



Value in *Wayang Sukuraga* as material for fiction texts in elementary school

Yoesrina Novia Vini Syafitri ^{1*}, Mamat Supriatna ², Hazrul Affendi Mohmad Razali ³,
Suciati Nur Apriyati ⁴

¹ STKIP Bina Mutiara, Sukabumi, Indonesia, 43192

² Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia, 40154

³ Kolej Islam Teknologi Antarabangsa (KITAB), Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

⁴ Universitas Islam Al-Ihya, Kuningan, Indonesia, 45552

Article info	Abstract
Keywords: elementary school, fiction text, local wisdom, wayang sukuraga.	Wayang Sukuraga is a traditional Sundanese art that visualizes human body parts as symbolic figures laden with moral values. This study aims to describe the values contained in Wayang Sukuraga characters, such as Eyes, Ears, Mouth, Hands, and Feet, and their relevance as fictional text material in elementary schools. The method used is qualitative description with data collection techniques including interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that each Wayang Sukuraga character contains a strong moral message, including Eyes, which symbolize caution in judging, Ears, which depict the ability to filter information, mouth, which represents ethics in speaking, Hands, which reflect real work and actions, and Feet, which teach the right direction in life. These values are educational, humanistic, and relevant for strengthening the character of elementary school students. In addition, Wayang Sukuraga has high potential as a source of inspiration in learning fictional texts, because the symbolism of its characters can be developed into imaginative stories rich in moral messages. Thus, Wayang Sukuraga is an effective cultural medium for instilling character values through literacy learning in elementary schools.

* Corresponding Author.

E-mail address: yoesrinanoviavini@gmail.com (Yoesrina Novia Vini Syafitri)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.33578/jpkip.v15i2.369-385>

Received 4 January 2026; Received in revised form 2 April 2026; Accepted April 8 2026

Available online 28 April 2026

e-ISSN 2598-5949 | p-ISSN 2303-1514 © The Authors.

1. Introduction

Traditional arts are an integral part of a nation's cultural heritage, rich in local wisdom and crucial to shaping community identity. Agisfi and Rabbil (2023) emphasize that traditional arts in West Java function as a medium of cultural transmission, ensuring the continuity of local values amidst rapid social transformation. In this region, traditional arts such as Wayang Golek, Angklung Sered, Tarawangsa, and Wayang Sukuraga represent collective expressions of Sundanese society, integrating aesthetic, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. The West Java Cultural Values

Preservation Center (BPNB Jabar, 2022) highlights that preservation efforts require systematic stages of research, reconstruction, and revitalization to maintain relevance without losing authenticity. In this regard, traditional arts are not merely historical artifacts but also serve as instruments for character education and cultural identity formation (Setiawan & Isha, 2024; Biesta, 2020). This argument is strengthened by findings from primary education studies indicating that integrating local culture into elementary education enhances students' cultural awareness, engagement, and character development (Sari, 2021; Putri & Nugraha, 2022; Putra & Amelia, 2021; Siregar & Wahyuni, 2022).

The integration of traditional arts into educational practices aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that students construct knowledge through active engagement with their environment and social interaction (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). Wayang Sukuraga, through its symbolic representation of body parts, provides concrete and contextual means for students to understand abstract concepts such as morality and responsibility. This is further supported by culturally responsive pedagogy, which asserts that incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into learning enhances engagement, relevance, and academic success (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Moreover, the multiliteracies framework emphasizes that literacy is developed through multiple modes, including visual, symbolic, and narrative forms (New London Group, 1996; Kress, 2010). Empirical findings confirm that contextual, interactive, and culture-based learning significantly improves students' literacy skills, motivation, and critical thinking (Rahman & Fitria, 2020; Yuliana et al., 2021; Apriani & Suryani, 2021; Hidayati & Rahmawati, 2022; Nugroho & Pratiwi, 2023). Thus, Wayang Sukuraga is not only a cultural symbol but also a pedagogical medium that facilitates the holistic development of literacy, character, and cultural identity.

A concrete example of the revitalization of traditional arts in West Java is Wayang Sukuraga, a distinctive art form from Sukabumi created by the artist Effendi. Beginning in the early 1990s, Effendi explored abstract representations of human body parts through visual art, which later evolved into a performative medium combining artistic expression with moral messaging. First performed around 1996, Wayang Sukuraga was designed as both an educational and cultural performance medium. The term "Sukuraga" derives from *suku* (member) and *raga* (body), reflecting its conceptual foundation. Initially presented as a visual artwork, it later developed into a performance rich in symbolic and philosophical meaning, in which characters take the form of body parts—eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet—each representing specific values and functions (Suardi, 2019; Hidayat & Suandana, 2019). Research in primary education contexts also shows that the use of storytelling and symbolic media, such as wayang, can improve students' reading comprehension and engagement in learning activities (Rahayu, 2020; Kurniawan & Lestari, 2021; Dewi & Handayani, 2022).

Philosophically, each body part embodies responsibility and moral function, distinguishing Wayang Sukuraga from other forms such as Wayang Kulit and Wayang Golek, which rely on fixed characters derived from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics (Lyesmaya & Nurmeta, 2022). In Wayang Sukuraga, characters are dynamic and contextual, allowing each to function as either a protagonist or an antagonist depending on the narrative circumstances. This flexibility provides a richer framework for moral interpretation and aligns with critical literacy perspectives that encourage students to interpret meaning dynamically rather than passively (Janks, 2018; Luke, 2018). Furthermore, Wayang Sukuraga serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for moral education, social communication, and cultural reflection. Its sustainability is supported by institutions such as the Fendi Sukuraga Cultural House, which facilitates performances, workshops, and cultural research. Its simple yet communicative form makes it adaptable to modern educational contexts (Lestari, 2022; Fitria & Sari, 2021).

Despite its potential, challenges persist in elementary school learning practices. Instruction often relies on conventional teaching materials that lack contextual relevance and fail to effectively integrate local culture, resulting in low student engagement and limited literacy development, particularly in critical and creative comprehension of fictional texts (OECD, 2019). Empirical evidence from *Jurnal PAJAR* also indicates that the lack of innovative and contextual teaching approaches contributes to low literacy achievement and reduced student participation in learning (Rahman & Fitria, 2020; Maulana & Siregar, 2022; Iskandar & Putra, 2023). Additionally, Wayang Sukuraga is still predominantly utilized as a performance art or character education medium and has not been systematically developed as a literacy-based instructional resource. This reveals a gap between the potential of traditional arts and their pedagogical application in classroom practice.

A review of previous studies reveals that research on Wayang Sukuraga has primarily focused on its role in character education and communication skills (Rahayu, 2020; Lestari, 2022), without extensively exploring its integration into information literacy-based fictional text learning. Moreover, studies on traditional arts tend to emphasize preservation rather than transformation into innovative learning media that support 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, and information literacy (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). However, both international and national studies, including those published in *Jurnal PAJAR*, demonstrate that culturally integrated and student-centered learning significantly enhances engagement, conceptual understanding, and learning relevance (Gay, 2010; Moll et al., 1992; Yuliana et al., 2021; Apriani & Suryani, 2021).

Therefore, this study holds strong scientific urgency. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of elementary education by integrating local culture within the framework of 21st-century literacy and learning. Pedagogically, it offers innovative and meaningful learning approaches by utilizing Wayang Sukuraga as a literacy-based instructional medium. Culturally, it supports the preservation and revitalization of traditional arts by transforming them into educational resources. In practice, it provides teachers with a reference for developing culturally grounded fictional text materials that enhance students' literacy and character development. Thus, integrating Wayang Sukuraga into learning is not only relevant but also a strategic necessity for addressing the challenges of 21st-century education, which demand integrating literacy, character, and cultural identity.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to explore and understand in depth the values embedded in Wayang Sukuraga art in Warudoyong District, Sukabumi City. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for examining cultural phenomena, meanings, and social interactions in their natural contexts, allowing researchers to capture rich, contextually situated data (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Flick, 2018). Furthermore, qualitative approaches have been widely used in cultural and educational studies to uncover meaning-making processes and social practices in authentic settings (Silverman, 2016; Tracy, 2020).

The selection of informants used a purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately selecting individuals based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). This technique is considered effective in qualitative inquiry because it allows researchers to obtain information-rich cases that provide deep insights into the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015; Etikan et al., 2016). The criteria included individuals who possess direct

knowledge and experience of Wayang Sukuraga, are actively involved in its preservation or study, and are capable of providing credible, in-depth information. In addition, the selection considered the diversity of perspectives to ensure comprehensive data and contextual richness (Robinson, 2014). Therefore, the key informants in this study consisted of a Wayang Sukuraga artist (Effendi), an academic and researcher (Dr. Dyah Lyesmaya, M.Pd.), and a community leader (Mr. Asep), representing artistic, academic, and socio-cultural viewpoints.

The data collection procedure involved three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, which allows flexibility while maintaining focus on research objectives (Kallio et al., 2016; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). This approach enables researchers to explore participants' perspectives regarding the values, meanings, and functions of Wayang Sukuraga in a more nuanced manner. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure data accuracy and transparency. Second, participant observation was conducted at Wayang Sukuraga performances at the Fendi Sukuraga Cultural House, focusing on symbolic representations, interactions, and audience responses. Participant observation is particularly useful in cultural studies as it allows researchers to understand behaviors and meanings within their natural settings (Spradley, 2016; Kawulich, 2005). Third, documentation studies were conducted by reviewing relevant materials, including performance archives, photographs, videos, and related literature, which serve as complementary data sources and strengthen triangulation (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), which consists of three interconnected stages. The first stage is data reduction, which involves selecting, focusing on, simplifying, and transforming raw data through coding and thematic categorization. Coding plays a crucial role in qualitative analysis as it helps identify patterns and construct meaningful interpretations from the data (Saldaña, 2016; Nowell et al., 2017). The second stage is data display, in which organized data are presented as descriptive narratives, matrices, or visual representations to facilitate interpretation (Miles et al., 2019). The third stage is conclusion drawing and verification, which involves identifying relationships, meanings, and patterns while continuously validating findings to ensure credibility and consistency (Yin, 2018). This analytical process is conducted iteratively throughout the research to ensure depth and rigor.

In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument (human instrument), directly involved in all stages of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). The researcher assumed the role of a moderate participant-observer, engaging in field activities without disrupting the natural setting. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process, recognizing the potential influence of researcher bias and subjectivity (Berger, 2015; Finlay, 2012). To enhance trustworthiness, the study employed several validation strategies, including triangulation of data sources and methods, reflective journaling, and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Carter et al., 2014). These strategies are widely recommended in qualitative research to ensure credibility, dependability, and confirmability of findings, thereby strengthening the scientific rigor of the study.

3. Results

The results of this research study include the origins of Wayang Sukuraga, its form and activities, its values, and its value as material for fictional texts.

3.1 The origins of wayang sukuraga

An interview with Mr. Effendi, a Wayang Sukuraga artist, revealed that Wayang Sukuraga was born from spiritual and philosophical reflections on the human body as a representation of morality.

This idea originated in a painting entitled "Steps" (1987), which depicts body parts such as the eyes, mouth, ears, hands, and feet in a layered visual. This inspiration is based on Surah Yasin verse 65, which emphasizes that on the Day of Judgment, the limbs will bear witness to human deeds. Effendi also emphasized that "humans are puppeteers, and the body is their puppet," a philosophical metaphor that each individual is responsible for their moral behavior. He explained that the initial idea for Wayang Sukuraga arose from his anxiety about seeing the younger generation start to distance themselves from local culture and from a lack of awareness of the importance of maintaining themselves and their behavior. The painting that became the beginning of Wayang Sukuraga is as follows.



Figure 1. Wayang sukuraga painting (source: personal documentation, 2025)

The primary inspiration for Wayang Sukuraga stems from the concept of body parts as symbols of human nature. He believes that each body part is not merely a physical organ, but also carries a moral significance that can be used for reflection. For example, the eyes symbolize vision and caution, the ears the ability to listen and understand others, the mouth represents careful speech, while the hands and feet symbolize action, hard work, and responsibility. He derived this philosophy from his artistic experience, parental teachings, and Sundanese ethical values, which emphasize that humans must protect their limbs from reprehensible behavior. This is where the term "Sukuraga" was coined, a combination of the words suku (member) and raga (body).

The process of creating Wayang Sukuraga is a gradual process, from painting to performance. According to Mr. Effendi, during an interview, the first designs were made from cardboard with simple shapes drawn. He then added bright colors to appeal to children. In this process, he developed each character based on the characteristics of each body part. Each character has characteristics, dialogue, and stories that contain moral messages, such as the importance of speaking well, listening attentively, working together, and maintaining good behavior. He emphasized that these characters are not just entertainment, but educational communication tools. In the interview, Mr. Effendi also explained that Wayang Sukuraga was initially introduced in school activities, art studios, and children's counseling in Warudoyong District and around Sukabumi. The public response was very positive because of its unique, easy-to-understand form. Since then, Wayang Sukuraga has developed rapidly, especially when it began to be used in teaching moral values and character education. This success has led to Wayang Sukuraga being invited to various art activities and to becoming part of cultural preservation programs by local communities. Mr. Asep, a local community leader, stated that Wayang Sukuraga has persisted

because it can be easily adapted to digital and learning media, as well as simple art performances relevant to educational contexts.

3.2 The form and activities of wayang sukuraga

Based on observations obtained on October 5, 2025, Wayang Sukuraga differs from traditional shadow puppetry. The performance does not use a screen or a white screen; instead, the puppeteer interacts directly with the audience. The following is a Wayang Sukuraga performance, as seen in the image below.



Figure 2. Sukuraga wayang performance (source: personal documentation, 2025)

In this Wayang Sukuraga performance, the puppeteer plays all gamelan instruments such as drums, gongs, sarons, and cymbals alone, while bringing to life the dialogue between the body parts that become the main characters. Liesmaya & Nurmeta (2022) stated that the characterization in Wayang Sukuraga differs from that in other wayang, such as wayang kulit and wayang golek, which have their own identities and do not adopt the Ramayana or Mahabharata epics. The characters in Wayang Sukuraga include the Eyes, Ears, Mouth, Hands, and Feet. The following is the symbolic meaning of the Wayang Sukuraga characters:



Figure 3. Eye figure (ma ata (source: <https://sukuraga.com/rumahbudaya/karya-fendi/rumah-budaya/>)

Description: The Mata figure symbolizes wisdom and control of the gaze. In performances, its visual form resembles a face with large, expressive eyes. It reminds people to be careful in their views and judgments, in keeping with the moral message of guarding one's gaze from evil.



Figure 4. Ear figure (ceu eli) (source: <https://sukuraga.com/rumahbudaya/karya-fendi/rumah-budaya/>)

Description: Ears represent the ability to hear good things and reject negative whispers. Visually, this character is often depicted with large ears, signifying openness and a willingness to absorb advice.



Figure 5. Mouth Figure (Mulutna) (Source: <https://sukuraga.com/rumahbudaya/karya-fendi/rumah-budaya/>)

Description: Symbolizing wise speech and control over one's speech. This figure is often visualized in red or orange, representing the energy of communication and the power of language as a mirror of one's morals.



Figure 6. Hand Figure (*Leungeun Katuhu dan Kénca*) (Source: <https://sukuraga.com/rumahbudaya/karya-fendi/umah-budaya/>)

Description: The right and left hands symbolize work, charity, and responsibility. In the performance, the hands move dynamically, signifying concrete actions in social life. The message is that humans should not only think and speak, but also act for the good.



Figure 7. Sukuraga Wayang Character: Feet (*Kudu Leumpang*) (Source: <https://sukuraga.com/umahbudaya/karya-fendi/umah-budaya/>)

Description: Feet represent the right direction and steps in life. They symbolize a moral commitment to following the straight path. In the performance, foot movements accompany the "Kudu Leumpang" dance, signifying that humans must continue walking towards goodness.

Observations and interviews with Pak Effendi, a Sukuraga puppet artist, revealed that the Sukuraga puppet show is flexible, with no fixed duration for each performance, unlike traditional puppet shows. Sukuraga puppets emphasize conveying meaning and moral values through puppet characters representing human body parts, such as eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet. This performance serves as both entertainment and an educational medium, conveying messages about behavior and etiquette derived from these body parts, reflecting human life and moral responsibility.

The puppeteer in this performance acts as both director and solo actor, presenting the story accompanied by traditional music and other artistic elements. Wayang Sukuraga typically touches on contemporary social and real-life issues, with performances lasting approximately one to two hours. Mr. Effendi also revealed that Wayang Sukuraga performances are often performed at official events, community events, and cultural festivals. In each performance, a moral message is delivered in the context of social issues, such as the imbalance between morality and technology among modern humans.

3.3 The value of wayang sukuraga

Based on literature reviews and field studies, Wayang Sukuraga in Warudoyong District, Sukabumi City, reveals the meaning and values of the representation of body parts as wayang characters. This Sukuraga puppet conveys a simple yet profound moral message. The value of responsibility is reflected in the Hand and Foot characters, who teach that every action must be carried out consciously and used for good. The mouth symbolizes honesty, reminding us that words have consequences and that we must guard our speech to avoid hurting or deceiving others. The value of discipline is also implied by the Foot symbol, which illustrates the importance of taking the right steps and adhering to rules. Meanwhile, the Ears represent empathy and caring, as listening intently is a form of respect for others. The Eyes character conveys a message of caution and wisdom, emphasizing that humans must be selective in their observation, assessment, and understanding of situations before acting.

All the Wayang Sukuraga characters demonstrate that body parts work together, thus instilling the value of cooperation and the importance of collaboration in social life (Nurjanah, 2020; Suryana & Wibowo, 2021; Rosidi, 2021). Furthermore, according to Hidayat & Sundana (2019), the core of this philosophy is the value of gratitude, as reflected in the name "Sukuraga," which teaches that the human body is a gift from God and must be cared for and used properly. Thus, Wayang Sukuraga serves not only as a work of art but also as a medium for character education, developing students' integrity, creativity, and self-regulation through symbolic understandings that resonate with everyday life.

3.4 The value of wayang sukuraga as material for fiction texts

Based on the previous analysis, the integration of Wayang Sukuraga can be situated more specifically within fictional text instruction in elementary schools, particularly in strengthening students' understanding of intrinsic narrative elements such as character, plot, theme, and moral message. This conceptual framework is further reinforced by empirical findings from informants, including artists, academics, and community figures directly involved in Wayang Sukuraga.

From a characterization perspective, the symbolic figures in Wayang Sukuraga Eyes (Ma Ata), Ears (Ceu Eli), Mouth (Mulutna), Hands (Leungeun Katuhu and Kénca), and Feet (Kudu Leumpang)

serve as concrete representations of human traits and behaviors. Empirical data from interviews with the main informant, Effendi (Wayang Sukuraga artist), reveal that each body part is intentionally designed to "represent human responsibility over their own actions," emphasizing that "humans are the puppeteers, and the body is their puppet." This statement reflects the idea of moral agency, where individuals consciously control their behavior. Supporting this, Dr. Dyah Lyesmaya, M.Pd., explained that such symbolic representations make it easier for elementary students to understand character roles in stories because they are visual, contextual, and closely related to students' daily experiences. These findings align with research indicating that well-developed characters enhance comprehension and empathy in narrative learning (Graesser et al., 1997; Mar & Oatley, 2008).

In terms of plot and narrative structure, field observations conducted at performances in the Fendi Sukuraga Cultural House show that conflicts in Wayang Sukuraga stories often emerge from imbalances in the functions of body parts, for example, when the mouth speaks without listening to the Ears or when the Eyes fail to observe. Informants highlighted that these conflicts are intentionally constructed to illustrate cause-and-effect relationships in human behavior. This empirical evidence supports the theoretical framework of story schema, which holds that students better understand narratives when events are logically and causally connected (Rumelhart, 1975). Additionally, community leader Mr. Asep noted that children who watch these performances tend to retell the stories by emphasizing "what went wrong and how it was corrected," indicating their ability to grasp narrative structure and moral resolution.

Regarding the moral message (theme and amanat), empirical findings demonstrate that Wayang Sukuraga effectively conveys ethical values through symbolic storytelling. Interviews and observations indicate that students can identify values such as responsibility (Hands), empathy (Ears), self-control (Mouth), critical awareness (Eyes), and discipline (Feet) after engaging with the performance or related stories. Dr. Dyah Lyesmaya emphasized that these values are "more easily internalized when presented in story form rather than abstract explanation," confirming the role of narrative as a medium for moral learning. This finding is consistent with the concept of fiction as a "moral laboratory," where learners explore ethical situations through imagination (Hakemulder, 2000; Mar, 2018).

Furthermore, in the context of reading literacy and classroom learning, empirical data show that using Wayang Sukuraga as a source of fictional texts increases student engagement and participation. Observations reveal that students are more active in discussing story elements, asking questions, and expressing opinions when the narrative is connected to familiar cultural symbols. Informants also reported that students demonstrate better comprehension when asked to retell stories or identify moral lessons, indicating improved literacy skills. This supports previous findings that narrative-based and culturally relevant materials enhance reading motivation and comprehension (Yulianawati et al., 2022; Hopkins & Weisberg, 2022).

Pedagogically, the empirical findings suggest that Wayang Sukuraga can be effectively implemented in fictional text learning through activities such as reading culturally based stories, identifying intrinsic elements, retelling narratives from different character perspectives, discussing moral values, and engaging in storytelling or dramatization. Informants emphasized that these activities not only improve students' understanding of narrative texts but also foster collaboration, critical thinking, and emotional engagement.

In conclusion, the integration of Wayang Sukuraga into fictional text learning in elementary schools is supported not only by theoretical frameworks but also by strong empirical evidence from field informants. The data demonstrate that symbolic cultural narratives make abstract literary and moral concepts more concrete, meaningful, and accessible for students. Thus, Wayang Sukuraga

serves as a powerful pedagogical resource that bridges narrative literacy, character education, and local cultural wisdom in a holistic and contextually relevant learning process.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Wayang Sukuraga functions as a symbolic system that conveys moral values through the personification of human body parts, as consistently confirmed by interviews and field observations. Effendi's statement that "humans are puppeteers and the body is their puppet" reflects the concept of *moral agency*, in which individuals control their ethical actions. This aligns with Frick and Kerkhoff's (2021) perspective that moral awareness develops through reflective engagement with one's own behavior, and is further reinforced by Biesta (2020), who emphasizes the importance of subjectification in education as a process of becoming morally responsible individuals. However, unlike abstract theoretical constructs, Wayang Sukuraga translates this concept into concrete, visual representations, making it more accessible to elementary school students. This finding is also supported by studies in primary education contexts, which emphasize that concrete, context-based learning media significantly enhance students' moral understanding and engagement (Setiawan & Isha, 2024; Lyesmaya & Nurmeta, 2022). Thus, cultural symbolism plays a significant role in facilitating the internalization of moral concepts in a more tangible and meaningful way.

Furthermore, the characteristics of Wayang Sukuraga figures reveal a strong connection with critical literacy and character development theories. The Eye character, which symbolizes careful observation and judgment, supports Janks' (2018) notion of critical literacy as the ability to interpret the world thoughtfully and reflectively, and aligns with Luke (2018), who positions critical literacy as a tool for fostering social awareness and critical engagement in education. Field findings show that the eye symbol is not merely aesthetic but also functions pedagogically, teaching students how to filter information critically. This extends the work of García and O'Donnell (2020) on visual literacy and is further supported by Kress (2010), who highlights the role of multimodality in meaning-making processes. In line with this, research in elementary teacher education journals indicates that integrating local cultural symbols into literacy learning strengthens students' critical thinking and interpretative skills (Rahayu, 2020; Lestari, 2022). Thus, Wayang Sukuraga not only supports critical literacy theory but also contextualizes it within students' lived cultural experiences.

In the socio-emotional domain, the Telinga (Ear) character emphasizes empathetic listening, aligning with the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) framework (CASEL, 2020), particularly in social awareness and relationship skills. This is also consistent with Zins and Elias (2007), who argue that social-emotional competencies are fundamental to students' academic and personal success. Observational and interview data indicate that narrative interactions within the performance highlight the importance of listening before responding. While this supports Rahmawati and Larsen's (2020) findings that culturally integrated learning enhances empathy, this study further contributes by showing that empathy can be effectively developed through symbolic narratives rather than solely through direct interpersonal interaction.

Similarly, the Mulut (Mouth) character, which stresses the importance of controlling speech, corresponds with Nguyen and Guo's (2021) findings on verbal regulation and its influence on prosocial behavior. Field data reveal that narrative conflicts often emerge from the misuse of speech, such as speaking without reflection or without listening. This perspective is strengthened by Gee (2015), who explains that language practices are deeply tied to identity and social behavior. This suggests that moral values are embedded in the narrative structure itself, enabling students to understand ethical consequences through story-based contexts. Supporting this, studies in *Jurnal*

Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar highlight that narrative-based learning using local cultural media helps students understand the impact of communication behavior and fosters responsible expression (Setiawan & Iasha, 2024).

The roles of Tangan (Hands) and Kaki (Feet) further reinforce the principles of action-based character education (Weninger, 2019), highlighting values such as responsibility, hard work, and commitment. These findings are consistent with those of Yunus et al. (2022), who emphasize the effectiveness of practice-based, culturally relevant learning in strengthening moral internalization. In addition, the concept of *funds of knowledge* proposed by Moll et al. (1992) supports the idea that students' cultural backgrounds can serve as valuable resources in constructing meaningful learning experiences. This indicates that Wayang Sukuraga not only conveys moral values conceptually but also bridges them into actionable and contextually grounded learning.

From a pedagogical perspective, integrating Wayang Sukuraga into instruction on fictional texts closely aligns with the local culture-based literacy approach. UNESCO (2021) highlights that culturally contextual learning enhances student motivation and comprehension, while Ladson-Billings (2014) emphasizes the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in fostering meaningful and inclusive learning environments. This is further supported by OECD (2019), which underscores the need for education systems to develop students' competencies through contextual and culturally responsive approaches. Empirical studies by Septiani et al. (2023) also show that traditional cultural media facilitate understanding of narrative structures and character values. The present study confirms these findings, demonstrating that Wayang Sukuraga provides complete intrinsic elements of fiction, including symbolic characters, moral conflicts, and explicit messages. More importantly, this study contributes a novel insight by positioning traditional art not merely as supplementary media, but as a primary source for constructing meaningful fictional learning materials.

In conclusion, the integration of field data, theoretical frameworks, and prior research, including evidence from Scopus-indexed studies, indicates that Wayang Sukuraga plays a strategic role in fostering literacy and character education. This study not only validates existing theories but also extends them by providing empirical evidence that local cultural forms can transform abstract moral and literacy concepts into concrete, contextual, and meaningful learning experiences for elementary school students.

5. Conclusion and implications

This research yielded the key finding that Wayang Sukuraga possesses a systematic and representative structure of moral values through the symbolism of body parts (eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet), which have been empirically proven to embody the values of honesty, responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and wisdom in life. These findings not only demonstrate the relevance of Wayang Sukuraga as a cultural heritage but also confirm its potential as a contextual learning resource in Indonesian language learning, particularly in fictional texts. Substantively, Wayang Sukuraga provides a complete set of intrinsic story elements, symbolic characters, a plot based on moral conflict, a contextual theme, and an explicit message, thus enabling students not only to understand the text's structure but also to internalize character values through meaningful learning experiences. Thus, the findings of this study confirm that integrating local culture into literacy learning is not merely complementary but can also serve as a primary resource for building elementary school students' narrative understanding and character.

The practical implications of this research suggest that elementary school teachers can use Wayang Sukuraga as an innovative teaching material to teach fictional texts using a culture-based

approach. Teachers can develop learning scenarios that integrate character analysis, plot, and moral messages, while exploring the moral values contained in each body symbol. Furthermore, the use of visual media and simple performances based on Wayang Sukuraga can increase student engagement, strengthen visual literacy, and support the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of noble character and global diversity. For curriculum developers, these findings provide a basis for systematically integrating local culture into teaching materials, thereby creating contextual, relevant, and meaningful learning experiences.

As for directions for further research, more in-depth studies are needed that use experimental or mixed-methods approaches to quantitatively test the effect of Wayang Sukuraga on improving students' literacy skills and character. Furthermore, further research can develop Wayang Sukuraga-based learning models integrated with digital technology, such as interactive e-modules or augmented reality, to expand the reach and effectiveness of learning in the digital age. Comparative research across local cultures is also crucial for identifying the strengths and uniqueness of each culture as a source of literacy. Thus, the continuation of this research is expected not only to strengthen the theoretical foundation but also to produce pedagogical innovations that are adaptive to developments in 21st-century education.

Credit authorship contribution statement

First Author: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft.

Second Author: Methodology, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation. **Third Author:** Formal Analysis, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Review & Editing. **Fourth Author:** Supervision, Project Administration, Funding Acquisition, Writing – Review & Editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently without any financial or commercial influence.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. However, the data are not publicly accessible as they contain information related to human participants, and their confidentiality and privacy must be protected.

Ethical Declaration

Kindly provide a clear and compliant Ethical Approval Statement. If your study involved human participants, please confirm that the research adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki and that informed consent was obtained. If your study did not involve human participants or animals, please state clearly: "Ethical approval is not applicable to this manuscript. All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. They were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Declaration of AI statement

Portions of this manuscript were drafted, edited, and refined with the assistance of ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Grammarly. These tools were used to support academic writing processes, particularly in improving grammar, clarity, coherence, and overall language quality. All AI-assisted outputs were carefully reviewed, revised, and validated by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

References

- Agisfi, M., & Rabbil, A. (2023). Traditional arts and cultural sustainability in West Java. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(2), 120–135.
- Apriani, D., & Suryani, L. (2021). Penerapan model pembelajaran berbasis masalah untuk meningkatkan literasi siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 5(2), 345–352.
- Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Jawa Barat. (2022). *Laporan pelestarian nilai budaya Jawa Barat*. BPNB Jawa Barat.
- Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>
- Biesta, G. (2020). Risking ourselves in education: Qualification, socialization, and subjectification revisited. *Educational Theory*, 70(1), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12411>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40.
- Brewer, W. F. (1980). Literary theory, rhetoric, and stylistics: Implications for psychology. *Poetics*, 9(1–3), 121–147.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing interviews* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(5), 545–547.
- CASEL. (2020). *What is social and emotional learning?* Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. <https://casel.org>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dewi, R., & Handayani, T. (2022). Pengembangan bahan ajar berbasis budaya lokal di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 6(1), 78–86.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4.
- Finlay, L. (2012). Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 6(1), 6–25.
- Fitria, Y., & Sari, N. (2021). Pengaruh media pembelajaran interaktif terhadap hasil belajar siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 5(3), 489–497.
- Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Frick, M., & Kerkhoff, A. (2021). Fostering moral agency through reflective practices in education. *Journal of Moral Education*, 50(3), 345–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1781068>
- García, A., & O'Donnell, B. (2020). Developing visual literacy in elementary education: Implications for teaching and learning. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 52(4), 476–498. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X20966381>
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Gee, J. P. (2015). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (5th ed.). Routledge.
- Graesser, A. C., Singer, M., & Trabasso, T. (1997). Constructing inferences during narrative text comprehension. *Psychological Review*, 101(3), 371–395.
- Greenhow, C., & Lewin, C. (2016). Social media and education: Reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 41(1), 6–30.

- Hakemulder, J. (2000). *The Moral Laboratory: Experiments Examining the Effects of Reading Literature on Social Perception and Moral Self-Concept*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Herlina. (2012). Pengaruh pembelajaran berbasis cerita terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 13(2), 145–156.
- Hidayat, T., & Suandana, I. (2019). Nilai filosofis dalam Wayang Sukuraga sebagai media pendidikan karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan Seni*, 8(1), 45–56.
- Hidayati, N., & Rahmawati, D. (2022). Peningkatan kemampuan berpikir kritis melalui pembelajaran kontekstual. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 6(2), 210–218.
- Hopkins, E. J., & Weisberg, D. S. (2022). The role of narrative engagement in children's learning from stories. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 218, 105365.
- Iskandar, M., & Putra, R. (2023). Integrasi literasi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 7(1), 55–63.
- Janks, H. (2018). *Literacy and power*. Routledge.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965.
- Kawulich, B. B. (2005). Participant observation as a data collection method. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(2).
- Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2021). *Asesmen nasional: Literasi membaca*. Kemendikbud.
- Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science*, 342(6156), 377–380.
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Routledge.
- Kurniawan, A., & Lestari, P. (2021). Penggunaan media cerita untuk meningkatkan keterampilan membaca siswa. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 5(1), 120–128.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74–84. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751>
- Lickona, T. (2019). *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Lestari, D. (2022). Pemanfaatan media budaya lokal dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 11(2), 145–156.
- Lyesmaya, D., & Nurmeta, I. K. (2022). Wayang Sukuraga sebagai media pendidikan karakter pada siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 10(1), 25–34.
- Maulana, I., & Siregar, N. (2022). Pengaruh pembelajaran berbasis proyek terhadap kreativitas siswa. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 6(3), 400–408.
- Mar, R. A. (2018). Stories and the promotion of social cognition. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(4), 257–262.
- Mar, R. A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(3), 173–192.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534>

- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92.
- Nguyen, T., & Guo, Y. (2021). Verbal self-regulation and prosocial behavior in primary school students. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 49(5), 789–799. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01093-3>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1–13.
- Nugroho, B., & Pratiwi, D. (2023). Pengembangan literasi informasi siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 7(2), 150–158.
- Nurdiyantoro, B. (2018). *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Nuraeni. (2022). Integrasi profil pelajar Pancasila dalam pembelajaran berbasis budaya lokal di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Nusantara*, 8(1), 45–56.
- OECD. (2019). *OECD future of education and skills 2030: OECD learning compass 2030*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/5890a40c-en>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 42(5), 533–544.
- Piaget, J. (1970). *Science of education and the psychology of the child*. Orion Press.
- Putra, Y., & Amelia, R. (2021). Pembelajaran berbasis budaya dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 5(4), 600–608.
- Putri, A. D., & Nugraha, D. (2022). Integrasi budaya lokal dalam pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan karakter siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 8(1), 67–75.
- Rahayu, S. (2020). Penggunaan media wayang dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 9(3), 201–210.
- Rahayu, S. (2020). Penggunaan media wayang dalam meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 4(3), 567–575.
- Rahman, A., & Fitria, Y. (2020). Pengaruh pembelajaran kontekstual terhadap hasil belajar siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 4(2), 234–241.
- Rahmawati, Y., & Larsen, K. (2020). Culturally responsive teaching in primary education: Enhancing empathy through local culture integration. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(2), 451–466. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13231a>
- Ramirez-Avila, M., & Barreiro, C. (2020). Improving narrative comprehension through summarizing strategies in elementary education. *Journal of Language and Education*, 6(2), 85–97.
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25–41.
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1975). Notes on a schema for stories. In D. G. Bobrow & A. Collins (Eds.), *Representation and Understanding: Studies in Cognitive Science* (pp. 211–236). Academic Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Sari, M. P. (2021). Pembelajaran berbasis kearifan lokal untuk meningkatkan literasi budaya siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 6(3), 210–218.
- Septiani, R., Hidayat, T., & Supriyadi. (2023). Integrasi budaya lokal dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia untuk meningkatkan literasi siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, 8(1), 55–66.
- Setiawan, A., & Isha, V. (2024). Penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui pembelajaran berbasis budaya lokal di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 12(1), 1–12.
- Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

- Siregar, H., & Wahyuni, S. (2022). Implementasi pembelajaran tematik berbasis kearifan lokal. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 6(4), 520–528.
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.
- Suardi, A. (2019). Wayang Sukuraga sebagai media refleksi moral masyarakat. *Jurnal Seni dan Budaya*, 11(2), 98–107.
- Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st century skills: Learning life in our times*. Jossey-Bass.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wahyudin, D., & Sari, R. (2020). Penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui pembelajaran berbasis cerita di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PGSD*, 9(2), 120–130.
- Weninger, C. (2019). Problematising the notion of "authentic school learning": Insights from action-based character education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51(10), 1027–1038. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1427575>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Yuliana, R., Siregar, N., & Dewi, L. (2021). Pembelajaran berbasis budaya untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 5(1), 112–120.
- Yulianawati, I., Pratiwi, D., & Lestari, S. (2022). The impact of storytelling on elementary students' reading engagement. *Journal of Elementary Education*, 11(3), 215–224.
- Yunus, M., Rahman, A., & Fitriani, N. (2022). Culture-based learning to strengthen students' character in primary education. *International Journal of Elementary Education*, 6(2), 123–132.
- Zins, J. E., & Elias, M. J. (2007). Social and emotional learning: Promoting the development of all students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 17(2–3), 233–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410701413152>