

Analysis of Ethnoscience Concepts and Early Childhood Character Formation in Sundanese Folklore

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Abstract: Various natural phenomena that appear in Sundanese folklore continue to develop into legends that provide knowledge in the form of moral values embedded in the thinking of the Sundanese people. These moral values are formed into the values of local cultural wisdom that can be integrated with science into a new scientific concept known as Ethnoscience. This research aims to analyze the concept of ethnoscience and character formation in Sundanese folklore. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with an ethnoscience approach. The research method examined the concept of natural events and character formation in Sundanese folklore. The data analysis process used was an interactive analysis model, through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study showed the analysis of several ethnoscience concepts in the form of the formation process: (a) Situ Bagendit, (b) Mount Tangkuban Perahu, and (c) Telaga Warna, which were integrated with the value of local wisdom that emerges from each Sundanese folklore. The value of local wisdom, as expressed in Sundanese folklore, stimulates the formation of character due to the moral values it embodies, which arise from the negative actions of character.

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INTRODUCTION

Sundanese folklore presents numerous stories about the emergence of various natural phenomena, often related to the impact of human actions. This story continues to evolve into a legend that offers insight into the consequences of taking negative actions against others. (Andi Ima Kesuma et al., 2024) They reveal that legends contain several myths that affect their mindset when interpreting various taboos in daily life. The people's beliefs are very strong, and the myths that circulate prove their belief in the ancestors (Firdaus & Ansori, 2024). Their belief in ancestors influences the cultural values that shape their work and household lives (Ardiyansah & Robby, 2023). The culture left behind by their ancestors gave rise to the concept of community knowledge, which involves understanding the environment based on their attitudes. This concept is known as original science (H. S. A. Putra, 2021). Native science reveals the influence of culture on science, how the perspective of human relations with nature includes the process of interaction between body, mind, soul, and spirit, as well as communicating with every element of nature (Cajete, 2025). Indigenous science forms a cultural system known as ethnoscience, which is a concept and principle embedded in human understanding through their interaction with nature (Mukti et al., 2022). Through Sundanese folklore legends, we will find several ethnographic concepts.

The legends that we will analyze in this study are "The Legend of Situ Bagendit, Sangkuriang, and Telaga Warna". The three stories describe several natural events that arise due to bad human behavior. The concept of ethnoscience in these three Sundanese folklores displays two sides: one from the cultural side, which is related to the norms that apply in Sundanese culture, and the scientific side, which displays the natural events that are formed. Natural phenomena that emerge in society can be linked to science as a discipline formed through the process of incorporating regional cultural values (Harefa, 2017). Science, culture, and society are the common foundation for creating a good quality of life through the conservation and sustainable use of nature (Díaz et al., 2015). Nessipbayeva (2013) revealed that the formation of children's character must be through folk pedagogy to understand national culture, national character,

family environment, true teachers, and spiritual support. Moral, folk, and religious stories provide essential information about the culture that influences children's behavior (Collette & Miller, 2018; Lee et al., 2014; Yao & Enright, 2020). The storytelling method has been proven to support character education. This method has been applied in schools in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, with results showing its contribution to children's social, moral, and emotional development (Lee et al., 2014; Leming, 2000; Walker & Lombrozo, 2017).

The use of human characters in storytelling methods is more effective than the use of anthropomorphic illustrations in shaping prosocial behaviors in children (Larsen et al., 2018). The use of the storytelling method, incorporating Sundanese fairy tales, is one of the preventive measures that enables early childhood to more easily understand science and technology concepts through legends they are already familiar with. In addition, the content of moral stories in Sundanese fairy tales helps shape children's characters by understanding their local cultural norms and not committing the evil deeds committed by the characters in the story. This research aims to analyze ethnoscience and character formation in Sundanese fairy tales. The problems in this study are: (1) How to analyze the concept of science in the material of natural events contained in Sundanese fairy tales, (2) How to analyze the character formation in Sundanese fairy tales in childhood. Through this research, it is hoped that early childhood educators can more easily understand the concepts of science, culture, and character in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

METHOD

The design in this study was a literature study. The data sources in this study included journals related to ethnoscience and student character formation, as well as Sundanese legend story websites, such as the story of Sangkuriang, Situ Bagendit, and Telaga Warna, and textbooks for grade 2 elementary school students. The analysis technique using an interactive data analysis model is carried out through 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification (Hidayati & Darmuki, 2021). At the data reduction stage, the researcher summarized the concepts in the three Sundanese legends related to the material of natural events, and also summarized the formation of the characters. The data presentation stage is carried out by interpreting the concept of natural events contained in the three Sundanese legends with natural event material, namely: (a) the formation of Mount Tangkuban Parahu, the story of Telaga Warna and Situ Bagendit by straightening out information about the myths circulating about natural events that occur due to the bad nature of humans and interpreting some of the characters that are formed. The last stage is the verification stage. At this stage, the data that has been presented is then verified by concluding the concept of natural events, namely: (a) the formation of Mount Tangkuban Parahu, the story of Telaga Warna, and Situ Bagendit was formed because it occurred through a scientific process, not because of the negative impact of human vices. Then, in this final stage, the researcher identified several characteristics and their impact, providing education to students about the characteristics of each character so that they can imitate the positive aspects and avoid the negative ones.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Ethnoscience Concepts in Sundanese Folklore

The ethnoscience concept formed in the story of Situ Bagendit in Table 1 shows that people's beliefs about Situ Bagendit were generally only seen as a lake formed due to the disaster of greed and pride of Nyai Bagendit. This story has become a local wisdom value that is passed down from generation to generation, so that children do not develop bad character traits. As time goes by, early childhood understanding will develop, so original scientific knowledge about the origins of the formation of Situ Bagendit is needed. Through the analysis of this ethnoscientific concept, it is hoped that early childhood educators can acquire new knowledge to enhance the development of pre-operational cognitive stages in accordance with Jean Piaget's theory. Early childhood, in the age range of 2-7 years, can show symbolic thinking and pass through relationships related to the five senses and the physical (Sansena, 2022). This stage is also characterized by mental experimentation, in which children try to do something to find an

answer to the problem they are facing. In this preoperational stage, children combine and transform the information they receive (Novitasari & Prastyo, 2020). By examining the cognitive stages, we can determine that children seek the truth about the process of forming Situ Bagendit through scientific methods.

Table 1. Analysis of the Ethnoscience Concept of the Legend of Situ Bagendit

The Story of Situ Bagendit	The Concept of Natural Events in the Legend of Situ Bagendit	Ethnoscience Concept
A wealthy widow named Nyai Endit was cursed by a beggar grandfather in the form of a flood around her house, which submerged the area and formed a situ (lake) due to her greed and arrogance.	Situ Bagendit is located in Bagendit Village, Banyuresmi District, Garut Regency. Situ Bagendit originated from a flooded rice field area, and over time, expanded and covered the rice fields to form a lake (Jamaludin, 2013).	The story of Nyai Endit's greed in the Garut region has a tragic impact on its form and appearance. Flood water appeared in the yard, inundating the area to form a lake known as Situ Bagendit. This situation has become a value of local wisdom in the Garut region that has been inherited from generation to generation. If studied scientifically, lakes are formed as a result of natural processes in which an area is naturally or artificially flooded.

The legend of Sangkuriang is a myth commonly believed by the Sundanese people, as they perceive Mount Tangkuban Perahu as resembling an upside-down boat. In childhood, with a stage of thought that is still based on symbolic images, it will be easier for them to believe that the myth is real. Therefore, new knowledge is needed in the form of ethnoscience concepts so that children can compare the formation of Mount Tangkuban Perahu with science. Through the concept of ethnoscience, they will learn that Mount Tangkuban Perahu is not only recognized by its shape, which resembles an upside-down boat, but they will also discover new facts related to some craters and flora that cannot be understood if they believe in the myths that circulate. Each stage begins when our brain is mature enough to allow for new operations or logic (Juwantara, 2019).

Table 2. Analysis of the Ethnoscience Concept of the Legend of Sangkuriang

The Story of Sangkuriang	The Concept of Natural Events	Ethnoscience Concept
The story of Sangkuriang's forbidden love for his biological mother (Dayang Sumbi). Dayang Sumbi imposed an impossible condition: to build a large boat overnight that would block the Citarum River, thereby preventing the marriage from taking place. To speed up his work, Sangkuriang cheats by asking for the help of supernatural beings. Knowing Sangkuriang's deception, Dayang Sumbi finally asked for the people's help to make it seem as if dawn was starting to rise, so that the boat could not be completed overnight. Sangkuriang discovers Dayang	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mount Tangkuban Perahu seems to have existed since the Miocene era, the result of the eruption of Mount Sunda, which is classified as an ancient volcano. Mount Tangkuban Perahu was formed between 105,000 and 10,000 years ago. Then, between 10,000 and 50 years later, Mount Tangkuban Perahu Muda appeared (West et al., 2025). 2. The emergence of the Tangkuban Boat child mountain triggered the formation of nine craters, namely Pangguyangan Crater, Rhino Crater, Domas Crater, and Queen Crater. Unique flora and fauna multiply, beautifying the beauty of the mountain, including 	The legend of Sangkuriang's anger towards Dayang Sumbi by kicking a large ship that he made into the Tangkuban Perahu mountain which formed an upside-down ship (nangkup) became a legend that has been passed down from generation to generation, told by ancestors until now as a value of local wisdom in the form of a myth that the mountain was formed only because of the kick of an ordinary man. Meanwhile, if researched scientifically, Mount Tangkuban Perahu was formed due to natural

The Story of Sangkuriang	The Concept of Natural Events	Ethnoscience Concept
Sumbi's infidelity, and he becomes angry and kicks the boat. The boat overturned and formed a mountain known as Mount Tangkuban Parahu.	anthers, Javanese eagles, wild boars, deer, pangolins, jelarang, tandoo, and various types of birds, as well as cone meows and ancient mosses that are up to 10 cm thick (Lyra Vellaniza Ferbita & Teddy K Wirakusumah, 2021).	events, such as the eruption of Mount Sunda.

The formation of different colors in each lake is the main attraction of this natural tourism. The myth of the life of colorful fish that causes discoloration, of course, will not last long, because early children will compare their imagination to seeing a freshwater pond containing colorful koi fish that does not cause a change in the color of the pond. Children at this stage do not yet have the ability to think logically and begin to think egocentrically, with reasoning dominated by perception rather than logical thinking (Mulyan, 2024). This stage will confuse them in understanding the culture that surrounds the reality they are seeing. Therefore, the concept of ethnoscience exists to bridge their initial understanding into pure scientific knowledge (Septina et al., 2025). Pure science shows the influence of weather, sunlight, environmental currents, and water grass that cause different colors in the water. This understanding can support their stage of scientific development.

Table 3. Analysis of Ethnoscience Concepts from the Legend of Telaga Warna

The Story of the Telaga Warna	The Concept of Natural Events	Ethnoscience Concept
Dewi Kuncung Biru is the daughter of Prabu Swarnalaya, who is spoiled with abundant wealth and infinite love. His arrogant attitude and disrespect for the hard work of his people angered nature, bringing lightning in the form of rain and storms. The land around the palace split and caused flooding. The Battle of the Bulge was destroyed by the rain. Then, a lake filled with beautiful and colorful fish appears.	Telaga Warna is located in the Puncak Area, Bogor Regency. The colorful beauty of the lake, which varies, is the main attraction of the lake. According to the Indonesian Dictionary, a lake is defined as a basin-shaped land area filled with water (M. I. Putra et al., 2023). The color of the water in this colorful lake varies, ranging from bluish-green, yellowish-green, to brownish. The difference in the color of the lake water is caused by weather conditions, sunlight, and currents around the location. Geological factors and aquatic plants in the lake also affect water color changes (Safitri et al., 2023).	The legend of the origin of the colored lake has developed for generations in the Sundanese region. The myth about the appearance of the colored lake states that the lake contains colorful fish that appeared as a result of a disaster caused by the pride of a spoiled princess and her ingratitude towards the people. The lake appears to have been formed as a result of natural events, while the color differences appear due to weather conditions, sunlight, currents around the site, and aquatic plants in the lake.

Ethnoscience Analysis in Sundanese Folklore in Early Childhood Character Formation

Early childhood is called the golden age, which is when a person's mental and character develop. Children begin to explore the world and learn from it. The environment plays an important role in instilling moral principles in character building. Children will see and learn from their world, namely the environment around where they are. Children are great imitators; what they see and hear will be embedded in them from childhood to adulthood, shaping their character (Fitri, Kania Adinda Nur; Aljamaliah, 2021). When a child sees and imitates the lifestyle or model of others, their character can become bad. For example, when movies are shown in electronic and print media, they become idols and models that are easily imitated by children. This includes movies with murder scenes, fights, pornography, and other things that are easily

accessible to children. This is due to the fact that everyone is exposed to different types of stimulus models; one of them is the life model, also known as the "life model", which comes from the lifestyles of family, friends, and teachers (Gulo et al., 2024).

The most common method of influencing a child's mind is storytelling. In addition, stories are more effective at providing advice than direct advice and are more profound in the child's memory (Pattiasina et al., 2022). Storytelling helps spread local cultural values through unique local stories, messages, and morality that children want to implement will be easily accepted (Lasmini, Pingky et al., 2022). Through traditional fairy tales, students are formed to develop their character by applying learning based on local wisdom (Purwani & Mustikasari, 2024). The traditional stories of the archipelago show more truth than evil, encouraging children to behave well. To build a responsible national character, folklore such as "Timun Mas" from Central Java, "Si Kabayan" from West Java, "Bawang Shai" from Yogyakarta, and "Watu Maladong" from Southwest Sumba must be studied, understood, and preserved (Engel Bertha Halena Gena et al., 2025). To this day, folklore is a type of traditional oral literature, having great power to convey relevant moral and cultural messages (Afrodita et al., 2025). Literature that is read, understood, and interpreted can help students learn values such as politeness, love, justice, honesty, sacrifice, and friendship. This can make them appreciate morality more (Sagala et al., 2022). Many experts agree that literary learning is essential for the development of students' intelligence, both intellectual, emotional, and spiritual (Akromah Akromah et al., 2024).

Based on the analysis of character formation in Sundanese fairy tales, it is evident that some characters are created to counteract the evil deeds committed by the main characters in legends. Situ Bagendit's story illustrates the moral value of the flood disaster that hit an area due to the greed and arrogance of a rich widow. Among the meanings conveyed from the story are: (1) God gives a beautiful nature called Bagendit to everyone to be enjoyed and managed properly to benefit others; (2) Be friendly, generous, and caring for each other; and (3) Living together to help each other solve problems to prevent bad things from happening (Pandanwangi, 2021).

Through this story, it is hoped that the Sundanese people will not imitate their bad behavior by instilling moral values from an early age, such as Philanthropy (Generosity), Care, Humility, and Empathy. Philanthropy is the behavior of always helping people in need (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). One of the activities that can foster a sense of generosity in childhood is eating together, which can be done at school. When friends do not bring provisions, others will be encouraged to share their provisions with them, so that they can experience the happiness of eating with friends (Fitri & Setiawati, 2024). Some indicators of generosity that can be stimulated in eating together activities in childhood are: (1) selfless help, (2) unselfishness, (3) willingness to sacrifice, (4) sensitivity and readiness to act to help people in need, and (5) compassion (Muhammad & Muhid, 2022). The next character formation in this story is simplicity. Siran et al. (2017) revealed that the indicators of simplicity are not extravagant, not greedy, not miserly, and not arrogant. Simplicity training in early childhood can be done through the application of a simple lifestyle and feeling sufficient and grateful for what you have (Amini & Sari, 2022). The formation of the third character, formed from Situ Bagendit's story, is empathy. Indicators of empathy, according to Siran et al. (2017), are: (1) understanding the feelings of others, (2) sympathizing with others, and (3) solving problems based on the perspective of others. Limarga (2017) revealed that instilling empathy through storytelling methods is the right step in practicing empathy in childhood.

Table 4. Analysis of Character Formation in the Legend of Situ Bagendit

The Story of Situ Bagendit	Character Building
A wealthy widow, Nyai Endit, was cursed by an old beggar, who predicted a flood in her house that would submerge the surrounding area and form a situ (lake) due to her greed and arrogance.	Generosity (Generosity), humility, and empathy

The story of Sangkuriang embodies the moral values of Sangkuriang, who acts solely according to his lust without regard for the requirements set by Dayang Sumbi. In this story, the character formation that is formed is: (a) discipline, (b) a sense of responsibility, and (c) curiosity. Sangkuriang made a large boat with the help of supernatural beings. This story suggests that Sangkuriang lacks discipline. To stimulate the development of discipline character, through this story, the indicators of discipline that will

be conveyed as a form of moral development in childhood are conveyed by Patmawati (2018), namely: (1) doing assignments and homework well, (2) being responsible for every action, (3) choosing according to a predetermined schedule, and (4) working together in a group. Additionally, the second character embodies a sense of responsibility. The sense of responsibility that is instilled from an early age is to take care of the things you have, return them to their original place, and be on time in doing and completing the tasks given (Salsabila, 2021). The third character formed from the Sangkuriang story is curiosity. Indicators of curiosity are: Reading material or discussing natural phenomena or recent learning, 4) Enthusiasm for answers, 5) Attention to the object observed, 6) Asking questions about each step of the activity, 7) Demonstrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, 8) Listening to the teacher's explanations regarding the material seriously (Wardani & Janattaka, 2022). Curiosity must be trained from an early age so that it develops into perseverance and a passion for learning.

"As good as he is at hiding a carcass, he will surely smell it too," is a profound lesson given by Sangkuriang's story about the dangers of hiding the truth. To protect Sangkuriang from the truth that is considered too heavy, Dayang Sumbi chooses to hide the fact that Tumang, the dog that always accompanies him, is actually his father in the form of an animal. Sangkuriang killed his father unintentionally because he didn't know his own origins, and it happened in the most sad and shocking circumstances. When Tumang's heart was given to Dayang Sumbi by Sangkuriang, the terrible truth was exposed. Dayang Sumbi felt ashamed and devastated because Sangkuriang had killed Tumang and the big secret that he had been hiding had been revealed. Dayang Sumbi was very angry, and his reaction led to Sangkuriang being expelled. It also begins a series of inevitable tragedies that culminate in Sangkuriang's attempt to build a mountain in one night as a symbol of rejected love and bad luck. This lesson emphasizes how important it is to face reality with courage and honesty, and allow honest and open discussions to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise from ignorance (Mukodas, Miranti, 2024). The moral values that can be taken are never giving up, prohibiting *incest*, and being willing to sacrifice (Paramitha, 2021).

Table 5. Analysis of Character Formation in the Legend of Sangkuriang

The Story of Sangkuriang	Character Building
The story of Sangkuriang's forbidden love for his biological mother (Dayang Sumbi). Dayang Sumbi imposed an impossible condition: to build a large boat overnight that could withstand the flow of the Citarum River, thereby preventing the marriage from taking place. To speed up his work, Sangkuriang cheats by asking for the help of supernatural beings. Knowing Sangkuriang's fraud, Dayang Sumbi finally asked for the help of the people to make it seem as if dawn had already risen, so that the boat could not be completed overnight. Sangkuriang, knowing of Dayang Sumbi's deception, finally became angry and kicked the boat, which overturned and formed a mountain known as Tangkuban Parahu.	Discipline, Responsibility, and Curiosity

The formation of characters derived from the Telaga Warna folklore is independent and grateful. Independence in childhood is indicated by children's ability to carry out activities, socialize, and make decisions without relying on others (Wahyuningsih et al., 2019). Independence in planting is the initial foundation in character formation (Yunarin & Destiana, 2024). Another character that is formed in this legend is the character of gratitude. Listiyandini et al. (2020) identified indicators of gratitude, namely: (1) Gratitude for others, both God and life, (2) Positive feelings about the life they have, and (3) the tendency to act as an expression of positive feelings and gratitude. Expressing gratitude can lead to increased peace of mind, happiness, physical health, and a profound sense of well-being (Uhder et al., 2017).

The value of local wisdom in the story of the Telaga Warna that can be taken is Silih Asih, Silih Asah, and Silih Asuh. The value of Silih Asih, as indicated by the responsibility, is demonstrated by Prabu Suwarnalaya, who, due to his status as a king, is responsible for running the government with full accountability. Her unyielding nature of never giving up in her efforts to have children, even willing to go to the forest to reclude and ask the creator to have children immediately, shows the value of Silih Asah. Although Prabu Suwarnalaya was a king, he was not greedy, as evidenced by his actions, which embodied the value of Silih Asih, demonstrating his ability to control himself. The affection of Prabu and Ratu for

their children shows the value of self-expression. The princess's grumpy nature shows the value of self-expression. His honesty is shown by Prabu Suwarnalaya's statement that the necklaces he gave came from people all over the country, an act that meets the value of Silih Asah. The princess's grumpy nature threw the necklace her father had given her to the floor while speaking rudely. When the Queen saw her daughter's abusive actions, she immediately cried and showed the value of Silih Asih with the indicator of Self-Expression. These actions are included in the value of Silih Asih and the Self-Expression indicator (Budiyawan et al., 2024).

Table 6. Analysis of Character Formation in the Legend of the Telaga Warna

The Story of the Telaga Warna	Character Building
The Blue Kuncung Goddess was the daughter of Prabu Swarnalaya, who was spoiled with abundant wealth and infinite love. His arrogant attitude and lack of respect for the hard work of his people angered nature, bringing lightning in the form of rain and storms. The land around the palace split and caused flooding. The Kutatanggeuhan Kingdom disappeared when the rain stopped. Then, a lake filled with beautiful and colorful fish appears.	Independent and Grateful

CONCLUSION

Ethnoscience analysis and character formation in Sundanese folklore provide new knowledge for early childhood education by comparing myths passed down from generation to generation with original scientific findings. The cognitive stage of early childhood, specifically the pre-operational stage, involves conceptual and intuitive thinking. Through this thinking stage, students will classify objects according to their development, starting from symbolic knowledge and continuing to reasoning using mathematical logic. This study offers a clearer scientific understanding of how natural events are formed. These studies are tailored to their ability to analyze natural events that arise based on legendary stories by developing scientific facts. This study contributes to the character formation created by moral stories, which are the negative impacts of the character's actions. The formation of characters is based on the three Sundanese folk tales, namely: Generous, Humble, Empathy, Discipline, Sense of Responsibility, Curiosity, Independence, and Gratitude. The local wisdom of Silih Asih, Silih Asah, and Silih Asuh is described in the story "Telaga Warna". Among the indicators, the value of local wisdom of Silih Asih indicates Responsibility and Self-Expression, while the value of local wisdom of Silih Asih also indicates Enthusiasm, Self-Control, and Honesty; however, no indicators appear for the value of local wisdom of Silih Asih.

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