
The value of the Makassar *kelong* in literature as an expression of local wisdom

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the meanings contained in the oral tradition and modern form of *kelong* from Makassar, Indonesia. The research method is qualitative, using a literature review that focuses on cultural research. Data analysis uses the model developed by Miles and Huberman. Based on the results of the research, the value of Makassar *kelong* consists of: 1) religious values consisting of human relations with God, relations between humans, and human relations with the natural cosmos; 2) nationalism values consisting of love for the country, national spirit, respect for diversity, willing to sacrifice, and obey the law; 3) the value of independence consisting of hard work, creativity and innovation, discipline, resilience, lifelong learning; 4) the value of gotong royong which includes cooperation, solidarity, kinship, and mutual orientation; 5) and the value of integrity which includes honesty, exemplary, responsibility, and love of truth. The five *kelong* values reveal the function, implementation, and existence of local wisdom practiced by the people of Makassar today.

Keywords: Local wisdom, *kelong*, Makassar, value

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INTRODUCTION

As a country with complex cultural riches, Indonesia sometimes experiences ups and downs in building harmony. Many positive and negative values are felt from this complex cultural diversity. Positive values, including a plurality of ethnicities, languages, and religions, give pride to the unique cultural diversity of the Indonesian nation. The negative values that occur include acts of thuggery, disharmony in relations between religious communities, and anarchist demonstrations, which are very worrying. Positive values can be extracted from various sources, one of which comes from the local wisdom possessed by each region. Local wisdom is a grand miniature in the cultural arena and is a complete concept of civilization. It serves as a beacon in every aspect of life. Therefore, each tribe in Indonesia makes local wisdom a cultural wealth that must be promoted and preserved because it is the wealth and pride of its people.

Cultural products influence societal life, and literary works are vital in humanity existence. Literature offers an imaginative means of engaging with the world through an artistic perspective. In addition, literature serves as a vehicle for authors to express their purposes, missions, ideologies, and opinions concerning what they observe, feel, experience, and contemplate. Every literary work centres on human beings, encompassing all aspects of humanity, including social and cultural dimensions. In the context of moral education, literature presents numerous values that can be studied and adopted as exemplary models. Literary works significantly contribute to character cultivation; exposure to texts that instil moral values constitutes an essential first step toward moral development.

Integration of traditional oral literature, such as *kelong*, into character education can effectively instil moral values in Generation Z. Studies demonstrate that oral literature possesses inherent educational values that resonate with younger audiences, conveying character education principles like honesty, responsibility, and empathy through storytelling (Jana et al., 2024; Zain, 2024). Educators can create environments that encourage collaboration and intercultural dialogue by integrating local traditions into educational contexts, thereby preventing conflicts (Friansah et al., 2023). Engaging with

oral literature reinforces a sense of belonging and community, which is vital for sustaining harmony in a pluralistic society (Mojapelo, 2023; Youpika et al., 2024).

The study of oral traditions, particularly within traditional poetry, reveals significant cultural, ecological, and educational values deeply embedded in these forms of expression. Oral poetry often encapsulates local ecology and cultural practices, providing insights into community relationships with their environment and reinforcing societal values of sustainability and resource management (Bouziane, 2024; Syahputera et al., 2024). Furthermore, traditional poetry serves as a vehicle for educational messages, fostering community identity and enhancing civic responsibility through its narratives (Herlina et al., 2024; Sulistyarini et al., 2023).

Makassar *kelong* is one of the cultural expressions of the people of Makassar, South Sulawesi. As with culture in general, *kelong* needs to be maintained and preserved to maintain the noble values of culture. One of the efforts to preserve *kelong* is by studying and researching the use of *Kelong* to be applied in the character education sector of children because children are the spearhead in continuing the national ideals of a nation. Studying *kelong*'s traditionally rich values presents a unique opportunity to explore the dimensions of culture, ecology, and moral education. Integrating literary works such as *kelong* into urban narratives, particularly in places like Singapore, emphasizes their role as cultural anchors that enhance urban authenticity (Saifudeen, 2025). This perspective aligns with a broader discourse on how maritime heritage can inform contemporary urban identity, demonstrating that *kelong* is not simply a relic of the past but a living component of an evolving community identity. The novelty of the *kelong* value study lies in its multifaceted nature, bridging the realms of culture, education, and ecology. An assessment of the value of the Makassar *kelong* can reveal more profound insights into its significance in contemporary society, thereby enriching understanding of its role in both local and global contexts. Based on this, this research was conducted as a first step to map and reveal the local wisdom values contained in the *kelong* tradition.

Hakim (1998:1) states that *kelong* is a form of Makassar poetry. *Kelong* represents one of the most well-known and enduring forms of literary expression, which continues to develop within society, particularly among those with a cultural and linguistic background rooted in the Makassar tradition. Makassar literary works classified as poetry include *doangang*, *paruntuk kana*, *kelong*, *dondo*, *aru*, *rapang*, and *pakkiok bunting*; those categorized as prose include *rupama*, *pau-pau*, and *patturioloang*; and those considered rhythmic speech are *royong* and *sinrilik*. Specifically, regarding the Makassar's poetic form *kelong*, scholarly research has shown some disagreement. Some scholars argue that *kelong* constitutes the root or prototype of all forms of traditional Makassar poetry.

Investigating *kelong*'s traditionally rich values presents a unique opportunity to explore cultural, ecology, and moral education dimensions. Integrating literary works such as *kelong* into urban narratives, particularly in places like Singapore, emphasizes their role as cultural anchors that enhance urban authenticity (Saifudeen, 2025). This perspective aligns with a broader discourse on how maritime heritage can inform contemporary urban identity, demonstrating that *kelong* is not simply a relic of the past but a living component of an evolving community identity. The novelty of the *kelong* value study lies in its multifaceted nature, bridging the realms of culture, education, and ecology. An assessment of the value of Makassar *kelong* can reveal more profound insights into its significance in contemporary society, thereby enriching understanding of its role in both local and global contexts.

Value is appreciated, respected or desired to be achieved because it is considered ideal in society. So, the Makassar *kelong* contained several values that its society must maintain and preserve. Values are levels, contents, characteristics, or things that are important or useful for humanity. Assessing means weighing, an activity that connects two different objects and then makes a decision. The values found in the Makassar *kelong* include religious, moral, and educational values. Apart from the values mentioned above, there is a crystallization of values based on the character education philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara (PKB Technical Guidance for School Principals and School Supervisors, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2 August 2017), namely religious, nationalist, independent, cooperation values, teamwork and integrity.

Based on the background mentioned above, this study formulates the problem of identifying the values contained in Makassar literature as one form of local wisdom of the Makassar community that can contribute to the character formation of teens (Gen-Z), especially those in South Sulawesi. The focus of this study is deemed important because *kelong* serves as a medium for strengthening character education values. *Kelong* is rich in educational content. The characteristics of Generation Z in Indonesia

are digital natives who tend to move independently rather than collectively to participate in society, which is dominated by efforts to voice opinions on social media platforms to contribute to public discussions.

Social media serves as both a source of information and a platform for participation. Many youths aged 17-21 act as social influencers through content on Facebook, Instagram, or vlogs. They spend a significant amount of their daily activities on the Internet. One case in South Sulawesi involved a child murder committed by a peer, driven by the perpetrator's belief in internet hoaxes about organ trafficking and the promise of financial gain. Thus, understanding the values of social interaction contained in *kelong* is crucial in shaping their character. Understanding the values in *kelong* can influence how they interact with the world, especially on social media. *Kelong* can impact Generation Z's ability to filter information and express themselves daily.

The study of oral tradition explains the "meaning" and "pattern" of oral traditions through a holistic approach. "Meaning" can be understood as function, values, norms, and local wisdom, while "pattern" refers to the rules, structure, and formulas inherent in the tradition. The study of oral tradition does not focus solely on the oral text but also considers the social and cultural contexts in which the tradition evolves. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how oral tradition functions within society and how cultural values are transmitted across generations (Sibarani, 2012).

The uniqueness of this study lies in uncovering the values embedded in *kelong* as part of oral tradition across generations. *Kelong* can be communicated from generation to generation. Therefore, this research can explore how these values are transmitted across generations. According to Amir (2013: 19), oral literature is a significant subject of study because it exists and continues to thrive within society—not only in Indonesian communities but also in many other countries worldwide. Oral literature remains alive in its original community, namely the society that created and nurtured it, in its place of origin, in its native village.

The benefits of this research are directed at two things, namely, theoretical benefits and practical benefits. The theoretical benefits are: i) this research is expected to be a reference for other researchers who wish to develop Makassar *kelong* values for the application of character education in learning models at the expected level; ii) it is hoped that it can contribute to knowledge in the educational environment, especially in the field of literature. There are two practical benefits of this research. First, to provide information to all components of society, including literature lovers, about the need to maintain the value of local wisdom as an educational tool, especially for children, who are a strong pillar of the nation's next generation. Lastly, for researchers themselves, the results of this research are expected to add to the body of knowledge, especially the application, utilization, development, and preservation of local wisdom values as a guide to social life.

METHOD

A qualitative, culturally-focused library research methodology based on cultural phenomena is used in this study. The Makassar *kelong*, a traditional literary work transmitted through written media, serves as the empirical source for the data. Exploring the ideals found in *kelong* literature as manifestations of Makassar indigenous wisdom is the main goal of the study. Key methodological principles, such as the researcher's role, research setting, data sources, data collection procedures, instruments, data analysis, and data validation—elements that correspond with the features of qualitative research—are taken into consideration when designing the study descriptively in accordance with the qualitative paradigm.

The data used in this study comes from Makassar *kelong*, which captures the Makassar community's traditional knowledge. In order to fully comprehend and interpret the meanings of these literary works, the researcher gathered them and read them several times. To confirm the principles ingrained in the literary works—especially those that represent the character and worldview of the Makassar people as the cultural owners of the *kelong* tradition—the researcher also spoke with trustworthy informants as part of the observation technique.

Data collection and analysis were carried out simultaneously, and then again afterwards. This study uses the interactive data analysis paradigm created by Miles and Huberman (1992), which analyzes qualitative data interactively and continually until saturation is reached.

The researcher serves as the main research tool in this research. The approach used entails preliminary research to find literary works that incorporate the ideals being studied. Since the analysis

is interpretive, theoretical triangulation is used to support the findings' validity. Expert evaluation from academics and cultural researchers in related domains as well as practitioners with knowledge of Makassar language, literature, and culture further supports the validity of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Values cover all aspects of human life, both human relationships with God, humans with humans, and human relationships with the natural surroundings. Literary value can be defined as the presentation of a formula that can rationalise the reader's reaction. A proposition that can rationalize the reader's evaluative reaction to a particular text and is given a value by the reader is called literary value judgment.

Several values can be analysed based on the interpretation of meaning through reading the text in this research. The values that are often found or discussed in previous research are religious values, aesthetic values, moral values, and educational values. In this research, additional findings include (a) religious values, (b) nationalist values, (c) independence values, (d) mutual cooperation values, and (e) integrity values.

Based on the values in Makassar *kelong*, incorporating *kelong* into arts and culture education enhances students' development into compassionate, cultured, and responsible individuals. It promotes accountability, analytical reasoning, and emotional intelligence. *Kelong* is useful in regional language learning since it facilitates vocabulary growth, fluency, and cultural knowledge. Lastly, by incorporating *kelong* into educational pedagogy, *kelong* tradition can be kept current and transformational, guaranteeing that Makassar's legacy will continue to lead current and future generations in a constantly changing world.

Discussion

Religious values

Religion is an attitude and behaviour that is obedient in carrying out the teachings of the religion one adheres to, being tolerant, loving nature, and always establishing harmony between people. Sub-religious values consist of the following.

Relationship with the Creator

Faith and piety are associated with belief, as illustrated in data (24) from the fifth stanza, which emphasizes the obligation to worship God as the Creator. This is reflected in the following lyrics: "*Salai antu gauknu/ Punna teako annyomba/ Ka niak antu/ Karaeng mappakjaria*".

As religious beings, humans are obliged to carry out the commands of the Almighty. This idea is illustrated in the following data, which describes human devotion to God based on their conviction of His existence and belief in His supernatural nature. Therefore, belief in His oneness must be continuously strengthened. This is reflected in the following *kelong* lyrics: "*Kusomba ri maniak-Na/Mallakak ri taklenguk-Na/Nakujarreki/Risipak kasekreaan-Na*".

In this research, what describes faith and devotion to Almighty God is shown in the following data: to Almighty God is shown in the following data: *Karaeng Allah taala/ karaeng mappajaria/ia kusomba/ia tong kupaknganroi*. The society of Makassar is a predominantly Muslim society that believes nature and all its contents are created by God. Even though it cannot be seen logically, attitudes and beliefs remain strong in its existence. His existence can be believed in everything He created. This has been done by the community since Islam began to enter Makassar city.

Relations with others

Tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect between groups or individuals that must be upheld in social interactions. Tolerance comes from the Latin word *tolerare*, which means patience and restraint. Tolerance covers many areas, one of which is tolerance of religion. One example of religious tolerance is respecting each other and trying not to offend other people's feelings. The tolerance aspect can be illustrated in the following data: "*Tutulaloko ri kana/Ingakko ri pangaukang/Kodi gauknu/Kodi Todong Balakna*".

The positive attitude found is about maintaining an attitude in what we say, always protecting yourself from doing good deeds, because if you do something bad, you will also get recompense. This *kelong* also suggests that when socializing we must always maintain our attitude because the goodness

we have will be reflected in the attitude we show.

Helping each other is also a characteristic that the society of Makassar has had from the past until now. Both in physical and spiritual forms, for example, praying for each other's goodness. Prayer is part of how we believe in His power. Prayer is a request to Allah accompanied by humility to obtain goodness and salvation. Prayer can also mean approaching God with all your heart or sincerity. The people of Makassar still firmly believe that praying to Allah sincerely, God willing, will be answered. Thus, praying for each other showed that people sincerely hope the best for each other. Helping each other values can be seen from the following *kelong* lyrics: "*Kuminasaiko sunggu/Kutinjakko matekne/Manna pucuknu/Tangkebbu matekne ngaseng*".

Harmony with nature

Nature is the physical or material world, which generally concerns life. Humans live side by side and depend on nature. Therefore, humans must protect nature well. To protect nature, humans must pay attention to things like the following.

There is a saying that says cleanliness is a part of faith. Therefore, as a religious person, cleanliness must always be maintained to maintain the cleanliness of the faith. This can be illustrated in the third stanza data as follows: "*Sekreji kupala ri julu borikku/Sirikaji tojeng/Sollanna na nia areng mabajikta/Ri borik maraeng*".

The *kelong* mentioned above illustrates how Makassar people always keep themselves clean in their hearts and minds. Cleanliness of heart and mind is reflected in the word *siri*, which is the main character of the Makassar people. The *kelong* illustrates how the people of Makassar always want to show their identity as human beings who have principles, always maintain their honor and dignity as a tribe who always think positively, and have clean hearts and minds in living their lives in the midst of their community and from the perspective of outside society.

The people of Makassar are known for their deep love for their homeland. This affection is reflected in *kelong*, which expresses a love for the homeland. Through these *kelong*, the subject conveys a strong desire to protect the environment, represented by his longing for his son. The value of that aspect is shown in the following data: "*Naki makminasa tekneki masunggu/Na nacinik todong/Borik maraenga sarroa mangkakkali/Ri kamajuanta*". The *kelong* contains the value of hope for the progress of the hometown (environment). Take care of your hometown so that outsiders do not underestimate the progress achieved. This hope can be achieved if the people can properly maintain the potential within it.

As living creatures created by God, humans and nature were created to live side by side and depend on each other. Through nature, God provides all the riches in it for human prosperity. Likewise, with nature, humans must protect it so that natural resources continue to be maintained and can be utilized by humans for their survival. This is illustrated in the following data: "*Ussukko-ussukko dongik/Teako kanrei asengku/Ase karaeng/Pamarriang tunisomba*".

The *kelong* depicts how a farmer wholeheartedly protects his rice as his source of life. Nature provides the tools, and farmers use them for their living needs. Guarding it from attacks by the birds that would eat it, because they consider the rice field to be a gift from God that must be guarded and maintained.

Nationalist values

Nationalism functions by appreciating, maintaining, and developing the cultural riches of one's nation—wisdom, virtues, tradition, values, thought patterns, mentality, and cultural works—while also fostering respect for the cultural riches of other nations. This, in turn, strengthens the identity of the Indonesian nation. The nationalist values are love of the homeland, national spirit, willingness to sacrifice, and obedience to the law.

Love of the homeland

Love for one's homeland is a condition where people can give feelings of love and affection to their hometown, as illustrated in the following data: "*Tikring kamma anne mae/ Ri pakrasangang sunggua i/ Naniak tonja/ Pakrasangang kamaseku*". The nationalist value of love for one's homeland is depicted in the *kelong* above, which describes love for one's homeland. In the *kelong* text, it is described as someone who loves his homeland even though he is in a comfortable place, while his homeland is a poor place.

National spirit

National spirit is a condition that shows awareness of surrendering the loyalty of each individual to the State/nation or hometown, as illustrated in the following data: “*Adakna taua rinni/ Massing nagaukang inji/ Napauang/ Massing ri jari-jarina*”.

The nationalist values in the *kelong* above can be described based on the culture or habits of the community. In this research, the people in question are the people of South Sulawesi, especially the Makassar ethnic group. This data illustrates that culture or habits in society can be known, understood and practised because they have been passed down from generation to generation and passed down from their ancestors. This illustrates the national spirit inherent in the people of Makassar in maintaining customs and passing them on to their descendants.

An attitude of willingness to sacrifice is an attitude that reflects a willingness and sincerity to give something that is owed to someone else, even though it will cause suffering for oneself. The willingness to sacrifice is shown in the following data: “*Nakkukmak anne ri kampongku/ Kuring-kuring riballakku/ Apa gaukku/ Ka nasimbangak dolangang*”.

The nationalist value of being willing to sacrifice is found in the *kelong* above, which describes a person's longing and love for his beloved hometown. He missed his hometown, his home and relatives but was helpless because he was separated by the ocean. The *kelong* depicts someone who is willing to make sacrifices, leaving his hometown to endure all his longings in order to support his family.

Nationalist values are also found in data (23) in the third stanza, which describes a person who has gone abroad, but his heart and mind are still focused on his hometown. He only left because he was forced to seek fortune abroad. The *kelong* also illustrates that even though he is far away in another country, customary laws and customary norms are still maintained. His love is illustrated in the following *kelong* verse: “*Sekreji kupala ri julu borikku/Sirikaji tojeng/Sollanna na nia areng mabajikta/ Ri borik maraeng*”.

Value of independence

Independence is an attitude of believing in one's own abilities, strengths, and talents, not depending on other people. Independent sub-values are:

Hard Work (Work Ethic)

Hard work is an activity that is carried out seriously without getting tired or stopping before the work target is achieved and always prioritizing or paying attention to the satisfaction of the results of every activity carried out. This can be seen in the following data; “*Ussukko-ussukko dude/Ueako kanrei my aseng/Ase Karaeng/Pamarriang Tunisomba*”.

The *kelong* above describes the hard work carried out by a farmer in planting, maintaining, and protecting his rice from attacks by birds that prey on rice. The value of independence is trying to do everything honestly and correctly based on one's own encouragement and the ability to regulate oneself in accordance with one's rights and obligations so that one can solve the problems one faces.

Creative and innovative

The meaning of independence regarding creativity and innovation can be illustrated in the following data: “*Battu ratema ribulang/ Makkutaknang ri bintoeng/Apa kananna/Bunting lombo jako sallang*”.

The *kelong* above depicts the meaning of a person's dreams about the fate they will experience in the future. It is said to be a dream because this song was created and known to the people of Makassar long before anyone stepped foot on the moon. This *kelong* embeds hope in every line. It can also be interpreted as a prayer said by someone for their future happiness in their true life (married life).

Discipline

The value of disciplinary independence can be illustrated in the data below. The independence value in this data refers to the courage of Makassar fishermen in making decisions, it shows their discipline in making decisions. They dare to sail the seas even though they only use simple boats. They stand by their principles. What he has said, he will do according to his promise. The discipline aspect is shown in this *kelong*: “*Kubantunna sombalakku/Kutantang baya-bayaku/Takminasayak/Toali tannga dolangang*”.

Resilience

Resilience means not giving up easily in facing life's challenges. Resistant to all of the problems or changes that may have happened. Following data shown the resilient aspect: "*Punna nukana kalennu/ Caraddekko nu mannggasseng/ Botoi bedeng/ Minro-minro na tianang*". The value of independence in the data above refers to a person's ability to regulate themselves and believe in their abilities so that they can solve the problems they face. This data describes the high sense of self-confidence that the people of Makassar have in their abilities and intelligence in responding to the challenges that come their way.

The value of mutual cooperation

Cooperation is the ability to work together to fight for the common good for the wider community, especially those who are in dire need, marginalized and neglected in society. Sub-values of cooperation:

Cooperation

Gotong royong is an Indonesian term that is oriented towards the meaning of working together to achieve a desired result. This term comes from the words gotong, which means work, and royong, which means together. In this research, the meaning of cooperation can be found in the following data: "*Sekreji kupalak ri julu borikku/Sirikaji tojeng/Sollanna na niak areng mabajitta/Ri borik maraeng*". The value of cooperation is that the people of Makassar continue to maintain togetherness to maintain and preserve the noble tradition of *sirik*, which is the main characteristic and character of the Makassar people.

Solidarity

Solidarity is a sense of togetherness, unity, interest, and sympathy as members of the same class or common interests. Cooperation in the form of solidarity can be shown in the following data: "*Punna kugappamo sallang/Panngissengang kuboyaya/Kuminasai/Erok kupakmatu-matu*". The *kelong* mentioned describes a person's solidarity towards his/her group regarding the knowledge gained. He does not want to have the knowledge he obtains alone but wants to share it with everyone who needs it in the same interest. He wants what he knows to be used for the common good for the benefit of the people.

Kinship

Kinship is the interaction between people that forms a sense of belonging and connection with one another, as shown in the following data: "*Adakna taua rinni/ Massing nagaukang inji/Na napauang/Massing ri jari-jarina*".

The *kelong* mentioned above describes the preservation of customs in Makassar society. The sense of kinship in society is still very high and must be maintained so that it is not eroded by the times, which are influenced by the flow of globalization with all its advantages and disadvantages. Traditions are tried to be passed down from generation to generation in one community with all the maximum effort that can be made.

Integrity value

Integrity is harmonizing thoughts, words and actions that represent moral behaviour whose truth can be justified rationally. Sub values of integrity:

Honesty

Honesty is part of positive human nature. It is a part of self-esteem that must be maintained because it has a high value. Honesty is tied to human conscience. An example of honesty can be shown through the following data: "*Teajak nakke angnganre/Punna kaluku nilukkak/Mallakak nakke/Nipatunrung ri pokdena*".

In the data above, the value of integrity is a society that still maintains the noble culture that has been passed down from generation to generation. The culture in question is *mallak* 'fear' of committing wrongdoing *lukkak* 'stealing' and fear of bearing the consequences *mallakak nakke* 'I'm afraid'. The people of Makassar believe that honesty is the key to success in living a life, because no matter how small a mistake is made, it will be rewarded.

Exemplary behaviour

Exemplary behaviour is someone's behaviour used as an example for people who know or see it.

This can be shown in the following data: “*Tau toaku mappasang/Ri kambe anak cucunna/Alle paenteng/Pangngdakkang lakbirinu*”.

The exemplary value is found in the *kelong* above, containing a message from parents to their children and grandchildren that the tradition of glory must be upheld and maintained. The exemplary value is shown by parents to their children about how to behave and behave well in life in society so that other people can give appreciation.

Responsibility

The data below shows that integrity regarding responsibility involves upholding noble manners as something that society must maintain and continue to practice. People consistently pass this down so that it can be maintained by their descendants and used as a bond and tool to connect the past, present, and future. This value can be seen in the following section: “*Jari-jarina taua/ Takkulleai sisaklak/ Punna nisikko/ Pangngadakkang tau toa*”.

Moral commitment

Moral commitment is a promise to oneself or others to carry out actions that have positive values. Moral commitment can be described in the following data: “*Punna kugappamo sallang/ Panngissengang kuboyaya/ Kuminasai/Erok kupakmatu-matu*”.

The *kelong* above describes a person’s promise to themselves and the hope that it will be useful in the future for others, or a person’s promise of moral responsibility to themselves. He doesn’t want to have the knowledge he obtains alone, but wants to share it with everyone who needs it in the same interests. He wants what he knows to be used for the common good for the benefit of the people.

Love of the truth

The value of integrity, love of truth, can be found in data (23) in the second stanza which describes a person who always upholds sirik customs even though he is in another country. Sirik contains a strong meaning of truth for the people of Makassar. He advised his fellow villagers to always enforce sirik. Sirik is a character or self-esteem possessed by the people of South Sulawesi in general and Makassar in particular. This is illustrated in data as follows: “*Sekreji ku palak ri julu borikku/Sirik kaji tojeng/Sollang na na niak areng ma bajikta/Ri borik maraeng*”.

Integrating cultural, religious, and nationalist values through Makassar kelong in education and society

Makassar *kelong* reflects a complex set of cultural values deeply embedded in the religious, nationalist, moral, and social fabric of the community. These values are not compartmentalized but interwoven, shaping the attitudes and behaviors of the Makassar people across generations (Farisi et al., 2024).

Religious values occupy a central place in *kelong* narratives, rooted in Islamic teachings and expressed through poetic symbolism. These values span three interconnected dimensions: the relationship with the Creator, relationships with others, and harmony with nature. They promote faith, piety, and obedience to divine commands, as well as social virtues like tolerance, mutual respect, and helping others regardless of differences in belief (Akhmar et al., 2023). *Kelong* encourages responsible interaction with the environment, viewing natural resources as divine gifts to be preserved and respected. This spiritual-ecological ethos aligns with contemporary discourses on sustainability and reflects how indigenous wisdom can inform modern societal values (Sihombing, 2025; Sugihartono & Purnomo, 2023).

Nationalist values embedded in *kelong* emphasize the significance of cultural identity, unity, and dedication to the nation. These values manifest through the nurturing of patriotism, willingness to sacrifice, and respect for customs and laws. *Kelong* plays a vital role in instilling a strong sense of national identity and social responsibility (Zulfa & Wibowo, 2023). By reinforcing collective commitment to Indonesia’s cultural and political integrity, it supports the development of a resilient society (Riani et al., 2024).

In parallel, values of independence emerge as a call for personal empowerment. *Kelong* inspires individuals, especially the younger generation, to embrace hard work, creativity, discipline, and resilience. These values not only contribute to the personal growth of individuals but also to societal advancement

(Prajā et al., 2025). By cultivating independence and personal responsibility, *kelong* helps prepare individuals to navigate challenges and contribute positively to their communities (Aris & Wijaya, 2023).

The values of mutual cooperation, or *gotong royong*, are another cornerstone of *kelong*. These values promote togetherness, collective problem-solving, and social harmony. Through poetic verses, *kelong* teaches that no individual can thrive alone; mutual assistance and solidarity are essential. It fosters unity, reinforces the importance of social bonds, and encourages empathy and shared responsibility within the community (Jana et al., 2024; Talukder, 2025).

Similarly, integrity is a vital component of *kelong*'s moral guidance. It encompasses honesty, exemplary behavior, accountability, moral commitment, and a deep love for truth. These principles not only enhance individual character but also strengthen social trust and cohesion. *Kelong* functions as both a moral compass and a cultural legacy, passing these values to future generations (Apriani et al., 2023; Aura et al., 2023).

The implementation of these values in daily life and in education reflects their relevance beyond literary or cultural domains. Religious values expressed through *kelong* support spiritual practices, interpersonal ethics, and environmental responsibility. They find expression in rituals, everyday behavior, and classroom teachings (Wu et al., 2023). Nationalist values, when embedded into character education, help develop civic consciousness and national pride among students. The independence values promote critical life skills such as innovation, perseverance, and self-direction, which are especially important for young people in facing the pressures of globalization (Makgabo & Quintero, 2024).

In educational contexts, *kelong* also serves as a medium for cultivating mutual cooperation. It fosters inclusive and supportive learning environments, encourages collaboration, and strengthens cultural identity. Integrating these principles into the curriculum helps students develop into socially responsible individuals (Ariyani et al., 2023). Similarly, the value of integrity, when taught through *kelong*, enhances ethical awareness and character formation, ensuring that future generations carry forward a moral legacy grounded in honesty and truthfulness (Fatmahwati et al., 2024).

Kelong is more than oral literature; it is a living cultural force. It operates as a tool for communication, education, and entertainment, while also serving as a vessel for identity and tradition. The preservation of *kelong* is essential to maintain the transmission of noble values such as *aqidah* (creed), *ibadah* (worship), and *akhlak* (morality). In modern educational settings, *kelong* can be used to teach religious values in engaging and flexible ways, for example through storytelling in religious education or bedtime recitation by elders to children (Nilsen et al., 2025; Sunaryati et al., 2024).

Moreover, integrating *kelong* into arts and culture education enriches students' growth as humane, socially aware individuals. It encourages responsibility, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. In regional language learning, *kelong* proves effective in enhancing vocabulary, improving language fluency, and deepening cultural understanding. Its musicality and rhythm make language learning more enjoyable and impactful (Hashim et al., 2024; Sawita et al., 2024). *Kelong* teaches life values such as *siri' na pacce* (self-respect and solidarity), mutual cooperation, and filial piety. Thus, presenting regional languages through *kelong* offers an engaging alternative to conventional grammar-based methods, making the learning process more meaningful (Gamaliia et al., 2024; Maspul, 2024).

By embedding *kelong* into educational and cultural systems, the values it carries remain relevant and transformative, ensuring that Makassar's heritage continues to guide present and future generations in an ever-changing world.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the *kelong* analysis in this research, the values found in the research consist of (1) the religious values, which consist of relationship with the creator, relationships with others, harmony with nature, (2) the nationalist values: love for the homeland, national spirit, respect for diversity, willingness to make sacrifices, and obey the law, (3) the value of independence: work ethic, creativity and innovation, discipline, resilience, and lifelong learning, (4) the value of mutual cooperation: cooperation, solidarity, kinship, and oriented towards the common good, and (5) the integrity values: honesty, exemplary, responsibility, anti-corruption, moral commitment, and love for the truth.

After analysing these representations, the article found that to reveal the meaning of Makassar *kelong* is based on oral and modern forms. This research identifies five core values in the Makassar *kelong* texts: religious, nationalist, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity. These values,

integral to character education, shape moral and ethical behaviors (religious), foster patriotism and respect for diversity (nationalist), encourage self-reliance and responsibility (independence), promote teamwork and community spirit (mutual cooperation), and build strong moral character and trustworthiness (integrity). By embedding these values, schools nurture well-rounded individuals who positively contribute to society.

The study of values in Makassar *kelong* is relevant to Rengko (2021) with research on the agricultural chants and songs of the Tulembang community in Gowa Regency. Some differences between these two studies include the focus and objects of the research, the structure and form of the texts, social and cultural functions, and their application in education. The fundamental difference between the two studies lies in their implementation in education. The first study directly connects the values of the texts with character education in schools, while the second study offers a broader perspective on local wisdom, social norms, and culture. Furthermore, both studies agree that Makassar *kelong* has strong relevance in the context of education and cultural values. By integrating the values from Makassar *kelong* into character education, schools can help shape knowledgeable individuals who positively contribute to society.

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