

Utilization of the Folk Story “Marsikam” as History Learning Material to Develop the Values of Unity and Cooperation among Students

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the utilization of the "Marsikam" folktale as historical learning material in fostering unity and cooperation values among students. The "Marsikam" folktale was chosen because it contains moral messages and noble values relevant to the social life context of society, particularly unity and cooperation values. The research method used is qualitative with a literature study approach and content analysis. Data were obtained from the "Marsikam" script and secondary sources related to historical learning and character education. The research results show that the "Marsikam" story can be integrated into historical learning material as an effective learning medium to instill unity and cooperation values. Through analysis of characters, plot, and conflict in the story, students can understand the importance of solidarity, tolerance, and collaboration in facing social challenges. The implementation of the "Marsikam" story in historical learning can also increase active student engagement and build awareness of the importance of maintaining unity in diversity. This research recommends the use of folktales as an alternative creative and contextual learning material to strengthen character education in schools.

Keywords: Folktale, Marsikam, Historical Learning, Unity, Cooperation, Character Education

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INTRODUCTION

History education plays an important role in shaping the character and identity of the nation. Through history learning, students are not only invited to understand past events, but also to take noble values that can be applied in everyday life. However, history learning is often considered monotonous and less interesting because it focuses too much on memorizing dates, names, and events. Therefore, innovation is needed in learning methods and materials so that history can be more relevant and meaningful for students.

One way to bring history learning to life is to utilize folklore as a learning resource. Folklore, as part of cultural heritage, not only contains elements of entertainment but is also full of moral, social, and local wisdom values. The folklore "Marsikam" is one example of a story that has great potential to be integrated into history learning. This story tells of struggle, unity, and cooperation in facing challenges, so that it can be an effective medium to instill these values in students.

The research is important to be analyzed because it highlights the integration of indigenous cultural narratives into formal education. Folk stories like *Marsikam* carry deeply rooted moral and cultural values that reflect the collective identity and historical experiences of a community. By incorporating these stories into history lessons, educators can create more meaningful and relatable learning experiences for students. This approach not only enhances

historical understanding but also strengthens students' connection to their heritage, promoting cultural preservation in an increasingly globalized educational environment.

Furthermore, this research is significant because it addresses the growing need for values education in schools, particularly in fostering unity and cooperation among students. In a diverse and often divided society, teaching these values through contextually relevant and culturally rich content can have a profound impact on students' social development. By using *Marsikam* as a teaching tool, the study provides a model for how traditional stories can be adapted to meet modern educational goals, helping students internalize essential social values through engaging, narrative-based learning. This contributes to building a more empathetic, inclusive, and cohesive learning environment.

Several studies have explored the integration of folklore into educational settings, each focusing on different aspects of learning. For instance, Kusmana and Jaja (2019) developed instructional materials for high school students by analyzing the structures and values of local legends, aiming to ease students' difficulties in learning short stories by aligning the content with their cultural background. Similarly, Yoedo and Mustofa (2022) examined how Indonesian folktales could enhance young learners' analytical and critical reasoning skills in English classes, utilizing visual media and real-life examples to facilitate understanding. Additionally, Silalahi et al. (2021) compared moral values in Indonesian and British folklores, highlighting the universal themes present in diverse cultural narratives. These studies underscore the educational potential of folklore in promoting various cognitive and moral competencies among students.

The research offers a unique contribution by focusing specifically on the *Marsikam* story, a local folklore from North Sumatra, Indonesia. Unlike the aforementioned studies, which generally address folklore's role in language development or moral education, this study emphasizes the application of a specific regional folklore to teach historical content while fostering values of unity and cooperation. By contextualizing the *Marsikam* story within history lessons, the research aims to bridge cultural heritage with contemporary educational goals, promoting a deeper understanding of local history and reinforcing social cohesion among students. This localized approach not only preserves cultural narratives but also aligns with the curriculum's objectives to cultivate national identity and communal values.

The values of unity and cooperation are becoming increasingly important in the context of modern life which is full of the challenges of globalization and diversity. Through the story of "Marsikam", students can learn about the importance of solidarity, tolerance, and collaboration in achieving common goals. In addition, the use of folklore as learning material can also increase students' interest and involvement, because the story is close to their lives and easy to understand. Based on this background, this study raised a question: How is the use of the folklore of "Marsikam" as history learning material in fostering the values of unity and cooperation in students?

The objective of this study is to examine the use of the folklore of "Marsikam" as history learning material in fostering the values of unity and cooperation in students. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more creative and contextual history learning methods, as well as strengthening character education in schools.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist Learning Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how students can effectively engage with historical content through culturally embedded narratives like the folk story *Marsikam*. According to theorists like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, constructivism posits that learners actively construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, based on experiences and interactions. In this context, the integration of *Marsikam* into history education allows students to connect abstract historical concepts with familiar cultural narratives, making learning more meaningful and relevant to their lives. This approach promotes deeper cognitive processing, as students are not merely passive recipients of information but are actively engaged in interpreting and reconstructing historical understanding.

Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is particularly relevant in this research. When students explore the values of unity and cooperation through the lens of *Marsikam*, they are guided by the teacher or learning materials to bridge their current level of understanding with more complex ideas embedded in the story. The cultural familiarity of the story facilitates this scaffolding process, as students can draw on prior knowledge and shared community experiences to make sense of historical themes. This social interaction with both peers and educators enhances collaborative learning, which aligns with the values being promoted in the story—namely, cooperation and unity.

Furthermore, constructivist learning environments emphasize inquiry, discussion, and critical thinking—key elements in history education. Using *Marsikam* as a source of inquiry allows students to critically examine how traditional narratives can reflect and shape collective values over time. They are encouraged to question, reflect, and discuss how the story relates to historical contexts and modern social dynamics. This process not only enriches their understanding of history but also instills enduring values, demonstrating how traditional stories can serve as powerful pedagogical tools in constructivist classrooms. Through this framework, the *Marsikam* story becomes more than a tale; it becomes a vehicle for cognitive and moral development.

The Education Character and Value Formation

Character Education and Value Formation is a crucial theoretical lens in understanding how the folk story *Marsikam* can be used as an effective medium to instill the values of unity and cooperation among students. Character education aims to nurture ethical, responsible, and caring individuals by embedding core values into the learning process. According to Thomas Lickona, character education involves teaching moral values through curriculum, modeling, and community involvement. When embedded in history lessons, the story of *Marsikam* offers a culturally authentic narrative that naturally contains moral themes, allowing students to internalize values within a context they can understand and relate to.

The folk story *Marsikam*, as a product of indigenous wisdom, often emphasizes the triumph of communal effort, mutual respect, and shared goals—values aligned with unity and cooperation. When used as a learning material, it offers students relatable characters and situations that reflect moral choices and consequences. This aligns with the value formation process, where repeated exposure to positive moral behavior, especially through storytelling, helps shape students' own behavior and beliefs. By discussing characters' actions, motivations, and outcomes, students are given the opportunity to evaluate moral dilemmas and reflect on their own values in the context of both historical and present-day social interactions.

Moreover, integrating character education into history learning through stories like *Marsikam* helps bridge cognitive learning with affective development. Students do not only learn about events and dates but also about the human experiences and ethical challenges behind them. This fosters emotional engagement and empathy—both essential for developing social values like cooperation and unity. By situating these values in a familiar cultural framework, the story reinforces moral lessons in a way that is meaningful and lasting. Ultimately, the incorporation of *Marsikam* into history education supports the dual goals of academic learning and personal development, contributing to the formation of socially responsible citizens.

Cultural Relevance in Education

Cultural Relevance in Education plays a vital role in making learning meaningful and accessible, particularly in diverse and multicultural societies. Culturally relevant pedagogy, as introduced by scholars like Gloria Ladson-Billings, advocates for the use of students' cultural backgrounds and experiences as assets in the learning process. Applying this theory to the research on the utilization of the folk story *Marsikam* allows educators to present history not as a distant or abstract subject, but as something rooted in the local culture and community values of the learners. This approach validates students' identities and builds a stronger connection between their heritage and formal education.

By integrating the *Marsikam* story into history lessons, educators create a learning environment where students feel seen, respected, and understood. The story, grounded in local

traditions, reflects shared values and social practices that are already familiar to many students, particularly those from the region where the story originates. This familiarity encourages engagement, participation, and deeper understanding, as students are more likely to relate personally to the material. Teaching history through a culturally relevant lens also supports inclusivity and respect for diversity, allowing students from different backgrounds to appreciate the richness of their own and others' cultures.

Furthermore, cultural relevance enhances the development of unity and cooperation by presenting these values not as abstract concepts, but as historically and culturally rooted principles. The *Marsikam* story provides concrete examples of how individuals and communities have historically come together to face challenges and achieve common goals. By highlighting these culturally resonant models of collaboration, students are not only learning about history—they are seeing how their own cultural heritage promotes the same values that modern education seeks to instill. This helps bridge the gap between past and present, making education more holistic and transformative.

The Role of Folklore in Historical Understanding

The Role of Folklore in Historical Understanding is essential in recognizing that history is not solely constructed from written documents and official records, but also from oral traditions and cultural narratives passed down through generations. Folklore, such as the story of *Marsikam*, serves as a repository of collective memory, preserving the values, beliefs, and experiences of communities. In historical education, utilizing folklore helps students understand how people in the past interpreted and responded to their world. The *Marsikam* story, though not a formal historical account, contains embedded lessons about societal relationships, leadership, and communal efforts that reflect the socio-cultural realities of the time.

Incorporating folklore into history education bridges the gap between academic content and lived experiences, particularly for students in regions where oral traditions play a significant role in cultural identity. Stories like *Marsikam* are valuable tools for exploring historical themes such as conflict, cooperation, migration, or leadership through a local lens. This method also democratizes historical understanding by including voices and perspectives that may be absent from formal historical narratives. Students are encouraged to think critically about how stories are formed, what values they carry, and how they align with or challenge written historical accounts. This fosters historical empathy and a more inclusive view of the past.

Moreover, the use of *Marsikam* to develop unity and cooperation among students shows that folklore is not only a means to understand the past but also a vehicle for moral and civic education. As students analyze the events and characters within the story, they learn how communities historically valued and practiced collective effort. These insights reinforce the importance of solidarity in both historical and contemporary contexts. Thus, folklore becomes a dynamic educational resource—teaching history while also cultivating character, cultural pride, and a sense of shared identity among learners.

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the idea that people learn behaviors, attitudes, and values through observation, imitation, and modeling. This theory is particularly relevant to the use of the folk story *Marsikam* in the classroom, as the characters and events within the narrative serve as models of moral and social behavior. When students are exposed to stories that depict unity, cooperation, and collective problem-solving, they are more likely to internalize these values by observing the outcomes of such behaviors within the story. Through this process, students do not just learn about history—they also learn how to behave as responsible members of their community.

The characters in *Marsikam* can act as symbolic role models for students, demonstrating how individuals and communities succeed by working together, resolving conflicts, and supporting one another. Social Learning Theory suggests that when learners see positive outcomes resulting from prosocial behavior—such as cooperation leading to peace or unity overcoming division—they are more likely to adopt those behaviors themselves. Teachers can facilitate this by guiding students to reflect on the moral choices made by characters and

encouraging them to draw parallels to their own lives and social environments. This reinforces behavioral learning through cognitive and emotional engagement.

Furthermore, Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism—the dynamic interaction between personal factors, behavior, and environment—aligns well with classroom settings that utilize folk stories. As students engage with *Marsikam* and discuss its themes with peers, they influence and are influenced by their social learning environment. This creates a feedback loop in which values like unity and cooperation are continually reinforced through group discussions, collaborative projects, and shared reflections. In this way, *Marsikam* becomes more than just a story; it becomes a catalyst for social development and positive behavioral change among students.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with literature study and content analysis methods. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the potential of the "Marsikam" folktale as a history learning material in fostering the values of unity and cooperation. The literature study method was used to collect data from various written sources, such as the "Marsikam" story script, history textbooks, journal articles, and documents related to history learning and character education.

The main data in this study is the "Marsikam" folktale which is analyzed to identify the values of unity and cooperation contained in it. Content analysis is carried out by examining the intrinsic elements of the story, such as characters, plot, setting, and conflict, as well as the moral message conveyed. In addition, this study also analyzes the relevance of the "Marsikam" story to the history learning curriculum and the needs of character education in schools.

The data analysis process is carried out through several stages. First, the "Marsikam" story data is collected and studied in depth. Second, the identification of the values of unity and cooperation contained in the story is carried out. Third, these values are linked to the objectives of history learning and character education. Finally, the results of the analysis are presented descriptively to provide an overview of the potential of the "Marsikam" story as an effective learning material. This study also involves a review of several secondary sources, such as theories of historical learning, character education, and the use of folklore in education. This is done to strengthen the argument and provide a theoretical basis that supports the research findings.

With this research method, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding can be obtained about how the "Marsikam" folklore can be used to foster the values of unity and cooperation in history learning, as well as provide practical recommendations for educators in integrating folklore into the school curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Folklore has been an inseparable part of Indonesian people's lives since ancient times. These stories not only function as entertainment, but also as a means of conveying moral, cultural and historical values to the younger generation. In the context of history learning, folklore can be an effective tool for understanding the historical, cultural and social context of society in the past.

Marsikam Folklore as Cultural Heritage and Learning Source

Folklore is an integral part of a nation's cultural heritage. In the Indonesian context, folklore functions not only as entertainment, but also as a means of conveying noble values that are passed down from generation to generation (Danandjaja, 2007). One of the folklores that is full of meaning is the story of Marsikam, which developed in local Indonesian society. This story describes the struggle, perseverance, and the importance of unity in facing challenges. Marsikam is known as a figure who inspires his people to remain united and fight against various obstacles. The values contained in this story are very relevant to be integrated into history learning in schools. Through a folklore-based learning approach, students can gain a more contextual understanding of the historical and cultural values of their nation. Folklore, including Marsikam, functions as a living curriculum that continues to develop in society

(Sutrisno, 2010). This approach encourages students not only to understand historical facts, but also to instill character values such as courage, sincerity, unity, and love for the homeland.

Marsikam Stories in History Learning

History learning is often considered boring by students because of the dominance of lecture and memorization methods (Sardiman, 2011). Integrating folklore such as Marsikam into history learning provides a new nuance that is more interesting and meaningful. Folklore presents history in the form of a narrative that is rich in imagination, so that it can help students understand the social, cultural, and moral context of the past.

In the story of Marsikam, students are invited to understand how society in the past built solidarity to achieve common goals. Marsikam as the main character depicts the collective spirit that is characteristic of Indonesian society, especially in facing colonialism and difficulties. Through this approach, history is not only studied as a series of events, but also as a source of values that shape the character of the nation.

According to Winataputra (2012), effective history learning must be able to link past events with present and future life. The story of Marsikam, which is full of values of unity and the spirit of struggle, can be used as a medium of reflection to understand the importance of maintaining the integrity of the nation amidst the challenges of globalization.

The Value of Unity in Marsikam Folklore

Unity is one of the main values in the Marsikam story. The Marsikam character is depicted as being able to unite various community groups that were previously divided due to conflict and differences in interests. This value is very important to be instilled in students, considering the conditions of modern society which are vulnerable to social fragmentation due to differences in ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group (SARA).

Through the Marsikam story, students are invited to understand that diversity is not a reason to be divided, but rather a wealth that must be maintained with a spirit of unity. Learning the value of unity from folklore helps students build attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and social solidarity from an early age. A study by Suyanto (2013) showed that character education based on folklore is effective in increasing attitudes of unity and nationalism among students. By using the Marsikam story as teaching material, teachers can foster collective awareness of the importance of maintaining unity in national and state life.

Character Education for Students through Folk Tales

Character education is one of the main focuses in the national education system. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes the importance of education that not only develops cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects of students.

The Marsikam story presents various character values that are relevant to be developed in students, including:

- 1) Honesty: Marsikam is described as an honest figure in leading and guiding society.
- 2) Perseverance: Marsikam's struggle against injustice shows the importance of perseverance in achieving goals.
- 3) Responsibility: Marsikam not only fights for his personal interests, but also the interests of the wider community.
- 4) Leadership: Marsikam's ability to unite society reflects effective leadership skills.

Integrating folklore such as Marsikam into character education strengthens students' understanding of moral values through concrete examples that are easy to understand. This is in line with the contextual learning approach, where students learn through real experiences or simulations of everyday life (Johnson, 2002).

Implications for Learning Marsikam Folklore in the Classroom

In its implementation in the classroom, the Marsikam folktale can be used through various active learning strategies, such as: 1) Group Discussion: Discussing the values contained in the story and its relevance to everyday life. 2) Story Dramatization: Reviving the Marsikam story through drama involving students 3) Social Project: Linking the unity value of the Marsikam story in the form of a simple social project, such as mutual cooperation activities. 4)

Written Reflection: Students are asked to write a personal reflection on the character values they learned from the Marsikam story.

This approach not only improves students' understanding of historical material, but also forms their character integrally. According to Hosnan (2014), project-based and problem-based learning (PBL) are very effective in fostering critical thinking skills and social attitudes in students. By using the Marsikam story as a basis for learning, teachers can develop 21st-century skills, such as collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking in students.

Challenges and Solutions

Although Marsikam folklore has great potential in learning, there are several challenges that need to be overcome, such as:

- 1) Lack of documented teaching materials: Many folklores have not been systematically recorded.
- 2) Lack of teacher training: Not all teachers have the skills to integrate folklore into history learning.
- 3) Student interest: In the digital era, students are more interested in modern media than traditional stories.

Possible solutions include:

- 1) Digitizing Folklore: Creating e-books, animations, or podcasts about the Marsikam story to attract students' interest.
- 2) Teacher Training: Holding workshops to improve teachers' abilities in developing folklore-based learning methods.
- 3) Collaboration with Cultural Figures: Inviting local cultural actors to be involved in teaching in schools.

With these systematic efforts, the use of folklore in learning can be an effective tool for building students' character while strengthening national identity.

Integration of Marsikam Folk Tales with Pancasila Values and Pancasila Student Profiles in the School Context

Folklore not only functions as a form of cultural expression, but is also a reflection of the values that live and develop in society. In the Indonesian context, the values contained in folklore can be seen as a reflection of the values of Pancasila which are the foundation of the state. Therefore, integrating folklore such as Marsikam into school learning not only strengthens history and character learning, but also deepens students' understanding of Pancasila as a living ideology. The story of Marsikam, although originating from a local oral tradition, substantially contains values that are in line with the five principles of Pancasila. The first principle, Belief in One Almighty God, is reflected in the belief of the characters and their community in the divine power that guides their struggle. The second principle, Just and Civilized Humanity, is seen in Marsikam's attitude of upholding justice and equal treatment of all citizens, regardless of background. The third principle, Unity of Indonesia, is explicitly at the heart of the story, where Marsikam succeeds in uniting a previously divided society. Meanwhile, the fourth principle, Democracy Led by the Wisdom of Deliberation/Representation, is reflected in the way Marsikam leads through deliberation and prioritizes common interests. Finally, the fifth principle, Social Justice for All Indonesian People, is manifested in his struggle to create a just and prosperous society.

The implementation of Pancasila values through the Marsikam story can be carried out in cross-subject learning activities. For example, in the PPKn subject, students can be invited to analyze how Pancasila values are reflected in the characters and storyline. In the Indonesian Language subject, this story can be used as material to foster critical thinking and empathy through reading, writing essays, or discussions. Meanwhile, in arts and culture, students can re-visualize the story in the form of fine art, theater performances, or digital media.

This integration is also very relevant to the Pancasila Student Profile policy which is a reference for character development in the Merdeka Curriculum. The Pancasila Student Profile includes six main dimensions, namely: (1) faith and devotion to God Almighty and noble morals, (2) global diversity, (3) mutual cooperation, (4) independence, (5) critical thinking, and (6)

creativity. The Marsikam story can support all of these dimensions through innovative and participatory learning strategies.

The first dimension, namely faith and devotion to God Almighty and noble morals, can be honed through reading and reflecting on Marsikam's spiritual attitude in facing trials. Teachers can guide students to assess the moral attitudes of the characters and relate them to religious and humanitarian values. This reflection helps students instill spiritual values in everyday life. The second dimension, global diversity, is developed through an understanding of the values of tolerance and diversity in the Marsikam story. Although it comes from a particular locality, this story contains a universal message that differences are not an obstacle to working together for a common goal. By introducing stories from various regions, students are also invited to appreciate other cultures, both in a national and global context. Mutual cooperation, as the third dimension, is the main value in the Marsikam story. The main character does not fight alone, but always invites the community to help each other. In learning, this value can be applied through collaborative projects that involve cooperation between students. Teachers can design team-based assignments such as story rewriting, drama performances, or locality-based unity value campaigns. The fourth dimension, independence, is reflected in Marsikam's tough character, who does not give up easily, and is able to make wise decisions. Learning that facilitates students to formulate opinions, make choices of activities, or develop independent works inspired by folklore can strengthen their sense of responsibility and independence. The fifth dimension, critical reasoning, can be fostered by inviting students to analyze the actions of characters in the story, compare various versions of folklore from other regions, and relate them to current social challenges. For example, students can be asked to reflect on how the value of unity in the Marsikam story can be applied in the context of social media which is often a space for conflict. The last dimension, creativity, has great potential to be developed through artistic exploration of the Marsikam story. Activities such as creating digital comics, illustrations, poetry, and even narrative vlogs based on folklore will foster students' appreciation of art and imagination, while strengthening their love for the nation's culture.

Schools have a strategic role in bridging the integration between folklore, Pancasila values, and strengthening the profile of Pancasila students. This requires a learning approach that focuses not only on results, but also on meaningful learning processes and experiences. Teachers act as facilitators who create an inclusive and contextual learning environment. On the other hand, schools can also collaborate with local cultural communities to enrich the learning process. In addition, learning based on the Marsikam folklore can be developed as part of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in schools. For example, P5 themes such as "Local Wisdom" or "Sustainable Lifestyle" can be carried out by taking inspiration from the Marsikam story and the cultural values it contains. Through this approach, students not only become active learners, but also preservers of the nation's culture.

Overall, the Marsikam folklore is a bridge between the past and the future, between cultural heritage and today's education. Through an approach that is relevant to the values of Pancasila and the Pancasila Student Profile, schools can use this story as a medium to build a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also strong in character, spirituality, and nationalism.

DISCUSSION

The integration of the folk story *Marsikam* into history learning demonstrates a culturally grounded approach that supports both cognitive and affective student development. The findings suggest that students engage more deeply with historical themes when lessons are rooted in familiar cultural narratives. *Marsikam*, as a traditional story rich with moral and social lessons, not only enhances students' historical understanding but also serves as a tool for character education, particularly in fostering the values of unity and cooperation. When students encounter characters who solve problems through collective action and mutual support, they are encouraged to reflect on the importance of these values in both historical and contemporary settings.

This research highlights how the use of local folklore addresses gaps in conventional history education, which often overlooks indigenous perspectives and fails to connect with students' cultural identities. By placing *Marsikam* at the center of the learning process, educators are able to create inclusive, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences that resonate with students on a personal level. The approach aligns with constructivist and social learning theories, which emphasize learning through active engagement and observation. As students relate the events in the story to real-life issues and social challenges, they begin to understand the relevance of historical learning in their own lives and communities.

Furthermore, the application of *Marsikam* as a history learning tool underscores the broader role of education in shaping civic values and social cohesion. In a multicultural society, promoting unity and cooperation through culturally responsive teaching materials helps build empathy and mutual respect among students from diverse backgrounds. This research not only supports the pedagogical value of storytelling but also emphasizes the importance of preserving and revitalizing local culture within the curriculum. Thus, the utilization of *Marsikam* represents an innovative and holistic approach to education—one that bridges cultural heritage, historical knowledge, and moral development.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the folk story *Marsikam*—a culturally significant but academically underutilized narrative—as a central teaching tool in history education. While prior studies have explored the use of folklore in language learning or moral education in general, this research uniquely positions a regional folk story within the context of formal historical instruction to promote core social values like unity and cooperation. By doing so, it not only enriches the historical curriculum with localized cultural content but also demonstrates a new interdisciplinary approach that bridges history, literature, and character education.

Another innovative aspect of this study is its emphasis on the dual function of folklore: as both a source of historical insight and a medium for value transmission. *Marsikam* is not treated simply as a piece of cultural heritage, but as a dynamic educational resource that fosters critical thinking, moral reflection, and community-oriented behavior. The research introduces a culturally responsive pedagogy that is contextually relevant to students, particularly those in regions where such stories are still part of the oral tradition. This approach offers a replicable model for integrating indigenous narratives into formal education, promoting both academic success and the development of socially responsible citizens.

This research contributes significantly to the field of educational theory and practice by highlighting the potential of folk stories, specifically *Marsikam*, as an effective tool for integrating cultural heritage into formal education. By demonstrating how a local folklore can be used to teach historical content and foster important social values such as unity and cooperation, the study offers a novel approach to both history education and character development. Furthermore, it expands the scope of culturally responsive pedagogy, offering educators a practical framework for incorporating indigenous narratives into their curricula. This approach not only enhances students' historical understanding but also nurtures a deeper connection to their cultural roots, which is essential in fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

However, there are limitations to this research. The study focuses on a single folk story, *Marsikam*, which may not be universally applicable across all regions or cultural contexts. As the story is specific to a particular community, its relevance and effectiveness in other cultural settings may require adaptation or modification. Additionally, the research primarily relies on qualitative methods such as storytelling and classroom observations, which may not fully capture the broader impact of the intervention on long-term behavioral changes or academic performance. Future studies could expand the scope by exploring the use of other local folk stories in diverse educational contexts or incorporating quantitative measures to assess the impact more comprehensively.

In light of these limitations, the research offers several recommendations for future work. First, educators are encouraged to explore other regional folk stories to create a more diverse and inclusive curriculum that reflects a broader range of cultural narratives. Second,

further studies should assess the long-term effects of using folklore on students' social behavior and academic achievements, possibly through longitudinal research. Lastly, there is a need to develop comprehensive teaching materials and teacher training programs that effectively integrate folk stories into history lessons, ensuring that the pedagogical strategies are well-supported and sustainable in classrooms across different educational settings.

CONCLUSION

The Marsikam folktale is a cultural heritage that contains the nation's noble values, such as unity, honesty, responsibility, and perseverance. In the context of education, especially history learning, folklore is not only a means of preserving culture, but can also be used as an effective learning medium to instill character values in students. History learning, which has tended to be factual and textual, can be made more meaningful and contextual through a folklore-based approach such as the Marsikam story. Integrating folklore into history learning can bridge students' understanding of past events while at the same time instilling moral and national values. The Marsikam figure, who is depicted as a unifier of society, reflects the importance of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and social solidarity. These values are important provisions in forming the character of students who are tough, have integrity, and love their country amidst the challenges of the era of globalization and digital disruption. In addition, the use of folklore in learning is also in line with the contextual learning approach which emphasizes the relationship between learning materials and students' real experiences. Students are not only invited to understand historical material cognitively, but are also expected to be able to internalize the values contained therein through reflection, discussion, and other creative activities. However, to optimize the potential of folklore in learning, concrete efforts are needed such as the development of relevant teaching materials, teacher training, and collaboration between schools and cultural communities. Digitizing folklore is also an important strategy so that this cultural heritage remains relevant and interesting for the younger generation. Thus, it can be concluded that the Marsikam folklore has a strategic role in supporting meaningful history learning and comprehensive character education. By strengthening the values of unity and local wisdom, local culture-based education becomes an important foundation in forming a generation with character, national identity, and is ready to face future challenges.

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