

# THE ROLE OF REGIONAL LITERATURE AS A FOUNDATION OF STUDENT CHARACTER (Study of Students in Kendal Regency)

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this writing is to analyze the role of regional literature in shaping the character of students in Kendal Regency. This research uses qualitative methods, with primary data in the form of questionnaires. The research results show that the majority of respondents think that regional literature has an important role as a basis for forming students' character. Regional literature can strengthen students' identity, especially those in Kendal Regency and have a national outlook, so that they are able to face various challenges in the future. Apart from that, regional literature which contains lessons and wisdom in its stories will help in developing students' character.

**Keywords:** Role of Regional Literature, Student Character

## INTRODUCTION

The important role of literature in the formation of a nation needs to be considered. The first thing to note is that nations, as we understand them, are a relatively recent phenomenon in history. Historical records, archeology, and literature show that the structure of ancient societies was different from that of modern states. The concept of a modern state began to emerge during the European Renaissance when countries such as France and England achieved a unity that allowed the formation of a national identity based on various elements such as territory, language, political ideology and religion. However, literature is the element that unites everything to evoke a sense of nationality (Aslan, 2017).

Literature is a language-based art, where formal and social elements are modified to create written works. As a social institution, national literature emerges from the daily lives of people in certain regions. Based on this evidence, social institutions and individual psychology are elements that are readily represented in literary form and content (Murtini, 2019).

This prerogative allows literature to play an important, sometimes even decisive, role in the formation of a nation. It is known that every country faces challenges, often in the form of war, in the process of its independence, and after independence, the country begins to build relationships with the previously mentioned social institutions to begin the process of building its cultural identity. Therefore, the revival of national literature is very important to fulfill collective desires (Semadi, 2020).

Apart from that, the erosion of the noble values of Indonesian culture, including literature and regional languages, reflects the pattern of judgment of Indonesian society which tends to be pragmatic. The evolution of language and conversation in the current digital era seems to increase the potential for neglecting the elements and benefits of regional literature among students. Regional literature reflects the nation's socio-cultural conditions which must be preserved. However, empirically, the implementation of Indonesian language

learning, especially in the current digital era, still focuses on cognitive learning which emphasizes developing students' thinking abilities (Rosid Abdul, 2021). Cognitive development still revolves around the ability to memorize and master the exam question format. The limited teaching facilities for Indonesian students to hone their literacy skills, especially in regional languages, is reflected in the monitoring results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) over the last 18 years (2000 to 2018), where Indonesian students were ranked 371 twice, showing lack of progress in literacy interests.

This situation shows that interest in literacy, which is an important basis in forming students' character, is still far from expectations. The lack of awareness of the importance of regional literature and literacy in the digital era seems to be increasing among Indonesian students. Therefore, there is a need for encouragement for students to develop interest in regional literary values. This desire is in line with one of the contents of (Global Monitoring Report, 2006) entitled *Literacy for Life*, which states that literacy is the right of all humans, not only for moral foundations, but also to prevent and avoid the erosion of human potential and economic capabilities, which are the basic essence of human character education, in this case the character of students (Zuchdi, 2015).

The good character of a nation's students reflects the education system and quality of that nation. Therefore, the education system in Indonesia must be proactive in opening up many opportunities for educators to form students in a noble cultural atmosphere, especially through regional literature (Aslan, 2017). The importance of regional literature as one of the foundations of student character is something that cannot be ignored. One form of state effort to develop student character can be realized through regional literary literacy education in schools. Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this writing is to analyze the role of regional literature in forming student character in Kendal Regency.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach, because all sources of research objects are taken in a social context to explore the meaning of a group (students). This research uses primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to students who met the research criteria. The questionnaires given to respondents were closed and open questionnaires using Google Form, with the target respondents being all students in Kendal Regency. Secondary data used in this research comes from scientific journals and related literature.

In this research, the target population is students with an age range of 14-18 years. The research sample consisted of 50 school students in Kendal Regency.

## DISCUSSION

**Table 1 Respondents' Understanding of Regional Literature**

No	Question	Answer Percentage (%)
1.	Do you know what is meant by regional literature?	Understand 20%
		Don't understand 80%

Based on table one, the results of the first question from the online questionnaire were that 75% of respondents thought they did not really understand the meaning of regional literature, and 25% understood very well. So it can be concluded that 40 people and out of 10 respondents felt they did not understand the meaning of regional literature.

**Table 2 Description of Respondents' Understanding of Regional Literature**

No	Question	Presentation Questions Answers %	Statement
1.	What do you think about the definition of regional literature?	Literature that developed in the region and is expressed using regional languages 90%	Literature means letters, writings, or compositions, which are also expressions through language of someone's thoughts and feelings. So regional literature itself is literature or expression through language of thoughts and feelings that occur within the scope of a region where literature develops.
		Regional literature is a work in the form of written or oral literature 10%	Regional literature is writing or literary work in any form, such as poetry, songs, advice, stories, and developed in a region as a cultural work.

Then the second question is a survey in the form of an essay about the meaning of regional literature. As a result, 90% answered that regional literature is literature that develops within a regional scope and uses regional literature. Furthermore, another 10% answered that regional literature is a work in the form of writing or literary works in the form of poetry, songs, tips, stories, etc. that use certain regional languages as a form of local culture native to that region.

**Table 3 Known Types of Regional Literature**

No	Questions	Key	Percentage	Statements
1	What regional literature do you know?	Folklore	90%	of the public knows folklore more widely
		Fairy tales	82%	Almost all Indonesian children grow up being told fairy tales from their respective regions
		Poetry	36%	Not many people realize that poetry is a type of regional literature, not just a literary work.
		Pantun	68%	Pantun is a form of oral poetry that is used to express complex ideas and emotions, and almost everyone knows that pantun is included in oral literature.
		Myth	2%	Myths exist in almost every region of the archipelago, but only a few people realize that myths are included in regional literature

The results of the survey on the third question showed that 90% of respondents knew that regional literature was folklore, 82% knew that fairy tales were regional literature, 36 chose poetry as the regional literature they knew, 68% chose rhymes, and 2% chose myths. The conclusion is that there are three types of regional literature that are most widely known, namely folk tales, fairy tales and pantun.

**Table 4 Level of Interest in Reading Regional Literature**

No	Question	Interest	Percentage (%)
1.	How interested are you in reading regional literature?	Not interested	4
		Slightly Interested	4
		Quite Interested	26
		Interested	60
		Very interested	6

The fourth question in the survey asked respondents' interest in reading regional literature. As a result, 4% chose scale one, 4% chose scale two, 26% chose scale three, 60% chose scale four, and 6% chose scale five. This shows that interest in reading regional literature among respondents is quite high, with 60% choosing a scale of four, which means the interest percentage is in the range of 60%-80%, with a total of 30 respondents.

The fifth question is an open questionnaire that asks why respondents are interested in reading regional literature. As many as 85% of respondents said they were interested because regional literature contains moral values and messages and can broaden their knowledge about a region. Apart from that, 10% were interested because they thought regional literature had interesting characteristics. In comparison, 5% of respondents admitted that they were not interested in regional literature and did not like reading it.

In the sixth question of the survey, the results showed that 95% of respondents considered that studying regional literature at this time was still useful for students to become individuals with more character. In comparison, 5% disagreed with the statement. So, almost 100% of respondents considered that regional literature was an important element in forming the character of today's students.

**Table 5 How important it is to study regional literature in the digital era**

No.	Question	Answer	Percentage (%)
1.	In your opinion, does studying regional literature today help us become students with character?	Yes I think so	95
		No, I don't think so	5

The seventh question is an open questionnaire that asks why regional literature still influences the character of students today. Around 90% of respondents agreed that in the current era, there are more and more foreign cultural values that have the potential to shake the character and identity of the nation's children. The remaining 10% believe that regional literary works always have their own moral values and uniqueness which can be the basis for character formation in today's young generation.

In the eighth question, an open questionnaire regarding the definition of student character in the era of digitalization, we summarized the answers from 50 respondents. The results show that students with character are those who are able to filter foreign cultural values in the digital era, maintain character as the young generation of Indonesia, have self-control, and are able to develop national character with noble morals.

## CONCLUSION

Currently, with various information and culture from various countries entering easily, the majority of respondents believe that regional literature has an important role as a basis for forming students' characters. Regional literature can strengthen the identity of students, especially those in Kendal Regency, who have national insight so they are able to face various challenges in the future. Apart from that, regional literature which contains lessons and wisdom behind the stories will help in developing students' characters.

One of the limitations of this research is that the number of respondents did not meet the target, so it is not enough to describe the actual situation. In addition, this research is only based on general forms of regional literature. Future research is recommended to examine more specific regional literary forms.

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