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Understanding Story Elements and Religious Values in Indonesian Folktales Among PBSI Students of FKIP UHAMKA

(Pemahaman Unsur Cerita dan Nilai-Nilai Religius dalam Cerita Rakyat Indonesia pada Mahasiswa PBSI FKIP UHAMKA)

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Abstract: Students of Indonesian Language and Literature Education (PBSI) are required to possess knowledge and understanding of folklore, narrative structures, and religious values embedded within these tales. This is crucial as part of integrating Islamic values into their education, which will prove beneficial both for the students themselves and for their future students. Hence, the purpose of this research is to analyze the comprehension of PBSI students at University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA regarding the elements of narrative and religious values in Indonesian folklore. This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach through a survey utilizing a Google Form-based questionnaire. The research findings indicate that, overall, the PBSI students exhibit a satisfactory understanding of folklore and its religious values. Nonetheless, there are a few students whose grasp of these religious values appears less accurate. This understanding yields diverse advantages for aspiring Indonesian language educators, such as enriching their pedagogical experiences, enhancing language skills, stimulating imagination and creativity, and reinforcing national identity. Comprehending folklore also plays a pivotal role as a valuable asset within classroom instruction and in preserving Indonesia's cultural heritage for the future. Nevertheless, further efforts are imperative to enhance students' understanding of religious values embedded in folklore, to optimally integrate these values into Indonesian language instruction. In conclusion, this study asserts that the majority of PBSI students within FKIP UHAMKA exhibit a proficient comprehension of Indonesian folklore, although there is room for improvement in comprehending religious values that have the potential to enhance the teaching of Indonesian language and literature, as well as the preservation of national cultural identity.

Keywords

folklore, religious values, student understanding, story elements

Abstrak: Mahasiswa PBSI (Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia) perlu memiliki pengetahuan serta pemahaman tentang cerita rakyat, struktur cerita, dan nilai-nilai religius yang terkandung dalam cerita tersebut. Hal ini penting sebagai bagian dari integrasi nilai-nilai keislaman dalam pembelajaran yang akan memberikan manfaat baik bagi mahasiswa itu sendiri maupun bagi peserta didik mereka di masa depan. Untuk itu, tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis pemahaman mahasiswa PBSI di Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA terhadap unsur cerita dan nilai-nilai religius dalam cerita rakyat Indonesia. Objek penelitian ini terdiri dari lima cerita rakyat Nusantara, antara lain yaitu *Ciung Wanara*, *Asal Mula Danau Toba*, *Batu Batangkup*, *Keong Mas*, dan *Batu Menangis*. Adapun responden dalam penelitian ini yaitu mahasiswa PBSI FKIP UHAMKA yang mengikuti mata kuliah Sastra Nusantara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif melalui survei menggunakan angket berbasis Google Form. Teknik presentase dan analisis faktor digunakan untuk menganalisis data dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman mahasiswa PBSI secara umum sudah baik terhadap cerita rakyat dan nilai-nilai religius yang terkandung dalamnya. Namun, terdapat beberapa mahasiswa yang memiliki pemahaman yang kurang akurat terkait nilai-nilai religius. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa Program Studi PBSI di FKIP UHAMKA memahami cerita rakyat Indonesia dengan baik, meskipun perlu peningkatan dalam memahami nilai-nilai religius yang berpotensi memberikan manfaat pada pengajaran bahasa dan sastra Indonesia serta pelestarian identitas budaya nasional. ditinjau dari gender. Oleh karena itu, modul harus dikembangkan sebagai syarat dan kebutuhan agar tujuan pembelajaran dapat tercapai.

Kata Kunci

cerita rakyat, nilai religius, pemahaman mahasiswa, unsur cerita

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INTRODUCTION

Folktales are a product of cultural creation, passed down through generations predominantly via oral transmission—occasionally in written form (Zulkarnais et al., 2018; Tupasela, 2016; Nisa & Andalas, 2021). As a form of ancient literary work, folktales continue to thrive and evolve with the cultural developments of society. Importantly, folktales embody character values that reflect life and can be implemented daily to exhibit noble values (Junaini et al., 2017; Ahmadi et al., 2021; Yanti et al., 2019; Sugiarti, 2021). Elements within folktales include themes, characters, plot, setting, and a moral message (Sonjaya, 2022). Through the moral messages contained in folktales, we can provide advice and life lessons to the next generation (children) Sugiarti, Andalas, & Bhaktid (2022) in an enjoyable manner, without being overly didactic (Agbenyega et al., 2017). Common moral values found in folktales typically include religious or spiritual values, honesty, empathy, and compassion (Yuliyanti, Sadhono, & Wibowo, 2022). However, the instillation of these values through folktales presented to children requires serious supervision by adults, as sometimes the content of the stories may not be easily digestible (Yanti et al., 2016).

Numerous studies have indicated that a child who is regularly told stories, whether in everyday life or as bedtime stories by their parents, will exhibit enhanced creativity and cognitive skills. This fact underscores that folktales also play a fundamental role in nurturing their cognitive abilities to support brain development and competitive learning abilities in school (Wardiah, 2017; Mayrita, 2017; Abidin, 2018; Chalamah et al., 2020).

Discussing the guidance provided in storytelling folktales inherently addresses the core issue—the storyteller. To deliver engaging storytelling for children, a storyteller needs a deep and adequate understanding of the folktales prevalent in Indonesia. Without this understanding, a storyteller cannot effectively narrate to children and instill the values contained within these stories.

The PBSI (Education of Indonesian Language and Literature) Study Program at UHAMKA includes the Nusantara Literature course in its curriculum to emphasize the importance of understanding folktales. As future linguists and literary scholars, PBSI students must possess adequate competence and understanding concerning Indonesian folktales. PBSI UHAMKA students are to be at the forefront of preserving and maintaining the existence of folktales, considering their significant role in cultural continuity and heritage transmission to future generations. Therefore, PBSI students must have knowledge and understanding of the structure and religious values embedded in these tales as an integration of Islamic values, which will undoubtedly benefit them and their future students in the educational field.

Based on the issues outlined, this research will focus on analyzing PBSI students' understanding of Indonesian Folktales, both in terms of story structure and the religious values contained therein. This study aims to serve as a benchmark for student comprehension of folktales so that if the results are satisfactory, it will confirm their readiness to educate students. However, if the findings are unsatisfactory or do not meet expectations, further actions will be necessary to genuinely enhance PBSI students' competence in preserving folktales as an intangible heritage passed down for centuries.

To become a proficient educator who can impart religious values through folktales, a good understanding of the folktales prevalent in Indonesia is necessary. As intangible heritage narrated by ancestors, folktales should be preserved as they offer character and religious values for students. Moreover, children familiar with these stories tend to be more intelligent than others.

Research on folktales has been extensively conducted by various scholars. However, few studies have focused on the perceptions of students, particularly PBSI students, regarding their understanding of these tales. For instance, research by [Afsari \(2015\)](#) showed that the Parigi community perceives folktales as stemming from both nuclear and extended family settings. They actively maintain the tradition of storytelling and consider it to have sacred value. The folktales of Parigi, according to [Haerudin & Cahyati \(2018\)](#), serve various functions and remain among the most renowned within the community. This study also found differences in perception based on the respondents' age and gender. Previous studies have demonstrated that folktales can be an effective educational resource for children in developing traits such as responsibility, independence, honesty, piety, and cooperation. Factors such as the teacher's ability to convey stories, simplification of tales, use of illustrations, selection of themes aligned with children's interests and characteristics, and story continuity affect the learning process. It is hoped that children can apply these values in their daily lives through folktales. Both studies focused on the community's perception of Parigi folktales by origin, age, and gender. This study attempts to understand PBSI students' comprehension of the story elements and religious values in folktales.

Next, research by [Afriza and Zufadli \(2022\)](#) discussed high school students' perceptions of folktales from Riau. In their study, the folktale '*Pak Dayu*' ranked second among five studied tales. Other findings indicated that the folktale '*Apek Weng Thai*' ranked third, '*Terjadinya Gunung Daik (The Origin of Gunung Daik)*' fourth, and '*Bakau and Perepat*' fifth. It is important to note that [Afriza and Zufadli \(2022\)](#) limited their focus to the popularity of folktales and involved only tales from the Riau community, whereas this study includes various tales from across the archipelago.

From the review of prior research, it is clear that no study has specifically explored the understanding of Indonesian Language Education students, who are also prospective language teachers, regarding Indonesian folktales. Therefore, there is a research opportunity to gain new insights into PBSI students' understanding of Indonesian folktales. It is crucial for students of Indonesian Language Education, as future language and literature teachers, to have a thorough understanding of these tales to effectively narrate them to students. Based on this, the current study aims to reveal PBSI UHAMKA students' comprehension of story elements and religious values in folktales. This research is essential to assess the readiness of PBSI UHAMKA students as future educators who will directly engage in teaching the religious values contained in folktales.

METHOD

This study is descriptive quantitative research that utilizes a survey method in its approach. In survey research, the researcher poses questions to various respondents to gather information about beliefs, opinions, characteristics, or behaviors related to the research object, both past and ongoing. This survey method focuses on questions about individual beliefs and behaviors (Lawrence, 2003). The descriptive quantitative research aims to describe the data on the understanding of students from the PBSI Study Program at FKIP UHAMKA regarding the elements of folktales and the religious values contained in Indonesian folktales.

The objects used in this study are five Indonesian folktales, namely *Ciung Wanara*, *Asal Mula Danau Toba (The Origin of Lake Toba)*, *Batu Batangkup*, *Keong Mas*, and *Batu Menangis (The Crying Stone)*. These folktales were selected because they contain moral and religious values and represent various regions across the archipelago. The respondents in this study are students who are in their fifth semester and are enrolled in the Nusantara Literature course during the academic year 2022/2023, totaling 95 students. The involvement of these respondents is relevant to the research topic as one of the materials in this course is about folktales. The survey was conducted online through Google Forms, with the study duration being one week and carried out before the final semester exams.

Data collection techniques in this study employed a questionnaire implemented via Google Forms. The Thurstone Scale ([Liposvetsky, 2007](#)) was used in this research. This scale provides questions accompanied by several answer choices which help determine the level of students' understanding of the folktales. The Thurstone Scale was chosen because the answer options can be

flexibly adjusted according to the needs of student responses. Subsequently, the collected data will be analyzed using percentage techniques, factor analysis, and conclusions regarding the level of students' understanding of the story elements and religious values in Indonesian folktales.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study addresses the understanding of story elements and religious values in various Indonesian folktales, such as *Ciung Wanara*, *The Origin of Lake Toba*, *Batu Batangkep*, *Keong Mas*, and *The Crying Stone*. In relation to folktales, PBSI students certainly need to comprehend these stories from Indonesia as a foundation for teaching learners. This is because folktales enrich local culture, preserve national identity, impart moral values, develop language skills, and enhance the creativity and imagination of students. By understanding these folktales, PBSI students can teach in a way that is both engaging and meaningful.

Students' Understanding of the Ciung Wanara Story

The tale of Ciung Wanara narrates the story of a queen and a young prince who were slandered and exiled by an evil concubine while still in the womb. In the forest, Ciung Wanara encounters a magical rooster. With the help of this animal, Ciung Wanara returns to the kingdom, defeats his father in a cockfighting match, and claims his rightful throne. This legend teaches values of courage, strength, and justice, and is a part of the cherished cultural heritage of West Java. Based on this folktale, PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA were provided with a multiple-choice questionnaire to assess their understanding of the Ciung Wanara story. Below are the students' responses to their comprehension of the Ciung Wanara folktale.

Table 1
Students' Understanding of the *Ciung Wanara* Story

No	Questions	Response	
		True	False
1	What is narrated in the story of Ciung Wanara?	17,9%	82,1%
2	What did Ciung Wanara do to regain his father's trust and the throne?	76,8%	23,2%
3	Who are the characters in the story of Ciung Wanara?	83,2%	16,8%
4	What moral and religious values can be derived from the story of Ciung Wanara?	30,5%	69,5%

Ciung Wanara is a folktale originating from Ciamis, West Java, Indonesia. It recounts the story of the Kingdom of Galuh in West Java, where King Raden Permana di Kusuma had two queens who were pregnant at the same time. The first queen, Nyimas Dewi Naganingrum, gave birth to a baby boy named Hariangbanga. Meanwhile, the second queen, Nyimas Dewi Pangrenyep, plotted a wicked scheme by swapping Naganingrum's baby with a puppy. The real baby Naganingrum was then rescued by the King's Advisor, Ki Lengser, and raised in the forest. Years later, an old couple found a handsome and charming baby boy by the river. They were overjoyed and raised him with love, naming him Ciung Wanara. Ciung Wanara grew up to be a handsome, intelligent, and brave young man.

One day, Ciung Wanara went to the Kingdom of Galuh with his favorite rooster. He entered a cockfighting competition and successfully defeated the King of Galuh's rooster. The King fulfilled the wager and gave half of his kingdom to Ciung Wanara. During this journey, all secrets were unveiled. Ciung Wanara learned that his mother was still alive and he managed to rescue her. Meanwhile, Dewi Pangrenyep, who had committed the crime, was captured and imprisoned. Ciung Wanara's brother, Hariangbanga, also participated in the combat and lost against Ciung Wanara. Ultimately, the Kingdom of Galuh was divided into two, and Ciung Wanara lived happily with his biological mother and adoptive parents in the palace named Pakuan Pajajaran.

The tale of Ciung Wanara portrays religious values related to harmonious relationships in family life, acts of mercy and protection towards an abandoned child, the importance of apologizing and accepting apologies, and the rejection of betrayal as an act contrary to moral and ethical religious principles (Adeani, 2018; Praramdana, 2020).

Table 1 data above shows the students' understanding of the Ciung Wanara story. This section includes four questions posed to students about the story's content, actions taken by Ciung Wanara, the characters in the story, and the moral and religious messages derived from it. The findings indicate that the majority of students (82.1%) do not have a correct understanding of the Ciung Wanara story's content. This indicates a deficiency in their knowledge regarding the story. Additionally, although the majority of students (76.8%) have a correct understanding of the actions taken by Ciung Wanara to regain his father's trust and the throne, some students (23.2%) still answered this question incorrectly.

However, the research results show that the majority of students (83.2%) have a correct understanding of the characters in the Ciung Wanara story. This indicates clarity in character identification within the tale. Nevertheless, it is noted that regarding the understanding of the moral and religious messages contained in the Ciung Wanara story, only a small portion of students (30.5%) provided correct answers.

The meaning of these findings is that most students do not yet have an adequate understanding of the Ciung Wanara story as a whole. There is a lack in their knowledge, especially regarding the story itself and the moral and religious messages it contains. This indicates a need to enhance the understanding and awareness of students towards the story and the values it aims to convey. Further efforts are required in teaching and exploring the meanings contained in the Ciung Wanara story to students so that they can achieve a better and deeper understanding of the story and the values it intends to communicate. This is crucial to perform, as conveying moral values through folktales in literature education at schools can build character and personality in students (Baan, 2021).

Students' Understanding of the Origin of Asal Usul Danau Toba (The Origin of Lake Toba)

The folktale of *the Origin of Lake Toba* narrates the story of Toba, an orphan who was diligent in farming and fishing. One day, he caught a golden fish which then transformed into a beautiful girl named Putri. They married and had a son named Samosir. Samosir was mischievous and often ate greedily. When he was serving some food to his father, he ate some of the food himself and was hit by his father. Samosir learned that he was descended from a fish, then his mother turned into a giant fish and Lake Toba was formed. Samosir Island is located in the middle of the lake. Based on this folktale, PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA were provided with a multiple-choice questionnaire to assess their understanding of *the Origin of Lake Toba* story. Below are the students' responses to their comprehension of the folktale of *the Origin of Lake Toba*.

Table 2
Students' Understanding of The Origin of Lake Toba

No	Questions	Response	
		True	False
1	What is narrated in the story of <i>the Origin of Lake Toba</i> ?	83,2%	16,8%
2	What condition did the female character stipulate before agreeing to marry the character Toba?	86,3%	13,7%
3	What is the name of the male character who triggers the climax of the story of <i>the Origin of Lake Toba</i> ?	82,1%	17,9%
4	What moral and religious values can be derived from the story of <i>the Origin of Lake Toba</i> ?	67,4%	32,6%

The folktale "*Asal Usul Danau Toba (The Origin of Lake Toba)*" originates from North Sumatra, Indonesia. This story recounts the life of a young man named Toba, an orphan residing in the region who was diligent in farming and fishing. One day, while Toba successfully caught a golden fish, he ran out of firewood to cook the fish. After searching for firewood, Toba returned home to find a delicious meal prepared on his table. In his room, he met a beautiful girl who claimed to be the incarnation of the fish. The girl's name was Putri, and they eventually married on the condition that Toba must never reveal Putri's true origins as a fish. They were blessed with a mischievous son named Samosir.

One day, Samosir took leftover food to his father, who was working in the field. His father became angry and struck Samosir, calling him "son of a fish." Hurt and disappointed, Samosir went to ask his mother if he truly was descended from a fish. His mother admitted it and instructed Samosir to climb a steep hill. There, she transformed into a giant fish, and the lake overflowed, forming Lake Toba. In the middle of the lake, an island was formed, named Samosir Island, as a reminder of the event.

The tale of *the Origin of Lake Toba* embodies religious values reflected in the story's moral messages. Firstly, the value of honesty and trust is emphasized with the lesson never to break a promise, reflecting the importance of moral integrity in religion. Secondly, the value of forgiveness is highlighted, teaching us to be forgiving individuals. Forgiveness is a crucial aspect in many religious traditions which preach compassion and mercy towards others. Thirdly, the value of thoughtfulness and reflection is conveyed through the lesson to think before speaking. This teaches the importance of considering our words and actions, as they can have either positive or negative impacts on our lives and relationships with others (Sonjaya, 2022; Pulungan & Nasution, 2019; Prastiwi & Sudigdo, 2022).

Research findings in Table 1 regarding students' understanding of *the Origin of Lake Toba* story show a reasonably good level of comprehension among most students. Regarding the first question about what is narrated in the story, 83.2% of students answered correctly, demonstrating a good understanding of the plot and the background of Lake Toba's origin. However, there are still 16.8% of students who answered incorrectly, indicating a lack of thorough understanding of the story.

The second question, about the condition the female character stipulated before agreeing to marry Toba, the majority of students (86.3%) answered correctly. This indicates that most students understand the condition posed by the female character in the story, reflecting a good grasp of the narrative's details. Nonetheless, there are 13.7% of students who answered incorrectly, highlighting a need for better comprehension of this aspect of the story.

The third question about the name of the male character who triggers the climax of the story received a high level of correct responses, with 82.1% of students identifying him correctly. This shows that most students understand the significant role of the male child character in the narrative. However, there are 17.9% of students who answered incorrectly, indicating a need for greater attention to this detail of the story.

In terms of the final question regarding the moral and religious messages from the story, there is a need to improve understanding. Only 67.4% of students provided correct answers, while 32.6% answered incorrectly. This shows that some students do not fully grasp the moral and religious messages conveyed in the story. Thus, further efforts are needed to enhance their understanding of these messages in the tale of *the Origin of Lake Toba*.

Overall, although the majority of students have a good understanding of *the Origin of Lake Toba* story, they accurately explaining the main characters, the storyline, and the embedded moral messages, their comprehension of the religious values such as honesty, forgiveness, and thoughtfulness is also commendable. However, there are still some students who require additional focus to deeply comprehend the narrative. This could be achieved through more intensive material exploration, group discussions, and emphasis on the importance of understanding the moral and religious messages contained in the story. With a deeper understanding, students can appreciate and benefit from the values embedded in traditional stories like the *Origin of Lake Toba*, as posited by Ajayi (2019) that a thorough understanding of folktales can provide effective learning experiences.

Students' Understanding of the Batu Batangkup Story

The folktale of "*Batu Batangkup*" (overturned stone), tells the story of a widow named Mbok Minah and her two children, a boy and a girl. Despite Mbok Minah's hard of work gathering and selling firewood to meet daily needs, her naughty and lazy children never helped and often saddened their mother. Mbok Minah, who was old and frail, received no attention from her children who played heedlessly, ignoring their mother's calls. One day, after they had eaten all the food leaving none for their mother, Mbok Minah wished to be swallowed by Batu Batangkup, a magical stone that could

speak. Her request was granted, and when her children finally missed her, they found Mbok Minah inside the stomach of Batu Batangkup. However, their promise to change their behavior was short-lived, and ultimately, Batu Batangkup swallowed both children as a punishment for their naughty behavior and disregard for their mother. Based on this folktale, PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA were provided with a multiple-choice questionnaire to assess their understanding of the Batu Batangkup story. Below are the students' responses to their comprehension of the *Batu Batangkup* folktale.

Table 3
Students' Understanding of the Batu Batangkup Story

No	Questions	Response	
		True	False
1	What is narrated in the story of <i>Batu Batangkup</i> ?	68,4%	31,6%
2	What is Mbok Minah's occupation in the story of <i>Batu Batangkup</i> ?	74,7%	25,3%
3	What mythological element is contained in the story of <i>Batu Batangkup</i> ?	51,6%	48,4%
4	What moral and religious values can be derived from the story of <i>Batu Batangkup</i> ?	84,2%	15,8%

The folktale of "*Batu Batangkup*" originates from Indragiri Hulu, Riau, Indonesia, and tells the story of a poor widow named Mbok Minah who lived with her two naughty and lazy children. Despite Mbok Minah's hard work to provide for her family, her children never helped or respected her. They constantly played and ignored their mother's calls. Mbok Minah, old and ailing, often cried due to their treatment.

One day, when Mbok Minah prepared some food, she hoped their children would come, but her children ignored her call. However, they greedily ate all the food without leaving any for her. The children returned to play, neglecting their mother. As night fell, Mbok Minah became sicker, but the children continued to disregard her. They didn't even check on their deeply sleeping mother.

After searching for a few days, the children found the *Batu Batangkup*, a magical rock that had swallowed Mbok Minah. They cried and pleaded for their mother to be returned. However, *Batu Batangkup* refused, blaming the children for their poor behavior and lack of appreciation and respect for their mother. Eventually, both naughty children were also swallowed by *Batu Batangkup*, and they were never seen again.

The religious value in this story teaches the importance of valuing and respecting parents. Mbok Minah faithfully tried to fulfill her role as a mother, but her mischievous children never loved or helped her. Ultimately, they suffered the consequences of their poor behavior. This story imparts lessons about the importance of respecting and appreciating the love and care provided by parents (Yaacob & Abdillah, 2017).

The findings in the table illustrate the students' understanding of the *Batu Batangkup* story. The data presented includes the percentage of student responses that correctly and incorrectly answered four key questions. The first question is about what is narrated in the *Batu Batangkup* story. 68.4% of students answered correctly, while 31.6% answered incorrectly. This indicates that the majority of students have a good understanding of the story.

The second question regarding Mbok Minah's occupation in the *Batu Batangkup* story, 74.7% of students correctly identified her job, while 25.3% answered incorrectly. This shows a fairly good understanding among most students about Mbok Minah's role as one of the main characters in the story.

Meanwhile, the third question about the mythological element contained in the story, 51.6% of students recognized it correctly, whereas 48.4% answered incorrectly. This indicates that some students do not fully understand the mythological element present in the story. Lastly, in terms of the final question on the moral and religious messages that can be derived from the *Batu Batangkup* story, 84.2% of students understood these values correctly, while 15.8% answered incorrectly. This shows that most students can identify the moral and religious messages embedded in the story.

Overall, these findings demonstrate a good level of student understanding of the *Batu Batangkep* story. Most students have a good grasp of the story, the main character's occupation, and the moral and religious messages contained within it. They can also accurately describe the plot and the main characters. However, understanding of the mythological elements of the story still needs improvement. These findings can be used as input to enhance students' understanding of folklore and to delve deeper into aspects related to mythology. In addition to understanding spoken, written, and visual elements as components of mythology, a deeper exploration of community behavior in understanding myths in folklore is also necessary (Zhao-yuan, 2011).

Students' Understanding of the "Keong Mas Story (The Golden Snail)"

The folktale "*Keong Mas (The Golden Snail)*" recounts the story of King Kertamarta of the Daha kingdom who had two beautiful daughters, Dewi Galuh and Candra Kirana. When the handsome Prince Raden Inu Kertapati came to propose to Candra Kirana, Dewi Galuh became jealous. She cursed Candra Kirana, turning her into a golden snail and banished her from the palace. Candra Kirana met an old woman who helped her. One day, the prince discovered Candra Kirana's trail and they were reunited after the curse was lifted. Dewi Galuh fled into the forest and did not survive. The prince and Candra Kirana married and lived happily ever after. Based on this folktale, PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA were provided with a multiple-choice questionnaire to assess their understanding of the *Keong Mas* story. Below are the students' responses to their comprehension of the *Keong Mas* folktale.

Table 4
Students' Understanding of the Keong Mas Story

No	Questions	Response	
		True	False
1	What is narrated in the story of <i>Keong Mas</i> ?	80%	20%
2	Who are the characters involved in <i>Keong Mas</i> ?	84,2%	15,8%
3	What part of the story constitutes the conflict in <i>Keong Mas</i> ?	83,2%	16,8%
4	What moral and religious values can be derived from the story of <i>Keong Mas</i> ?	48,4%	51,6%

The folktale "*Keong Mas*" originates from East Java, Indonesia. This story recounts the life of King Kertamarta who ruled the grand kingdom of Daha. King Kertamarta had two beautiful daughters, Dewi Galuh and Candra Kirana, and their life was very happy. One day, a handsome prince named Raden Inu Kertapati from the kingdom of Kahuripan came to propose to Princess Candra Kirana. The proposal was well-received by King Kertamarta and Princess Candra Kirana, but Dewi Galuh felt jealous and believed she was more deserving of the prince's hand in marriage. Dewi Galuh's jealousy turned into hatred, and she plotted evil by enlisting the help of a witch to curse Princess Candra Kirana into becoming a Golden Snail, *Keong Mas*.

Dewi Galuh successfully executed her plan by spreading slander about Princess Candra Kirana, resulting in the princess being expelled from the palace. Princess Candra Kirana then wandered along the beach, where she met an evil witch who cursed her into becoming *Keong Mas*. Princess Candra Kirana was thrown into the sea and got trapped in a net the witch used to catch fish. Every day, the witch found delicious dishes on her plate without knowing who cooked them.

On the other hand, Prince Inu Kertapati did not sit idly by and disguised himself as a commoner to search for Princess Candra Kirana. During his journey, he met the witch who transformed into a crow to deceive the prince. Despite being misled, the prince continued to search for the princess's whereabouts. Eventually, the prince encountered an old, starving man, and due to his kindness, the old man revealed that Princess Candra Kirana was in Dadapan Village. After a long journey, the prince arrived at an old hut where he saw Princess Candra Kirana cooking. Coincidentally, as they met, the princess was cooking, and upon meeting her true love, the magic affecting the princess was lifted, and they returned to being human. Princess Candra Kirana introduced the grandmother who had helped her to the prince, and they went together to the kingdom. Dewi Galuh, fearing her

lies would be exposed, fled to the forest and fell into a ravine, unable to be saved. Thereafter, Prince Inu Kertapati and Princess Candra Kirana married and lived happily ever after.

This story contains moral and religious values that can be learned. These include the prohibition against jealousy, the importance of sibling assistance, and avoiding actions that damage relationships. Additionally, the story teaches about the importance of patience and kindness, as well as the crucial lesson to never give up. The belief that good deeds will result in good outcomes in the future is also conveyed through this story (Amelia & Sapriani, 2022; Trisnasasti, 2020).

The research data shows the level of student understanding of the *Keong Mas* story. On the first question regarding what is narrated in the *Keong Mas* story, the majority of students (80%) answered correctly, demonstrating a good understanding of the storyline. However, there are 20% of students who answered incorrectly, indicating that a small portion needs to improve their understanding of the story. On the second question about the characters involved in *Keong Mas*, the majority of students (84.2%) correctly identified the characters involved in the story. This shows that they have paid attention to and understood who plays significant roles in the *Keong Mas* story. Nevertheless, there are 15.8% of students who answered incorrectly, indicating that a small portion still needs to improve their understanding of the characters in the story.

The third question about the part of the story that constitutes the conflict in *Keong Mas*, the majority of students (83.2%) correctly identified the story part that reflects the conflict. This indicates that they can recognize and understand the critical moments in the story involving conflict. However, there are 16.8% of students who answered incorrectly, indicating that a small portion still needs to improve their understanding of the conflict in the story. On the fourth question regarding the moral and religious messages that can be derived from *Keong Mas*, the majority of students (48.4%) answered correctly. This indicates that there is room for students to improve their understanding of the moral and religious messages contained in the story. This data affirms the need for more exploration and a deeper understanding of the deeper meanings of the *Keong Mas* story and its connection to moral and religious values.

Overall, this research data indicates that most students have a good understanding of the storyline, characters, and conflict in the *Keong Mas* story. However, improvement is needed in their understanding of the moral and religious messages contained in the story. This emphasizes the importance of delving deeper into folklore and related values to achieve a more profound understanding. As expressed by Sandibaeva (2023), moral and religious values are crucial to be cultivated in student education as they are essential characteristics of an individual's behavior.

Students' Understanding of the Batu Menangis Story (The Crying Stone)

The folktale "Batu Menangis" (The Crying Stone) tells the story of a poor widow and her beautiful daughter. Despite her physical beauty, the daughter was lazy and did not help her mother. One day, the mother and daughter went to the village to shop. The daughter walked gracefully ahead while her mother followed behind in worn-out clothes. The villagers were charmed by the daughter's beauty, but were shocked when she claimed that her mother was merely her servant. She repeatedly disowned her mother, leading her mother to finally pray for her daughter to receive a fitting punishment. By the power of God, the daughter turned into stone as she begged for her mother's forgiveness, which was too late. Based on this folktale, PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA were provided with a multiple-choice questionnaire to assess their understanding of the "Batu Menangis" story. Below are the students' responses to their comprehension of the "Batu Menangis" folktale.

Table 5
Students' Understanding of the Batu Menangis Story

No	Questions	Response	
		True	False
1	What is narrated in the story of <i>Batu Menangis</i> ?	80%	20%
2	Where is the climax of the daughter's mischief/disobedience in the story of <i>Batu Menangis</i> ?	43,2%	56,8%
3	What mythological element is contained in the story of <i>Batu Menangis</i> ?	62,1%	37,9%
4	What moral and religious values can be derived from the story of <i>Batu Menangis</i> ?	82,1%	17,9%

The folktale "*Batu Menangis*" (The Crying Stone) originates from West Kalimantan, Indonesia. This story tells of a poor widow and her attractive daughter. The daughter was exceptionally beautiful, with a lovely figure and long curly hair, yet her character was poor. She was a lazy girl who never assisted her mother with household chores.

The daughter was more concerned with her appearance and always behaved in a spoiled manner. She expected her mother to fulfill every request while her mother toiled daily to meet their living needs. One day, the mother and daughter went to the village to shop. Despite the market being far from home, they walked. The daughter strolled elegantly dressed well, and made up to be noticed by others. In contrast, her mother walked behind, carrying baskets and wearing shabby clothes. Due to the distance between their home and the market, no one knew they were mother and daughter. Upon reaching the village, people noticed them. Captivated by the daughter's beauty, the villagers, especially the young men, followed her. However, their reaction changed upon seeing the mother trailing behind.

A young man approached the daughter and inquired about her mother. Yet, the daughter claimed her mother was just a servant. Each time someone asked about her mother, the daughter demeaned her, even calling her a slave. Initially, the mother tried to restrain herself and be patient listening to her daughter's disrespectful words. However, after facing the same question repeatedly, the mother finally prayed for divine punishment for her disobedient daughter.

By divine will, the disrespectful daughter gradually turned to stone, starting from her feet up to her entire body. As the transformation reached her waist, the daughter begged her mother for forgiveness. She regretted her disrespectful behavior and pleaded for her mother's forgiveness. Unfortunately, it was too late. The damage was done, and eventually, the daughter's entire body turned into stone. The folktale of *Batu Menangis* conveys that a child should never be disrespectful to their parents. If a child disrespects their parents, especially a mother who has given birth and raised them, they will face severe consequences in the future (Luthfiani & Rahmatya, 2021; Herwani, 2023).

Research findings on the students' understanding of the *Batu Menangis* story regarding the first question, the majority of students (80%) correctly explained what is narrated in the story, indicating that most of them have a sufficient understanding of the core story and plot. However, in terms of the second point, only 43.2% of students correctly answered about the peak of the daughter's mischief or disobedience in the story, while the remaining 56.8% answered incorrectly, showing a lack of understanding in identifying the critical point where the daughter's negative behavior peaked. Improvement in understanding this part could help students better grasp the character's complexity in the story and the consequences of the actions taken by the character.

On the third point, about 62.1% of students successfully recognized the mythological element in the *Batu Menangis* story, while 37.9% did not fully understand it. This indicates that the majority of students have a reasonably good grasp of the mythological elements present in this folktale, such as transformation into stone and divine intervention. This understanding helps students appreciate the depth and symbolic meaning in the story and enriches their knowledge of mythology and cultural heritage.

About the last point, the majority of students (82.1%) correctly answered about the moral and religious messages that can be derived from the *Batu Menangis* story. This shows that most students understand the moral lessons contained in the story, such as the importance of respecting and

appreciating parents and the adverse effects of disrespectful behavior. Additionally, understanding the religious values highlighted in the story can provide insights into the significance of faith and human relationships with the divine.

Overall, although there are areas needing improvement in understanding, the data indicates a good number of students have a solid comprehension of the *Batu Menangis* story, particularly in terms of the core story, moral messages, and religious values conveyed. Their understanding of religious values such as loyalty, love, and sacrifice is also commendable. By enhancing their understanding of the story's more complex and profound parts, students can better appreciate the cultural heritage and deep meanings contained in folklore. This is essential as teaching folklore through educational activities is vital for preserving cultural heritage and introducing ethnic identities to the next generation (Kopnicky, 2022).

In conclusion, this research shows variability in the students' understanding of PBSI FKIP UHAMKA regarding folktales and the religious values contained within. While most students have a good understanding, some have inaccuracies that need addressing. Nonetheless, a solid grasp of folktales and religious values enables students to teach in an engaging and meaningful way. This study provides insights into the importance of understanding folktales for PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA. Folktales benefit in enriching local culture, maintaining national identity, teaching moral values, developing language skills, and fostering creativity and imagination in students (Septika & Prasetya, 2020; Asra, 2022). Overall, the research findings indicate that students can respond well to the story's plot, main characters, and contained moral messages. However, some students still have inaccuracies regarding the religious values contained in the story.

Compared to previous research, Afriza & Zulfadli (2022) focused on the popularity of Riau folklore and the ranking of *Pak Dayu* stories. Afsari (2015) described the Parigi community's perception of the sacred values in Parigi folklore. Haerudin & Cahyati (2018) highlighted the role of Parigi folklore in culture and character education. Previous studies have emphasized high school students' perceptions of folklore from various regions, focusing on the popularity of the stories and their connection with sacred values and character. However, this research is focused on the understanding of Indonesian folklore elements by PBSI (Indonesian Language and Literature Education) students, with a special emphasis on the religious values contained in the stories. The results show that the majority of students have a good understanding of the folklore elements and the moral messages within them. Although some students have less accurate understanding, overall, it provides insights into the importance of understanding folklore for prospective teachers. This study also underscores the benefits of folklore in enriching local culture, preserving national identity, and developing language skills and student creativity. In comparison, the results of this study encourage a deeper and contextual understanding of folklore, contributing to character education and meaningful teaching.

This research underlines the importance of understanding for PBSI students at FKIP UHAMKA about Indonesian folktales and the religious values they embody. A thorough comprehension of folktales allows students to teach in an engaging and meaningful way, preserving and enriching local culture and national identity (Fujiastuti & Suyatmi, 2019; Khairil et al., 2020). It is vital for PBSI students, who will become teachers, to understand these stories (Kusmana & Nurzaman, 2021), enabling them to preserve local culture. Folktales are an integral part of Indonesian cultural heritage. By studying and understanding these stories, PBSI students can act as agents in ensuring that local cultures are not lost and continue to thrive in the future (Afriyanti & Somadayo, 2020).

Understanding folktales provides a rich and varied learning experience for prospective teachers (Krissandi et al., 2018). Students who understand folktales can use them as valuable resources in the classroom (Juwati, 2018), enlivening the atmosphere by teaching these stories to students, thus enhancing their interest in learning. Additionally, folktales can also be used to teach language and literature concepts in a more engaging and practical manner. Furthermore, understanding folktales contributes to improving students' language skills. Folktales often contain unique language features

including idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and traditional vocabulary (Iqbal & Wahyudi, 2022). By studying and teaching these stories, students can expand their understanding of the Indonesian language and hone their language skills, helping them become more competent teachers in teaching language and literature to students (Katoningsih, 2021; Patandean & Indrajit, 2021).

Through folktales, students are also encouraged to imagine and be creative. Folktales often contain strong elements of fantasy and imagination (Katamadze, 2019; Udovichenko et al., 2020). By understanding these stories, students can develop their abilities to imagine and create. They can use folktales as inspiration for writing stories, developing creative activities such as drama or theater performances, and encouraging students to actively participate in the learning process. Understanding folktales plays a role in strengthening national identity. Folktales are reflections of Indonesian cultural and national identity. By learning and appreciating these stories, PBSI students can strengthen their sense of nationalism and love for their homeland. They can help students develop understanding, pride, and love for Indonesian cultural heritage, thus strengthening national identity among the young generation (Lizawati & Uli, 2019; Kuswara & Sumayana, 2021; Putri, 2020).

In summary, understanding Indonesian folktales is essential for PBSI students as future teachers. With this knowledge, they can preserve culture, enrich learning experiences, improve language skills, encourage imagination and creativity, and strengthen national identity. All these will aid them in becoming more effective and influential teachers in teaching the Indonesian language and literature to the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of understanding Indonesian folktales and the religious values they contain among students of the PBSI Program at FKIP Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. Hamka (UHAMKA). Although the majority of students have a good understanding of folktales such as *Ciung Wanara* (average understanding 52.1%), *The Origin of Lake Toba* (average understanding 79.75%), *Batu Batangkup* (average understanding 69.72%), *Keong Mas* (average understanding 74.45%), and *Batu Menangis* (average understanding 66.85%) with an overall average understanding of 68.76%, there are still some students who have inaccurate understandings related to the religious values in these stories. Nevertheless, a good grasp of these folktales and religious values offers various benefits for the students as future teachers, including enriching learning experiences, enhancing language skills, fostering imagination and creativity, and strengthening national identity. Ultimately, understanding these folktales is crucial for PBSI FKIP UHAMKA students. With a solid understanding of folktales and religious values, students can become effective and influential teachers of Indonesian language and literature to the younger generation. This understanding also contributes to enriching local culture, preserving national identity, teaching moral values, developing language skills, and encouraging creativity and imagination in students. Thus, understanding these folktales becomes a valuable asset that can be utilized in the classroom and helps preserve Indonesia's cultural heritage for the future.

The next research recommendation is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing the understanding of religious values in Indonesian folktales by students of Indonesian Language and Literature Education and to develop more effective learning strategies to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the religious aspects in folktales. Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or case studies could be employed to explore the perceptions and factors affecting students' understanding, aiming to provide concrete guidance for future curriculum and teaching development.

DECLARATIONS

Author contribution	Trie Utari Dewi served as the head of the research team, determined the study sample, analyzed the folklore, developed the instruments, and acted as the correspondent. Wini Tarmini, as the first team member, assisted the team leader in analyzing the folklore, developing instruments, and conducting
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	literature reviews. Syarif Hidayatullah, as a team member, helped distribute the instruments to students and analyze the data from the instrument distribution as well as process the research findings. Fauzi Rahman, as a team member, assisted in reviewing literature, specifically in searching for relevant articles from reputable international journals, and performed translations into academic English.
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