

The Phenomenon of Indonesian Folklore Outspread for Teenagers

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Abstract

Folklore is a story that lives in a certain collective environment. In the early days, folklore was a source of education through verbal transmission for people who could not read and write. It is then passed down verbally by ancestors to the next generation to give life lessons and warnings to them. Unfortunately, the outspread of Indonesian folklore has been decreasing each day, especially for teenagers. One of the reasons for the reduced spread of folklore is the intervention of outside cultures that is served with a more interesting packaging, that made teenagers view Indonesian folklore as out-of-date. Other reasons for the reduced spread of the folklore to teenagers are the lack of support from the school's curriculum and the lack of interest from the general public. This research aims to explore the function of folklore for teenagers, how they know folklore in this era, and the way teenagers understand, and act upon Indonesian folklore. This research uses quantitative method by collecting questionnaire data and interviews about the outspread of folklore amongst teenagers. In the result, it is found the majority of teenagers only know a small amount of folklore. They know folklore mostly from school and storybooks to learn about the moral values inside it. This is not an ideal result for the folklore outspread for teenagers. It would be ideal if the teenagers knew and understood more folklore to apply in their lives, so they could be more open-minded. This research aims to provide the practical solution to this problem.

Keywords: Folklore, Teenagers, Outspread.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rampan [13] defines folklore as stories that live in a certain collective environment. It has become part of the rich history and culture of its people. Folklore is passed down by ancestors to the next generation, both verbally and in writing, in various forms [6]. Folklore's function as a means of communication containing moral, traditional, educational, and local wisdom values, is related to the transmission of folklore intergenerationally [5]. Folklore has other overlooked functions, namely as an introduction to ancestral warnings to the younger generation and as supporting material in research.

However, the spread of folklore in the present is hampered, especially for teenagers. The first reason is that parents are too busy to tell their kids folklore [16]. The second reason is how foreign folklore that are paired with digital packaging attract more youth attention than local folklore. For example, Ghibli movies that contain the essence of folklore packed in interesting plots and animation [8]. The third reason is the school books, like Indonesia's electronic school books, that often only contain famous folklore [15]. Teachers who are not interested in folklore also play a part since they teach based on school books without giving additional information. The last reason is the lack of support and interest from the general public that they view folklore only as teaching material about moral values for children only when it teaches people about other cultures, promoting cultural diversity, and understanding the present [9].

The lack of folklore outspread can have a huge effect. They can make children and adults close-minded that makes them lack understanding of other cultures and perspectives. It can

also make people unaware of disaster mitigation. For example, the tsunami incident in Aceh. Since there was only one region that knew about tsunami mitigation disasters through folklore, that was the only region with a minimum number of victims [1].

Folklore is usually spread verbally. But ideally for this generation, especially for teenagers, folklore can be spread by pairing it with technology, performances, and other interesting ways. It can help teenagers to understand and be more interested in folklore, and not view it as an out-of-date thing. It can also help them build more connections with other people who are also interested in folklore.

Folklore can be spread to a wide range of ages. In this paper, a wide range of ages will be able to participate, but the focus of the subject will be on teenagers aged 16-24. This research aims to determine the function of folklore for teenagers, how they know folklore in this era, and the way they understand and act upon Indonesian folklore. It is made to provide practical solutions to the problems occurring these days. A quantitative method is used for this research by collecting questionnaire data and interviews.

2. LITERATURE

2.1 FOLKLORE DEFINITION

Koentjaraningrat [7], known as The Father of Indonesia Anthropology, categorizes folklore based on cultural elements such as ideas, behavior, and physical aspects. Folklore itself is an idea with themes, plots, and characters. This research focuses on the behavioral aspect of folklore, while the physical aspect is still lacking.

2.2 FOLKLORE FUNCTION

Folklore functions as a shape of communication that contains moral, traditional, educational, and local wisdom values [5]. It acts as a messenger of ancestral letters to the younger generation. According to Joseph Campbell [10], one of the functions of mythological existence is instruction. Many lessons and tips are contained in folklore, even though the story was published and spread hundreds of years ago. Apart from that, folklore can also help as a supporting material for research. For instance, a research on the reception of the Keseneng Village community on the Kedung Wali myth which proves that the reception rituals of Keseneng Village and the folklore of Kedung Wali influence one another indirectly [14].

2.3 FOLKLORE OUTSPREAD

Traditionally, folklore is passed down intergenerationally [6]. However, documentation is needed to preserve folklore and spread it to the public with easy access [9]. In today's generation, there are more suitable methods for spreading folklore. The first method is by pairing it with technology such as educational games, which have been found to be appealing to elementary school students [16]. The second method is by pairing it with performances that is more preferable to Indonesians, as Bagus Takwin said [12]. But since games and performances are intangible, people often remember the visual aspects of games and performances rather than the actual story. A third method is to create movies based on folklore, such as the entertainment industry Bumilangit, which incorporates urban legend characters as heroes [11]. This method can help spread Indonesian folklore to a wider audience.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilizes a quantitative approach by gathering data through questionnaires and interviews. It follows a specific procedure, starting with a theory and hypothesis that are then measured quantitatively. The goal is to comprehend a phenomenon within a specific group of individuals and draw conclusions that can be applied to a larger group. The method involves five steps, including defining key questions, selecting participants, determining methods and variables, choosing analysis tools, and analyzing the findings [4].

The questionnaire is designed for a broad age range, but it primarily targets teenagers between the ages of 16 and 24. It aims to gather information on how teenagers perceive folklore, its significance to them, and how they engage with it. The responses will be analyzed alongside age data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how various age groups interpret and interact with folklore. Additionally, insights from a folklore expert will be sought to validate the findings.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 109 respondents participated in answering the questionnaires.

Table 1. The Age of The Respondent
Source: Personal Data

Age	Respondent	Responses
<15 years old	0	0%
16-24 years old	100	92%
25-34 years old	7	6%
35-44 years old	0	0%
45-54 years old	2	2%
>55 years old	0	0%

The data shows that the majority of participants in the questionnaire were aged 16-24 years old (92%), with a smaller number of participants aged 25-34 (6%) and 45-54 (2%). The analysis will focus on the role of folklore for teenagers, how they learn about folklore in the present day, and how they interpret and engage with Indonesian folklore.

Table 2. Vertical Complex Table about Ways of Knowing Folklore and Age
Source: Personal Data

Complex Table (Vertical)		Age		
Question	Answers	16-24	25-34	45-54
How do you know folklore?	School	40%	43%	50%
	Magazine	1%	0%	0%
	Storybooks	41%	57%	50%
	Internet	9%	0%	0%
	Social media	3%	0%	0%
	Performances	0%	0%	0%
	Parents	6%	0%	0%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Based on the data, it was found that 41% of respondents aged 16-24 learn about folklore through school, while 40% learn through storybooks. This pattern is also observed in other age groups, suggesting that the ways people acquire knowledge about folklore have remained relatively unchanged. Therefore, there is a need for alternative methods to improve access and understanding of folklore.

It is also seen in the data that there are 9% of teenagers learn about folklore through the internet, indicating that there are now more ways to share folklore, particularly through technology. This aligns with an interview with Galih Aristo, the founder of World Mythology Community, who believes that there needs to be more diverse methods of spreading folklore, including through advanced technology.

Table 3. Vertical Complex Table about Folklore Function and Age
Source: Personal Data

Complex Table (Vertical)		Age		
Question	Answers	16-24	25-34	45-54
In your opinion, what is the function of studying folklore?	To learn moral values	66%	57%	0%
	To know cultures from a certain region	9%	29%	100%
	To know the origin of a certain region	9%	14%	0%
	Knowing the mindset of the people in a particular area	1%	0%	0%
	Get to know yourself more	0%	0%	0%
	Understand more about life	1%	0%	0%
	To pass on wisdom to younger generations	1%	0%	0%
	Know more about human nature	2%	0%	0%
	Opening new perspectives in understanding certain things	10%	0%	0%
Total		100%	100%	100%

The data from the table indicates that people's beliefs about the purpose of folklore vary depending on their age. Among those aged 16-24, 66% believe folklore teaches moral values, while 10% believe it helps in understanding different perspectives. This is likely because teenagers in this age group are still in the process of forming their identities and values. The data also suggests that younger individuals are more open-minded and willing to consider different perspectives. In contrast, all respondents aged 45-54 believe folklore is a way to learn about the culture of a specific location. Adults use folklore for various reasons, including cultural research, entertainment, and gaining insight before visiting a place.

Folklore has traditionally been passed down verbally from one generation to the next [6]. However, since this form of sharing is intangible, people may interpret and understand folklore differently. This can lead to misinterpretations and changes in the content of folklore. As a result, younger generations may remember and spread folklore in various versions based on their understanding and memory. Additionally, different cultures around the world can also influence the variations of folklore. For instance, the different versions of the Cinderella story are influenced by the cultures and attitudes of each country [3].

There are upsides and downsides to the way folklore is spread and the variety of folklore that exists. The upside to this is that the abundance of folklore allows younger generations to choose which versions they resonate with, helping them develop an open perspective and shape their own identity and moral values. However, the downside is that with so many variations, it is easy for people to create new folklore without reliable sources or foundations. This can lead to the spread of negative ideas and adversely impact the younger generation's search for identity.

Folklore is constantly changing due to various factors, and its evolution cannot be halted. Therefore, it is crucial to document all forms of folklore to allow future generations to witness the diverse versions. Additionally, documenting folklore ensures that it is based on reliable sources, preventing the spread of misinformation.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

Folklore is a traditional story that is passed down through generations verbally, and it plays a significant role in society for people of all ages. However, the spread of folklore has been declining due to the increasing fascination with technology. It is crucial to find new ways to preserve and share folklore, especially with younger generations. According to questionnaire data, the method of spreading folklore has remained unchanged over time, but fortunately, there are signs of adaptation to modern generations. The success of recent folklore initiatives has demonstrated that teenagers can engage with and appreciate folklore more if its spread is increased.

5.2 SUGGESTION

There are numerous ways to increase the popularity of folklore, especially among teenagers. By combining folklore with technology and sharing it through social media, movies, performances, games, and communities, folklore can reach a wider audience. However, folklore still lacks a physical presence to fully establish itself as a cultural form. Therefore, creating a folklore center can provide a physical space for people to connect, discuss, and learn more about folklore through museums, theatres, classes, and other facilities. By consolidating all folklore-related activities and resources in one place, a folklore center can effectively enhance the dissemination of folklore.

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