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The Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition as Oral Literature: Educational Values and Cultural Transmission in Beber Hamlet

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ABSTRACT

In the context of globalization and cultural change, local oral traditions play an important role as informal educational spaces for transmitting values and cultural knowledge. This study examines the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) tradition as a form of oral literature that functions as a medium for educational values and cultural transmission in Beber Hamlet. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, the research employs in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis to explore oral expressions embedded in ritual practices, including prayers, chants, advisory utterances, and narrative performances. The findings reveal that oral literature within the Galeng Tahun tradition serves significant educational functions by transmitting moral, social, and spiritual values across generations. These values are conveyed through symbolic language that fosters social harmony, respect for tradition, and awareness of the relationship between humans, nature, and the divine. Cultural transmission occurs through collective ritual participation, intergenerational storytelling, and community-based learning practices that enable younger generations to internalize local wisdom. Despite challenges posed by modernization, the Galeng Tahun tradition demonstrates continuity and adaptability as a form of informal cultural education. This study highlights oral literature as a valuable resource for value education and cultural sustainability within local communities.

1. Introduction

Oral literature constitutes an important form of intangible cultural heritage that plays a vital role in traditional societies as a medium for transmitting educational values, knowledge, social norms, and cultural identity across generations. Verbal traditions such as legends, mantras, pantun (poetic quatrains), songs, and ritual narratives function not only as aesthetic expressions of language but also as informal educational tools embedded in everyday cultural practices (Luluk & Novi, 2023). Through oral literature, communities construct collective memory,

internalize moral values, and sustain cultural continuity through experiential and participatory learning processes.

In the multicultural context of Indonesia, oral literary traditions manifest in diverse forms that function as instruments of cultural education. Studies reveal that praise traditions in Cirebon, folktales in Aceh, and oral practices in various ethnic communities play a significant role in transmitting moral, religious, and social values to community members (Kamaluddin, 2025; Yulsafli & Erfinawati, 2025). These traditions not only preserve local cultural identities but also operate as community-based learning mechanisms that integrate cultural knowledge with daily life practices (Widiyarto, 2025).

An ethnolinguistic approach provides a relevant framework for understanding oral literature as a linguistic and educational practice inseparable from social structures and value systems. Language in oral traditions functions as part of communicative events that reflect worldviews, social relations, and local wisdom while facilitating intergenerational knowledge transfer. Research on oral traditions among the Toraja and Krinok communities demonstrates that verbal art serves as a medium for cultural transmission and moral education while reinforcing collective identity (Gres et al., 2025; Sugiyartati et al., 2025). In educational settings, the study of speech acts and verbal modalities in classroom interaction has been shown to support comprehension and pedagogical engagement, as illustrated in research on desiderative speech acts in Indonesian language learning (Dwitasari et al., 2025). Bibliometric analyses further indicate a growing scholarly interest in Indonesian oral traditions, particularly their social, cultural, and educational functions within local communities (Andalas et al., 2024).

One enduring oral tradition in Javanese society is the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition, an annual customary ritual that employs oral literature as its primary medium for conveying cultural meaning and educational values. The tradition involves various forms of verbal expression, including advice, pantun, songs, and prayers, which symbolically represent the passage of time, collective reflection, moral guidance, and hopes for well-being. Through repeated ritual performance, these oral expressions function as informal educational resources that enable cultural transmission and strengthen the cultural identity of the Dukuh Beber community.

Theoretically, oral literature is understood as a social and pedagogical practice that extends beyond textuality. Omoniyi and Whiteley (2020) argue that oral literature functions as an archive of collective memory and cultural capital connecting past, present, and future generations. From an ethnolinguistic perspective, language and culture are mutually constitutive, and traditional linguistic practices must be interpreted within their social contexts (Hymes, 2021). Basso (2021) further emphasizes that the “place of speaking” in oral traditions constitutes a symbolic space for articulating collective experience, memory, and values. Similarly, Geertz (2022) conceptualizes cultural phenomena as symbolic texts that must be interpreted within networks of social relations and ritual practices. Within this

framework, the Galeng Tahun tradition can be understood as a cultural text that embodies educational meanings and local worldviews.

From the perspective of literary anthropology, oral literature represents an aesthetic and pedagogical manifestation embedded in communal rituals. Foley (2021) highlights that oral traditions function pedagogically by instilling moral and cultural values through performance. This view is reinforced by Bauman and Briggs (2024), who emphasize performativity as a key aspect of oral tradition, enabling the actualization of identity, social relations, and cultural transmission through ritual speech events.

Despite their educational significance, oral traditions such as Galeng Tahun face challenges due to globalization and modernization. Many verbal traditions experience a decline in their function as informal educational media and are transmitted less frequently across generations (Luluk & Novi, 2023; Widiyarto, 2025). Studies on oral literature in Madura, Jambi, and Cirebon demonstrate that while these traditions possess strong educational and cultural value, their sustainability depends on conscious preservation efforts (Wildaturrohimah et al., 2025; Sugiyartati et al., 2025; Kamaluddin, 2025). However, research that specifically examines the educational values and cultural transmission functions of oral literature within the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition in Dukuh Beber remains limited.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the educational values embedded in the oral literature of the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition, interpret its cultural meanings, and examine its role in cultural transmission within the Dukuh Beber community. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to studies of oral literature, ethnolinguistics, and education, and practically to the preservation and utilization of local cultural heritage as a resource for value-based education.

2. Methodology

Research Approach and Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach within an interpretative paradigm. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of the educational values, cultural meanings, and processes of cultural transmission embedded in the oral literature of the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition. This tradition is understood as an informal educational practice rich in symbolic, moral, and social values. Qualitative research enables researchers to interpret cultural and educational phenomena from participants' perspectives within their natural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Sugiyono, 2022). Similar qualitative approaches have been applied in educational research to explore value-based learning processes, literacy development, and instructional meaning-making in both formal and informal educational settings (Imran et al., 2025; Hasan & Inayati, 2025).

The research design adopted an ethnographic-qualitative orientation, focusing on the lived cultural practices of the Dukuh Beber community that are transmitted intergenerationally through oral tradition. This design emphasizes the interconnectedness of language, culture, and value education within the community's social life (Hymes, 2021; Foley, 2021). In this study, oral literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition is conceptualized as a cultural and educational text that can only be meaningfully interpreted within its social, ritual, and pedagogical contexts (Geertz, 2022). Ethnographically oriented educational studies likewise emphasize contextual learning environments as effective spaces for the transmission of values, creativity, and literacy (Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Research Location and Time

The study was conducted in Dukuh Beber, a Javanese community that consistently observes the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition. The location was selected based on the continuity of the tradition and the active involvement of community members in preserving oral literature. Data collection was carried out during the main 10 Suro events as well as during supporting activities outside the primary ritual process, allowing the researcher to capture both formal ritual performances and everyday practices through which oral traditions are transmitted and sustained within the community.

Data Sources and Informants

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data included oral utterances, ritual narratives, songs, prayers, and explanatory accounts delivered by traditional leaders and ritual practitioners during the Galeng Tahun Tradition. These data reflect educational messages and cultural knowledge transmitted through oral literature. Secondary data comprised supporting documents, local archives, tradition records, and previous studies relevant to oral literature and cultural education. In line with educational research that prioritizes learning content and instructional context, the integration of primary and secondary data enables a comprehensive understanding of value transmission processes (Imran et al., 2025).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves intentionally choosing individuals based on their knowledge, experience, and active involvement in the Galeng Tahun Tradition (Merriam & Tisdell, 2022; Tracy, 2022). A total of eight primary informants participated in the study, including traditional elders, community leaders, ritual practitioners, and youth representatives. This composition ensured intergenerational perspectives and enabled an analysis of how educational values are transmitted and internalized across generations, similar to studies that examine instructional roles and learning processes across different educational actors (Hasan & Inayati, 2025). Presented in full in the following Table 1

Table 1. Informant Profiles

Initial	Role of Informant	Age	Involvement in Galeng Tahun Tradition
I1	Traditional elder	68	Guardian of customary values and history
I2	Community leader	61	Interpreter of symbolic and ritual meanings

I3	Ritual practitioner	54	Conduit of prayers and oral expressions
I4	Ritual practitioner	47	Performer of songs and oral narratives
I5	Community figure	52	Mediator between custom and social life
I6	Community figure	45	Supporter and coordinator of ritual practices
I7	Youth participant	27	Active participant and inheritor of the tradition
I8	Youth participant	23	Representation of youth perceptions

The number of informants was deemed sufficient as data saturation was achieved, meaning no significant new information emerged from further data collection (Miles et al., 2020). This indicates that the selected participants provided comprehensive insights into the cultural practices, oral traditions, and community perspectives under study. The purposive selection of informants, based on their knowledge, experience, and active involvement in the Galeng Tahun tradition, ensured that the data collected reflected a wide range of relevant experiences, generational viewpoints, and interpretative depth necessary for a thorough qualitative analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three main techniques. First, participatory observation was conducted by directly observing and participating in the Galeng Tahun ritual, with particular attention to verbal expressions, educational messages, and community interactions (Spradley, 2021). Second, in-depth interviews were carried out using semi-structured guidelines to explore informants’ interpretations of educational values, cultural meanings, and transmission processes embedded in the tradition (Rubin & Rubin, 2021). Third, audio-visual documentation in the form of recordings, photographs, and videos was used to capture oral expressions, ritual performances, and contextual settings, supporting both textual and contextual analysis. The use of multimodal documentation aligns with educational research that integrates media and learning environments to capture complex literacy and value-based learning processes (Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed an interactive model proposed by Miles et al (2020), consisting of three stages. Data reduction involved selecting and categorizing utterances and narratives related to educational values, cultural meanings, and transmission mechanisms. Data display was conducted through narrative descriptions, thematic tables, and interpretative mapping of the relationship between oral literature and informal educational functions. Conclusion drawing involved interpreting patterns and meanings by relating empirical findings to theories of oral literature, ethnolinguistics, cultural education, and anthropology

Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and reliability, several strategies were applied. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observation, interviews, and documentation. Theoretical triangulation was employed by linking findings with oral literature, ethnolinguistic, and cultural anthropology theories (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2021). Member checking was also implemented by returning preliminary interpretations to informants for confirmation and clarification, thereby minimizing researcher bias and enhancing trustworthiness.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study were obtained through three data collection techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and examination of cultural documents related to the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition in Dukuh Beber. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify the forms of oral literature, their educational values, cultural meanings, and patterns of cultural transmission within the community. These findings demonstrate how oral literature functions as a medium of informal education and intergenerational learning embedded in ritual practice.

Forms of Oral Literature in the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition

Based on interviews with traditional leaders and ritual practitioners, the Galeng Tahun Tradition is consistently accompanied by orally transmitted utterances passed down across generations. These utterances are not codified in written form but are memorized and delivered verbally by individuals recognized for their customary authority. Informants emphasized that the legitimacy of these utterances lies not in linguistic formalism but in contextual appropriateness, ritual timing, and the credibility of the speaker. In practice, ritual leaders recite specific utterances that function as moral and spiritual guidance. One elder explained: “*Suro iku wektu kanggo ngresiki ati, dudu mung upacara, nanging supaya urip luwih eling lan waspada*” (10 Suro is a time to cleanse the heart, not merely a ritual, but a reminder to live with awareness and self-control).

Observations revealed that oral literature appears at several stages of the ritual, particularly during the opening, main procession, and closing ceremonies. These oral forms include ritual prayers in Javanese and Arabic, traditional songs conveying moral advice and life wisdom, and customary instructions emphasizing harmony, discipline, and collective responsibility. These utterances are delivered in a structured ritual sequence that reinforces shared meanings, facilitates collective participation, and supports the internalization of ethical and cultural values among community members. During the procession, traditional songs are chanted collectively, allowing younger participants to follow and gradually memorize the verses through repetition and participation.

Document analysis, including village records and visual documentation, indicates consistency in the types of oral literature used across different years, despite variations in performance style. This consistency reflects the stability of core ritual texts while allowing adaptive expression in response to changing social and performative contexts. This consistency suggests a stable core of oral texts that functions as a cultural canon, while performance flexibility allows adaptation to

changing social contexts. These forms function as vehicles for cultural learning and value transmission. A summary is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Forms of Oral Literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition

No	Form of Oral Literature	Data Source	Description of Findings
1	Ritual prayers	Interviews, Observation	Recited as spiritual guidance and ethical reminders
2	Traditional songs	Observation, Documents	Convey moral teachings and life philosophies
3	Customary instructions	Interviews	Normative guidance related to social conduct
4	Symbolic narratives	Cultural documents	Narratives explaining time cycles and human life

Educational Functions and Cultural Transmission of Oral Literature

Interview results indicate that the Dukuh Beber community perceives oral literature as an effective medium for informal and community-based education. Informants explained that ritual utterances serve as learning tools through which younger generations acquire values such as respect for elders, social responsibility, self-control, and awareness of cultural identity. One ritual participant noted: “*Anak-anak ora diajari nganggo ceramah, nanging diajak melu, ngrungokake, lan niru sing diwulangake ing tembang lan doa*” (Children are not taught through lectures, but by being involved, listening, and imitating what is conveyed in songs and prayers).

Rather than functioning through explicit instruction, these values are internalized through repeated exposure, participation, and imitation during ritual events. Observational data show that collective listening, chanting, and responding to ritual utterances foster social learning and strengthen intergenerational interaction. The mechanism of value transmission operates through embodied learning, where moral meanings are reinforced by ritual actions, vocal participation, and shared emotional experiences.

Document analysis further confirms that educational and cultural transmission functions are frequently cited as core reasons for sustaining the Galeng Tahun Tradition. Archival records and community documentation emphasize that the ritual is perceived not only as a ceremonial obligation but also as a strategic medium for preserving moral values, collective memory, and intergenerational knowledge within the social structure of Dukuh Beber. These functions are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Functions of Oral Literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition

No	Function	Dominant Data Source	Manifestation Form
1	Educational	Interviews	Internalization of moral and ethical values
2	Cultural transmission	Observation	Intergenerational learning through ritual

3	Social cohesion	Observation	Strengthening community solidarity
4	Cultural identity	Documents	Reinforcement of Dukuh Beber identity

Cultural Meanings Embedded in Oral Literature

Interviews reveal that oral literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition is interpreted as a medium for reflection and moral realignment at the turn of the Javanese calendar year. Informants described 10 Suro as a moment for self-evaluation, renewal of social relations, and reaffirmation of harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. This meaning is linguistically encoded in metaphorical expressions within ritual utterances, such as references to “*mlaku ing dalan sing bener*” (*walking on the right path*) and “*nyawiji karo alam*” (*being united with nature*), which symbolize ethical conduct and ecological awareness.

Observations show that the solemn delivery of oral literature, accompanied by respectful bodily gestures and collective silence, reinforces its pedagogical and symbolic significance. Such performative elements create an atmosphere of reverence that enhances attentiveness and facilitates deeper internalization of moral messages among participants. Cultural document analysis supports the view that Galeng Tahun oral literature represents a local philosophical framework that guides behavior and ethical orientation within the community by articulating shared norms, values, and cosmological understandings. These meanings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Cultural Meanings of Oral Literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition

No	Cultural Meaning	Data Source	Indicators
1	Moral reflection	Interviews	Introspective prayers and advice
2	Life harmony	Observation	Nature-based symbols in songs
3	Temporal awareness	Documents	Narratives of annual cycles
4	Communal togetherness	Observation	Collective ritual participation

Strategies for Cultural Transmission and Preservation

Interview findings indicate that cultural transmission and preservation of oral literature are primarily conducted through direct involvement of younger community members in ritual practices. Informants emphasized that participation in Galeng Tahun rituals constitutes an experiential learning process through which cultural knowledge is naturally acquired. An elder explicitly stated: “*Yen bocah melu saben taun, tanpa disadari dheweke bakal paham lan kelingan dhewe*” (If children participate every year, unconsciously they will understand and remember).

Observations confirm that the annual performance of the ritual functions as a repetitive learning space that reinforces memory and understanding of oral traditions. Additionally, document analysis reveals adaptive strategies such as audio-visual recording and written archiving to support continuity amid social change. These complementary practices enable the preservation of oral literature

while maintaining its educational function and relevance within evolving community contexts. These strategies indicate an expansion of traditional oral transmission into hybrid modes that maintain ritual authority while extending accessibility. A summary of these strategies is presented in Table 5

Table 5. Strategies for Cultural Transmission and Preservation of Oral Literature

No	Strategy	Data Source	Implementation Form
1	Oral transmission	Interviews	Direct learning
2	Annual ritual	Observation	Routine 10 Suro ceremonies
3	Documentation	Documents	Visual and written archives
4	Cultural education	Interviews	Community-based social activities

Discussion

Oral Literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition as a Living Educational Practice

The findings demonstrate that oral literature in the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition in Dukuh Beber functions not merely as a cultural relic but as a living educational practice that is continuously reproduced within the community’s social life. This supports the perspective that oral literature operates as a dynamic, contextual system of communication and learning rather than as a static cultural artifact (Lamusu, 2020; Hasanah & Andari, 2020). However, this study extends previous theories by showing that educational transmission does not rely primarily on narrative content alone, but on ritualized repetition, embodied participation, and the authority of ritual actors. Ritual prayers, traditional songs, customary instructions, and symbolic narratives consistently appear at each stage of the Galeng Tahun procession, forming a structured sequence of oral texts that implicitly convey moral guidance and social norms to participants, particularly younger generations. Similar patterns of value-oriented oral traditions have been identified in other Nusantara communities (Karsiwan & Sari, 2024; Wahyuddin et al., 2024). Compared to these traditions, Galeng Tahun is distinctive in its strong temporal symbolism, positioning oral literature explicitly within an annual moral recalibration framework rather than episodic ceremonial performance. In contemporary educational contexts, integration of digital tools with value-based learning further demonstrates how mediated practices can support both literacy and cultural learning (Purwati et al., 2025).

Educational, Social, and Spiritual Functions of Galeng Tahun Oral Literature

The discussion reveals that oral literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition performs interconnected educational, social, and spiritual functions. Its educational function is evident in ritual utterances that serve as instruments for internalizing moral values, social ethics, discipline, and respect for tradition. This finding refines existing educational theory on oral literature by emphasizing imitation and affective engagement over explicit moral instruction, suggesting that learning occurs through ritual immersion rather than didactic transmission. This reinforces the arguments of Hasanah and Andari (2020) and Lamusu (2020). Socially, oral literature fosters solidarity and strengthens communal bonds through collective participation and

shared listening experiences, similar to findings in Lampung and Bengkulu traditions (Karsiwan & Sari, 2024; Wahyuddin et al., 2024). Spiritually, the use of prayers and religious songs positions oral literature as a medium for spiritual reflection and moral self-evaluation, supporting Caesarine and Setyaningsih (2023). Thus, Galeng Tahun oral literature demonstrates an integrated model of education where moral, social, and spiritual dimensions are inseparable.

Educational Meanings and Cultural Symbolism in Galeng Tahun Oral Literature

The educational meanings embedded in Galeng Tahun oral literature are expressed through symbolic representations of time, nature, and human life. These symbolic constructions function pedagogically by framing ethical reflection and personal transformation within a cyclical temporal perspective rooted in local cosmological beliefs, in which 10 Suro is interpreted as a moment for moral renewal (Fernanda et al., 2024). This study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that temporal symbolism in oral literature functions as a pedagogical calendar, structuring ethical reflection within cyclical time rather than linear progression. The symbolic messages regulate behavior and social harmony, supporting the view of Sibarani et al. (2024).

Cultural Transmission and Preservation as an Educational Process

The findings indicate that preservation is achieved through oral transmission, ritual repetition, and documentation. Unlike perspectives that view documentation as a threat to orality, this study shows that documentation functions as an auxiliary educational tool that strengthens memory without displacing ritual authority. Theoretically, this study extends ethnolinguistic and literary anthropological approaches by highlighting ritual performance as the central mechanism of educational transmission. Practically, it provides a basis for integrating local oral traditions into community-based cultural education programs. The novelty of this research lies in its demonstration that Galeng Tahun oral literature operates simultaneously as ritual practice, pedagogical system, and cultural sustainability mechanism within a single, integrated framework.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Galeng Tahun (10 Suro) Tradition in Dukuh Beber represents oral literature as a living cultural practice that plays a vital role in educational processes and cultural transmission within the community. Oral literature manifested through ritual prayers, traditional songs, customary advice, and symbolic narratives functions not merely as an aesthetic form of expression but also as an educational medium for transmitting moral values, local wisdom, and collective cultural identity across generations. The findings reveal that oral literature in the Galeng Tahun Tradition serves integrated educational, social, and spiritual functions. From an educational perspective, it facilitates the internalization of character values, ethical awareness, and cultural knowledge among younger

community members; socially, it strengthens solidarity and communal cohesion; and spiritually, it provides a space for reflection, devotion, and expressions of hope for well-being.

Furthermore, the cultural meanings embedded in ritual utterances reflect the Dukuh Beber community's worldview concerning the harmony between humans, nature, and the divine, reinforcing oral literature as a foundational source of cultural learning. The preservation of Galeng Tahun oral literature is sustained through annual ritual performance, intergenerational oral transmission, and community-based cultural documentation. Despite the challenges posed by modernization and changing social dynamics, this tradition demonstrates adaptive resilience without losing its core educational and cultural significance. Overall, this study highlights the importance of oral literature as an intangible cultural heritage and affirms its relevance as a medium of community-based education and cultural transmission, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on oral literature within educational and ethnolinguistic studies.

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