



Dewi Anjani Folklore as a Learning Resource for Geography Education: A Literature Review

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Abstract

This study examines the potential of Dewi Anjani folklore as a learning resource for geography education through a systematic literature review. Dewi Anjani is a prominent cultural figure in Sasak folklore, closely associated with the Mount Rinjani landscape in Lombok, Indonesia. The study aims to synthesize existing literature to identify geographical values, spatial representations, and environmental meanings embedded in the folklore, and to assess its relevance for contemporary geography learning. The research employed a qualitative literature review method, drawing on academic journal articles, scholarly books, ethnographic studies, and credible online sources related to Dewi Anjani folklore, cultural geography, and geography education. Data were collected through purposive searching using relevant keywords and analyzed through thematic synthesis. The analysis focused on identifying elements of physical geography, human environment interaction, cultural landscapes, and environmental ethics represented in the folklore narratives. The results reveal that Dewi Anjani folklore contains rich geographical content. Physical geography is reflected through symbolic representations of volcanic landforms, forest ecosystems, water resources, and environmental hazards associated with Mount Rinjani. Human and cultural geography aspects emerge through local beliefs, spiritual practices, and community based environmental norms. Additionally, the folklore conveys sustainability oriented values such as environmental balance, respect for nature, and disaster awareness, which align with current geography education objectives. The literature also indicates that folklore based learning supports place based education and strengthens students' sense of place and environmental consciousness. The study concludes that Dewi Anjani folklore constitutes a meaningful and contextually relevant learning resource for geography education when integrated through appropriate pedagogical frameworks. By bridging indigenous knowledge and scientific geography, folklore based learning can enhance holistic geographical understanding and culturally responsive education. Future studies are recommended to investigate empirical applications of folklore based geography learning models in classroom settings.



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INTRODUCTION

Geography education plays a fundamental role in shaping learners' understanding of spatial relationships, environmental processes, and the complex interactions between humans and their physical surroundings. Beyond the acquisition of technical knowledge such as maps, coordinates, and spatial models, geography learning is increasingly expected to cultivate critical spatial thinking, environmental ethics, and a sense of place. Contemporary scholars emphasize that geography education should be

grounded in meaningful contexts that connect abstract concepts with learners' cultural and lived experiences (Maude, 2016; Lambert & Morgan, 2022). This perspective aligns with broader educational reforms that advocate contextual, learner-centered, and culturally responsive pedagogies.

In response to these paradigmatic shifts, the integration of local knowledge and cultural narratives has gained prominence in geography education research. Indigenous knowledge systems, oral traditions, and folklore are recognized as valuable epistemological resources that encode spatial knowledge, environmental wisdom, and moral relationships between humans and nature (Gruenewald & Smith, 2014; Somerville, 2019). Folklore, in particular, represents a narrative based form of knowledge transmission that is inherently place-bound. Through stories, myths, and legends, communities articulate their understanding of landscapes, natural hazards, ecological balance, and sacred spaces. These narrative elements closely correspond with key geographical concepts such as place, region, environment, and human and environment interaction.

The educational value of folklore lies not only in its cultural significance but also in its pedagogical capacity to enhance engagement and conceptual understanding. Narrative based learning has been shown to support deeper cognitive processing by linking factual information with emotional and symbolic meaning (Tuan, 2018). In geography education, storytelling can function as a bridge between scientific explanations of physical phenomena and culturally embedded interpretations of the natural world. This approach encourages students to perceive geography as a living discipline that is connected to identity, memory, and local environments, rather than as a collection of detached facts (Roberts, 2020).

Within the Indonesian context, folklore is particularly rich in geographical content due to the country's diverse physical landscapes and strong cultural ties to nature. One prominent example is the folklore of Dewi Anjani, a legendary figure closely associated with Mount Rinjani in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Dewi Anjani is often portrayed as a guardian of nature and a spiritual ruler of the Rinjani landscape, symbolizing harmony between humans and the environment. The narrative contains detailed references to volcanic mountains, forests, water sources, and sacred spaces, reflecting local perceptions of geomorphology, ecological systems, and environmental stewardship. These elements align closely with both physical geography (e.g., volcanism, ecosystems) and human geography (e.g., cultural landscapes, spiritual geographies).

Despite its strong geographical relevance, Dewi Anjani folklore has predominantly been studied from literary, anthropological, and cultural heritage perspectives. Existing research tends to focus on symbolic meanings, mythological structures, or spiritual values embedded in the narrative, while its potential contribution to geography education remains underexplored. This gap is notable, given the growing emphasis on place-based education and culturally grounded learning materials in geography curricula worldwide (Lambert & Morgan, 2022). Without systematic synthesis, the pedagogical potential of Dewi Anjani folklore risks remaining fragmented and underutilized in formal education.

Recent literature in geography education underscores the importance of place-based and culturally responsive teaching approaches to improve learning relevance and sustainability awareness. Place-based education emphasizes learning that is rooted in local environments and community knowledge, enabling students to develop stronger place attachment and environmental responsibility (Somerville, 2019). Similarly, culturally responsive pedagogy highlights the integration of learners' cultural backgrounds into instructional content to enhance inclusivity and meaning-making (Gay, 2018). Folklore-based learning resources are well positioned within these frameworks, as they naturally integrate cultural identity with spatial and environmental knowledge.

Given these considerations, a literature review focusing on Dewi Anjani folklore is both timely and necessary. A systematic synthesis of existing studies can reveal how the folklore represents geographical concepts, conveys environmental values, and supports spatial learning. Literature-based research is particularly suitable for this purpose, as it allows for comprehensive analysis without requiring primary field data, while still generating theoretical and pedagogical insights (Snyder, 2019). By organizing dispersed scholarly works into a coherent analytical framework, such a review can clarify the relevance of Dewi Anjani folklore for geography education.

Accordingly, this article aims to examine Dewi Anjani folklore as a learning resource for geography education through a structured literature review. The study explores how the narrative reflects geographical themes, supports place-based learning, and contributes to environmental and spatial

understanding. By bridging folklore studies and geography education, this article contributes to ongoing discussions on integrating local wisdom into curriculum development and provides a conceptual foundation for future instructional innovation in geography teaching.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative literature review approach to examine the potential of Dewi Anjani folklore as a learning resource for geography education. A literature review method was selected because it enables systematic synthesis of existing scholarly knowledge, facilitates conceptual clarification, and supports theory building without the need for primary data collection (Snyder, 2019). This approach is particularly appropriate for studies that aim to bridge cultural narratives and educational theory, where empirical data may already be dispersed across multiple disciplinary domains such as folklore studies, cultural geography, and education.

The literature corpus was compiled through a structured search of reputable academic databases and digital repositories to ensure the credibility and relevance of sources. Primary databases included online database and national academic repositories hosting Indonesian studies. To capture both international theoretical perspectives and local contextual analyses, the search strategy intentionally combined global education literature with region specific folklore studies.

To maintain analytical rigor, the selection of literature followed predefined inclusion criteria. Eligible sources were required to (1) explicitly discuss Dewi Anjani folklore or closely related Rinjani narratives, (2) address educational, geographical, cultural, or environmental dimensions of the folklore, and (3) be published in peer-reviewed journals, academic books, or reputable edited volumes. Both empirical and conceptual studies were included, as long as they contributed interpretive insights relevant to geography education.

Sources were excluded if they focused solely on ritual practices without spatial or environmental interpretation, lacked scholarly credibility, or did not provide sufficient analytical depth. Non-academic materials, popular media, and anecdotal online sources were also excluded to ensure academic validity. This systematic selection process aligns with best practices in qualitative literature synthesis and enhances transparency and reproducibility (Snyder, 2019).

Data analysis followed a thematic synthesis framework commonly applied in qualitative review studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008). First, all selected texts were subjected to close reading to identify explicit and implicit references to geographical concepts, such as landscape representation, human–environment relationships, spatial symbolism, and environmental ethics. Particular attention was given to narrative elements that reflect physical geography (e.g., mountains, forests, water systems) and human geography (e.g., sacred spaces, cultural landscapes, place identity).

Second, identified concepts were coded and grouped into thematic categories relevant to geography education. These categories included, but were not limited to, place-based learning, environmental stewardship, spiritual ecology, cultural landscape interpretation, and local wisdom in spatial learning. The coding process was iterative, allowing themes to be refined as new patterns emerged across the literature. Third, the thematic findings were interpreted through the lens of contemporary geography education theory, particularly place based education and culturally responsive pedagogy. This interpretive step enabled the alignment of folklore derived themes with formal educational objectives and curriculum frameworks. By synthesizing narrative analysis with pedagogical theory, the study moved beyond descriptive interpretation toward conceptual integration.

Overall, this methodological design provides a robust framework for examining Dewi Anjani folklore as an educational resource, ensuring that the analysis is systematic, theoretically grounded, and relevant to contemporary geography education discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature review reveals that Dewi Anjani occupies a central position in Sasak folklore and is consistently associated with Mount Rinjani as a sacred geographical space. Across historical texts, ethnographic studies, cultural documentation, and educational discussions, Dewi Anjani is portrayed not merely as a mythical figure, but as a symbolic representation of human and nature relationships embedded within the landscape of Lombok Island. This recurring association indicates that folklore

functions as a cultural lens through which geographical meaning is constructed and transmitted across generations.

Several sources describe Dewi Anjani as the guardian spirit of Mount Rinjani, symbolizing balance, harmony, and moral responsibility toward nature (Fathurrahman, 2016; Suparlan, 2019). In these narratives, Mount Rinjani is not framed solely as a physical landform, but as a living space imbued with spiritual and cultural values. From a geographical perspective, this reflects the concept of place rather than mere space, aligning with humanistic geography which emphasizes emotional attachment, cultural meaning, and lived experience within landscapes (Tuan, 1977). The repeated depiction of Rinjani as a sacred mountain reinforces how cultural narratives contribute to place-making processes and environmental perception.

The reviewed literature also indicates that Dewi Anjani folklore implicitly conveys geographical knowledge related to physical geography. Descriptions of forests, springs, volcanic terrain, and climatic conditions surrounding Mount Rinjani are embedded in the stories. These elements provide contextual understanding of geomorphology, ecosystems, and natural hazards, particularly volcanic activity. Such representations align with arguments in geography education literature that narrative-based learning can enhance students' comprehension of complex environmental systems by situating them within familiar cultural contexts (Morgan, 2011; Catling & Willy, 2018).

From the perspective of environmental geography, Dewi Anjani folklore consistently emphasizes ethical relationships between humans and nature. Several studies highlight that the myth functions as a moral framework promoting environmental stewardship, restraint, and respect for natural resources (Suryani, 2020; Prasetyo, 2021). These values resonate strongly with contemporary themes in geography education, particularly sustainability, conservation, and disaster awareness. The folklore thus acts as an indigenous knowledge system that parallels modern environmental education principles, supporting the integration of local wisdom into formal curricula.

In educational discourse, the reviewed studies suggest that folklore-based learning resources can strengthen contextual and culturally responsive geography education. Dewi Anjani narratives provide opportunities to integrate physical geography (volcanoes, ecosystems, climate), human geography (belief systems, cultural practices), and environmental geography (conservation ethics) within a single learning framework. This integrative potential aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize meaning-making through learners' cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978; Brooks & Brooks, 1999).

Furthermore, the literature indicates that using Dewi Anjani folklore in geography learning can enhance students' spatial thinking and place attachment. By connecting abstract geographical concepts to locally meaningful stories, students are more likely to develop emotional engagement and critical awareness of their environment. This finding supports previous research suggesting that place-based education improves geographical literacy and environmental responsibility (Gruenewald & Smith, 2014).

However, the literature also highlights challenges in translating folklore into formal geography instruction. Some sources caution that folklore must be pedagogically contextualized to avoid mythological literalism and to ensure alignment with scientific geographical concepts (Catling, 2014). Therefore, Dewi Anjani folklore should be positioned as a complementary learning resource one that enriches conceptual understanding rather than replacing empirical explanations. This reinforces the importance of teacher competence in integrating cultural narratives with academic geography content.

Overall, the results of this literature review demonstrate that Dewi Anjani folklore possesses substantial potential as a learning resource for geography education. It embodies multidimensional geographical knowledge, encompassing physical landscapes, human environment interactions, cultural identity, and sustainability values. When critically and contextually integrated, the folklore can serve as an effective pedagogical bridge between local wisdom and formal geographical education.

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that Dewi Anjani folklore holds significant potential as a culturally grounded learning resource for geography education. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that Dewi Anjani is not merely a mythical figure, but a symbolic representation of human–

environment relationships deeply embedded in the geographical landscape of Mount Rinjani, Lombok. Through its narratives, the folklore constructs geographical meaning by integrating physical features, cultural beliefs, and environmental ethics into a coherent sense of place.

The findings indicate that Dewi Anjani folklore encapsulates multidimensional geographical knowledge. Elements of physical geography, such as volcanic landscapes, forest ecosystems, water sources, and climatic conditions are implicitly conveyed through narrative descriptions. At the same time, aspects of human and cultural geography are reflected in community beliefs, spiritual values, and traditional environmental practices associated with Mount Rinjani. This integration aligns with contemporary geography education paradigms that emphasize holistic understanding of space, place, and human and nature interactions.

Furthermore, the literature highlights that Dewi Anjani folklore promotes values of environmental stewardship, balance, and sustainability. These values resonate strongly with current educational goals in geography, particularly in fostering environmental awareness, disaster literacy, and sustainable development perspectives. As such, the folklore functions as an indigenous knowledge system that complements scientific geographical explanations and supports place based and culturally responsive learning approaches.

However, the review also underscores the importance of pedagogical mediation. Dewi Anjani folklore should be integrated into geography education through critical and contextualized instructional strategies to ensure alignment with scientific concepts and curriculum objectives. When appropriately framed, the folklore can enhance students' spatial thinking, place attachment, and critical reflection without compromising academic rigor.

In conclusion, Dewi Anjani folklore represents a valuable alternative and complementary learning resource for geography education. Its integration into teaching and learning processes offers an effective bridge between local wisdom and formal geographical knowledge, contributing to more meaningful, contextual, and sustainable geography education. Future research is recommended to explore empirical classroom implementation and instructional models that operationalize folklore based geography learning in diverse educational settings.

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