setiawan, et al (2022)	Female characters in both traditions are depicted as passive, able to change their fate only through miracles or male assistance.	Demonstrates similarities in structural gender bias in folklore from two different cultures.

5. Discussion

5.1 Distinctive Features of Indonesian Folklore

Indonesian folklore operates simultaneously as moral pedagogy, environmental knowledge, and identity work. Tales such as *Malin Kundang* are consistently used as character-education scaffolds in Indonesian classrooms: recent studies show the story's

salience for teaching filial piety, humility, and social responsibility, and even map its narrative functions for curricular design and cross-regional comparison. Newer classroom-based work (2024) documents explicit integration of *Malin Kundang* into narrative-text learning and community character-building programs, confirming its continued use to regulate social norms and intergenerational ethics. Comparative analyses likewise situate *Malin Kundang* within a broader Asian tradition of filial narratives, underscoring shared moral cores with culturally specific delivery (Naufalia, 2020; Ocsis, et. al., 2024; Ferdinal & Octavianus, 2024; Sholikhah, et al., 2024).

Myths along Java's south coast, especially *Nyai Roro Kidul*, encode ecological wisdom and tacit "risk scripts." Recent geomythological readings (2025) argue that sea-queen motifs align with hazard memory (rogue waves, tsunamis), offering place-based cues for coastal risk awareness; ethnographic work on Javanese folklore more broadly identifies embedded mitigation messages across well-known tales. These insights resonate with Indonesia's best-documented DRR folklore case: *smong* on Simeulue Island, where lullabies and oral narratives taught "run after long shaking and receding sea" generations before 2004—an approach now cited internationally as transformative DRR practice. Together, these studies show how mythic personae and oral forms transmit environmental heuristics as lived pedagogy (Kamil, et al., 2021; Indriana, et al. 2021; Arwansyah, et al. 2025).

Legends also intertwine historical consciousness with cultural identity, reflecting the archipelago's plural sociocultural ecology. West Java's *Sangkuriang/Tangkuban Parahu* complex is read as a site-making legend that encodes customary-law values and mythic etiologies tied to landscape features; comparative work positions *Sangkuriang* alongside the Oedipus cycle to highlight how Sundanese materials negotiate taboo, kinship, and authority through locally intelligible frames. Beyond single tales, textbook analyses show "legend" as the dominant folklore genre in Indonesian EFL materials, indicating institutional recognition of legendry as a vehicle for cultural identity formation in schooling. Contemporary literature studies further track how classical myths are transformed in modern Indonesian novels, signaling ongoing renegotiation of identity symbols across media (Nurgiyantoro, et al., 2024; Anggraini, et al., 2022; Mutmainnah, 2021; Sudrajat, et al., 2024).

5.2 Characteristics of Global Folklore

Global folklore traditions share certain structural and functional features, but each cluster also brings distinctive emphases shaped by history, religion, social organization, and local concerns. Below expands the original paragraph by giving clear examples, summarizing recent scholarship, and linking each claim to up-to-date studies.

a. European fairy tales (Grimm brothers)

Classic Grimm tales repeatedly stage clear moral binaries and often resolve transgressions through punishment or restitution; scholars have long argued that these narratives encode proto-legal and moral prototypes—teaching social norms by

dramatizing crime and retribution and modelling desirable behaviours for children and communities. Contemporary analyses connect those narrative outcomes to socialization and to historical practices of moral pedagogy in European folk culture (Roberts, 2001).

b. Hans Christian Andersen

Andersen's stories (e.g., "The Little Mermaid," "The Ugly Duckling") tend to emphasize individual psychological development, moral lessons mediated through personal sacrifice or awakening, and ambiguous, often melancholic endings that invite reflective readers to weigh ethical complexity rather than offering a simple legalistic solution. Recent literary studies treat Andersen's tales as miniature Bildungsromane that foreground subjectivity and moral Bildung across life stages (Torres, 2021).

c. African folktales

A growing body of work highlights how African folktales operate as community-centered pedagogic tools: stories propagate collective norms, problem-solving strategies, and models of social cooperation; they are also mobilized today in education, resilience-building, and culturally responsive curricula. Recent empirical research shows folktales being used in classroom and community settings to transmit survival strategies, environmental knowledge, and socio-emotional coping mechanisms—functions that make them powerful instruments of resilience in contexts of social or ecological stress (Wiysahnyuy & Valentine, 2023).

d. Norse and Greek myths

Myths from the Norse and Greek corpora function at a larger cosmological scale: they place human experience within cycles of creation, conflict, and destruction; they stage fraught interactions between gods and mortals; and they explore existential themes—fate, hubris, mortality—that help societies negotiate uncertainty and mortality. Recent syntheses in myth studies emphasize how these narratives encode worldviews (cosmology, materiality, ritual meaning) and continue to inform identity and cultural memory (Collamar, 2023).

e. Shared functions across traditions

Across these geographically diverse traditions, folklore serves as a living archive of collective anxieties (war, scarcity, social change), a toolkit for moral education (teaching norms through exempla and negative exempla), and a mechanism for cultural continuity (transmitting symbols, rites, and communal values across generations). Contemporary folklore scholarship frames these roles dynamically—folklore is not a static relic but an adaptive cultural roadmap that both preserves and negotiates cultural meanings in the face of globalization, pedagogy, and political change (Bastet & Houlbrook, 2023).

5.3 Comparative Analysis

A comparative perspective shows both shared and divergent elements between Indonesian and global folklore. Across cultures, folklore functions as a medium for moral education and cultural identity reinforcement, transmitting ethical norms, role models, and collective memory to shape social consciousness. Recent comparative studies highlight that this pedagogical function is cross-cultural, though the ways in which values are framed and prioritized differ across contexts (Silalahi, et al., 2021).

One of the most consistent distinctions lies in thematic orientation. Indonesian folklore is deeply intertwined with ecological wisdom and local spiritual practices, often embedding rules of environmental stewardship within myth and narrative. Ethnographic and ecocritical studies of regional traditions (e.g., Banyumas, Sentani) document how stories encode taboos on tree-cutting, protection of sacred sites, and respect for water sources, effectively functioning as community-based systems of ecological governance. Such findings suggest that Indonesian folklore serves not only as abstract moral discourse but also as a socio-cultural technology for sustaining human–nature relations (Sultoni, et al., 2023; Yektiningtyas & Dewi, 2023).

By contrast, European folklore—particularly as transmitted through Grimm and Andersen—tends to emphasize hierarchical moral order and the restoration of universal justice. Narrative structures frequently foreground binary moral positions, where wrongdoing is punished and virtuous behavior rewarded, reinforcing compliance with social norms. Comparative literary analyses confirm that these stories became central to moral education in European childhood, reflecting a more universalizing rather than ecological orientation (Althobaiti, 2023).

Representations of gender reveal further cross-cultural ambivalence. Female figures often occupy paradoxical positions: endowed with symbolic power (as guardians, prophets, or sacrificial figures) yet simultaneously marginalized within patriarchal narrative structures. Recent Indonesian folklore studies (e.g., Kalimantan narratives) show that male protagonists typically dominate as agents of change, while female characters are more often confined to domestic or victim roles, or their power is framed through sacrifice. This pattern resonates with global research that documents folklore as a site where traditional gender hierarchies are both reproduced and, at times, subtly resisted through depictions of female defiance or cultural authority (Wulandari, et al., 2025).

These divergences have important implications. In Indonesia, integrating folklore into environmental education or community-based conservation programs offers a culturally resonant way to promote ecological sustainability, as traditional narratives already embed rules of resource management. Conversely, in European contexts where folklore emphasizes universal justice, its use in education requires attention to the cultural specificity of moral frames and potential neglect of ecological or local concerns. Scholars further suggest that digital folklore platforms now mediate these functions globally, reshaping how traditional narratives are interpreted in contemporary settings (Ginting, et al., 2025; Silalahi, et al., 2021).

6. Conclusion

Folklore, both within the Indonesian archipelago and globally, constitutes a vital component of the socio-cultural fabric of societies. The findings of this study affirm that folklore serves not merely as a form of entertainment, but also as a pedagogical instrument, a vehicle for cultural preservation, a medium for the construction of social identity, and a conduit for the transmission of moral values. In particular, Nusantara folklore encapsulates the cultural richness of Indonesia through its legends, myths, fairy tales, and folktales—each genre distinguished by unique characteristics that reflect local values such as environmental wisdom, social cohesion, ethical conduct, and reverence for tradition. Conversely, global folklore presents a broader cultural spectrum with universal themes including the dichotomy of good and evil, the pursuit of self-identity, and philosophical reflections on human existence.

The distinctive traits of Nusantara folklore—its close affiliation with nature, the centrality of familial and communal values, and its transmission through traditional performing arts—underscore its divergence from global folklore, which frequently emphasizes heroic conflicts and individualistic ideologies. Nonetheless, both traditions converge in their shared commitment to moral instruction and the safeguarding of cultural heritage.

In the context of globalization and modernization, folklore faces considerable challenges, such as declining interest among younger generations and a lack of societal awareness regarding its cultural significance. Nevertheless, the adoption of digital technologies and the incorporation of folklore into formal education curricula have opened new pathways for its revitalization and sustainability, both locally and globally.

Given its pedagogical potential, folklore should be strategically integrated into formal education as a means of cultivating students' character while fostering an appreciation of cultural and moral values. A systematic incorporation of folklore into curricula across all levels of education is imperative to nurture students' understanding of cultural identity and national consciousness. In response to the digital era, innovative approaches to folklore instruction must be adopted, leveraging digital media such as interactive storytelling applications, digital comics, and social networking platforms, thereby aligning pedagogical methods with the media preferences of contemporary youth.

Efforts toward folklore preservation should also include the routine organization of cultural festivals and public events that celebrate the diversity of both Nusantara and global folklore. Such initiatives not only enhance public appreciation for traditional culture but also encourage cross-cultural dialogue and enrich communal experiences.

The sustainable preservation of folklore necessitates active and collaborative engagement among local communities, academics, government bodies, and the private sector. A community-based, synergistic approach ensures the continued relevance and vitality of folklore amid rapidly evolving societal contexts.

Further research into the impact of modernization on folklore is essential for

developing inclusive and participatory strategies for its preservation. An in-depth understanding of these challenges will enable the effective evolution of folklore traditions, ensuring their continued relevance as an integral component of contemporary cultural identity and their dynamic transmission to future generations.

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution
Author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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