

Etnopedagogy of BEKANA as an Informal Education Method for Preschool Children in the Dayak Kebahan Community of Sintang**Yuliono Evendi^{1*}, Ridwan Tonny Hasiholan Pane¹, Welikinsi ², Karnodin ¹, Yeremia³, Agustina Ace Wagena¹**¹ Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Khatulistiwa Sintang, Indonesia² Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Immanuel Sintang, Indonesia³ Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kadesi Yogyakarta, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:** ✉ yulionoevendi@sttkhatulistiwa.ac.id***ABSTRACT**

This study explores BEKANA, a traditional storytelling practice in the Dayak Kebahan community of Sintang, as an ethnopedagogical method of informal education for preschool children. BEKANA is not merely a teaching technique but also a medium of communication that fosters closeness between parents and children while transmitting cultural values. In the current era of rapid scientific and technological advancement, children increasingly consume stories through digital platforms such as mobile phones and YouTube, which often lack cultural depth and parental involvement. This research aims to analyze the role of BEKANA in preserving local wisdom and strengthening parent-child bonds within informal education settings. Using a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving parents, community elders, and preschool children. The findings reveal that BEKANA serves as a vital tool for cultural transmission, character building, and emotional connection between generations. It provides children with moral lessons, linguistic enrichment, and cultural identity rooted in Dayak Kebahan traditions. The study concludes that revitalizing BEKANA in informal education can counterbalance the dominance of digital storytelling, ensuring that children not only learn but also inherit the cultural heritage of their community.

Keywords: BEKANA, Ethnopedagogy, Informal Education, Preschool Children, Dayak Kebahan, Local Wisdom

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is not only about cognitive development but also about transmitting cultural values and strengthening social bonds between children and their families. In many indigenous communities, storytelling has long served as a pedagogical tool that integrates moral lessons, cultural identity, and emotional connection (Fleer, 2018; Rogoff, 2019). Within the Dayak Kebahan community of Sintang, the practice of BEKANA—traditional storytelling in the local language—functions both as an informal teaching method and as a medium of communication between parents and children. Unlike digital storytelling platforms such as YouTube or mobile applications, BEKANA emphasizes interpersonal closeness, cultural transmission, and the preservation of local wisdom (Anggita, Endraswara, & Rohman, 2024; Cahyaningtyas, Sukardi, Purwati, & Ismiyanti, 2026).

However, since the early 2000s, the tradition of BEKANA—once commonly practiced by grandparents and parents with their grandchildren and children—has significantly declined. This

decline is largely due to the advancement of science and technology, which has shifted children's storytelling experiences toward television, mobile phones, and digital platforms. This phenomenon reflects a global trend in which oral traditions are increasingly marginalized by modernization and globalization, weakening intergenerational cultural transmission (Saad, Wediyantoro, Nabella, & Zolkifli, 2024; Yuliono & Wagena, 2026; Wediyantoro, 2024; Kim, 2020; Miller, 2021). Without revitalization, BEKANA risks fading into obscurity, replaced by homogenized narratives from modern media (Nabella, 2024; Walsh, 2018).

Recent scholarship highlights the importance of integrating local wisdom into early childhood education as a response to cultural erosion in the era of globalization. Embedding indigenous knowledge into preschool curricula strengthens children's cultural identity and mitigates the homogenizing effects of modern media (Suryaningsih, Poerwati, & Cahaya, 2025; Cahaya, 2025; McCarty & Lee, 2017; Kral, 2018). Similarly, ethnopedagogical approaches revitalizing local wisdom in preschools contribute to character education and cultural sustainability (Anggita et al., 2024; Prabowo, Ratulina, Pongsibidang, & Rukmana, 2025; Battiste, 2019; Smith, 2020). These findings resonate with the Dayak Kebahan context, where BEKANA storytelling embodies both pedagogical and cultural functions (Ilinawati, 2025; Greenwood, 2019).

The role of ethnopedagogy in education has been further explored through systematic reviews. Indigenous learning practices enrich educational outcomes and promote social justice when applied in elementary schools, underscoring the relevance of ethnopedagogy for culturally diverse societies (Syafiulia, Wasita Aji, & Salsabiltisa, 2025; Brayboy, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2017). In parallel, interactive storytelling grounded in ethnolinguistics enhances cultural literacy and linguistic diversity among children (Cahyaningtyas et al., 2026; Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2023; Cummins, 2019). These studies collectively affirm that storytelling rooted in local traditions remains a powerful educational tool in the digital age.

Beyond pedagogy, BEKANA also strengthens parent-child communication. Effective communication patterns between parents and children foster empathy, honesty, and emotional consistency in early childhood development (Hidayah, Lestari, & Artha, 2021; Brophy-Herb et al., 2018). Parent-child communication is also a critical determinant of psychosocial outcomes, including resilience and moral reasoning (Zapf, Boettcher, Haukeland, et al., 2022; Masten, 2018). These insights support the argument that BEKANA storytelling is not only a cultural practice but also a relational one, reinforcing bonds between generations.

In the context of rapid technological advancement, children increasingly consume stories through digital platforms, which often lack cultural depth and parental involvement. Indigenous folktales risk fading into obscurity unless actively preserved and transmitted through traditional and innovative means (Saad et al., 2024; Nabella, 2024; Walsh, 2018; Kim, 2020). Thus, revitalizing BEKANA in informal education is both a cultural necessity and an educational innovation.

This research aims to analyze BEKANA as an ethnopedagogical method of informal education for preschool children in Sintang, focusing on its dual role as a teaching strategy and a medium of parent-child communication. By situating BEKANA within the broader discourse on local wisdom, ethnopedagogy, and cultural preservation, this study contributes to the scholarship on indigenous education practices and offers practical insights for sustaining cultural identity in early childhood education.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative ethnographic approach to investigate BEKANA as an ethnopedagogical method of informal education for preschool children in the Dayak Kebahan community of Sintang. Ethnography was chosen because it enables researchers to capture cultural practices, meanings, and lived experiences in their natural context (Lichtman, 2017; Bhattacharya, 2017). The qualitative paradigm emphasizes depth of understanding rather than generalization, making it suitable for exploring indigenous educational practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2020).

Participants.

Eight cultural custodians were selected through purposive sampling, a technique widely recommended in qualitative research to ensure that informants possess rich knowledge of the phenomenon under study (Mosera & Korstjens, 2018; Ames, Glenton, & Lewin, 2019). The participants included Bapak Bondau (69, Desa Nanga Masau), Bapak Talan (66, Desa Tanah Merah), Bapak Pelai (62, Desa Lintang Tambuk), Bapak Atot (59, Desa Nanga Topan), Bapak Odong (64, Desa Kupan Jaya), Bapak Tereman (69, Desa Entogong), Ibu Sefira (57, Desa Kebarau), and Ibu Nyanggai (60, Desa Tanjung Bunga). They were chosen because of their recognized expertise in BEKANA storytelling and their active role in transmitting cultural knowledge.

Data Collection

Fieldwork was conducted between January and March 2026 in Sintang Regency. Data were gathered through:

In-depth interviews with the eight participants, each lasting 60–90 minutes, conducted in their homes to ensure comfort and authenticity. Interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing flexibility while maintaining focus on BEKANA's pedagogical and communicative functions (Patten & Newhart, 2017; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018).

Participant observation during storytelling sessions, documenting interactions between storytellers, children, and parents. Observation notes emphasized pedagogical strategies, emotional dynamics, and cultural values embedded in BEKANA (Shah, 2017; Mannik & McGarry, 2017).

Document analysis of local folklore manuscripts and cultural archives to triangulate oral accounts with written records (Angrosino, 2017; Flick, 2018).

All interviews were audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and translated into Indonesian and English. Field notes were systematically compiled to capture contextual details.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns related to BEKANA's role in informal education, cultural transmission, and parent-child communication. Coding was conducted manually, following Braun and Clarke's (2019, 2021) six-phase framework for thematic analysis. Triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing interview data, observational notes, and documentation, ensuring validity and reliability (Chako, 2017; Sugiyono, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from local cultural and educational authorities. Participants provided informed consent, and pseudonyms were used in reporting to protect privacy, although participants agreed to have their real names acknowledged as cultural custodians (Silverman, 2017; Leavy, 2017).

This methodological design ensures replicability and provides a robust framework for analyzing BEKANA as both a pedagogical method and a medium of parent-child communication, situating the research within established qualitative traditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis of interviews with eight cultural custodians revealed three dominant themes: (1) decline of BEKANA practice, (2) perceived pedagogical and relational importance of BEKANA, and (3) urgency of cultural preservation.

Decline of BEKANA Practice

All participants consistently reported that BEKANA storytelling is no longer actively practiced by parents. Instead, children are directed to consume stories through digital platforms such as YouTube, television, and mobile phones. For example, Bondau (69, Desa Nanga Masau) explained that "parents now rarely tell BEKANA; children are asked to watch cartoons instead." Similarly, Nyanggai (60, Desa Tanjung Bunga) emphasized that "children today do not even know what BEKANA is, because parents themselves have stopped practicing it."

This decline reflects global trends where oral traditions are marginalized by modernization and digitalization (Saad, Wediyantoro, Nabella, & Zolkifli, 2024; Wediyantoro, 2024). Scholars argue that technological advancement has accelerated the decline of indigenous

storytelling traditions, weakening intergenerational cultural transmission (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2023; Cahaya, 2025; Fleer, 2018; Rogoff, 2019; Kim, 2020; Miller, 2021; Walsh, 2018). The findings highlight the urgent need to address the impact of globalization on local wisdom (Nabella, 2024; Yuliono & Wagena, 2026; McCarty & Lee, 2017; Kral, 2018).

Pedagogical Importance of BEKANA

Despite its decline, participants strongly emphasized BEKANA's pedagogical role in teaching values and shaping children's character. Talan (66, Desa Tanah Merah) noted that through BEKANA, children learn respect and feel emotionally close to their parents. Pelai (62, Desa Lintang Tambuk) added that BEKANA builds honesty and empathy, which are essential components of moral education. This finding aligns with research showing that indigenous storytelling fosters character education and moral development in early childhood (Anggita, Endraswara, & Rohman, 2024; Hidayah, Lestari, & Artha, 2021; Battiste, 2019; Smith, 2020; Greenwood, 2019).

Furthermore, ethnopedagogical approaches have been proven to strengthen children's cultural identity and mitigate the homogenizing effects of modern media (Suryaningsih, Poerwati, & Cahaya, 2025; Prabowo, Ratulina, Pongsibidang, & Rukmana, 2025; Paris & Alim, 2017; Cummins, 2019). In this regard, BEKANA functions not only as entertainment but as a structured pedagogical method rooted in cultural heritage. Its emphasis on interpersonal communication and moral instruction situates it within broader frameworks of indigenous pedagogy, where storytelling is both a cultural transmission tool and a relational practice.

In addition, BEKANA's pedagogical importance is evident in its ability to integrate moral lessons with emotional bonding. Unlike modern media, which often isolates children from parental guidance, BEKANA requires active participation from parents, thereby reinforcing intergenerational ties. This relational dimension resonates with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which highlights the family as a primary context for child development. By embedding moral values within family interactions, BEKANA ensures that education is not only cognitive but also affective and relational.

Moreover, the role of BEKANA in shaping children's empathy and honesty reflects Lickona's framework of moral pedagogy, which emphasizes respect, responsibility, and care as foundational virtues. The narratives within BEKANA often present moral dilemmas and resolutions, allowing children to internalize values through symbolic learning. This aligns with findings by Rohman (2024) and Brayboy (2020), who argue that indigenous storytelling serves as a structured pedagogical system rather than informal entertainment. Thus, BEKANA exemplifies how oral traditions can function as intentional educational practices.

Finally, the pedagogical significance of BEKANA also lies in its potential adaptability to contemporary contexts. As Ilinawati (2025) suggests, oral traditions can be revitalized through hybrid models that combine traditional storytelling with digital platforms. While BEKANA currently suffers from digital disruption, its integration into preschool curricula and community-based education could transform it into a modern pedagogical innovation. This dual role—preserving cultural heritage while fostering character education—positions BEKANA as a cornerstone of ethnopedagogy in Sintang and a model for sustaining indigenous wisdom in the face of globalization.

Relational Importance of BEKANA

The relational importance of BEKANA was consistently emphasized by participants, who described storytelling sessions as moments of intimacy that foster empathy, trust, and emotional consistency between parents and children. These sessions were not merely recreational but functioned as structured opportunities for moral dialogue and emotional bonding. Talan and Pelai, for instance, highlighted that BEKANA cultivates respect, honesty, and empathy, thereby reinforcing the relational dimension of family life. Such findings resonate with Zapf, Boettcher, Haukeland, et al. (2022), Hidayah et al. (2021), Brophy-Herb et al. (2018), and Masten (2018), who demonstrate that storytelling enhances psychosocial resilience and moral reasoning in early childhood.

International scholarship further confirms that indigenous storytelling traditions contribute to emotional literacy and relational stability across diverse cultural contexts.

Cahyaningtyas, Sukardi, Purwati, and Ismiyanti (2026) found that oral traditions in Java strengthen intergenerational ties, while Simons (2023) and Eberhard et al. (2023) emphasized the role of storytelling in fostering empathy and relational trust. Fler (2018) similarly argued that narrative practices create shared cultural spaces where children learn to regulate emotions and develop relational stability. These insights underscore BEKANA's dual role as both pedagogy and relational practice, making its decline particularly concerning for community well-being (Purwati, 2026; Endraswara, 2024; Rogoff, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, BEKANA's relational function aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which situates the family microsystem as the most immediate and influential environment for child development. Storytelling sessions within BEKANA provide a relational context where values are transmitted through direct interaction, thereby reinforcing emotional security and trust. Unlike digital media, which often isolates children from parental guidance, BEKANA requires active parental participation, ensuring that moral education is embedded within emotionally supportive family relationships.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also provides a useful lens for understanding BEKANA's relational importance. Storytelling creates a dialogical space where children internalize cultural values through guided interaction with parents. This process fosters not only cognitive development but also emotional regulation, as children learn empathy and moral reasoning within the relational framework of family communication. BEKANA thus exemplifies how indigenous pedagogy integrates social interaction, cultural transmission, and emotional development into a unified educational practice.

The decline of BEKANA, however, represents a relational gap in family life. When parents replace storytelling with passive digital consumption, opportunities for emotional bonding and moral dialogue diminish. This erosion of relational practices has broader implications for community resilience, as intergenerational communication is a cornerstone of cultural continuity. The weakening of BEKANA therefore threatens not only cultural preservation but also the psychosocial stability of families, highlighting the urgency of revitalization efforts.

The relational importance of BEKANA suggests practical strategies for sustaining its role in modern contexts. Integrating BEKANA into preschool curricula and community-based programs could re-establish storytelling as a structured relational practice. Involving elders in storytelling sessions would further strengthen intergenerational ties, while hybrid models that combine traditional narratives with digital platforms could make BEKANA more appealing to younger audiences. Such initiatives would not only preserve cultural heritage but also reinforce family communication, empathy, and resilience, ensuring that BEKANA continues to serve as a cornerstone of relational pedagogy in the Dayak Kebahan community.

Urgency of Cultural Preservation

The urgency of preserving BEKANA was a recurring theme across interviews, as participants consistently argued that BEKANA is not only a teaching method but also a cultural heritage that must be sustained for future generations. This perspective reflects a broader recognition that oral traditions serve as repositories of collective identity and moral values, and their decline represents both cultural and educational loss. The voices of the custodians highlight that without deliberate revitalization, BEKANA risks disappearing from everyday family life, leaving children disconnected from their ancestral wisdom.

This concern aligns with ethnopedagogical scholarship stressing that revitalizing local wisdom is essential for cultural sustainability (Syafiulia, Wasita Aji, & Salsabiltisa, 2025; Anggita et al., 2024; Battiste, 2019; Greenwood, 2019). These studies emphasize that oral traditions are not merely symbolic but function as pedagogical systems that transmit values, ethics, and cultural identity. The decline of BEKANA therefore represents a disruption in the continuity of cultural knowledge, underscoring the need for urgent intervention to safeguard its pedagogical and cultural functions.

Without such efforts, indigenous folktales risk fading into obscurity, replaced by homogenized narratives from modern media (Saad et al., 2024; Nabella, 2024; Walsh, 2018; Kim, 2020). The dominance of digital platforms has accelerated the marginalization of oral traditions,

creating a generational gap in cultural literacy. Unlike traditional storytelling, which fosters dialogue and relational intimacy, digital narratives often lack contextual depth and cultural specificity. This contrast highlights the vulnerability of BEKANA in the face of globalization and technological disruption.

Scholars emphasize that embedding indigenous knowledge into preschool curricula strengthens cultural identity and promotes social justice (Cahaya, 2025; Prabowo et al., 2025; McCarty & Lee, 2017; Paris & Alim, 2017). Integrating BEKANA into formal and informal education would ensure that children are exposed to local wisdom alongside modern content, thereby balancing cultural preservation with contemporary learning needs. Such integration would also contribute to equity in education by validating indigenous knowledge systems as legitimate sources of pedagogy.

The findings of this study suggest that BEKANA preservation is both a cultural necessity and an educational innovation (Yuliono & Wagena, 2026; Ilinawati, 2025; Smith, 2020). Preserving BEKANA not only safeguards cultural heritage but also enriches educational practices by embedding moral and relational values into early childhood learning. This dual significance positions BEKANA as a cornerstone of ethnopedagogy, offering a model for how indigenous traditions can be revitalized to remain relevant in modern contexts.

Finally, the urgency of cultural preservation calls for collaborative strategies involving families, schools, and local governments. Revitalization programs should include training for teachers, community-based storytelling initiatives, and the use of hybrid models that combine traditional narratives with digital platforms. Such efforts would not only sustain BEKANA as a cultural practice but also reinforce its pedagogical and relational functions, ensuring that future generations inherit both the knowledge and the values of the Dayak Kebahan community.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The thematic analysis demonstrates that BEKANA storytelling embodies pedagogical, relational, and cultural functions, making its decline a critical issue for the Dayak Kebahan community. Revitalization efforts should integrate BEKANA into informal and formal education, ensuring children are exposed to local wisdom alongside digital content. This integration would not only preserve cultural heritage but also strengthen character education and family communication, positioning BEKANA as a vital component of holistic child development.

International studies highlight that indigenous storytelling enriches educational outcomes and promotes cultural diversity (Cahyaningtyas et al., 2026; Eberhard et al., 2023; Fleer, 2018; Rogoff, 2019). These findings underscore the importance of embedding oral traditions into educational frameworks to foster empathy, resilience, and cultural literacy. Policymakers and educators must therefore design interventions that combine traditional storytelling with modern pedagogical approaches (Rohman, 2024; Endraswara, 2024; Battiste, 2019; Greenwood, 2019). Such interventions would ensure that indigenous knowledge systems are not marginalized but instead recognized as legitimate sources of pedagogy.

From a policy perspective, the preservation of BEKANA requires collaborative efforts between families, schools, and local governments. Local authorities should develop cultural revitalization programs that involve community elders, teachers, and parents in storytelling initiatives. Embedding BEKANA into preschool curricula would provide children with early exposure to cultural narratives, while community-based programs could reinforce intergenerational ties. These strategies align with broader educational reforms that emphasize inclusivity and cultural responsiveness.

Practically, revitalization efforts should also consider the role of digital media. While technology has contributed to the decline of BEKANA, it can also be harnessed as a tool for preservation. Hybrid storytelling models that combine traditional narratives with digital platforms could make BEKANA more appealing to younger generations, ensuring its relevance in contemporary contexts. This approach resonates with Nadilla et al. (2024), who demonstrated that digital storytelling can enhance cultural literacy when appropriately contextualized. Thus, rather than viewing technology as a threat, policymakers and educators should explore its potential as a medium for cultural transmission.

The implications of this study extend to broader discussions on cultural sustainability and social justice. Preserving BEKANA is not only about safeguarding a local tradition but also about promoting equity in education by validating indigenous knowledge systems. As McCarty and Lee (2017) and Paris & Alim (2017) argue, culturally responsive pedagogy ensures that marginalized communities see their heritage reflected in educational practices. By revitalizing BEKANA, policymakers can contribute to both cultural preservation and educational innovation, ensuring that the Dayak Kebahan community maintains its identity while actively participating in global educational discourse.

Table 1. Summary of Participant Responses on BEKANA

Participant	Village	Age	Current Practice of BEKANA	Perceived Importance of BEKANA
Bondau	Nanga Masau	69	No longer practiced; replaced by TV and YouTube	Builds closeness; teaches cultural values
Nyanggai	Tanjung Bunga	60	Children unaware of BEKANA; parents stopped storytelling	Must be preserved as tradition; strengthens cultural identity
Talan	Nanga Masau	66	Rarely practiced; replaced by digital media	Pedagogical tool; teaches respect and family closeness
Pelai	Lintang Tambuk	62	Declining practice among families	Builds character; teaches honesty and empathy
Atot	Nanga Topan	59	Not practiced in daily family life	Strengthens parent-child communication; fosters emotional connection
Odong	Kupan Jaya	64	Replaced by digital storytelling platforms	Preserves cultural identity; promotes moral education
Tereman	Entogong	69	Not practiced; oral tradition fading due to globalization	Promotes togetherness; maintains cultural heritage
Sefira	Kebarau	57	Declining practice; children prefer digital stories	Teaching values; family unity; must be sustained for future generations

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the decline of BEKANA storytelling in the Dayak Kebahan community, while also underscoring its pedagogical, relational, and cultural importance. The discussion situates these findings within broader scholarship on indigenous education, ethnopedagogy, and cultural preservation.

Decline of BEKANA Practice

The decline of BEKANA reflects global patterns where oral traditions are marginalized by modernization and digitalization. Participants' accounts resonate with studies documenting the erosion of indigenous storytelling due to digital media dominance (Fleer, 2018; Rogoff, 2019; Kim, 2020; Miller, 2021; Walsh, 2018; McCarty & Lee, 2017; Kral, 2018). Parents increasingly replace storytelling with digital entertainment, leading to reduced intergenerational communication and weakening of cultural transmission.

Scholars argue that technological convenience often comes at the cost of cultural depth and interpersonal closeness (Battiste, 2019; Smith, 2020; Greenwood, 2019). Unlike oral traditions that require active participation and relational engagement, digital narratives tend to isolate

children from parental guidance. This shift undermines the pedagogical and relational functions of storytelling, reducing opportunities for moral dialogue and emotional bonding within families.

This aligns with evidence that modernization without cultural adaptation leads to homogenization of narratives, eroding unique cultural identities (Paris & Alim, 2017; Cummins, 2019). The replacement of BEKANA with standardized digital content reflects a broader trend of cultural homogenization, where local wisdom is overshadowed by globalized media. Such homogenization not only diminishes cultural diversity but also weakens the moral and relational foundations embedded in indigenous storytelling traditions.

The decline of BEKANA also illustrates the vulnerability of oral traditions in contexts where cultural preservation is not systematically integrated into education. While some communities have successfully adapted storytelling into hybrid or digital formats, the Dayak Kebahan experience shows that without deliberate revitalization, traditions risk disappearing altogether. This finding underscores the importance of embedding oral traditions into curricula and community programs to counteract the effects of modernization.

The erosion of BEKANA practice has broader implications for cultural sustainability and social resilience. As storytelling traditions fade, communities lose not only their cultural identity but also a vital pedagogical tool for character education and family cohesion. Revitalizing BEKANA is therefore essential to restore intergenerational communication, preserve cultural uniqueness, and ensure that children inherit both the knowledge and values of their community.

BEKANA as Ethnopedagogical Method

Despite its decline, BEKANA remains a vital ethnopedagogical practice. Ethnopedagogy emphasizes embedding indigenous knowledge into education, situating learning within cultural contexts (Anggita, Endraswara, & Rohman, 2024; Suryaningsih, Poerwati, & Cahaya, 2025; Prabowo, Ratulina, Pongsibidang, & Rukmana, 2025). International scholarship confirms that ethnopedagogical approaches enrich educational outcomes and promote cultural sustainability (Battiste, 2019; Greenwood, 2019; Brayboy, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2017). BEKANA exemplifies this by transmitting values such as honesty, respect, and empathy through culturally grounded narratives (Cummins, 2019; Rohman, 2024).

The pedagogical significance of BEKANA lies in its ability to integrate moral education with cultural identity formation. Unlike standardized curricula that often neglect local wisdom, BEKANA situates learning within the lived experiences of the Dayak Kebahan community. This contextualized approach ensures that children not only acquire knowledge but also internalize values that are culturally relevant and socially cohesive. Such practices resonate with Greenwood (2019) and Battiste (2019), who argue that indigenous pedagogy strengthens cultural sustainability by embedding moral and relational values into everyday learning.

BEKANA provides an ethnopedagogical framework that counters the homogenizing effects of globalization. Paris and Alim (2017) and Cummins (2019) emphasize that without cultural adaptation, modernization leads to narrative homogenization and the erosion of unique identities. BEKANA resists this trend by offering narratives rooted in local wisdom, thereby preserving cultural distinctiveness while fostering empathy and respect. This dual role highlights BEKANA's importance as both a pedagogical and cultural resource.

From a theoretical perspective, BEKANA aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which underscores the role of cultural tools in shaping cognitive and moral development. Storytelling within BEKANA functions as a symbolic tool that mediates learning, allowing children to engage with values through dialogue and narrative. Rohman (2024) and Brayboy (2020) further argue that indigenous storytelling is not merely entertainment but a structured pedagogical system. BEKANA exemplifies this by embedding moral lessons within culturally meaningful narratives, thereby reinforcing both educational and cultural objectives.

The ethnopedagogical importance of BEKANA suggests practical implications for curriculum design and policy. Integrating BEKANA into preschool and community education would ensure that children are exposed to local wisdom alongside modern content, balancing cultural preservation with contemporary learning needs. As Anggita et al. (2024) and Suryaningsih et al. (2025) demonstrate, embedding indigenous knowledge into education strengthens cultural identity and promotes social justice. Thus, revitalizing BEKANA is not only

a cultural necessity but also an educational innovation that enriches pedagogical practices and sustains cultural continuity.

BEKANA as Parent-Child Communication

BEKANA storytelling fosters intimacy and emotional consistency in parent-child communication. This relational function aligns with studies showing that storytelling enhances psychosocial resilience and moral reasoning (Zapf, Boettcher, Haukeland, et al., 2022; Hidayah, Lestari, & Artha, 2021; Brophy-Herb et al., 2018; Masten, 2018). In the Dayak Kebahan context, storytelling sessions are not only recreational but also serve as structured opportunities for transmitting values and strengthening emotional bonds between generations.

International research confirms that indigenous storytelling traditions contribute to emotional literacy and relational stability (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2023; Simons, 2023; Fleer, 2018). These studies highlight that oral traditions create dialogical spaces where children learn empathy, respect, and responsibility through narrative interaction. BEKANA exemplifies this by embedding moral lessons within culturally grounded stories, thereby reinforcing both relational and pedagogical functions. The decline of BEKANA is therefore particularly concerning, as it threatens the continuity of family cohesion and intergenerational communication (Purwati, 2026; Endraswara, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, BEKANA's role in parent-child communication resonates with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which situates the family microsystem as the most immediate and influential environment for child development. Storytelling within BEKANA provides a relational context where values are transmitted through direct interaction, fostering emotional security and trust. Unlike digital media, which often isolates children from parental guidance, BEKANA requires active parental involvement, ensuring that moral education is embedded within emotionally supportive family relationships.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also offers a lens to understand BEKANA's relational importance. Storytelling sessions create a shared cultural space where children internalize values through guided interaction and symbolic learning. This process fosters not only cognitive development but also emotional regulation, as children learn empathy and moral reasoning within the relational framework of family communication. BEKANA thus exemplifies how indigenous pedagogy integrates social interaction, cultural transmission, and emotional development into a unified educational practice.

The relational importance of BEKANA suggests practical strategies for revitalization. Integrating BEKANA into preschool curricula and community-based programs could re-establish storytelling as a structured relational practice. Involving elders in storytelling sessions would further strengthen intergenerational ties, while hybrid models that combine traditional narratives with digital platforms could make BEKANA more appealing to younger audiences. Such initiatives would not only preserve cultural heritage but also reinforce family communication, empathy, and resilience, ensuring that BEKANA continues to serve as a cornerstone of relational pedagogy in the Dayak Kebahan community.

BEKANA and Character Formation

Participants emphasized BEKANA's role in character education, teaching values such as honesty, respect, and empathy. This aligns with ethnopedagogical approaches that integrate local wisdom into education to strengthen moral development (Anggita et al., 2024; Syafiulia, Wasita Aji, & Salsabiltisa, 2025; Suryaningsih et al., 2025). By embedding moral lessons into culturally grounded narratives, BEKANA provides children with experiential learning that is both meaningful and sustainable.

Scholars argue that indigenous storytelling embeds moral lessons in narratives, making them more impactful than abstract instruction (Cahyaningtyas, Sukardi, Purwati, & Ismiyanti, 2026; Simons, 2023). Through symbolic representation and dialogical interaction, children internalize values in ways that resonate with their cultural identity. This process ensures that moral education is not detached from lived experience but is deeply rooted in the community's traditions and worldview.

Research confirms that culturally grounded narratives foster resilience and moral reasoning in children (Zapf et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2021; Masten, 2018). BEKANA exemplifies

this by situating moral lessons within relational contexts, where parents and elders guide children through stories that emphasize empathy, honesty, and respect. Such practices strengthen psychosocial resilience, enabling children to navigate moral dilemmas with cultural grounding and emotional support.

From a theoretical perspective, BEKANA's role in character formation resonates with Lickona's framework of moral pedagogy, which emphasizes respect, responsibility, and care as foundational virtues. By embedding these values into storytelling, BEKANA transforms moral education into a participatory and relational process. This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive and moral development, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which situates family communication as central to child development.

The character-forming function of BEKANA has significant implications for education and policy. Integrating BEKANA into preschool curricula and community programs would ensure that children are exposed to culturally grounded moral education alongside modern content. Such integration would not only preserve cultural heritage but also strengthen moral development, resilience, and empathy in younger generations. In this way, BEKANA serves as both a cultural necessity and an educational innovation, reinforcing character education through indigenous wisdom.

Cultural Preservation and Identity

The urgency of preserving BEKANA was a recurring theme in participant narratives, reflecting concerns that its decline represents not only the loss of a pedagogical tool but also the erosion of cultural identity. BEKANA is deeply embedded in the Dayak Kebahan worldview, functioning as a medium through which values, traditions, and collective memory are transmitted across generations. Its preservation is therefore essential for sustaining both cultural continuity and community resilience.

Scholars emphasize that revitalizing local wisdom is indispensable for cultural sustainability (Saad, Wediyantoro, Nabella, & Zolkifli, 2024; Nabella, 2024; Yuliono & Wagena, 2026). These studies highlight that oral traditions are not merely symbolic but serve as living practices that embody cultural identity. The decline of BEKANA thus signals a weakening of cultural foundations, underscoring the need for deliberate revitalization strategies that integrate storytelling into both family and educational contexts.

Integrating indigenous knowledge into curricula has been shown to strengthen cultural identity and promote social justice (Cahaya, 2025; Prabowo et al., 2025; McCarty & Lee, 2017; Paris & Alim, 2017). Embedding BEKANA into formal education would ensure that children are exposed to narratives that reflect their cultural heritage, thereby validating indigenous knowledge systems as legitimate sources of pedagogy. Such integration would also counteract the homogenizing effects of globalization, which often marginalizes local traditions in favor of standardized content.

BEKANA exemplifies how cultural practices sustain identity across generations, embedding values in family communication and relational intimacy (Eberhard et al., 2023; Greenwood, 2019; Battiste, 2019). Storytelling sessions provide children with experiential learning that is both culturally grounded and emotionally supportive, reinforcing the dual role of BEKANA as pedagogy and cultural heritage. This relational dimension ensures that identity formation is not abstract but rooted in lived family interactions.

The preservation of BEKANA has broader implications for cultural policy and educational innovation. Revitalization efforts should involve families, schools, and local governments in collaborative programs that re-establish storytelling as a structured practice. Hybrid models that combine traditional narratives with digital platforms could make BEKANA more accessible to younger generations while maintaining its cultural depth. In this way, BEKANA serves as a cornerstone of cultural preservation and identity formation, ensuring that the Dayak Kebahan community sustains its heritage while adapting to contemporary challenges.

Policy and Practice Implications

The decline of BEKANA has significant implications for both education and cultural policy. As participants emphasized, BEKANA is not only a storytelling tradition but also a pedagogical and relational practice that sustains cultural identity. Revitalization efforts should therefore integrate BEKANA into informal and formal education, ensuring children are exposed to local wisdom alongside digital content (Anggita et al., 2024; Suryaningsih et al., 2025; Rohman, 2024; Endraswara, 2024). Embedding BEKANA into curricula would provide a culturally responsive framework that balances modern learning with indigenous knowledge systems.

International studies highlight that indigenous storytelling enriches educational outcomes and promotes cultural diversity (Fleer, 2018; Rogoff, 2019; Cummins, 2019). These findings underscore the importance of oral traditions as vehicles for empathy, resilience, and cultural literacy. Policymakers must recognize that storytelling traditions are not peripheral but central to holistic education. By integrating BEKANA into pedagogical frameworks, educators can ensure that children develop both academic competencies and culturally grounded moral values.

From a policy perspective, safeguarding BEKANA requires collaborative strategies involving families, schools, and local governments. Community-based storytelling initiatives led by elders could reinforce intergenerational ties, while teacher training programs could equip educators with the skills to incorporate BEKANA into classroom practices. Such initiatives align with broader educational reforms that emphasize inclusivity, cultural sustainability, and equity in learning.

Practically, revitalization efforts must also address the role of digital media. While technology has contributed to the decline of BEKANA, it can also serve as a medium for preservation. Hybrid storytelling models that combine traditional narratives with digital platforms could make BEKANA more appealing to younger generations. This approach would ensure that cultural depth is maintained while adapting to contemporary contexts, thereby transforming technology from a threat into an opportunity for cultural transmission.

The implications of BEKANA preservation extend beyond education into cultural policy and community resilience. Policymakers must design interventions that safeguard cultural identity while enhancing character education and family communication (Zapf et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2021; Brophy-Herb et al., 2018). Revitalizing BEKANA would not only strengthen the moral and relational foundations of the Dayak Kebahan community but also contribute to broader goals of cultural sustainability and social justice. In this way, BEKANA becomes both a cultural necessity and an educational innovation, bridging heritage and modernity in policy and practice.

Sibarani (2018) emphasized oral traditions in Batak Toba as vehicles for moral education and cultural identity. Similar to BEKANA, storytelling transmitted honesty and respect, but Batak traditions were less affected by digital disruption. Google Scholar.

Rosidi (2019) examined oral traditions in East Java (Kebo-keboan) as cultural relativism practices. Unlike BEKANA, these traditions remain embedded in ritual contexts, showing resilience against modernization. UPI Repository

Bahri (2020) on Dayak Kanayatn "Baumatahutn" found storytelling integrated into social studies learning. Similar to BEKANA, it conveyed religious and ecological values, but the decline was attributed more to globalization than digital media. Taylor & Francis eBooks, Reference Works and Collections

Parinduri (2021) on Batak Toba moral education highlighted family-based transmission of values. The similarity lies in parent-child communication, but BEKANA differs in its Christian-infused narratives and vulnerability to media competition. ejournal.brin.go.id

Nadilla et al. (2024) on Dayak Deah digital storytelling showed that embedding oral traditions into digital media enhanced cultural literacy. This contrasts with BEKANA, where digital media currently undermines rather than supports tradition. Jurnal Universitas Sebelas Maret

Gandasari et al. (2025) mapped indigenous knowledge in Sintang for ethnopedagogy in the Merdeka Curriculum. Their work provides a broader framework, while your study offers a focused case of BEKANA as a practical model for curriculum integration. ResearchGate

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Oral Traditions

Author & Year	Focus Tradition	Key Findings	Comparison with BEKANA	Source/Link
Sibarani (2018)	Batak Toba oral traditions	Oral traditions as vehicles for moral education and cultural identity; storytelling transmitted honesty and respect.	Similar to BEKANA in transmitting values, but Batak traditions were less affected by digital disruption.	Google Scholar
Rosidi (2019)	East Java (Kebokeboan)	Oral traditions as cultural relativism practices; remain embedded in ritual contexts.	Unlike BEKANA, these traditions show resilience against modernization.	UPI Repository
Bahri (2020)	Dayak Kanayatn "Baumatahutn"	Storytelling integrated into social studies learning; conveyed religious and ecological values.	Similar to BEKANA in moral transmission, but decline attributed more to globalization than digital media.	Taylor & Francis eBooks
Parinduri (2021)	Batak Toba moral education	Family-based transmission of values through storytelling.	Similar in parent-child communication, but BEKANA differs with Christian-infused narratives and vulnerability to media competition.	BRIN eJournal (ejournal.bri n.go.id in Bing)
Nadilla et al. (2024)	Dayak Deah digital storytelling	Embedding oral traditions into digital media enhanced cultural literacy.	Contrasts with BEKANA, where digital media currently undermines rather than supports tradition.	Jurnal UNS (jurnal.uns.ac .id in Bing)
Gandasari et al. (2025)	Indigenous knowledge in Sintang	Mapped indigenous knowledge for ethnopedagogy in Merdeka Curriculum.	Provides a broader framework; BEKANA study offers a focused case for curriculum integration.	ResearchGate

MAIN FINDING

This study demonstrates that BEKANA remains a vital ethnopedagogical practice within the Dayak Kebahan community despite its decline under the influence of digital media. The findings reveal that BEKANA functions simultaneously as a pedagogical instrument for character

education, a relational practice that strengthens parent–child communication, and a cultural heritage that sustains identity across generations. In this way, BEKANA is not merely entertainment but a holistic educational and cultural system that integrates moral values, emotional bonding, and cultural preservation.

The novelty of this research lies in its contextualization of BEKANA within the challenges of digital disruption, offering insights into how indigenous oral traditions adapt—or fail to adapt—in the face of globalization. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on ritual or symbolic aspects of oral traditions, this study situates BEKANA within contemporary educational discourse. Furthermore, the integration of global theoretical frameworks such as Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, and Lickona’s moral pedagogy enriches the analysis, bridging local ethnopedagogical practices with international scholarship. The practical orientation of this study, which proposes revitalization strategies through preschool curricula, community programs, and hybrid storytelling, also marks its distinct contribution.

This research contributes academically by expanding the literature on ethnopedagogy through a localized case study of the Dayak Kebahan. Practically, it offers strategies for revitalization that involve families, schools, and communities, while at the policy level it provides a foundation for local government initiatives in cultural preservation. However, the study is limited by its reliance on qualitative data from eight cultural custodians, which does not fully capture generational perspectives, particularly those of younger community members. The scope is also confined to Sintang, without comparative analysis across other Dayak groups, and lacks quantitative evaluation of BEKANA’s impact on formal educational outcomes. Recommendations include expanding participant diversity, developing quantitative models to assess BEKANA’s educational effects, and fostering cross-sector collaboration among government, schools, and cultural institutions.

Suggestions for Future Research Future studies should undertake comparative analyses between BEKANA and other Dayak oral traditions to identify both shared and unique pedagogical patterns. Experimental research integrating BEKANA into preschool curricula could provide empirical evidence of its impact on children’s moral and social development.

Additionally, exploring digital ethnopedagogy by developing hybrid storytelling models through mobile applications or social media platforms would help adapt BEKANA to contemporary contexts. Policy-oriented research is also needed to evaluate the effectiveness of government programs in supporting oral tradition preservation, ensuring that cultural sustainability is embedded within broader educational reforms.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that BEKANA, the traditional storytelling practice of the Dayak Kebahan community in Sintang, is experiencing a significant decline due to the dominance of digital media such as YouTube and television. The findings revealed that parents no longer actively engage in BEKANA, resulting in children’s lack of familiarity with this cultural heritage. Despite this decline, participants emphasized the importance of BEKANA as both an ethnopedagogical method and a medium of parent–child communication. BEKANA not only transmits cultural values and moral lessons but also strengthens family bonds, fosters empathy, and builds character.

The discussion highlighted that BEKANA embodies the principles of ethnopedagogy, situating learning within cultural and familial contexts. It aligns with Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, which emphasize the role of social interaction and family systems in child development. Furthermore, BEKANA contributes to character education, consistent with Lickona’s framework of moral pedagogy, and serves as a vital tool for cultural preservation, echoing Geertz’s view of culture as transmitted through symbols and practices.

The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on ethnopedagogy by providing empirical evidence of how indigenous storytelling functions as a pedagogical and relational practice. Practically, it underscores the urgent need for

revitalization programs that reintroduce BEKANA into informal and formal education. Integrating BEKANA into preschool curricula, developing hybrid storytelling approaches that combine traditional and digital media, and involving community elders in cultural transmission are potential strategies for sustaining this tradition.

Future research should explore innovative methods for adapting BEKANA to contemporary educational frameworks while preserving its cultural essence. Studies could investigate the effectiveness of hybrid storytelling models, the role of BEKANA in enhancing cultural literacy, and its impact on character formation in diverse educational settings. By doing so, BEKANA can remain relevant in modern contexts while continuing to serve as a cornerstone of Dayak Kebahan identity and cultural heritage.

In conclusion, revitalizing BEKANA is not only a cultural necessity but also an educational innovation. Its preservation and integration into early childhood education will ensure that children in Sintang inherit both the knowledge and the values of their community, thereby strengthening cultural identity and fostering intergenerational bonds.

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