

REPRESENTATION OF PERSISTENCE AND MORAL VALUES IN THE ORAL LITERATURE OF ACEH'S FOLK STORY BANTA BARENSYAH: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Acehnese folklore is a timeless oral heritage that has evolved to this day, across generations. The meaning behind the stories in folklore implies the values of fortitude and moral roles of its characters. Therefore, through the narrative presented is not just a fairy tale but reflects the philosophy of life. This study aims to explain the fortitude and moral values in the oral literature of the Acehese folklore Banta Barensyah. This research method uses a qualitative approach, through library research. Data sources come from several relevant literature such as folklore books, hikayat manuscripts, cultural journals, AI-related journals, and educational journals. Data collection techniques include the identification stage, screening stage, feasibility stage, and inclusion stage. Data analysis techniques include the process of data collection, data presentation, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The research findings show that the Acehese folklore "Banta Barensyah" is an important embodiment of the virtue of resilience and noble morality that goes beyond mere physical strength. The strength of the main character is shown not only by how he continues to survive through difficult times, but also by how he remains honest even when betrayed. These values can be grouped into three main areas: personal morals (hard work and honesty), social morals (devotion to parents), and religious morals (trust in God). Banta Barensyah's victory over his uncle's betrayal symbolizes the moral lesson that honesty and virtue are the only paths to greatness. It also demonstrates that this oral literature is an important tool for building character and preserving local Acehese knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

Folktales are anonymous oral narratives passed down from generation to generation as part of a collective tradition. Their dynamic nature allows for modification and the emergence of various versions of the story in each telling (Thi & Nhung, 2016). Folk tales have been an enduring part of every culture for centuries (Bhattacharya & Karmakar, 2021). Folktales are cultural tools that serve as a way to entertain, teach, and keep national and

universal values alive. Folktales are usually divided into four groups: trickster stories (humorous stories), fables, pourquoi (origin stories), and fairy tales (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021). Oral literature, which was originally spoken, is now starting to be documented as Indonesian language teaching material to introduce the richness of regional culture in schools (Za & Winarni, 2024). Thus, the documentation of folk tales is not merely an effort to archive old narratives, but rather a strategic step to preserve national identity, integrating moral and cultural values into the modern education system.

In Indonesia, the development of oral literature persists to this day, serving as a medium for moral education and cultural identity. This rich oral literature is spread across various regions, each with unique characteristics, including Acehnese folklore. Haikal (2025) he stated that oral literature is an oral heritage, enriching Aceh's cultural heritage by presenting literary works rooted in the daily lives of the people. Aceh has a strong oral tradition, as Islamic values and customs combine to form narrative structures rich with moral messages.

Folk tales contain moral, religious and life values that can provide lessons for the listeners (Zaharani et al., 2025). Moral values are principles or standards used to determine what is considered right or wrong in terms of individual or group behavior (Rozaqi et al., 2025). In addition, the moral message in the story is a lesson given by the author about how to act and behave in social situations (Akbar et al., 2021). This moral message will have a positive impact on the reader. As stated by Putri et al. (2024) children's morals need to be properly nurtured through effective learning, one of which is through literary instruction on folk tales (hikayat). This demonstrates that folk tales are not merely fictional narratives, but strategic forms of education that shape the character and moral integrity of the younger generation through the noble values they contain.

One of Aceh's phenomenal folktales instills moral values in the form of the story of "Banta Barensyah." This story depicts the life struggles of a young man full of obstacles, but he still upholds honesty, obedience to his parents, and steadfast faith in the face of various social injustices. The steadfastness in the folktale "Banta Barensyah" is one of the central points that is interesting to study. The narrative in the story of "Banta Barensyah" depicts a character who is able to face various obstacles such as poverty and betrayal. However, "Banta Barensyah" remains steadfast to his principles and promises. In today's modern era, the representation of steadfastness is starting to fade in popular literature. As stated by Nurcholis &

Imran (2024) that a literary learning approach that integrates moral dimensions has been identified as an effective strategy for instilling character values. Therefore, it is important to rediscover character values as relevant traditional literature as an effort to strengthen national character.

In addition to steadfastness, the moral values contained in this story encompass the relationship between humans and God, humans and others, and humans and themselves. The story of "Banta Barensyah" is widely known orally in Aceh, but documentation and in-depth analysis of its theoretical representation of moral values are still limited. Many young people are familiar with the story's plot, but they do not yet understand the philosophical essence behind the characters' actions.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The purpose of this study is to explore in-depth several relevant literature regarding the representation of steadfastness and moral values in the Acehnese oral folklore "Banta Barensyah." Data sources in this study come from several relevant literature such as folklore books, saga manuscripts, cultural journals, educational journals, and other websites.

The data collection technique in this research begins with the Identification Stage (Input), which involves searching databases for relevant literature. This research process is completed in four methodical steps. The study then proceeds to the Screening Stage (Initial Screening), where the selection of found literature is carried out using abstracts and titles. To ensure the data is appropriate, the researcher conducts a thorough text analysis during the eligibility stage. The process of selecting the final literature that will form the basis of the study in this research ends with the Inclusion Stage (Final Results). Through the process of data collection, presentation, reduction, display, and drawing conclusions, the data analysis technique examines the literature. The data analysis technique analyzes the

literature through the processes of data collection, data presentation, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the problems studied, this study aims to represent the steadfastness and moral values in the oral literature of the Acehnese folk tale "Banta Barensyah." The following is the substance of the study from various databases such as books and relevant journals in several sub-studies.

Elements of the Determination of the Character Banta Barensyah

Determination is the main axis that drives the entire storyline of "Banta Barensyah". In this narrative, determination is identified through the main character's unyielding attitude when facing a series of impossible tests, one of which is the order to find the Emun Beriring cloth as a requirement from the king. Textually, this determination is represented not as blind ambition, but as a form of responsibility of a son to raise the dignity of his mother's life. Although told of undertaking a journey full of danger and crossing difficult geographical boundaries, Banta Barensyah never expressed a desire to back down. Banta Barensyah's determination can be seen in his struggle to obtain the gold cloth and the atmosphere. The following is an excerpt from the folktale "Banta Barensyah" presented in (Rico, 2024):

"Banta explained why he had to fight to obtain the cloth. Feeling sorry for Banta's story, the village chief granted his request. With his skill, Banta played his flute, singing melodious tunes. The village chief was completely captivated by Banta's melodious melody. After enjoying the music, he gave Banta his gold cloth and his flute".

"After getting the gold cloth and atmosphere, Banta left the island. He sailed across the vast ocean to his hometown using his magic taro leaves. The young man's heart was overjoyed. He couldn't wait to convey the happy news to his mother and immediately presented the gold cloth and the atmosphere to Putri Lalu Mata".

"However, misfortune befell Banta. Upon arriving at sea, he met and boarded Jakub's ship, which had just returned from sailing abroad. While on board, Jakub stole the gold and silver cloth he had worked so hard to acquire. After the cloth was confiscated, he was thrown into the sea. Proudly, Jakub took the cloth home to marry Princess Terus Mata".

"Meanwhile, Banta, who was swept away by the sea waves, ended up on a beach and was found by a husband and wife who were looking for shells. The husband and wife took him home and adopted him as their child. After living with his adoptive parents for some time, Banta begged himself to return to his hometown to meet his mother using his magic taro leaves. When he arrived at his hut, his mother greeted him with joy. Then, Banta told him all the events he had experienced".

This determination is also emotionally tested when he faces betrayal from his own uncle in the middle of the sea. After Banta Barensyah obtained the gold cloth and the *suasa* through hard work through the strains of the flute, his uncle still took it by force. In this case, Banta remained consistent in his truth and did not lose his way, even though his dignity and life were threatened when he was thrown into the sea. Banta Barensyah was helped by the magic of the sacred taro leaf by bringing it back after being rescued by a husband and wife. This symbolizes a symbol of unshakable integrity. Banta Barensyah did not harbor resentment and despair after being betrayed by his own uncle, but chose to return to his hometown and face reality honestly. Banta's attitude in recounting the bitter events experienced during his journey to find the gold cloth and *suasa* shows his determination not only in terms of physical strength in facing the waves, but also in his mental fortitude to remain grounded in the values of honesty. His uncle Jakob's betrayal did not break Banta's spirit, but the incident further emphasized the difference between Banta's sincere character and his deceitful uncle. This is in line with what was stated by Nurbaya et al. (2022) that the value of honesty is very important for everyone so that human life becomes more valuable, that honest people will be trusted.

Classification of Moral Values in the Story of Banta Barensyah

Morality can cover all aspects of daily life and activities, as well as all aspects of human dignity and worth (Mahajani et al., 2020). The moral values in this folktale can be classified into three main interrelated dimensions. First, individual moral values emphasize honesty and hard work; Banta Barensyah represents an independent figure who does not take dishonest shortcuts to achieve his goals. This is as stated in research conducted by Fitriyah et al. (2025) that values are present in narrative quotations and the actions of the characters, both when facing life challenges, building social bonds, or resolving conflicts. Furthermore, the results of the analysis also show that Banta Barensyah's narrative structure systematically develops moral lessons from orientation to resolution, which facilitates the internalization of the characters' traits for the reader.

Second, the social moral values clearly visible through the devoted relationship between Banta and his mother (*birrul walidain*), which in Acehese culture is considered the key to a blessed life. This is in line with the findings of research conducted by Juwairiah (2017) Folktales help children or readers develop a love for their own culture. Thus, these cultural values will foster a love for their local culture. Preserving this culture will contribute to children's understanding of various ancient folktales. Culture is a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and all the habits and

capabilities acquired by people as members of society (Indrastuti, 2018). This is because these moral values are important to make Indonesian children brave, strong, intelligent, and family-oriented in their daily lives (Naqiyah et al., 2025).

Third, religious moral values underpin the characters' behavior, where the concept of *tawakkal*, or surrender to God's destiny after maximum effort, consistently informs every decision. This classification demonstrates that Banta Barensyah's oral literature is not merely entertainment, but rather a comprehensive character education instrument for the community. These religious values provide important meaning for readers, especially children, about the significance of *tawakkal* in living life.

Symbolic Representation of Virtue and Vice in Banta Barensyah Stories

The representation of victory in this story serves as an affirmation of virtue overcoming evil, a universal message entrenched in Acehnese local wisdom. Banta Barensyah's victory stems from his success in marrying the king's daughter and achieving glory, symbolized as the fruit of his patience and steadfastness in life. Wati et al. (2023) He explains that spoken symbols are easier to understand than written symbols. This is because writing no longer deals directly with context. Written texts deal with the reader, not the writer. In this case, the implicit symbolic meaning of the written text must be understood by the reader.

On the other hand, the destruction of the greedy uncle serves as a warning symbol that immoral actions will bring harm to the perpetrator. Symbolically, the sought-after *Emun Beriring* cloth is not merely a valuable object, but rather a representation of the "noble results" that can only be obtained by those with high morals. Thus, this ending reinforces the position of oral literature as a didactic medium that instills optimism that truth and morality are the highest forces in social life.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that the Acehnese folktale "Banta Barensyah" is a profound representation of the values of fortitude and noble morality that go beyond mere physical strength. The main character's fortitude is reflected not only in his persistence in facing difficult trials, but also through his mental integrity in maintaining honesty despite being betrayed. These values are summarized in three main dimensions: individual morals (hard work and honesty), social morals (devotion to parents), and religious morals (*tawakkal*). Symbolically, Banta Barensyah's victory over his uncle's betrayal emphasizes the didactic message that virtue and sincerity are the only paths to glory, while also positioning this

oral literature as a crucial instrument in character formation and the preservation of Aceh's local wisdom. Thus, it is recommended that the values in this folktale be more widely integrated into the character education curriculum to strengthen the moral identity and love of the younger generation for regional culture.

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