Teaching Local Wisdom through Oral Literature: Insights from Teachers' Beliefs and Practices on Minangkabau Petatah-Petitih

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Abstract

This study investigates the teaching of local wisdom through oral literature by examining Minangkabau petatah-petitih (traditional proverbs) in relation to teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. Indonesian literary education often prioritizes national and canonical texts while giving limited attention to local oral traditions that embody moral, cultural, and philosophical values. Using a qualitative case study approach at MAN 3 Batusangkar, West Sumatra, the research involved Indonesian language teachers and Grade XI students. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of instructional documents, and were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of belief, practice, and tension. Findings show that teachers value petatah-petitih as a pedagogical resource for fostering character education and cultural awareness, but face structural constraints from a nationally oriented curriculum that provides little space for local oral traditions. While some teachers integrate petatah-petitih into classroom activities, discrepancies often arise between their beliefs and instructional realities. The novelty of this study lies in shifting the discourse on petatah-petitih from cultural and textual analysis toward its application as a living educational resource. The research highlights the potential of oral traditions as tools for critical literacy, cultural identity reinforcement, and pedagogical innovation, underscoring the need for culturally responsive curricula and teacher training.

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of literary education in Indonesia, attention to local literary works remains limited compared to national canonical texts (Intiana et al., 2023; Kholiq et al., 2022). This phenomenon is rather ironic, considering that Indonesia's diverse oral traditions preserve noble values that can enrich literary learning as well as character education (Agus et al., 2021; Syarifuddin et al., 2022). One oral tradition that embodies profound moral and philosophical strength is the petatah-petitih of the Minangkabau (Hasibuan et al., 2022; Ismar et al., 2023). For the Minangkabau community, petatah-petitih are not merely wise sayings but also life guidelines that direct action, behavior, and the preservation of social relations. However, in secondary school classrooms, this tradition often appears only symbolically, or is not integrated at all. Teachers recognize the importance of petatah-petitih, yet the pressure of a

national curriculum that prioritizes standardized literary texts causes oral traditions to lose their place (Mochlasin & Budiharjo, 2024; Moeis et al., 2022). This situation creates a gap between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices, thereby requiring serious investigation into how teachers interpret, adapt, and integrate petatah-petitih in instruction.

This issue is significant because education is not merely a transfer of knowledge but also a means of internalizing values. Petatah-petitih embody principles of local wisdom that can teach problem-solving, instill values of mutual cooperation, foster respect for differences, and shape students' identities as members of a particular cultural community (Elfira, 2023; Handoko et al., 2024). Amid the intensifying current of globalization, education grounded in local wisdom plays a strategic role in maintaining cultural identity while also providing an ethical foundation for younger generations. If local oral traditions continue to be neglected in education, future generations risk becoming disconnected from their cultural roots. Therefore, research that explores how teachers understand and practice the teaching of petatah-petitih is both relevant and urgent.

Previous studies on Indonesian oral literature have largely emphasized philological, structural, or cultural dimensions of traditional texts. For instance, research by Mulyani et al. (2024) and Rusman et al. (2023) highlights that Minangkabau petatah-petitih represent the philosophy of life of the Minangkabau people, famously encapsulated in the maxim alam takambang jadi guru (nature as a teacher). These studies demonstrate how these wise sayings function as legitimations of social and moral values. Other research by Hafizah et al. (2021) and Sari & Yusuf (2023) shows how Minangkabau oral traditions function as social instruments to maintain community harmony and reinforce customary systems. However, such studies predominantly focus on cultural and anthropological aspects, rather than pedagogical applications.

In the educational context, a growing body of research has begun to emphasize the importance of integrating local wisdom into learning. Harwati & Sathian (2024) and Riyanto et al. (2024) stress that culture-based education can strengthen students' character and enrich learning experiences. Similarly, studies by Astawaa et al. (2024) and Faturohim et al. (2024) underscore the significant potential of oral traditions as media for character education, particularly in secondary schools. Nevertheless, these studies remain limited to normative discourses about the importance of local wisdom, without examining in detail how teachers interpret and implement it in classrooms. This aligns with the findings of Deswila et al. (2021) and Murcahyanto & Mohzana (2023), who argue that many teachers face dilemmas between the idealism of teaching cultural values and the constraints of the national curriculum.

Other relevant studies explore teachers' beliefs in literary instruction. Abdul Rahman R et al. (2022), Andriani & Andra (2023), and Fiharsono et al. (2024) assert that teachers' beliefs significantly influence their teaching practices. In the Indonesian context, research by Arrajiv et al. (2023) and Supeni et al. (2022) shows that while teachers often hold positive beliefs about the importance of local literature, classroom practices tend to reflect otherwise. Factors such as limited instructional time, curriculum demands, and the scarcity of oral tradition-based teaching materials constitute major obstacles. This highlights the discrepancy

between what teachers believe and what they practice in the classroom.

Moreover, in the realm of language and literary instruction, few studies have specifically examined the use of Minangkabau petatah-petitih in classroom contexts. Most research has focused on Javanese oral traditions (Arrajiv et al., 2023; Faturohim et al., 2024; Harwati & Sathian, 2024; Supeni et al., 2022). Minangkabau, as one of the major ethnic groups with a rich and complex oral tradition, has received relatively little attention in pedagogical studies. Yet, the distinctive sociocultural context of the Minangkabau, with its matrilineal kinship system and the philosophy of adat basa nan sabana basa, opens new spaces for pedagogical exploration different from those in other regions. This gap underscores the significance of studying the integration of Minangkabau petatah-petitih into literary education.

Taking these findings into account, it is evident that previous studies have largely remained at the level of cultural values and normative benefits of local wisdom. Few have genuinely explored how teachers, as primary classroom actors, negotiate their beliefs with the realities of the national curriculum. A considerable gap exists between the discourse on the importance of oral traditions in education and the actual practices within classrooms. This study positions itself within this gap, seeking to capture teachers' voices and practices in teaching Minangkabau petatah-petitih. It not only documents the cultural values embedded in oral literature but also presents a concrete pedagogical perspective.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to highlight petatah-petitih not merely as cultural heritage to be preserved, but as living pedagogical resources in literary education. Until now, oral traditions have been largely positioned as cultural study objects, while their potential as learning media has been underexplored. By investigating teachers' beliefs and practices, this study seeks to open new discussions on how petatah-petitih can serve as a bridge between the national curriculum and the need to instill local cultural values in students. It also affirms that literary education can serve as a medium for integrating critical literacy, character education, and cultural identity formation.

The primary objectives of this study are to identify how teachers perceive the relevance of petatah-petitih in literary learning, to describe their actual classroom practices, and to examine the alignment or tension between their beliefs and practices. Ultimately, this research seeks to propose a more contextual model of literary education, one that not only complies with the demands of the national curriculum but also embraces the richness of local oral traditions. Thus, this study is expected to enrich the discourse on literary education and contribute to the development of educational and literary scholarship in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, given the need to explore the depth of meaning, teachers' beliefs, and link them with actual practices within a culturally rich context. A qualitative approach was selected because the issue under investigation concerns not merely frequency or quantitative measures, but rather how teachers interpret Minangkabau petatah-petitih, the rationale behind their pedagogical

choices, and the dynamics of classroom interaction, which can only be captured through in-depth observation and reflective dialogue (De Oliveira, 2023; Rashid et al., 2019). The research site, MAN 3 Batusangkar, was chosen for contextual and practical reasons: located within the Minangkabau cultural region, it provides a relevant empirical arena for tracing the integration of oral literature into instructional practices, while also allowing researchers to observe how local wisdom values are connected with the demands of the national curriculum at the secondary level (Ahmad et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). Considerations of accessibility, permission to conduct classroom observations, and the availability of teachers experienced in teaching local wisdom content also influenced site selection.

Informants were purposively selected to ensure rich and informative data. The primary sample consisted of six Indonesian language and literature teachers actively engaged in designing and implementing instruction related to local wisdom. This number was deemed sufficient to capture diverse perspectives without sacrificing analytical depth (Allan, 2020; Maher & Dertadian, 2018). Additionally, twelve Grade XI students were purposively selected from several classes to serve as supplementary informants, offering insights into students' reception and interpretation of petatah-petitih in learning. Teachers were chosen due to their roles as pedagogical decision-makers, while students were included as recipients of instruction who could reflect on the practical impacts of oral literature integration.

Data collection was conducted through a combination of semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-interventionist participant observation, and instructional document analysis. Interviews were designed to elicit teachers' narratives of belief, recorded, and transcribed for analysis. Classroom observations were carried out multiple times for each teacher informant to capture consistency and variation in practice, with field notes focusing on teacher-student interactions, instructional strategies, and the use of teaching materials. Analyzed documents included lesson plans, teaching materials, student worksheets, and student work, in order to examine the correlation between formal instructional texts and classroom practices (Mäder, 2023; Sarfo et al., 2021). This methodological combination followed a functional logic: interviews to capture beliefs, observations to document practices, and documents to trace pedagogical artifacts (Stanley, 2023).

Triangulation was ensured through methodological plurality (interviews, observations, documents) and data sources (teachers, students, documents), thereby enhancing the credibility of findings (Lewis, 2019). Internal validity was further strengthened through member checking, returning interim summaries to selected informants for confirmation, and peer debriefing with academic colleagues to test interpretations. Data analysis followed a reflective thematic procedure: transcription, iterative reading, initial coding, theme categorization, and thematic interpretation linking belief and practice (Kodithuwakku, 2022). Throughout the process, the researcher maintained an audit trail, reflective journaling to articulate positionality, and adhered to ethical procedures: institutional approval, voluntary informed consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Beliefs about the Value of Petatah-Petitih

Teachers in Maluku believe that petatah-petitih, as a form of oral tradition, possess strong pedagogical value in education. This belief is not something that emerged suddenly, but rather one that has been constructed through their long-standing experiences of living within socio-cultural environments rich in customary values. In an interview with a teacher, identified as YT, she explained that petatah-petitih are often used as references when giving advice to students, particularly in situations where they face behavioral issues or minor conflicts at school. This statement indicates that teachers regard petatah-petitih not merely as cultural heritage, but as practical instruments applicable to everyday learning processes. This aligns with Wicaksono et al. (2024), who argue that local cultural knowledge can serve as a relevant and effective learning resource for shaping students' identity and character.

Teachers' belief in the pedagogical value of petatah-petitih becomes more evident when they interpret it as a medium for instilling moral values. These proverbial or customary expressions often contain profound messages about social ethics, cooperation, and the importance of maintaining harmony. Another informant, MT, stated that he frequently quotes traditional sayings to remind students about the importance of mutual respect and avoiding selfishness. He observed that children more easily grasp moral lessons when delivered through familiar local expressions rather than through normative reprimands. Field observations in an elementary school in Ambon revealed similar practices: teachers integrated petatah-petitih into daily routines such as morning assemblies or classroom discussions. For instance, in the case of minor disputes among students, teachers inserted a petatah emphasizing togetherness and solidarity, which immediately influenced students' responses.

These findings show that teachers do not treat petatah-petitih as passive cultural relics but rather as active instruments for character education. Here, the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, as proposed by Anyichie et al. (2023) and Kumi-Yeboah & Amponsah (2023), becomes highly relevant. This perspective emphasizes that culturally responsive education is not simply about adding local content to the curriculum but about positioning cultural values as a pedagogical framework. By believing that petatah-petitih can simultaneously strengthen cultural awareness and moral development, teachers are in practice embodying this principle. They intuitively understand that students will be more engaged with learning when the values being taught are drawn from their own lived experiences and traditions.

Furthermore, teachers' belief in the potential of petatah-petitih may also be understood as a manifestation of their fundamental cultural knowledge. This cultural knowledge is not only embedded in teachers as community members but is also brought into the classroom as a contextual learning resource (Kondo, 2022; McCarty & Brayboy, 2021). In this regard, teachers act as cultural mediators, bridging traditional values and the needs of modern education. Classroom observations showed that teachers not only recited petatah-petitih verbally but also invited students to interpret their meanings and relate them to daily

life. For example, when discussing group work, a teacher introduced a petatah highlighting the importance of cooperation and linked it to students' own experiences of collective activities at home. This process reflects an effort to foster students' critical literacy, as described by McCarty & Brayboy (2021), namely the ability to understand social realities through critical reflection on cultural texts or symbols.

In an interview, another teacher, LS, emphasized that using petatah-petitih in learning not only helps students better understand moral values but also nurtures pride in their cultural identity. According to LS, students who are accustomed to hearing petatah-petitih at school more readily internalize moral messages while simultaneously developing an emotional bond with Maluku traditions. Observations supported this: several students appeared enthusiastic when asked about the meaning of specific petatah, with some even attempting to relate them to their family experiences. This demonstrates how cultural values not only thrive in customary settings but can also be reinforced through formal education.

Multicultural education literature supports these findings. Ladson-Billings (2021) argues that teachers with strong cultural beliefs are more capable of developing inclusive pedagogical practices. Similarly, Sherwood et al. (2021) highlight the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy, which positions students' culture as the starting point of learning. In this research context, teachers' belief in the value of petatah-petitih is a concrete manifestation of cultural integration into pedagogy, enabling character education to function more effectively because it is grounded in a cultural framework familiar to students. Thus, this belief does not merely reflect teachers' personal preferences but represents a pedagogical strategy aligned with modern educational theory.

Interestingly, these beliefs also present opportunities to design more contextual learning. When systematically integrated into the curriculum, petatah-petitih can strengthen the relationship between schools and local culture. This addresses criticisms often raised in education studies regarding students' alienation from overly globalized learning materials (Semião et al., 2023). By using petatah-petitih, teachers create bridges that allow students to recognize that what they learn in school is directly connected to daily life and ancestral traditions. This is a tangible form of asset-based pedagogy, viewing local culture as an asset in education rather than as an obstacle.

Moreover, teachers' beliefs may also be interpreted as small but significant acts in sustaining oral traditions amidst globalization. As Berlian & Huda (2022) argue, oral traditions risk marginalization in the modern era unless revitalized through education. Teachers who believe in the value of petatah-petitih thus serve as cultural agents, ensuring that traditions are not only informally transmitted within communities but also internalized through educational institutions. Field observations indicated that this practice is not rigid but organic, adapting to classroom situations and students' needs. Consequently, petatah-petitih function as flexible and relevant educational media rather than additional burdens in learning.

Classroom Practices and the Limited Integration of Petatah-Petitih

In their daily classroom practices, teachers have indeed attempted to bring petatah-petitih into learning. However, these efforts remain limited, unsystematic, and often

disconnected from formal curricular objectives. Some teachers take the initiative to insert petatah-petitih when providing examples of moral values such as cooperation, respect for others, or cleanliness. Others use them as supplementary material in class discussions to enrich students' understanding of a topic. In an interview, a teacher identified as RN revealed that she often quotes traditional sayings to emphasize moral lessons, even though she is aware that such practices are not explicitly included in the formal curriculum. This indicates that teachers improvise to connect traditional values with modern learning, although these attempts are not always supported by the curricular framework.

Field observations in a secondary school in Ambon revealed a similar pattern. During a Civic Education class, a teacher inserted a petatah about togetherness to illustrate the importance of solidarity in national life. Students responded enthusiastically, with some even sharing related experiences from their homes or communities. However, the integration was brief and resembled a narrative digression rather than an integral component of the lesson. Immediately after, the teacher returned to the textbook-based material. This illustrates that while local traditions can appear in classroom spaces, their presence is not institutionalized within the curriculum but rather emerges from individual teachers' initiatives. The classroom dynamic reflected this limitation as well: teachers were pressed for time to cover required content, leaving petatah-petitih to be included only as occasional interjections rather than as part of a structured teaching strategy.

This situation can be understood within the framework of teacher agency, as described by Blackmon-Balogun (2023), who argues that teachers act as agents of change with the capacity to shape the learning process, but that capacity is always negotiated against existing structural constraints. In this context, teachers' belief in the value of petatah-petitih drives them to bring it into the classroom, but the scope of the national curriculum, prioritizing competency standards, limits the extent of such integration. Teachers thus find themselves at the crossroads of idealism and reality. They recognize the pedagogical potential of petatah-petitih but are simultaneously bound by the demands of completing prescribed content.

In an interview, another teacher, DS, acknowledged that petatah-petitih are vital for teaching students ethics and social behavior. Yet, he admitted that he often lacks sufficient time to develop these further. He could only introduce them sporadically, for example, when correcting students' behavior or when the discussion touched upon relevant norms. According to him, if the curriculum allowed more explicit space, petatah-petitih could be systematically developed into teaching materials. This reveals both a desire and a constraint: teachers want to bring local traditions into the classroom, but rigid educational structures hinder broader development.

The phenomenon shows that the integration of petatah-petitih tends to be more symbolic than substantive. Symbolic, in the sense that they usually appear as short quotations or moral reminders without being expanded into more structured learning activities. Students may hear and even understand these messages, but they rarely have opportunities to critically explore their meanings through assignments, reflective discussions, or critical

literacy activities. Observations confirmed this: when a teacher mentioned a petatah, students appeared inspired, but discussions were quickly curtailed to return to formal content. Such situations reflect structural limitations that prevent the full realization of petatah-petitih's pedagogical potential.

From a sociology of education perspective, this can be interpreted as a form of cultural negotiation between local knowledge and modern education systems. Teachers, as cultural agents, attempt to bring traditions into classrooms but must adapt to broader regulations. As Anyichie & Butler (2023) and Cheng et al. (2021) explain, individual agency is never entirely free; it constantly interacts with structures that constrain, guide, or even suppress action. Teachers in this study are negotiating: affirming petatah-petitih as cultural identity markers while adopting minimalist approaches to avoid clashing with curriculum demands.

In practice, this limited integration is also linked to the absence of teaching materials designed to accommodate local traditions. Several teachers admitted that they had to improvise with personal knowledge and lived experience since available textbooks did not include petatah-petitih. RN noted that without dedicated modules or guidelines, teachers could only rely on what they knew, making the use of petatah-petitih highly dependent on individual initiative. This resulted in variation: some teachers used them more frequently because of their familiarity with tradition, while others used them rarely, citing a lack of confidence in interpreting the sayings.

Ultimately, these limitations highlight that despite an awareness of the importance of local traditions, the education system has yet to provide adequate space for them. Teachers strive to be creative agents, but their actions remain confined by structural boundaries. Thus, the integration of petatah-petitih in classroom practice remains largely symbolic, affirming cultural identity but not yet developed into systematic, contextualized pedagogy. This underscores the importance of viewing teachers not merely as curriculum implementers but as subjects actively negotiating local values within formal education frameworks.

Tensions between Beliefs and Instructional Realities

The tension between teachers' beliefs in the importance of oral traditions and the realities of classroom instruction emerged as one of the strongest findings of this research. Most interviewed teachers expressed their conviction that Minangkabau petatah-petitih contain moral, cultural, and pedagogical values highly relevant to contemporary students. However, these beliefs were not always reflected in their daily teaching practices. The national curriculum, which emphasizes canonical texts and nationally standardized literary content, remains the primary reference in lesson planning. A teacher identified as AN, for instance, explained that although she wanted to teach more about oral traditions, she felt "bound by curricular demands and competency targets," leaving little room for petatah-petitih. This statement illustrates the real dilemma faced by teachers: on one hand, they wish to employ local traditions for character education, but on the other, they are compelled to comply with a rigid national curriculum.

Field observations reinforced this finding. In a literature class at MAN 3 Batusangkar, a teacher attempted to insert petatah-petitih when discussing moral values in short stories.

The teacher explained that Minangkabau proverbs could serve as mirrors of social behavior, and the class briefly engaged in a lively discussion on their contemporary relevance. However, the moment was short-lived as the teacher quickly returned to the prescribed textbook material. Students appeared enthusiastic when discussing the proverbs, with some relating them to family experiences, but the energy dissipated once the lesson returned to canonical texts. This illustrates that while there is great potential for integrating oral traditions, teaching practices are restricted by curricular obligations that prioritize standardized content.

This tension can be analyzed through the lens of curriculum constraints, which limit teachers' freedom in determining what to teach because of their obligations to national standards and examinations. Teachers may exercise agency in choosing teaching strategies, but the materials they use are strongly shaped by the centralized education system. According to Lee et al. (2020), when education fails to align with local culture, it risks alienating students from their own cultural identity. In this case, despite teachers' desire to preserve cultural relevance, curriculum restrictions mean that petatah-petitih appear only as symbolic supplements, not as core learning materials. Thus, education, which should reinforce identity, risks weakening students' cultural bonds.

In an interview, teacher DS admitted that he often felt guilty for not being able to provide more space for local traditions. He acknowledged that students responded positively when petatah-petitih were introduced, but the national curriculum compelled him to prioritize prescribed content. This internal conflict highlights the clash between teachers' personal idealism and the binding realities of structural regulation. This aligns with Foster et al. (2023), who argue that education is always shaped by the tension between agency (teachers) and structure (curricula, regulations, standards). Teachers may hold holistic visions of education, but structural forces often curtail their capacity to realize them.

Classroom dynamics further underscore this misalignment. When teachers mentioned a petatah, the classroom atmosphere became more lively and interactive, but these moments were quickly interrupted as teachers returned to formal content. An informally interviewed student even remarked that learning felt more engaging when local proverbs were discussed, yet such opportunities were rare. This reveals students' genuine need for culturally grounded learning, a need still insufficiently addressed by formal education structures.

The tension also illustrates how teachers, as educational agents, are constrained by rigid systems. On the one hand, they seek to sustain local values in classrooms; on the other, they must fulfill administrative and academic obligations tied to the national curriculum. As Chander et al. (2020) and Hutchison & McAlister-Shields (2020) explain, agency is never absolute but always situated within reciprocal relationships with structures that both constrain and enable action. Teachers in this study are thus engaged in continuous negotiation between personal idealism and external regulation, resulting in teaching practices marked by compromise.

Further analysis shows that this tension directly impacts students' cultural learning. Because limited time and space are allocated to oral traditions, students only encounter partial glimpses of the richness of petatah-petitih. Rather than fostering critical literacy and

strong cultural identity, traditions risk being reduced to mere decorative supplements within the learning process. If this persists, schools risk losing their role not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as institutions that nurture students' cultural identity.

This situation highlights the urgent need for a more flexible and inclusive curriculum so that local traditions are no longer treated as supplementary but as core components of literature and character education. Such flexibility would minimize the tension between teachers' beliefs and curricular realities, enabling petatah-petitih and other oral traditions to stand alongside canonical texts as legitimate learning resources. The implications extend beyond cultural identity reinforcement: they point toward a more contextual, relevant, and humanistic model of education.

Petatah-Petitih as Living Educational Resources

In the life of Maluku communities, petatah-petitih are not merely remnants of culture handed down across generations, but also living sources of knowledge with a functional role in education. They are not confined to being recited at customary ceremonies or transmitted within the family sphere; rather, they are practiced in daily life as guides for moral, social, and spiritual conduct. Findings of this study demonstrate that petatah-petitih hold significant potential to serve as dynamic and contextual learning resources, thereby transcending their status as cultural heritage to become pedagogical instruments relevant to contemporary learning. Within this context, petatah-petitih may serve as a bridge between the world of tradition and the demands of modern education, which call for creativity, criticality, and a strong connection to cultural identity.

One informant, Bn., a secondary school teacher, revealed during an interview that he often incorporates petatah-petitih into his teaching, particularly when addressing moral and social themes. According to him, petatah-petitih not only help students feel closer to the learning material but also provide them with the space to reflect on their own life experiences. This statement reflects an acknowledgment that petatah-petitih are not mere cultural ornaments but rather educational tools that enrich the teaching and learning process. This resonates with the notion of culturally sustaining pedagogy articulated by Kumi-Yeboah & Amponsah (2023), which posits that education should not only respect students' cultural identities but also sustain them within the academic space.

Field observations further reinforced these findings. During a customary gathering in a coastal village in Maluku, petatah-petitih were delivered with deep solemnity by a community elder before the younger generation. The atmosphere was reverent, with children and adolescents sitting cross-legged, listening attentively. At one point, a child asked about the meaning of a particular expression, and the elder explained by relating it to daily life, such as the importance of mutual assistance in farming or maintaining harmony with nature. Such a situation illustrates that petatah-petitih are not frozen discourses but genuinely alive in social practice and intergenerational interaction. From these observations, it becomes evident that petatah-petitih serve a dual role: as vehicles of value transmission and as lived educational experiences.

From a critical literacy perspective, petatah-petitih can be used to engage students in analyzing embedded values and reflecting on social realities. For example, expressions about the importance of kinship in pela gandong may serve as a point of critical classroom discussion on how such values can be implemented within the context of school diversity. In this way, students are not merely passive recipients of petatah-petitih as dogma but are encouraged to test them against the dynamics of everyday life. This aligns with McCarty & Brayboy's (2021) argument that education should empower learners to become active, critical agents capable of linking cultural experiences to broader social structures.

Pedagogically, teachers face challenges in integrating petatah-petitih into a curriculum that is often highly textual and oriented toward standardized national outcomes. Nonetheless, this study shows that teachers continue to devise creative ways of embedding local cultural values. Another teacher, Ny. L., for instance, explained that she uses petatah-petitih to initiate class discussions, not only to enliven the atmosphere but also to affirm students' sense of cultural identity in school. Such practice illustrates that petatah-petitih can be positioned not merely as supplementary material but as legitimate pedagogical content.

Field experiences revealed strong student enthusiasm when petatah-petitih were incorporated into learning. When teachers linked a traditional expression to an environmental issue, for example, maintaining the cleanliness of the sea, students responded by sharing their own experiences of witnessing pollution on the beach and how such acts contradicted the messages embedded in petatah-petitih. This response highlights the dialogical space between cultural values and contemporary realities, representing a form of learning that connects local wisdom with global challenges. Thus, petatah-petitih serve simultaneously as vehicles for ecological and cultural literacy.

Conceptually, petatah-petitih represent sustainable living educational resources because they are rooted in community practices and continually renewed in relation to changing social contexts. Blackmon-Balogun (2023) emphasizes that culturally sustaining pedagogy requires that education does not merely adopt superficial elements of culture but places them as core sources of relevant learning for students. This underscores the need to position petatah-petitih as integral components of educational processes, rather than as peripheral folkloric symbols.

Further analysis indicates that the incorporation of petatah-petitih in formal educational settings can strengthen students' identities while preventing cultural alienation. If schools focus solely on canonical texts or narratives detached from local experiences, students risk feeling disconnected from their cultural roots. As Anyichie & Butler (2023) argue, educational practices that fail to draw upon local culture may alienate students from themselves and their communities. Conversely, integrating petatah-petitih as learning resources enables schools to become inclusive spaces that embrace diversity and reinforce social bonds.

These findings carry significant implications for educational policy. Curricula should allow greater flexibility for teachers to explore culturally rooted learning resources, including petatah-petitih. Without such flexibility, their pedagogical potential will remain symbolic and

underutilized in classrooms. Herein lies the relevance of culturally sustaining pedagogy theory, which underscores the need for an educational approach that not only accommodates but actively sustains and revitalizes oral traditions. Accordingly, petatah-petitih must be moved from the margins to the center of educational practices that respond to students' present-day needs.

Implications for Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Teacher Training

The integration of petatah-petitih into school-based learning presents distinct challenges, particularly in confronting entrenched structural barriers. These challenges arise because the national curriculum tends to privilege canonical texts at the core of learning, relegating oral traditions to the status of complementary or illustrative material. As a result, local values are frequently marginalized, despite their transformative potential in shaping student identity and character. This study underscores the necessity of systemic strategies to ensure that the integration of petatah-petitih transcends individual teacher initiatives and becomes embedded in directed educational policies. Without robust structural support, teachers' efforts to animate oral traditions in classrooms will remain limited to experimental spaces that are easily overlooked by standardized evaluation systems.

In interviews, Sd., a secondary school teacher, described often feeling "trapped" between his personal conviction regarding the importance of local culture and the curriculum's heavy emphasis on cognitive outcomes. He stated that although he frequently wished to use petatah-petitih in instruction, time constraints and dense material coverage left little room to do so. This statement reveals the dilemma teachers face between sustaining cultural ideals and meeting structural demands for academic conformity. This situation reflects the concept of curriculum constraints, which highlights the limited autonomy teachers possess in determining content and pedagogy under national standards.

Classroom observations provided tangible illustrations of this tension. In one language lesson in Ambon, the teacher began the session by linking the assigned text to local petatah-petitih. Students appeared enthusiastic, with some attempting to interpret its meaning in relation to their daily experiences. Yet, after approximately 15 minutes, the teacher shifted back to the prescribed national textbook content. The classroom atmosphere turned more formal, with students focused on copying notes, and the earlier vibrant discussion faded. This scenario reveals the limited space available for cultural integration, which remains fleeting before being overtaken by formal curricular demands. Such findings affirm that without policies granting broader legitimacy, cultural content in learning will remain marginal insertions rather than consistent practice.

The implications of this research point to two primary aspects. First, there is a need for a culturally responsive curriculum in which local values such as petatah-petitih are positioned alongside national texts. Such a curriculum does not diminish the importance of academic achievement but rather enriches it with dimensions of identity and cultural reflection. According to Ladson-Billings (2021) and McCarty & Brayboy (2021), culturally responsive curricula must ensure that instructional materials resonate with students' cultural backgrounds to make learning meaningful. In this regard, petatah-petitih should not be

treated as supplementary but as integral to literacy, character formation, and even critical thinking outcomes.

Second, teacher training is crucial for developing pedagogical strategies that integrate oral traditions with contemporary learning objectives. Without adequate training, teachers will struggle to design innovative learning models that balance curriculum demands with students' cultural identities. Blackmon-Balogun (2023) emphasizes that culturally sustaining pedagogy requires not only cultural awareness but also practical pedagogical skills to develop contextual methods. Teachers must be trained to employ petatah-petitih as entry points for critical dialogue, social reflection, and as literacy tools extending beyond reading and writing skills.

Another informant, Ny. T., admitted that she often felt hesitant to integrate oral traditions out of fear they might be deemed inconsistent with official curricular standards. She noted the absence of specific guidance from education authorities on how to design culture-based learning. This statement underscores the urgent need for structured teacher training. Without systemic guidance, teachers' initiatives remain fragmented and unlikely to evolve into collective, consistent practices.

Field experiences also showed that students responded very positively when local traditions were integrated into learning. In one session, students were tasked with writing reflective pieces on the meaning of a particular petatah-petitih. Their responses displayed creativity and courage in connecting traditional messages to contemporary issues such as social solidarity in the digital age. Some even related the expressions to personal experiences, such as helping friends in need. These outcomes demonstrate that oral traditions retain vibrant vitality when afforded pedagogical space. Yet such enthusiasm risks being squandered unless supported by consistent curricular and teacher-training frameworks.

Conceptually, these findings affirm the importance of an inclusive, culture-based vision of education. Education is not merely a vehicle for transferring linguistic skills but also a medium for strengthening identity and critical literacy. Foster et al. (2023) emphasize that multicultural education should empower students to understand, appreciate, and critically engage with cultural diversity. Thus, integrating petatah-petitih is not only a means of preserving cultural heritage but also of cultivating students as critical individuals capable of navigating global challenges.

Broadly, the recommendations for culturally responsive curricula and teacher training align with the vision of building an education system that is locally grounded while globally adaptive. Integrating oral traditions such as petatah-petitih can serve as a powerful means of shaping generations who remain rooted in their cultural heritage while being prepared to face modernity's challenges. Practically, this calls for synergy among universities, teacher-training institutions, and education authorities in designing programs that equip teachers with culturally responsive pedagogical competencies.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Minangkabau petatah-petitih are not merely cultural heritage to be preserved but can serve as living pedagogical resources within the context of literary education in schools. Teachers' conviction that petatah-petitih function as instruments for character formation and cultural awareness is shown to be relevant to contemporary educational needs, even though classroom practices remain constrained by a nationally standardized, canon-oriented curriculum. The tension between conviction and structural reality demonstrates an ongoing negotiation by teachers, rendering the integration of oral traditions more symbolic than systematic. Nevertheless, this research reveals that when petatah-petitih are effectively integrated into classrooms, they create significant opportunities for developing critical literacy, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering pedagogical innovation. The novelty of this study lies in reframing discourse on petatah-petitih from mere textual objects to their utilization as sustainable educational instruments. The key implication is the necessity of designing curricula that are more responsive to local culture and supporting teacher training for oral tradition integration, ensuring that literary education not only transfers linguistic knowledge but also builds students' critical awareness and cultural identity in facing modern challenges.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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