

Analysis of Fourth-Grade Students' Literacy Skills in Identifying Intrinsic Elements and Moral Values in Legend Stories at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the need to understand how primary school students construct meaning from legend stories, particularly in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values. The study aimed to analyze fourth-grade students' literacy skills in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values in legend stories and to examine factors influencing their performance. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design involving 20 fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga, Indonesia. Quantitative data were collected through a literacy test based on the legend Keong Mas and analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation and analyzed through thematic and interactive analysis. The findings showed that students' literacy skills in identifying intrinsic elements were generally good, with a mean score of 81.25; 75% of students achieved good to very good performance. Characters and characterization (95%) and setting (90%) were the strongest aspects, whereas plot (70%) and theme (75%) were more challenging. Students' ability to identify moral values was also good, with a mean score of 79.50; however, only 65% could provide logically supported explanations. Reading fluency, reading interest, motivation, parental support, school literacy programs, and teacher guidance influenced performance. The study concludes that legend stories can integrate literacy, literary analysis, and moral learning, although instruction should emphasize deeper interpretation and evidence-based reasoning.

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INTRODUCTION

Literacy development at the primary school level is no longer limited to the technical ability to read and write but increasingly involves students' capacity to construct meaning, interpret texts, respond critically, and connect textual information with their experiences. In this context, reading narrative texts is particularly important because students are required to understand not only explicit information but also relationships among characters, events, settings, conflicts, and messages. Ewing et al. (2022) explain that literacy education in primary classrooms should provide

opportunities for students to engage with diverse texts and develop the ability to read, understand, respond to, and construct meaning. Similarly, Lúcio et al. (2021) emphasize that reading comprehension is a complex skill involving information recognition, integration of textual content, inference, and the connection between new information and prior knowledge. Thus, literacy in narrative reading should be understood as a multidimensional ability rather than merely the ability to pronounce or reproduce written words.

International research further demonstrates that children's comprehension of narrative texts involves complex cognitive and interpretive processes. Wannagat et al. (2022) found that elementary school students construct mental representations of narratives at different levels, including surface information, semantic content, and situation models. Venneker et al. (2025) similarly show that children must integrate explicitly presented information with their prior knowledge and construct representations of events, characters, and relationships among narrative elements. These findings indicate that students' literacy competence in reading stories can be observed through their ability to identify information and establish meaningful relationships among different elements of a narrative. In addition, Gasser et al. (2022) demonstrate that narrative fiction can facilitate children's social and moral learning because stories enable them to identify moral messages, understand represented social worlds, and reflect on social and moral issues through interaction and dialogue. Therefore, reading narrative texts can simultaneously develop cognitive, interpretive, social, and moral dimensions of literacy.

The educational potential of narrative literature is particularly relevant when stories contain recognizable cultural and moral values. Research has shown that the moral dimension of a story can influence how children understand and remember its content. Russell et al. (2024) found that stories containing prosocial themes can encourage more complex narrative retelling and greater attention to central information. This suggests that moral messages are not merely supplementary components of narratives but may contribute to how children organize and retain important information from stories. Kucirkova and Ciesielska (2025) further indicate that children's connection with story characters can influence their engagement with narratives. Consequently, students' understanding of narrative texts may depend not only on their ability to locate textual information but also on their involvement with characters, events, and the narrative world.

Within the context of literacy and children's literature, literary texts can therefore serve as meaningful instructional resources. Curtin (2022) views literacy through children's and young adult literature as a contextual and sociocultural practice in which meaning is constructed through relationships among readers, texts, environments, and experiences. Leland et al. (2023) similarly argue for the purposeful integration of children's literature into reading instruction and emphasize the importance of helping students engage critically and deeply with literary texts. From this perspective, identifying intrinsic elements such as theme, characterization, plot, setting, point of view, and moral message is not simply a literary exercise; it is also part of students' ability to understand and interpret texts critically. Juliawati et al. (2022) specifically demonstrate that folklore contains various intrinsic elements, including theme, characterization, plot, setting, point of view, and message, and that identifying these elements can strengthen students' systematic understanding of literary texts.

The moral dimension of children's literature provides another important international issue. Literature can function as a space where students encounter questions concerning ethics, values, empathy, justice, and human behavior. Choo (2021) emphasizes the relationship between literature education, literacy, and ethical education by positioning literary texts as a means of encouraging

learners to reflect on moral and ethical questions. Yacek et al. (2023) further explain that moral education seeks to support young people in developing the capacity to understand, evaluate, and respond to moral issues as moral agents. These perspectives strengthen the argument that identifying moral values in narrative texts should be regarded as an important component of students' literacy development rather than as an additional learning activity.

In the Indonesian context, these issues are particularly relevant because folklore and local narratives are closely associated with cultural heritage and character education. Imelwaty et al. (2024) found that Indonesian primary school thematic textbooks contain moral values represented through characters and events, demonstrating that school texts can simultaneously support language development and moral understanding. Sumarwati et al. (2023) also found that learning media based on local folktales can positively support reading literacy among primary school students, particularly because local stories provide culturally familiar contexts for learners. Setiartin and Casim (2021) further demonstrate that oral traditions and folklore can contain moral, cultural, religious, historical, and heroic values that can contribute to students' moral knowledge, feelings, and actions. Similarly, Olugbemi-Gabriel and Ukpi (2023) argue that folktales have an educational function beyond entertainment because traditional narratives can communicate moral instruction and support children's character development. These findings indicate that folklore represents an important intersection between literacy education, literary comprehension, cultural identity, and moral education.

Recent Indonesian studies also provide direct evidence of the relevance of intrinsic-element and moral-value analysis in primary education. Narendrani et al. (2022), for example, found that folklore presented in Grade IV student textbooks contains moral values such as courage, helpfulness, and compassion. This finding is particularly relevant because it concerns the same grade level as the present study. Hidayatullah and Komara (2025) further emphasize that folklore used as literacy material for elementary students should be evaluated according to its intrinsic elements, including theme, plot, characters, and setting, as well as students' developmental characteristics. Yuliatun et al. (2025) similarly demonstrate the pedagogical potential of folklore for helping students identify story-building elements while simultaneously recognizing character and social values.

Previous empirical studies in Indonesia have addressed several aspects of the present research problem, but important gaps remain. Faridah et al. (2023), in their study of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 69 Palembang, found that students were generally capable of identifying intrinsic elements and moral messages in short stories. However, their study focused on short stories rather than legends and involved Grade V students. Hidayah et al. (2025) examined the intrinsic elements of *Malin Kundang* to develop character values among Grade IV students at SDN 3 Jerowaru and found that students could identify characters, plot, setting, and messages. Nevertheless, the emphasis of that study was more strongly directed toward character-value cultivation than toward measuring students' literacy abilities. Tusa'diyah (2025) investigated students' literacy abilities in identifying intrinsic elements and moral messages in legends and found that students' literacy performance was in the moderate category, with reading interest and the learning environment identified as influential factors. While highly relevant, that study was conducted in Grade V at SD Islam Tarbawi Payakumbuh, creating a contextual gap from the present research. Assidik (2025) analyzed intrinsic elements and moral values in the folklore *Asal-Usul Pulau Nusa*, but the research focused on textual analysis and did not examine students as

research participants. Pasande (2023), meanwhile, found that only approximately half of Grade IV students were able to identify intrinsic elements effectively in short stories, indicating continuing difficulties in understanding narrative structure, but the study did not address moral values or legend texts.

Taken together, previous studies confirm that literacy comprehension, identification of intrinsic elements, and interpretation of moral values are important dimensions of students' engagement with narrative texts. However, a clear research gap remains. First, several previous studies have examined intrinsic elements and moral values as separate analytical components rather than investigating them simultaneously as indicators of students' literacy competence (Assidik, 2025; Pasande, 2023). Second, studies involving students have predominantly focused on short stories or general folklore, while relatively limited attention has been given to legend stories as a specific narrative genre (Faridah et al., 2023; Hidayah et al., 2025). Third, some previous studies have analyzed folklore primarily as literary material or as a medium for character education without directly examining students' literacy processes in interpreting the text (Assidik, 2025; Hidayah et al., 2025). Fourth, although Tusa'diyah (2025) investigated literacy skills in identifying intrinsic elements and moral messages in legend stories, the study involved Grade V students in a different educational and geographical context. Therefore, there remains insufficient empirical evidence concerning how Grade IV students simultaneously identify intrinsic elements and interpret moral values in legend stories within a specific primary-school context.

This gap is also supported by preliminary classroom observation at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga, which indicated that students' abilities in interpreting legend stories were not uniform. Some students were able to recognize basic narrative information, particularly characters and events, but several students appeared to require further guidance in identifying more complex intrinsic elements, connecting events within the plot, and explaining the moral values conveyed through characters' actions and story outcomes. This preliminary condition suggests that students may be able to read a story at a basic level without necessarily demonstrating deeper literacy competence in analyzing and interpreting its literary and moral dimensions. Such a condition reinforces the need for a focused empirical investigation rather than assuming that students' ability to read a narrative automatically reflects their ability to understand its structure and values.

Accordingly, the novelty of the present study lies in its integrated analysis of two closely related but often separately examined dimensions: students' literacy skills in identifying intrinsic elements and their ability to identify moral values in legend stories. The novelty is further strengthened by focusing specifically on fourth-grade students, examining the phenomenon within the authentic context of SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga, and considering the factors that may influence students' performance. Unlike studies that primarily analyze the content of folklore or emphasize character-value formation, this study positions the student as the unit of analysis and examines how effectively students construct meaning from legend stories through the identification of narrative structure and moral values. This approach is theoretically grounded in the conception of literacy as meaning-making through engagement with texts (Ewing et al., 2022), the role of children's literature in developing critical textual engagement (Leland et al., 2023), and the capacity of literature to facilitate ethical reflection and moral understanding (Choo, 2021; Yacek et al., 2023). Thus, the study offers an integrated framework for examining narrative literacy that connects textual comprehension, literary analysis, and moral interpretation within primary education.

Accordingly, this study focuses on analyzing the literacy skills of fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values in legend stories. The study aims to describe students' ability to recognize and analyze narrative elements, identify and interpret moral values embedded in legend stories, and examine factors that may influence these abilities. By addressing these dimensions within a single analytical framework, the study is expected to provide empirical evidence for strengthening literacy-oriented literary instruction in primary schools and to demonstrate the potential of legend stories as learning resources for developing both reading comprehension and moral understanding.

METHODS

1. Research Approach and Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using an explanatory sequential design. This design was selected because the study aimed not only to measure fourth-grade students' literacy skills in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values in legend stories, but also to explain the quantitative findings through qualitative evidence concerning students' reading processes, difficulties, strategies, and learning contexts. In an explanatory sequential design, quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection intended to explain or elaborate the initial quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative phase was used to obtain an objective description of students' literacy performance through a reading comprehension test based on a legend story. The test measured students' abilities to identify the theme, characters and characterization, plot, setting, message, and moral values contained in the story. The qualitative phase subsequently explored the reasons underlying students' performance through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. This sequence enabled the study to move from measuring what students were able to do to explaining why particular patterns of performance occurred.

The explanatory sequential design was implemented in two interconnected phases. First, quantitative data were collected from the fourth-grade students and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were then used to determine the focus of the qualitative inquiry and to select student interview participants representing different levels of literacy performance. Second, qualitative data were collected from selected students, the fourth-grade teacher, and the principal. These data were analyzed to explain students' strengths and difficulties in interpreting legend stories and to identify contextual factors that influenced their performance. The two sets of findings were integrated during the interpretation stage to develop a more comprehensive understanding of students' literacy skills (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

2. Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga, Keruak District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The school was purposively selected because it implemented Indonesian language instruction aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum and used reading texts, including narrative and folklore materials, as part of literacy learning. The school was also considered appropriate because the study focused on students' abilities to understand literary texts through the identification of intrinsic elements and moral values.

The study involved all students enrolled in Grade IV at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga as the quantitative respondents. A total-population approach was used for the quantitative phase because the study sought to describe the literacy performance of the entire fourth-grade class rather than estimate the characteristics of a larger population. For the qualitative phase, several students were

selected purposively from the results of the literacy test to represent high, moderate, and low performance categories. The fourth-grade teacher and the principal were also included as key informants because they could provide contextual information concerning literacy instruction, school literacy practices, and factors affecting students' reading development.

The research was conducted from April to July 2026. The research activities included instrument preparation and validation, quantitative data collection, preliminary quantitative analysis, qualitative data collection, data analysis and integration, and the preparation of the research report.

3. Data Sources

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data sources. The quantitative data were obtained from students' scores on a literacy test developed from indicators of narrative comprehension and the identification of intrinsic and moral elements in legend stories. The qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

The primary data sources consisted of the Grade IV students who completed the literacy test, the fourth-grade teacher who provided information about classroom instruction and students' literacy development, and the principal who provided information about school-level literacy programs and supporting facilities. The secondary data sources consisted of learning modules, Indonesian language teaching materials, student worksheets, assessment records, school archives, photographs of learning activities, and other documents relevant to literacy instruction.

The use of multiple data sources was intended to strengthen the credibility of the findings through data triangulation, particularly by comparing information obtained from students, teachers, school administrators, observations, and relevant documents (Creswell, 2019; Moleong, 2021).

4. Research Instruments

Four data collection techniques were employed: a literacy test, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The instruments were aligned with the explanatory sequential design so that the quantitative instrument generated the initial performance profile, while the qualitative instruments provided explanations for the observed patterns.

The primary quantitative instrument was a reading comprehension test based on a selected legend story. Prior to answering the questions, students read the legend independently. The test assessed six main indicators: (1) identifying the theme, (2) identifying characters and characterization, (3) identifying the setting, (4) identifying the plot, (5) identifying the message or moral lesson, and (6) identifying the moral values contained in the story. The instrument was reviewed and validated before it was administered to the participants to ensure that the items were relevant to the research objectives and appropriate for the students' level.

Students' answers were scored according to a predetermined scoring rubric. The resulting scores were converted into a scale of 0–100 and classified into five performance categories: 86–100 = very good; 71–85 = good; 56–70 = fair; 41–55 = poor; and ≤ 40 = very poor. Descriptive statistics were subsequently used to summarize the students' performance.

The observation instrument consisted of indicators related to students' reading behavior, engagement during instruction, ability to identify story elements, ability to recognize moral values, interaction with the teacher, and the instructional strategies employed by the teacher. The observation was conducted using a non-participant approach, in which the researcher observed

classroom activities without directly participating in the teaching and learning process. Field notes were recorded systematically during the observation.

The interview instrument consisted of semi-structured questions. Interviews with students focused on their experiences in reading legend stories, difficulties in understanding the content, strategies used to identify intrinsic elements, ways of determining moral values, and factors that supported or hindered comprehension. Interviews with the teacher addressed the implementation of literacy instruction, the use of legend stories, students' common difficulties, instructional strategies, and efforts to improve literacy performance. Interviews with the principal focused on school literacy policies, literacy programs, and supporting facilities. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to maintain consistency across interviews while providing opportunities for participants to elaborate on their experiences (Moleong, 2021).

Documentation was used to support and cross-check the findings obtained through the test, observation, and interviews. The documents included student test papers, learning modules, lesson plans or teaching materials, assessment records, photographs of research activities, observation records, interview transcripts, and relevant school literacy documents.

5. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed the sequential structure of the research design. In the first phase, the researcher administered the literacy test to all Grade IV students. The students first read the selected legend story and then answered questions related to the intrinsic elements and moral values contained in the text. The test results were scored and analyzed to identify the overall level of students' literacy performance and the distribution of individual performance categories.

In the second phase, the researcher used the quantitative findings to determine the qualitative sampling strategy. Students representing high, moderate, and low performance categories were purposively selected for interviews. Classroom observations were conducted to examine how students engaged with legend stories during instruction and how the teacher guided them in understanding narrative elements and moral values. Interviews were then conducted with the selected students, the fourth-grade teacher, and the principal. With participants' permission, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The researcher also collected relevant documents throughout the research process. Documentation was used to verify information from other sources and to provide contextual evidence concerning classroom instruction and the school literacy environment. This sequence ensured that the qualitative phase directly responded to patterns identified during the quantitative phase, which is a central feature of explanatory sequential mixed-methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

6. Data Analysis

a Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The analysis included the mean, minimum score, maximum score, percentage distribution, and performance categories. Individual students' scores were calculated from the points obtained relative to the maximum possible score and converted to a 0–100 scale. The mean score was then calculated to provide an overall description of the class performance.

The analysis also examined students' achievement across the six indicators: theme, characters and characterization, setting, plot, message, and moral values. This indicator-level analysis was important because the study did not treat literacy ability as a single undifferentiated skill. Instead, it

examined which aspects of narrative comprehension and interpretation were relatively strong or weak.

b Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and documents were analyzed using an interactive model of qualitative data analysis consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2020). During data reduction, the researcher selected, coded, organized, and summarized information relevant to students' literacy performance, reading difficulties, interpretive strategies, teacher practices, and internal and external influencing factors.

In the data-display stage, the reduced data were organized into thematic categories to facilitate comparison across participants and sources. The categories included students' comprehension processes, difficulties in identifying intrinsic elements, difficulties in interpreting moral values, learning strategies, teacher support, reading interest, and environmental factors. Conclusions were then drawn by identifying recurring patterns and relationships across the qualitative data. These conclusions were continuously compared with the raw data to ensure consistency and credibility.

c Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Integration occurred during the interpretation stage. The quantitative findings identified the distribution and level of students' literacy performance, while the qualitative findings explained the conditions, experiences, and factors underlying those results. For example, difficulties reflected in students' test performance were compared with interview responses, classroom observations, and students' written work to determine whether the difficulties were associated with comprehension processes, limited familiarity with literary elements, reading interest, instructional practices, or learning conditions.

The integration of the two forms of evidence enabled the study to move beyond merely describing students' scores. Instead, the study provided an explanatory account of how fourth-grade students understood legend stories and why differences occurred in their ability to identify intrinsic elements and moral values. This integration strengthened the interpretive depth of the study and was consistent with the principal purpose of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

7. Trustworthiness and Research Ethics

To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the study applied data-source and technique triangulation by comparing test results with classroom observations, interviews, and documentary evidence. Differences or inconsistencies among sources were examined rather than ignored, allowing the researcher to develop interpretations grounded in multiple forms of evidence.

Ethical principles were also considered throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant school authorities. Participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, and participation in interviews was conducted with appropriate consent. Students' identities were kept confidential and were not disclosed in the reporting of the findings. Interview recordings and research documents were used only for research purposes and were stored securely.

RESULTS

1. Students' Literacy Skills in Identifying Intrinsic Elements in Legend Stories

The first stage of the study examined the literacy skills of fourth-grade students in identifying intrinsic elements in legend stories. In accordance with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, quantitative data were collected first through a reading literacy test administered to all 20

fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga. The quantitative findings were subsequently elaborated through classroom observations, interviews with the principal, the fourth-grade teacher, and selected students, as well as documentary evidence from students' written work and classroom activities. The integration of these sources provided a comprehensive account of students' ability to understand and analyze the intrinsic structure of the legend *Keong Mas*.

a. Quantitative Findings

The literacy test required students to read the legend *Keong Mas* and answer questions concerning five major intrinsic elements: theme, characters and characterization, setting, plot, and message. The maximum possible score was 100. The descriptive results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Literacy Skills in Identifying Intrinsic Elements

Statistic	Value
Number of students	20
Maximum score	95
Minimum score	50
Mean	81.25
Median	82
Mode	85

The results indicated that students demonstrated a generally good level of literacy competence, with a mean score of 81.25. The maximum score was 95, while the minimum score was 50, indicating a considerable range of individual performance. Although the overall performance was relatively strong, the difference between the highest and lowest scores demonstrated that students did not possess identical levels of competence in interpreting the intrinsic structure of the narrative.

To provide a more detailed description of performance, students' scores were classified into five categories, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Literacy Performance

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
86–100	Very Good	6	30%
71–85	Good	9	45%
56–70	Fair	4	20%
41–55	Poor	1	5%
≤40	Very Poor	0	0%
Total		20	100%

The distribution showed that the good category was dominant, comprising 9 students (45%), followed by the very good category with 6 students (30%). Four students (20%) were classified as fair, while only one student (5%) fell into the poor category. No student was categorized as very poor. Overall, 75% of the students were classified as good or very good, whereas 25% still required additional instructional support.

These findings suggested that most students had developed an adequate ability to comprehend narrative content and identify major intrinsic elements. Nevertheless, the distribution also revealed that a substantial minority of students continued to experience difficulties, particularly in relation to elements requiring higher levels of interpretation rather than simple recognition.

b. Performance by Intrinsic Element

A more detailed analysis of students' answer sheets revealed differences in achievement across the individual intrinsic elements. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Achievement in Identifying Individual Intrinsic Elements

Intrinsic Element	Percentage of Mastery
Characters and characterization	95%
Setting	90%
Message	80%
Theme	75%
Plot	70%

Students demonstrated the strongest performance in identifying characters and characterization, with a mastery rate of 95%. Almost all students were able to distinguish the main and supporting characters and describe their characteristics based on information provided in the story. Setting was the second-highest performing element, with a mastery rate of 90%. Most students were able to identify the place, time, and atmosphere represented in the legend.

Students performed moderately well in identifying the message, which reached 80% mastery, and the theme, which reached 75%. However, some students confused the central idea of the story with the moral message. This difficulty indicated that students could recognize explicit information but were less consistent when required to synthesize broader meanings from the narrative.

The lowest level of mastery was found in identifying the plot, at 70%. Analysis of students' responses indicated that several students had difficulty reconstructing events chronologically, particularly when the conflict developed gradually across several stages of the narrative. The findings therefore suggested that students found elements directly represented in the text easier to identify than elements that required them to integrate and interpret relationships among events.

c. Classroom Observation Findings

Quantitative findings were further examined through direct observation of Indonesian language instruction during the teaching of legend stories. The observation focused on teacher practices and student engagement in reading, discussion, identification of intrinsic elements, and interpretation of the story.

Table 4. Teacher Activities During Legend-Story Instruction

No.	Observed Activity	Result
1	The teacher used a legend story as learning material	Implemented
2	The teacher guided students in understanding the story	Implemented
3	The teacher explained intrinsic elements	Implemented
4	The teacher provided opportunities to identify intrinsic elements	Implemented
5	The teacher guided students in identifying moral values	Implemented
6	The teacher asked questions about the story	Implemented
7	The teacher provided feedback on students' responses	Implemented
8	The teacher actively involved students in learning	Implemented
9	The teacher used discussion and question-and-answer activities	Implemented
10	The teacher conducted learning evaluation	Implemented

The observation showed that all ten instructional indicators were implemented. The teacher did not merely present literary concepts theoretically but engaged students through reading, questioning, discussion, and feedback. The teacher also provided additional explanations when students encountered difficulties and helped them establish connections among events in the story. These instructional practices created opportunities for students to process the narrative more deeply and supported their ability to identify intrinsic elements.

Student engagement during the learning process was also observed.

Table 5. Students' Classroom Performance During Legend-Story Learning

No.	Observed Student Activity	Achievement
1	Reading the legend story attentively	90%

2	Identifying characters	95%
3	Identifying characterization	90%
4	Identifying setting	90%
5	Identifying plot	75%
6	Identifying theme	75%
7	Identifying message	80%
8	Identifying moral values	80%
9	Responding to teacher questions	85%
10	Summarizing the story	80%

The observation results were broadly consistent with the test findings. Students showed high engagement in reading the legend, with 90% demonstrating adequate reading participation. Their performance in identifying characters (95%) and setting (90%) was also high, corresponding closely to the quantitative test results. In contrast, plot and theme demonstrated lower levels of achievement, both at 75%, indicating that students required more guidance when dealing with relatively abstract or inferential aspects of narrative structure.

The observation also revealed differences associated with reading fluency. Students who read more fluently tended to understand the content more quickly and responded more accurately to questions concerning characters, setting, and plot. By contrast, students with weaker reading fluency required additional time to process the text and depended more heavily on teacher guidance.

d. Interview Findings

The interviews provided further explanation of the quantitative and observational findings. The principal reported that students' overall literacy competence was relatively good and associated this condition with a routine school reading program conducted before regular classroom instruction. According to the principal, the program provided students with regular opportunities to interact with different types of reading materials and gradually develop their reading habits.

The fourth-grade teacher similarly reported that most students had good reading comprehension and were generally able to understand the content of legend stories. However, one student experienced more difficulty because of relatively low reading fluency. The teacher also identified differences among intrinsic elements. Characters and settings were considered relatively easy for students to identify, whereas theme and plot required greater teacher guidance. This observation corresponded directly with the quantitative results, in which characters and characterization reached 95% mastery and setting reached 90%, while theme and plot reached only 75% and 70%, respectively.

The teacher further explained that the main difficulty was not simply reading individual words but understanding deeper meanings and expressing interpretations in students' own language. Some students could understand the general content but struggled to explain the central idea of the story or reconstruct the sequence of events accurately.

The student interviews reinforced these findings. A high-performing student demonstrated a clear understanding of the main and supporting characters as well as several settings in *Keong Mas*. The student was able to identify Candra Kirana, Dewi Galuh, Prince Inu Kertapati, the grandmother, and the sorceress, while also identifying the kingdom, river, grandmother's house, and palace as important settings. This response demonstrated the student's ability to connect characters and events with the spatial context of the story.

In contrast, a moderately performing student reported difficulty distinguishing the theme from the sequence of events, indicating that identifying the central idea and reconstructing the plot remained challenging. A lower-performing student explained that slow reading made it difficult to remember earlier parts of a longer story. This response suggested that reading fluency was an important factor underlying the differences in comprehension performance.

e. Triangulation of Findings

The consistency of the findings was examined through methodological triangulation involving test results, classroom observations, interviews, and documentary evidence.

Table 6. Triangulation of Students' Ability to Identify Intrinsic Elements

Aspect	Test Findings	Observation	Interview Findings	Overall Interpretation
Characters	95% mastery	Most students identified characters accurately	Teacher and students reported that characters were easy to recognize	Consistent
Setting	90% mastery	Students identified place and time effectively	Teacher reported that setting was relatively easy to understand	Consistent
Theme	75% mastery	Several students required guidance	Teacher reported that theme remained difficult	Consistent
Plot	70% mastery	Several students struggled to sequence events	Teacher and students identified plot as the most difficult element	Consistent

The triangulation demonstrated a high degree of consistency across data sources. The elements that received the highest test scores—characters and setting—were also the easiest elements observed in classroom activities and reported by the teacher and students. Likewise, theme and plot emerged consistently as the most challenging aspects across all sources. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence strengthened the credibility of the findings.

f. Integrated Interpretation

Overall, the findings demonstrated that the fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga possessed a good level of literacy skill in identifying intrinsic elements in legend stories, as reflected in the mean score of 81.25 and the finding that 75% of students achieved good or very good performance. However, students' competence was not uniform across all narrative elements.

The strongest performance was observed in elements that were relatively explicit and easily located in the text, particularly characters and setting. In contrast, theme and plot posed greater challenges because they required students to synthesize information across different parts of the narrative and construct a more coherent interpretation of the story. The qualitative findings further indicated that reading fluency, reading habits, and the ability to express understanding in students' own words contributed to these differences.

The findings therefore indicated that students' literacy competence involved more than basic decoding or literal comprehension. While most students were able to extract explicit information from the legend, some still needed support in developing deeper narrative comprehension, particularly when identifying central meanings and reconstructing relationships among events. The results suggested the importance of continued instruction that emphasized intensive reading comprehension, guided discussion, inferential questioning, and repeated engagement with a variety of narrative and folklore texts.

2. Students' Literacy Skills in Identifying Moral Values in Legend Stories

The second stage of the analysis focused on the ability of fourth-grade students to identify and interpret moral values embedded in the legend *Keong Mas*. Consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, quantitative evidence was first obtained through a reading comprehension test administered to all 20 students. The quantitative findings were subsequently elaborated through classroom observation, interviews with the fourth-grade teacher and selected students, and documentary evidence. The integration of these data sources was intended to determine not only whether students were able to identify moral values, but also how deeply they understood and explained those values in relation to the narrative.

a. Quantitative Findings

The assessment required students to read the legend *Keong Mas* and identify the moral values or messages contained in the story. Students were also asked to relate the moral lessons to situations in their everyday lives. The maximum score was 100. The descriptive results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Ability to Identify Moral Values

Statistic	Value
Number of students	20
Maximum score	95
Minimum score	45
Mean	79.50
Median	80
Mode	80

The results showed that students' mean score for identifying moral values was 79.50, which fell within the good-performance category. The highest score was 95, whereas the lowest score was 45. These findings indicated that most students were able to recognize the moral messages conveyed through the legend, although differences in performance remained evident across individual students.

The distribution of students' achievement is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of Students' Ability to Identify Moral Values

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
86–100	Very Good	5	25%
71–85	Good	10	50%
56–70	Fair	4	20%
41–55	Poor	1	5%
≤40	Very Poor	0	0%
Total		20	100%

As shown in Table 8, 10 students (50%) were classified as having good performance, while 5 students (25%) achieved the very good category. Thus, 75% of the students demonstrated good to very good ability in identifying moral values in the legend. Four students (20%) were categorized as fair and one student (5%) as poor. No student fell into the very poor category.

Although the overall achievement was relatively good, the results suggested an important distinction between recognizing a moral message and explaining its underlying meaning. Most students could identify obvious or explicitly stated moral lessons, but some experienced difficulty when required to interpret implicit values and provide a clear explanation of why particular actions or events represented those values.

b. Analysis of Students' Moral-Value Responses

Further analysis of the students' written responses showed that their ability to identify moral values was closely associated with their overall comprehension of the story. Students who understood the relationships among characters, conflicts, actions, and consequences were generally better able to identify the moral lessons embedded in the narrative.

Approximately 80% of the students were able to identify the main moral value, whereas only 65% were able to provide a logically supported explanation based on evidence from the story. This difference indicates that identifying a moral lesson was easier for students than justifying or interpreting the moral significance of a character's actions and experiences.

For example, some students provided general statements such as "we should be good" or "we should not be bad" without connecting these statements to particular actions, conflicts, or consequences presented in the story. Such responses indicated that the students had recognized the broad message but had not yet developed the ability to articulate the relationship between narrative evidence and moral meaning.

The findings therefore revealed two distinct levels of moral-literacy performance. At the literal level, students were generally able to identify explicit moral messages. At the interpretive level, however, fewer students were able to explain the reasons behind those values or connect them systematically to events and characters in the story.

c. Classroom Observation Findings

Classroom observations were conducted during Indonesian language instruction in which students read *Keong Mas* and discussed the moral values represented in the story. The observation results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Students' Classroom Performance in Identifying Moral Values

No.	Observed Activity	Achievement
1	Reading the story attentively	90%
2	Participating in class discussions	85%
3	Explaining the moral message	80%
4	Relating the story to everyday life	75%
5	Expressing opinions orally	80%
6	Responding to peers' opinions	75%

The observation showed that students were actively engaged in the learning process. Ninety percent of the students demonstrated attentive reading behavior, while 85% participated in classroom discussions. When the teacher asked students to identify moral messages, 80% were able to respond appropriately.

Students identified several moral values from the legend, including honesty, patience, kindness, and the avoidance of jealousy and envy. These responses demonstrated that students could recognize positive and negative behavioral values represented through the actions of the characters.

However, the ability to connect the moral message with everyday experiences was somewhat lower, at 75%. Similarly, only 75% demonstrated effective responses to peers' opinions. These findings suggested that students generally recognized the values embedded in the story but were less consistent in extending those values into reflective discussion and personal application.

The observation therefore reinforced the distinction identified in the quantitative results: students were more capable of recognizing moral values than of explaining, defending, and applying those values in a broader context.

d. Teacher Interview Findings

The fourth-grade teacher confirmed that most students were able to identify the moral lessons presented in the legend. According to the teacher, students generally recognized positive messages and were able to relate them to their daily lives. The teacher also observed, however, that students experienced difficulty when they were asked to explain the moral values in greater detail.

The teacher explained that students often understood the story but struggled to articulate their reasoning in their own words. This finding suggests that the main challenge was not simply identifying the message, but transforming an intuitive understanding of the story into a structured verbal explanation.

The teacher's observation was consistent with the test results. Although 75% of students achieved the good or very good categories, only 65% demonstrated the ability to provide logically supported explanations of moral values. This convergence suggests that the students' main difficulty involved moral interpretation and verbal elaboration, rather than basic recognition.

e. Student Interview Findings

Student interviews provided additional insight into how children interpreted the moral dimension of *Keong Mas*. One student explained that the story taught them that people should be patient, kind to others, and should not be jealous of other people. This response indicated that the student was capable of identifying several core moral principles from the narrative.

Another student, however, explained that identifying the moral message was not necessarily the most difficult part; the difficulty was explaining the reason behind the interpretation. The student stated that they knew the message but found it difficult to express the explanation in their own words.

This response provided an important explanation for the quantitative pattern. Students could often arrive at an appropriate moral conclusion, but some lacked sufficient confidence or linguistic resources to explain how the narrative evidence supported that conclusion. In this sense, moral-value identification required not only recognition but also comprehension, interpretation, and verbal expression.

f. Documentary Evidence

Documentary analysis further supported the findings from the test, observations, and interviews. Students' written responses showed that most were able to identify moral values such as honesty, patience, humility, helping others, and avoiding jealousy. These values were generally derived from the behavior and consequences experienced by the characters in the legend.

Photographs and classroom documentation also showed that students participated actively in group discussions when identifying moral values from the story. The instructional documents indicated that the teacher incorporated reading comprehension, discussion, character education, and moral reflection into the lesson. These materials supported the interpretation that moral-value identification was integrated into the broader literacy learning process rather than treated as an isolated activity.

g. Triangulation of Moral-Value Findings

The credibility of the findings was examined by comparing evidence from the literacy test, classroom observation, teacher interviews, student interviews, and documentation.

Table 10. Triangulation of Students' Ability to Identify Moral Values

Data Source	Main Finding
Literacy test	Most students achieved the good-performance category
Classroom observation	Students actively identified moral values during discussions

Teacher interview	Students could identify moral messages but had difficulty explaining them in detail
Student interviews	Students recognized moral messages but some struggled to justify their interpretations
Documentation	Students' written responses demonstrated understanding of the moral values contained in the story

The findings from all five data sources were consistent. The quantitative and qualitative evidence converged on the conclusion that students possessed a generally good ability to identify moral values in the legend. At the same time, all sources indicated that deeper explanation and interpretation remained more challenging than simple identification.

This consistency strengthened the credibility of the results and demonstrated that students' moral-literacy performance could not be adequately represented by test scores alone. The qualitative findings clarified an important aspect of the students' competence that was not fully visible in the overall mean score: students could often identify a moral lesson without being able to substantiate or explain it analytically.

h. Integrated Interpretation

Overall, the findings indicated that the fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga demonstrated a good level of literacy skill in identifying moral values in legend stories, as reflected in the mean score of 79.50 and the finding that 75% of students achieved good or very good performance. Most students were able to recognize moral values such as honesty, patience, kindness, humility, cooperation, and the rejection of jealousy.

However, the findings also revealed a meaningful limitation in the depth of students' moral interpretation. While approximately 80% of students could identify the main moral value, only 65% could provide a logically grounded explanation based on the events and actions presented in the story. This difference suggests that students' moral literacy was stronger at the level of recognition than at the level of interpretation and justification.

The qualitative findings further indicated that students' difficulties were related to their ability to express reasoning in their own words and to connect moral values with specific narrative evidence. Students were more successful when moral messages were explicit, whereas implicit values requiring interpretation of character behavior, conflict, and consequences were more demanding.

These findings suggest that literacy instruction using legend stories should move beyond asking students to identify a moral lesson. Learning activities should also encourage students to explain why a particular action represents a moral value, identify textual evidence supporting their interpretation, compare different characters' actions, and relate the moral lessons of the story to real-life situations. Such practices may strengthen students' ability to transform reading comprehension into reflective and meaningful moral understanding.

3. Factors Influencing Students' Literacy Skills in Identifying Intrinsic Elements and Moral Values

The third stage of the analysis examined the factors associated with fourth-grade students' literacy performance in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values in the legend *Keong Mas*. Following the quantitative and qualitative sequence of the study, the analysis moved beyond students' achievement scores to examine the conditions that supported or constrained their performance. Data were obtained from classroom observations, interviews with the principal, the fourth-grade teacher, and selected students, as well as documentary evidence. The findings indicated that students' literacy performance was influenced by the interaction of internal factors—

including reading interest, reading fluency, learning motivation, and reading comprehension—and external factors, including school literacy programs, availability of reading resources, parental support, family environment, neighborhood environment, and teacher instructional practices.

a. Classroom Observation Findings

Classroom observation was conducted during Indonesian language instruction to examine the learning environment and identify factors that supported or hindered students' engagement with legend stories. The observation results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Observed Factors Influencing Students' Literacy Skills

No.	Observed Aspect	Observation Result
1	Availability of reading materials in the classroom	Good
2	Reading program before instruction	Implemented routinely
3	Students' enthusiasm for reading legend stories	High
4	Students' participation in discussion	Good
5	Teacher support for students experiencing difficulties	Implemented
6	Students' use of the school library	Moderately active
7	Teacher–student interaction	Good
8	Literacy learning environment	Conducive

The observations indicated that the classroom environment was generally conducive to literacy development. Students were given opportunities to read the legend independently, discuss its content, and present the results of their analysis. Most students demonstrated high enthusiasm when engaging with the story, and classroom discussions encouraged them to explain their interpretations of characters, events, and moral values.

Teacher support emerged as an important instructional factor. When students encountered difficulties, the teacher provided guiding questions, repeated explanations of unclear sections, and facilitated group discussion. These practices appeared particularly useful when students were dealing with relatively demanding elements such as theme, plot, and moral interpretation.

The observation also revealed that the school possessed a reasonably adequate library containing folklore, Indonesian legends, children's literature, and informational texts. However, students' use of the library was only moderately active. This finding suggested that the availability of literacy resources did not automatically guarantee intensive use of those resources and that continued encouragement might be needed to maximize their potential.

b. Principal Interview Findings

The principal reported that the school had provided a range of reading materials, including folklore and legend books, in the school library. According to the principal, these resources were intended to provide students with opportunities to develop reading habits and broaden their knowledge beyond classroom textbooks.

The school had also established a routine reading program conducted before formal instruction began. This program was implemented consistently and was intended to encourage students to read regularly. The principal considered the reading routine an important component of the school's literacy culture because it provided students with repeated exposure to different types of texts.

The principal further identified several factors that influenced students' literacy development, including the family environment, neighborhood environment, reading habits developed from an early age, and school support through literacy programs. This finding indicates that literacy

development was not regarded as the sole responsibility of classroom instruction but as a process influenced by multiple educational environments.

The principal's explanation was consistent with the broader findings of the study. The relatively good literacy performance observed among most students was accompanied by a school environment that promoted regular reading and provided access to literary materials. At the same time, differences in individual performance suggested that school-level support interacted with factors outside the classroom.

c. Teacher Interview Findings

The fourth-grade teacher identified reading interest, reading ability, parental support, and learning motivation as important factors associated with students' literacy performance. The teacher observed that students who frequently read tended to understand stories more quickly than those who rarely engaged in reading activities.

The teacher also emphasized the importance of reading fluency. Students who could read smoothly were generally able to process story content more efficiently, whereas students with lower fluency often required more time and repeated explanation. This observation corresponded with the findings from the student literacy test, particularly the lower performance of one student whose reading fluency was less developed.

Learning motivation was also identified as an important internal factor. According to the teacher, students who actively asked questions, showed enthusiasm toward reading, and participated in discussion were more likely to identify theme, plot, and moral messages successfully. This suggested that motivation influenced not only students' willingness to read but also their level of engagement in meaning-making activities.

The teacher further reported that students with regular reading habits at home tended to demonstrate stronger comprehension. This observation highlighted the importance of parental involvement in establishing sustained reading practices beyond school hours.

d. Student Interview Findings

Students' perspectives provided more specific information about the role of reading habits and family support. One high-performing student explained that frequent reading of storybooks at home and in the school library made it easier to understand *Keong Mas*. This statement suggested that repeated exposure to narrative texts had contributed to familiarity with story structures and reading comprehension processes.

Another student reported that a parent regularly encouraged reading before bedtime. Such a routine provided consistent reading practice outside school and appeared to contribute to the development of reading habits.

In contrast, a lower-performing student reported rarely reading at home and explained that longer stories were more difficult to understand as a result. This response was consistent with the teacher's observation that students with less frequent reading practice tended to require greater support in processing longer narratives.

The student interviews therefore reinforced the role of reading frequency and family support as external influences on literacy development. At the same time, the differences among students illustrated that literacy performance remained closely connected to individual reading habits and levels of engagement.

e. Documentary Evidence

Documentary analysis provided additional evidence concerning the literacy environment at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga. Photographs of classroom activities showed that approximately 15

minutes of reading activity were conducted before regular instruction. Library documentation demonstrated the availability of collections including Indonesian folklore, legends, children's stories, and informational texts.

The teacher's instructional documents also indicated that literacy activities were incorporated into Indonesian language lessons. These activities included independent reading, group discussion, presentation of analytical results, and reflection on moral values contained in stories. Thus, literacy learning was not restricted to silent reading but involved several processes through which students were expected to interpret, discuss, and communicate their understanding.

Students' written work further supported the quantitative results. Most students were able to respond correctly to questions concerning characters, setting, theme, plot, message, and moral values. The documentation therefore reinforced the conclusion that the school's literacy environment and instructional practices provided meaningful support for students' literacy development.

f. Triangulation of Factors Influencing Literacy Skills

Triangulation was conducted to compare findings obtained from observations, principal interviews, teacher interviews, student interviews, and documentation.

Table 12. Triangulation of Factors Influencing Students' Literacy Skills

Data Source	Principal Finding
Classroom observation	Routine reading activities, active learning, and literacy resources supported students' performance
Principal interview	School literacy programs, library resources, family, and neighborhood environment were important factors
Teacher interview	Reading interest, reading ability, learning motivation, and parental support influenced students' performance
Student interviews	Reading habits at home and family encouragement supported story comprehension
Documentation	Reading facilities, teaching materials, and students' written work supported the observational and interview findings

The triangulation demonstrated a high degree of consistency across the different data sources. No substantial contradiction was found among observations, interviews, and documentary evidence. Rather, the findings converged on the interpretation that students' literacy abilities were shaped by a combination of personal characteristics and environmental support.

g. Internal Factors

The qualitative findings identified four major internal factors: reading interest, reading fluency, learning motivation, and the ability to comprehend written information.

Reading interest appeared to influence how willingly and consistently students engaged with literary texts. Students who expressed stronger interest in stories tended to participate more actively in reading and discussion activities.

Reading fluency was particularly important for processing longer narratives. Students who read slowly needed more time to retain earlier information and establish connections among events. This factor was especially relevant to the identification of plot, theme, and implicit moral meanings, which required students to integrate information across the story.

Learning motivation also influenced students' participation in literacy activities. Students who were more willing to ask questions, respond to teacher prompts, and participate in discussion appeared more capable of developing interpretations of the story.

Finally, comprehension ability determined how effectively students transformed decoded information into meaningful understanding. The results suggested that students could read a story

without necessarily being able to explain its central idea, sequence its events, or justify the moral lesson. Thus, literacy development involved a progression from basic reading fluency toward deeper comprehension and interpretation.

h. External Factors

The external factors identified in the study included school literacy programs, reading facilities, teacher instructional strategies, parental support, family environment, and neighborhood environment.

The school's routine reading program provided regular exposure to reading activities and contributed to the development of reading habits. The availability of library materials also expanded students' access to literary texts, although the moderate level of library use indicated that access still needed to be accompanied by active encouragement.

Teacher instructional practices played a particularly important role. The teacher used guiding questions, discussion, explanation, and feedback to help students understand difficult aspects of the story. These practices were especially relevant for abstract elements such as theme and plot and for moral interpretation requiring students to provide reasons for their responses.

Family support was another important factor. Students who reported reading regularly at home or receiving encouragement from parents generally appeared more comfortable dealing with narrative texts. Conversely, students with limited reading habits outside school tended to experience greater difficulties with longer stories.

The broader environment also contributed to literacy development. The principal's account suggested that students' reading habits were influenced by both family and neighborhood contexts. Therefore, literacy development appeared to depend on the continuity between school-based literacy practices and students' experiences beyond school.

i. Integrated Interpretation

The findings demonstrated that students' literacy skills were not determined solely by their individual cognitive abilities. Instead, literacy performance emerged from the interaction between internal dispositions and external learning conditions.

Students with stronger reading interest, greater reading fluency, higher motivation, and more developed comprehension tended to perform more effectively in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values. However, these internal strengths were reinforced by supportive external conditions, including regular school reading activities, access to books, teacher guidance, parental encouragement, and opportunities to read at home.

The findings also help explain the performance differences identified in Parts 1 and 2. Students generally performed well when they were required to identify explicit information such as characters and settings or clearly stated moral messages. Difficulties became more apparent when the task required deeper integration and interpretation, such as identifying theme and plot, explaining implicit moral values, or providing evidence-based explanations in their own words. These difficulties were more pronounced among students with weaker reading fluency and less frequent reading habits.

j. Overall Synthesis of the Results

When the three strands of evidence are considered together, the study indicates that fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga demonstrated generally good literacy skills in working with legend stories. The mean score for identifying intrinsic elements was 81.25, while the mean score for identifying moral values was 79.50. In both domains, 75% of students achieved good or very good performance.

Nevertheless, the results revealed an important distinction between literal recognition and deeper interpretive literacy. Students were highly successful in identifying characters and settings but less successful in determining theme and plot. Likewise, most students could identify moral values, but fewer were able to explain those values through logical reasoning and textual evidence.

The qualitative findings indicated that these differences were associated with reading fluency, reading interest, motivation, reading habits, parental support, teacher guidance, and the school literacy environment. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that improving students' literacy competence requires more than providing narrative texts. Students need sustained opportunities to read, discuss, interpret, justify their responses, and connect literary meanings with real-life experiences.

Overall, the findings position legend stories as potentially valuable resources for integrated literacy learning because they simultaneously engage students with narrative comprehension, literary structure, and moral meaning. The results also indicate that instructional efforts should increasingly emphasize inferential questioning, evidence-based interpretation, discussion, and reflection so that students move from merely identifying information toward constructing deeper and more coherent meanings from literary texts.

DISCUSSION

1. Results Analysis

The findings demonstrated that the literacy skills of fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values in the legend *Keong Mas* were generally at a good level. However, the findings also revealed important differences among the specific dimensions of narrative literacy. The mean score for identifying intrinsic elements was 81.25, while the mean score for identifying moral values was 79.50. In both domains, 75% of the students were classified as having good or very good performance. These results suggest that most students had developed a functional ability to comprehend literary texts, but their competence was not equally distributed across all aspects of narrative interpretation. In particular, students performed better when identifying explicit narrative information and experienced greater difficulty when tasks required inference, synthesis, explanation, and interpretation.

Regarding the first research objective, the findings showed that students were generally capable of identifying the major intrinsic elements of the legend. Characters and characterization represented the strongest area of achievement, reaching 95% mastery, followed by setting at 90%. This pattern indicates that students were more successful when the required information was explicitly represented in the text. Characters, their characteristics, and settings can generally be identified through direct textual information, making them more accessible to elementary school readers. This finding is consistent with the view that narrative comprehension involves constructing representations of characters, events, and situations from textual information (Wannagat et al., 2022; Venneker et al., 2025). The students' high performance in these elements also suggests that they had established a basic ability to extract and organize explicit information from narrative texts.

In contrast, theme and plot emerged as the most challenging intrinsic elements, with mastery rates of 75% and 70%, respectively. This difference is important because theme and plot require students to move beyond locating isolated pieces of information. Identifying the theme requires readers to synthesize events, characters, and conflicts in order to determine the central meaning of the story, whereas identifying the plot requires students to reconstruct relationships and sequences

among events. These processes involve a higher level of cognitive integration than simply identifying a character or setting. Lúcio et al. (2021) emphasize that reading comprehension is a complex process involving information integration and inference, while Wannagat et al. (2022) show that elementary students must construct mental representations of narrative content rather than merely retain surface information. The present findings therefore suggest that students' difficulties with theme and plot reflected limitations in deeper narrative processing rather than an inability to read the story itself.

The qualitative findings strengthened this interpretation. Classroom observations showed that students who read fluently tended to respond more quickly and accurately, whereas students with lower reading fluency needed additional time and teacher support. The teacher similarly reported that students generally understood the story but sometimes struggled to explain the central idea or reconstruct the sequence of events in their own words. One lower-performing student explicitly stated that reading slowly made it difficult to remember earlier parts of a longer story. These findings indicate that reading fluency and comprehension were interconnected in the students' performance. Thus, literacy competence in this context involved a progression from decoding and literal comprehension toward the integration and interpretation of narrative information.

The findings also indicated that teacher support played a meaningful role in students' performance. Observation showed that the teacher consistently used questioning, discussion, explanation, feedback, and guided reading activities. Such practices were particularly important for students who experienced difficulty identifying abstract narrative elements. The findings support the argument that literacy instruction should provide opportunities for students to interact actively with literary texts rather than merely receive explanations about literary concepts. Ewing et al. (2022) emphasize that primary literacy education should involve students in reading, responding to, and constructing meaning from diverse texts, while Leland et al. (2023) highlight the importance of critical engagement with children's literature. In the present study, teacher scaffolding appeared to help students move from simple recognition toward more structured interpretation of narrative elements.

The second research objective concerned students' ability to identify moral values in the legend. The mean score of 79.50, together with the finding that 75% of students achieved good or very good performance, indicated that most students were able to recognize moral lessons embedded in the story. Students identified values such as honesty, patience, kindness, humility, helping others, and avoiding jealousy. This result suggests that legend stories provided students with accessible contexts for connecting literary events with moral meaning. Gasser et al. (2022) argue that narrative fiction can facilitate children's social and moral learning because stories provide opportunities to recognize moral messages and reflect on social situations. Similarly, Setiartin and Casim (2021) and Olugbemi-Gabriel and Ukpi (2023) demonstrate that folklore and oral narratives can function as important resources for moral instruction and character development.

Nevertheless, the findings showed that recognizing a moral value was easier than explaining or justifying it. Approximately 80% of students could identify the main moral value, but only 65% were able to provide a logically supported explanation based on the story. This distinction represents one of the most important findings of the study. Students were generally able to state what the moral lesson was, but some were unable to explain why a particular character's behavior represented a particular value or how the events of the story supported their interpretation.

Therefore, students' moral literacy was stronger at the level of recognition than at the level of interpretation and justification.

This finding is consistent with the broader understanding of literacy as meaning-making rather than simple information retrieval. Ewing et al. (2022) conceptualize literacy as the capacity to construct meaning from texts, while Curtin (2022) emphasizes that engagement with children's literature involves relationships among readers, texts, experiences, and contexts. From this perspective, identifying the statement "we should be good" does not necessarily demonstrate deep literary comprehension. Deeper literacy requires students to connect the moral conclusion with characters' actions, conflicts, consequences, and the broader meaning of the narrative. The present findings therefore suggest that students' ability to identify moral values was already developing, but their capacity to articulate the reasoning behind those values required further development.

The result is also important from the perspective of ethical and moral education. Choo (2021) argues that literature can provide opportunities for learners to reflect on ethical questions, values, empathy, justice, and human behavior. Yacek et al. (2023) similarly emphasize the importance of developing young people as moral agents who are capable of understanding and evaluating moral issues. In this study, students' difficulties in explaining moral values indicate that moral learning through literature should not stop at identifying whether an action is good or bad. Students should also be encouraged to explain the consequences of actions, evaluate characters' decisions, and relate the values represented in the story to real-life situations. The fact that only 75% of students were able to connect the moral lessons with everyday life provides further evidence that the interpretive dimension of moral literacy remains an area for development.

The third research objective concerned the factors influencing students' literacy skills. The findings identified both internal and external factors. Internal factors included reading interest, reading fluency, motivation, and comprehension ability, whereas external factors included school literacy programs, reading resources, parental support, family environment, and teacher instructional strategies. These findings indicate that students' literacy development was not determined solely by individual ability. Rather, it emerged through the interaction between students' personal characteristics and the environments in which reading occurred.

Reading interest and reading habits were particularly evident in the qualitative data. Students who reported reading regularly at home or in the school library tended to demonstrate greater ease in understanding narrative texts. The findings are consistent with the broader view that sustained engagement with literary texts contributes to the development of literacy competence. Sumarwati et al. (2023) demonstrate the potential of locally relevant folklore to strengthen reading literacy, while Curtin (2022) emphasizes the importance of sustained engagement with stories in the development of literacy and meaning-making. In the present context, familiarity with narrative texts may have helped students recognize recurring story structures and process literary information more efficiently.

The school environment also appeared to provide important support for literacy development. The school implemented a routine reading activity before formal lessons, provided a library containing folklore and children's literature, and integrated reading, discussion, presentation, and reflection into Indonesian language instruction. These findings suggest that literacy was supported not only through individual reading tasks but also through institutional practices that created opportunities for repeated engagement with texts. Such conditions may help explain why

the majority of students achieved good or very good performance despite variation among individuals.

Taken together, the findings provide a coherent answer to the three research objectives. First, students demonstrated generally good competence in identifying intrinsic elements, but their performance declined when the task required greater synthesis and inference, particularly for theme and plot. Second, students were generally able to identify moral values, but their ability to explain and justify those values was less developed. Third, literacy performance was shaped by the interaction of reading fluency, interest, motivation, family support, school literacy practices, and teacher scaffolding. Therefore, the findings indicate that literacy in legend stories should be understood as a multidimensional process involving text recognition, narrative integration, interpretation, and moral reflection rather than as a simple ability to reproduce information from a text.

The overall pattern is also consistent with previous research showing that children's engagement with narratives involves increasingly complex processes of comprehension and interpretation (Gasser et al., 2022; Lúcio et al., 2021; Venneker et al., 2025). The present study extends this understanding by demonstrating that, within an Indonesian primary-school context, students' performance differed systematically according to the cognitive demands of the task. Elements and values that were more explicit were easier to identify, whereas tasks requiring inference, synthesis, and justification remained more challenging. This distinction provides an important basis for understanding the literacy needs of fourth-grade students and for designing instruction that moves beyond literal comprehension toward deeper literary and moral interpretation.

2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of the present study were broadly consistent with previous research demonstrating that narrative literacy involves more than basic reading fluency and requires students to construct meaning from textual information. The overall mean score of 81.25 for identifying intrinsic elements indicated that most fourth-grade students had developed a good level of narrative comprehension. This result was in line with Cahyani et al. (2022), who emphasized that reading comprehension enables elementary school students to obtain information, construct meaning, and use information from texts appropriately. Similarly, Lúcio et al. (2021) conceptualized reading comprehension as a complex process involving the recognition, integration, and interpretation of information. The present findings extended these perspectives by showing that students' performance varied according to the complexity of the narrative element being identified.

The strongest student performance was found in identifying characters and characterization (95%) and setting (90%). This finding was compatible with Wannagat et al. (2022), who showed that elementary school children construct mental representations of narrative information, including information about characters and situations. Venneker et al. (2025) likewise reported that children process narrative information by constructing representations of events, characters, and relationships within the story. The relatively high performance observed in the present study suggests that fourth-grade students were relatively successful in extracting and organizing information that was explicitly represented in the narrative. Thus, the findings support previous research indicating that elementary students can develop effective representations of concrete narrative information.

In contrast, the lower achievement in identifying plot (70%) and theme (75%) was consistent with the literature emphasizing the greater cognitive demands of integrating information across a narrative. Unlike characters or settings, plot requires readers to reconstruct the temporal and causal relationships among events, while theme requires them to synthesize the broader meaning of the narrative. This pattern corresponds with the findings of Wannagat et al. (2022) and Venneker et al. (2025), which suggest that narrative comprehension involves the construction of coherent mental representations rather than the simple retrieval of isolated textual details. The present study therefore reinforces the argument that students may demonstrate adequate literal comprehension while still experiencing difficulties with more inferential and integrative aspects of narrative understanding.

The findings also showed a close correspondence with Juliawati et al. (2022), who identified theme, characterization, plot, setting, point of view, and message as important intrinsic components of folklore. However, the present study differed from Juliawati et al. (2022) in an important respect. Their study primarily analyzed the intrinsic structure of folklore as a literary text, whereas the present study investigated students' abilities to identify those elements. This distinction is important because the current research shifted the analytical focus from the characteristics of the story itself to the literacy competence required for readers to interpret that story.

The findings concerning the use of legend stories as literacy materials were also consistent with Sumarwati et al. (2023), who found that local-folktale-based learning materials could support the reading literacy of elementary school students. Similarly, Hidayatullah and Komara (2025) argued that folklore could serve as appropriate literacy material when its intrinsic elements and complexity were compatible with students' developmental characteristics. The present study supports these findings because the *Keong Mas* legend provided a culturally meaningful narrative context through which students could practice reading comprehension, identify literary structure, and interpret moral meaning. However, the current findings also indicate that simply using folklore as learning material does not guarantee equal mastery of all narrative elements. Students still required specific instructional support for more abstract elements such as theme and plot.

The findings regarding moral values were similarly consistent with previous research. The mean score of 79.50 and the finding that 75% of students were categorized as good or very good indicated that most students could identify the moral lessons embedded in the legend. This finding corresponded with Narendrani et al. (2022), who found that folklore presented in Grade IV elementary-school materials contained moral values such as courage, helpfulness, and compassion. The correspondence is particularly important because both studies involved Grade IV students and Indonesian folklore, suggesting that narrative texts rooted in local culture can provide an accessible context for moral-value learning.

The present findings were also compatible with Imelwaty et al. (2024), who demonstrated that moral values are represented through characters and events in Indonesian primary-school textbooks. In the current study, students identified moral values through the actions, conflicts, and consequences experienced by the characters in *Keong Mas*. This similarity suggests that literary and language-learning texts can simultaneously support language development and moral understanding. Nevertheless, the present study adds an important distinction by demonstrating that students' ability to identify moral values was stronger than their ability to explain and justify

those values. Approximately 80% of the students could identify the main moral value, whereas only 65% could provide a logically grounded explanation.

This distinction is partly comparable to Russell et al. (2024), who found that story themes could influence the way children retained and reproduced central narrative information. Their findings suggest that prosocial themes can become important organizing features of children's narrative understanding. In the present study, moral themes were likewise accessible to many students; however, the difficulty emerged when students had to move from recognizing a moral conclusion to explaining the evidence supporting it. Thus, the present study extends previous work by highlighting a difference between moral recognition and moral reasoning in elementary narrative literacy.

The findings also corresponded with Gasser et al. (2022), who argued that narrative fiction can support children's sociomoral learning through recognition of moral messages and reflection on social situations. Similarly, Setiartin and Casim (2021) and Olugbemi-Gabriel and Ukpi (2023) demonstrated that folklore and oral traditions can function as resources for moral instruction and character development. The present study confirmed this educational potential, but it also identified a pedagogically important limitation: students were generally more successful in identifying moral lessons that were relatively explicit than in explaining implicit meanings. This suggests that the moral potential of folklore depends partly on how teachers facilitate interpretation rather than simply on the moral content of the story.

The findings concerning literary engagement were also consistent with Curtin (2022), who conceptualized children's literature as a contextual and sociocultural literacy practice in which readers construct meaning through interactions among texts, experiences, and environments. The present study found that students who expressed stronger reading interest and who regularly read at home or in the school library tended to understand legend stories more easily. This finding also complements Kucirkova and Ciesielska (2025), who emphasized the importance of children's relationship with story characters and narrative engagement. Although the present study did not directly measure character identification or reader-character distance, students' enthusiasm for *Keong Mas* and their ability to discuss its characters suggested that engagement with the narrative may have supported comprehension.

The role of teacher guidance identified in the present study was consistent with Ewing et al. (2022) and Leland et al. (2023), who emphasized that effective literacy education requires opportunities for students to interact actively with texts, respond to them, and construct meaning through discussion and critical engagement. In the present study, the teacher used questioning, discussion, feedback, and guided explanation, particularly when students struggled with theme, plot, and moral reasoning. These instructional practices may help explain why the majority of students achieved good or very good performance despite differences in individual literacy levels.

The findings concerning moral interpretation were also theoretically consistent with Choo (2021) and Yacek et al. (2023). Choo (2021) positioned literature as a space for ethical reflection, while Yacek et al. (2023) emphasized the development of learners as moral agents capable of considering and evaluating moral issues. The present study supports these theoretical perspectives but suggests that moral education through literature should be designed progressively. Elementary students may readily identify that a character's behavior is "good" or "bad," but deeper moral literacy requires them to explain the consequences of the behavior, identify textual evidence, and relate the value to real-life situations.

Several differences between the present study and previous research also deserve attention. Faridah et al. (2023) found that Grade V students were generally capable of identifying intrinsic elements and moral messages in short stories, whereas the present study involved Grade IV students and legend stories. The current findings therefore demonstrate that younger students can also achieve good levels of literary understanding when the learning material and instructional support are appropriate, although challenges remain in interpreting abstract elements. Hidayah et al. (2025) focused on *Malin Kundang* as a medium for character-value development among Grade IV students, whereas the present study specifically examined literacy performance in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values. The distinction indicates that the current research is more concerned with the cognitive and interpretive processes underlying students' literary literacy than with character formation alone.

The findings can also be compared with Tusa'diyah (2025), whose study examined the literacy ability of Grade V students in identifying intrinsic elements and moral messages in legend stories. While both studies identified the importance of literacy competence in interpreting legend narratives, the present study differed in grade level and educational setting and incorporated a more explicit mixed-methods explanation of the quantitative results. The present study therefore contributes contextual evidence from Grade IV students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga and demonstrates how reading fluency, reading habits, teacher support, and family factors help explain variations in performance.

Finally, the findings differed in emphasis from Assidik (2025), whose research analyzed intrinsic elements and moral values within a folklore text without involving students as research participants. The present study moved beyond the analysis of the literary object itself by examining the reader's ability to construct meaning from the text. This distinction is central to the contribution of the current research. While previous studies have established that folklore contains intrinsic elements and moral values, the present findings demonstrate that the educational significance of those elements depends on students' capacity to recognize, interpret, justify, and apply them.

Overall, the comparison with previous studies indicates substantial consistency concerning the educational value of narrative and folklore texts for literacy and moral learning. The main contribution of the present study lies in showing that students' competence is uneven across levels of narrative processing: explicit information is generally easier to identify, whereas theme, plot, implicit moral meanings, and evidence-based explanations require deeper interpretive engagement. This finding provides a more nuanced understanding of primary-school narrative literacy and strengthens the argument that legend-based instruction should move beyond comprehension at the literal level toward integrated literary analysis, inference, discussion, and moral reflection.

3. Implications of the Findings

The findings have both theoretical and practical implications for primary literacy education. Theoretically, the study reinforces the view that narrative literacy involves more than literal reading because students must integrate textual information, interpret narrative structure, and construct moral meaning from stories. The different levels of achievement across characters, setting, theme, plot, and moral interpretation further suggest that narrative literacy develops progressively from explicit information recognition toward higher-level inference and interpretation.

Practically, the findings indicate that legend stories can serve as effective literacy resources for integrating reading comprehension, literary analysis, and moral education. However, instruction

should not stop at asking students to identify characters or moral messages. Teachers should provide guided questions, discussion, textual evidence activities, and reflection tasks that encourage students to explain themes, reconstruct plots, justify moral interpretations, and connect story values with everyday experiences. The findings also highlight the importance of sustained reading habits, family support, school literacy programs, and access to diverse reading materials. These implications suggest that improving literacy requires cooperation among teachers, schools, families, and students rather than relying exclusively on classroom instruction.

4. Research Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study involved only 20 fourth-grade students from one primary school, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other schools, regions, and student populations. Second, the quantitative analysis relied primarily on descriptive statistics; therefore, the study did not establish statistical relationships or causal effects between literacy performance and the identified influencing factors. Third, the qualitative findings were based partly on students' and teachers' self-reported experiences, which may have been affected by recall or response bias. Fourth, the assessment focused on a single legend, *Keong Mas*, so students' performance may have been influenced by their familiarity with the story and its cultural context. Finally, several contextual factors, including students' prior reading experience, home literacy environment, and individual cognitive differences, could not be fully controlled. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples, multiple narrative texts, and longitudinal or comparative designs to examine the development of students' narrative and moral literacy more comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that fourth-grade students at SDN 2 Selebung Ketangga demonstrated a generally good level of literacy in identifying intrinsic elements and moral values in the legend *Keong Mas*. The mean score for identifying intrinsic elements was 81.25, with 75% of students achieving good to very good performance. Students demonstrated the strongest ability in identifying characters and characterization (95%) and setting (90%), whereas plot (70%) and theme (75%) remained more challenging. Similarly, students' ability to identify moral values was categorized as good, with a mean score of 79.50 and 75% of students achieving good to very good performance. However, the findings revealed that identifying moral values was easier than explaining and justifying them: approximately 80% of students identified the main moral values, while only 65% were able to provide logically supported explanations. Overall, the study demonstrates that students' narrative literacy was stronger in recognizing explicit information than in performing deeper inferential, interpretive, and reflective processes.

The qualitative findings further showed that students' literacy performance was influenced by interacting internal and external factors. Reading fluency, reading interest, motivation, and comprehension ability contributed to individual differences, while teacher guidance, routine school literacy activities, access to reading materials, parental support, and home reading habits provided important contextual support. These findings reinforce the potential of legend stories as learning resources that integrate reading comprehension, literary analysis, and moral learning. The study therefore suggests that primary literacy instruction should move beyond literal comprehension toward activities that require students to interpret themes, reconstruct plots, justify moral interpretations with textual evidence, and connect literary values with everyday life.

The findings should be interpreted within several limitations. The study involved only 20 students from a single primary school and examined students' responses to one legend, *Keong Mas*,

which limits the transferability of the findings to other populations and narrative contexts. In addition, the quantitative analysis was descriptive and therefore did not establish causal relationships between literacy performance and the identified influencing factors. Qualitative evidence also relied partly on participant responses, which may have been subject to individual perceptions or response bias.

Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples across multiple schools and regions, incorporate several legend and folklore texts, and consider comparative or longitudinal designs to examine the development of narrative and moral literacy over time. Further studies could also investigate the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions, such as guided reading, higher-order questioning, problem-based learning, or structured literary discussion, in improving students' ability to move from literal understanding toward deeper narrative interpretation and evidence-based moral reasoning.

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