



# Fostering Peace and Harmony Through Indonesian Heroes' Stories: A Systematic Review of Literature

Firman Parlindungan<sup>1</sup>(✉), Irfan Rifai<sup>2</sup>, Rahmad Nuthihar<sup>3</sup>, and Sofie Dewayani<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Communication Science, University of Teuku Umar, Meulaboh, Indonesia  
firman@utu.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> English Department of Humanities, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia  
irifai@binus.edu

<sup>3</sup> Department of Community Aceh Barat, Meulaboh, Indonesia  
rahmad.nuthihar@aknacehbarat.ac.id

<sup>4</sup> Litara Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia

**Abstract.** In this article, we explored how the Indonesian national hero stories have been constructed and how the academic scholars perceive, critic, and encourage the development of Indonesian children's storybooks about national heroes. We conducted a systematic review of literature in the following steps: (1) formulating the problem, (2) searching the literature, (3) gathering information from studies, (4) interpreting the evidence and (5) presenting the results. We limited our search to stories and studies of national heroes that originally came from Aceh Province. This inclusion criteria narrowed our focus into six Acehese national heroes; (1) Malahayati, (2) Cut Meutia, (3) Teuku Umar, (4) Cut Nyak Dien, (5) Teuku Nyak Arief, and (6) Teuku Muhammad Hasan. The findings show that the stories of those six Acehese heroes with their courageous acts have been passed to generations of Indonesians to nurture patriotism. They have been told through school textbooks, movies, and other media. However, we found many of these stories generally tell the same storyline, lead to predictable ends, and expect singular perspective moral value. As the result, such telling of Indonesia's national heroes' stories has turned the national heroes into mythical, unrealistic beings which might make it hard for students to connect and relate. Additionally, the stories typically contain acts of violence with less value on peace and harmony. These findings indicate that Indonesian children's storybooks on national heroes, particularly on those six Acehese heroes, need to be deconstructed and reconstructed. Children need alternatives to heroes' stories that challenge their critical perspective towards what it means to be a patriot and why maintaining peace and harmony is crucial in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Children stories · systemic literature review · national heroes · peace · literacy

## 1 Introduction

Humans, adults and children's love of stories is hereditary. Human being has used stories to transfer knowledge and information, including gossips, since the beginning of their civilization. Stories travel fast. Even before the invention of information technology, they have become a very efficient way of information sharing and transfer. In addition to knowledge and information, stories have been used to also transfer social norms and values [1, 2]. In the context of education, stories play a fundamental role in developing children's imagination and sense of freedom of expression like giving suggestions and thinking creatively [3]. They increase children's reading ability, develop aspects of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor of the children [4]. They are also powerful tools to help improve children's literacy and story development [5–7].

A good book for children should be instructive or nutritive, which means that it should be informational, educational, and healthy for children to consume [8]. Its contents and language of stories should be consistent with the intellectual and emotional progress level of children [3] as they relate with children's cognitive aspects, idea precipitation, and maturity level (Sukri Syamsuri et al., 2018) [3, 4]. In other words, the content of children's literature should be relevant with their background and environment as it plays a fundamental role as a part of children's growth.

Indonesian children grow up with folktales and stories about national heroes and their courageous acts that have been passed through generations. They have been told through school textbooks, movies, and other media to nurture patriotism. Researchers argue that stories about national heroes is a valuable resource as they transmit values, knowledge, and perceived thoughts about something that is culturally relevant about Indonesia [1, 2]. In the same vein, Srikandi [9] found that the use of Indonesian heroes' stories take part in constructing cultural memory for readers and how they perceived the stories and its values in their live. Having included in the curriculum, stories about national heroes have always been the primary reading content for children starting from elementary until high school [10].

However, many of these stories generally have been crafted by using the same storyline, lead to predictable endings, and used singular perspective moral value. As the result, national heroes have turned into mythical, unrelatable for students. The stories also typically contain acts of violence with less integration of values on peace and harmony. The over exposures of violent of heroes' characters in children's literature, if not used appropriately, might trigger violent behaviors and other negative attitudes in children. This might be the case because the portrayal of national heroes in literary works construct children's cultural memories [11].

The main problem that occurs is that the Indonesian national heroes are not yet known as a whole, particularly on how courageous acts are not perceived as violent, but create positive influences on children's lives [12]. Large number of Indonesian national heroes indicate potentials for exploring values in character education. For instance, Supriatna and Savira analyzed the values of characters embedded in the film of General Sudirman through a semiotic approach [13]. They argue that Jenderal Soedirman's short film serves as a learning media in packaging stories into interesting and meaningful learning experience for elementary school students. Bigazzi et al. in a cross-cultural explorative study of heroes in seven countries (2021) also highlighted that when children learn values

of characters in heroes' stories, they internalize the values as role models of the past and reflect them to the social values, norms, and morality of the presents [14].

## 2 Literature Review

### A. *The Concept of Hero and Heroism*

People may conceive hero and heroism differently, depending to the social construction attached within the society. According to Frisk [15], in early studies about hero and heroism, what makes someone a hero was characterized by an exclusive point of view to the heroic actions in which the title of hero was restricted to grand figures in history and myth. In more recent development, this conception has been shifted into a more open-minded perspective, embracing such relatively unremarkable individuals as athletes, soldiers, celebrities, and mountain rescues [16]. The latter seems to be the case in western society [15]. Kohen, Langdon, and Riches contend that heroes in this context share at least four essential traits: they anticipated helping situations and thought through their response; they possessed a broad sense of empathy, not just for those who might be viewed as "like them" but also for those who might be viewed as "other" in some significant ways; they routinely took action to help others, often in small ways; and they possessed some experiences or skills that gave them confidence about carrying out the heroic act [17]. Within this perspective, the conception of heroes provides more spaces for improving the world; a more tangible framework for thinking of knowledge as telling, modifying, and sharing real-world stories [18].

On the other hands, the concept of hero and heroism in Asian culture uses concrete realms of experience as a source of metaphors which is closely related to historical figures and myths [19]. Gibson identified four hero domains in a wide variety of seemingly unrelated Asian cultural traditions: the domestic, the cosmological, the political, and the religious [20]. Then, the heroic figures reconcile symbolic conflicts within and between the four domains. The stories about the heroic figures passed through generations might vary depending on which domain is given major prominence. As a case in point, Januarti [21] studied 20 films with a hero theme from China and Indonesia in terms of its heroic message, as well as its imagery, philosophy, and even culture. She found that in both Indonesian and Chinese films, the struggle against colonialism, injustice, and class is represented by heroic figures in comparable ways. Fogg [22] also maintain that the conception of hero in the context of Indonesia has developed from being a common term for veterans to a designated national category. It was formalized and bureaucratized to communicate messages about the character of the state, its collective past, as well as the qualities and accomplishments that the state valued. Then, the society might conceive messages about how Indonesian identity was developed in opposition to colonialism, the importance of armed conflict, and the unification of all the islands into one, cohesive political unit. The promotions and campaigns of the heroic figures are massively integrated in the curriculum at primary and secondary level of education [12, 23].

### B. *The Present Study*

In view of the above arguments, we argue that hero's stories play a pivotal role in strengthening students' identity and literacy skills as far as the stories are presented

appropriately in quality children's books. How the Indonesian national hero's stories have been constructed in school textbooks, movies, and other media are of the interest of this study. As such, we conducted a systematic review of literature about the story of Indonesian national heroes for children that are told through school textbooks, movies and other media. Given the fact that Indonesia is a diverse country constituted hundreds of islands, languages, and cultures, large number of national heroes have been formally recognized by the government. We focused on reviewing the literatures limited to six heroes from Aceh Province namely (1) Laksamana Malahayati, (2) Cut Meutia, (3) Teuku Umar, (4) Cut Nyak Dhien, (5) Teuku Nyak Arief, and (6) Teuku Muhammad Hasan. The reason we narrowed our focus in Aceh Province is due to the fact that it has a long history of armed conflicts started from the Dutch colonialism up to the civil war against the Government of Indonesia. We also investigated how the academic scholars perceive, critic, and encourage the development of Indonesian children's storybooks about national heroes. The understanding to this matter is crucial in order to provide insights on what could be done to enrich quality children' literature in Indonesia, especially that unpacks the national hero's stories and challenge critical thinking, nurtures values of characters, as well as broaden multicultural perspectives.

### 3 Method

This study employed a systematic review approach to analyze and synthesize previous relevant literatures to understand the breadth and depth of the existing study and identify gaps to explore [24]. As defined by Audrin [25], the purpose of systematic literature review is to collate relevant evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria to answer a specific research question. Using this methodology, we recognized a perceptible pattern in the research methods and the values told from each Acehese heroes. Furthermore, this research followed an adapted systematic review procedure according to Cooper (as cited in Vaughn et al. [26]) which phases include: a) formulating the problem, b) searching the literature, c) gathering information from studies, d) interpreting the evidence and e) presenting the results. To add on, our study is based on articles related to the story of 6 national heroes from Aceh province.

#### A. Phase 1: Formulating the Problem

Once we formulated the research questions, we then looked for relevant prior research related to similar topics. Previous research by Yulsafi and Fusrida [27], Soraya [28] and Kustina, et al. [29] who conducted a study on Acehese national heroes' story denoted that beside the portrayal of their courageous acts and immense influence as a national hero, there were still irrelevant values for children told in the stories such as an underage marriage, multiple marriages, hatred, as well as the act of harshness alongside each heroes' stories. Accordingly, scholars such as Srikandi [9] and Ningrum [3] agreed that stories should become a media where students can gain many moral values since it is a rich educational material to sharpen personality and character.

However, as aforementioned, Indonesia's national heroes' stories have turned the national heroes into mythical, unrealistic beings which might make it hard for students to connect and relate. The lack of peace and harmony values in the stories led to the

impetus for this review. Given this consideration, it was clear that there was a need to deconstruct and reconstruct how the national heroes' story is told and that children need alternatives to heroes' stories that challenge their critical perspective towards what it means to be a patriot and why maintaining peace and harmony is crucial in Indonesia.

### *B. Phase 2: Searching the Literature*

We used "children's stories" as a keyword for this review alongside with "literacy", "peace and harmony", "national heroes" and "systematic literature review" in Google Scholar. We employed the keyword "literacy" and "peace and harmony" in this study for the following reasons:

- We wanted to identify the values that has been told in the national heroes' story and how it nurtures patriotism and relevant for children as stories is a powerful tool for education.
- We wanted to identify if the national heroes' story pointed out the value of what it means to be a patriot and why maintaining peace and harmony is crucial in Indonesia.

Although we acknowledged that this may have limited this study into subjectiveness, identity, and appropriation, our primary aim is to review and evaluate relevant studies about national heroes' story as an education tool for children's literacy. To be included in the review, the following criteria need to be met: (1) focused on 6 national heroes form Aceh province (Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Meutia, Cut Nyak Dhien, Teuku Umar, Teuku Nyak Arief, Teuku Muhammad Hasan), (2) Involved some aspects of literacy and culturally relevant pedagogy, and (3) Published articles. We initially identified 23 articles that met these criteria which are related to Acehnese heroes, literacy, and cultural content.

### *C. Phase 3: Gathering Information from the Studies*

To gather information from the studies, we reread each article and categorized the studies into two excel table (see Table 1 and 2) divided into reviewed about Acehnese national hero's story and studies related to literacy and cultural content. During this initial analysis we excluded studies that did not meet our inclusion criteria. Accordingly, we were able to have 4 relevant studies about Acehnese national heroes while the rest are related to literacy and cultural content.

### *D. Phase 4: Analyzing and Interpreting the Evidence*

To answer research question one, we conducted content analysis based on its research method, values found from each hero's story, year of publication, and result of the study. From 4 studies that reviewed Acehnese heroes' story, we found a perceptible pattern in the research methods and the values told from each hero's story. Accordingly, several studies related to literacy and cultural content was also categorized in one excel table to answer research question number two based on scholar's research question, research method, and result. We approached this phase in analysis to synthesize findings using qualitative approach. We adapted Cooper's systematic review phase (as cited in Vaughn et al., [26]) to match the rare prior studies found for 6 national heroes form Aceh province.

In addition, to analyze the data as children's literacy tool, we used multicultural perspective in children's literature as our theoretical framework to measure the suitability

**Table 1.** List of Studies Depicted Aceh's Heroes

Reference	Type Values Embedded in the Stories	Depiction of the Character
Soraya, S. K., Samingan, S., & Roe, Y. T. (2021). Cut Nyak Dien: Ratu perang Aceh dalam melawan pemerintah kolonial Belanda tahun 1878–1908 [Cut Nyak Dien: The war queen of Aceh in fighting Dutch colonialism]. <i>Sajaratun: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pembelajaran Sejarah</i> , 6(2), 55–68.	Patriotism Nationalism Optimism Courageous Persistence	Cut Nyak Dien is a prominent noble lady in Aceh who uphold patriotism and fought in the name of religion despite the stereotype of gender at that time in Aceh which the common practiced religion is Islam. She always stepped in a battlefield, knows very well how to use Aceh's traditional swords (Rencong), and have no mercy for the Dutch's life. Cut Nyak Dien had such a great influence or impact in the religious, socio-cultural and political fields in Aceh.
Khakim, M. N. L., Furzaen, A. R., & Suwarno, E. I. (2020, August). Aceh Women's Contribution of Military Affairs During Western Colonialism in Indonesia. In <i>International Conference On Social Studies, Globalisation And Technology (ICSSGT 2019)</i> (pp. 220–228). Atlantis Press.	Patriotism Nationalism Gender equality	The chronicle of Aceh women's heroic story is closely associated with a repressed situation that forced them to give some contributions. Their strategy to against colonialism is subversive toward power relations which stand on Islamic interpretation that promotes gender inequality. The portrayed a strong women leader figure who actively contributes to politics and military affair as an admiral and a great war strategist in which they opposed the myth that political and military affairs are dominant by male.

*(continued)*

**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Type Values Embedded in the Stories</b>	<b>Depiction of the Character</b>
Kustina, R. (2018). Analisis nilai-nilai dalam cerita sejarah Teuku Umar: Sebuah kajian persepsi [Analysis of historical values of Teuku Umar: A perception studies]. <i>Jurnal Metamorfosa</i> , 6(2), 171–179.	Patriotism Benevolent Optimism Leadership	The values contained in the narrative history of the Teuku Umar in the form of (a) the value of the social nature of the benefactor who is heroic in helping the people, (b) the moral values found in the story of history as the hero has the soul of daredevil and not concerned with his own safety regardless of the people, (c) religious values such as a pious figure and receive great respect for the clergy as the heir of the Prophet.
Ruchliyadi, D. A., Sapriya, S., Komalasari, K., & Rahmat, R. (2018, November). The Integration of Prince Antasari's Character Values into Indonesian Civics Education Learning. In <i>Annual Civic Education Conference (ACEC 2018)</i> (pp. 472–475). Atlantis Press.	Patriotism Optimism Religious Leadership	The biography and the character values of Prince Antasari's life, that are monotheism which affirms God, hospitable, have a sharp view, permanence and determination, not afraid and not surprised at all the events that happen, have a firm believer, aspire the true independence, democratic, nationalist, does not like to glorify his offspring, humble to the common people, does not feeling tired and exhausted, really hate colonialism, very relevant to integrate it to the Civic Education which aims to increase students' awareness and insight the status of rights and obligations in the life of society, nation and state.

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Type Values Embedded in the Stories</b>	<b>Depiction of the Character</b>
Mawar, S. (2013). Teuku Nyak Arif: pejuang Aceh tiga zaman seri informasi sejarah No. 37/2013.	Patriotism Nationalism Benevolent	Teuku Nyak Arief, is a visioner nationalist hero who was also the first governor for Aceh province for 1945–1946. He is known as the warrior of 3 ages during the Dutch and Japan era who actively involved in building education for Aceh people alongside with Teuku Muhammad Hasan. They established an educational funding organization in Aceh named Atjehsche Studiefonds. Both Teuku Nyak Arief and Teuku Muhammad Hasan are known as an intellectual hero who actively involved in politics and initiated war with Japan during Japan colonization era in Aceh.

of the values told from each story. This framework appeared as a social justice point of view postulated to support cultural competence, academic excellence, and socio-political consciousness for all learners in every educational context [30]. Gloria Ladson-Billings, the scholar who raised the issue of relevant education for marginalized students stated that multicultural children’s literature is crucial in helping students to understand that learning should be connected to real-life problems in a society that is deeply ramified along racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural lines to name a few [31]. Hence, as a media where students can gain many moral values, stories should be appropriately told and relatable for student’s cultural, environment, and educational background as it allows students to have a sense of freedom to express themselves, dare to suggest, dare to think differently, and become more enthusiastic in developing imagination [3].



**Table 2.** List of Studies Arguing the Development of Hero's Stories in Literature

Reference	Major Take Away
Srikandi, C. N. (2019). Konstruksi ingatan budaya dan identitas pahlawan nasional dalam karya sastra sebagai budaya material [The Construction of cultural memory and Identity of national heroes in literary works as material culture]. <i>Sirok Bastra</i> , 7(2), 207–215.	The 'way of remembering' influences the formation of material culture including literary works and cultural identity of national hero figures who have lived at a time. Therefore, literature takes part in constructing cultural memory for readers and how they perceived the stories and its values into their live which in this case is how the portrayal of national heroes in literary works construct their cultural memories
Ningrum, E. F. (2018). Literature on student book and its effect for developing elementary school teaching materials. <i>Lingua Cultura</i> , 12(2), 209–214.	The results of this research could be useful for guidelines for the development of literary materials by teachers when implementing learning planning. The findings show that students' literature material is only about 30% of the Indonesian language learning material found in the 4th grade of elementary school. The lesson was limited to reading the text of the story then answering questions about the content of the text. In general, literary competence material in student books has not been emphasized on the cultivation of literary concepts.
Adnyani, N. K. S., & Budiarta, I. W. (2021). Internalization of character education based on national hero example in developing nationalism. <i>Cendekia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran</i> , 15(2), 172–188.	Learning using the role models of national heroes was better than conventional learning in students' citizenship knowledge. Learning using the role models of national heroes was better than conventional learning on student social responsibility attitudes. Learning using the role models of national heroes was better than conventional learning. Students acquire skills to gather information.
Irawati, R. P., & Purwani, N. (2013). Nilai-nilai moralitas dan budaya asing dalam sastra anak terjemahan melalui pemaknaan sastra anak oleh anak [Moral values and foreign culture in children's literature translation through literary meaning by children]. <i>Lingua</i> , 9(1).	Stimulation in children through literature is required at every age level and education. Through children's literature, children get a lot of moral education obtained in an unusual way but it's fun and hits deep children's minds. Through children's literature, children gain knowledge about children's culture and lifestyle on another continent that has a difference culture and climate with children Indonesia. It enriches knowledge and character building them to be more sensitive.

(continued)

**Table 2.** (continued)

Reference	Major Take Away
<p>Hartono, Y., Asrowi, M., &amp; Haryanto, S. (2018, August). Moral literacy in historical stories of national heroes: Studies in character educations on history learning at Surakarta High School. In <i>PROCEEDING ICTESS (Internasional Conference on Technology, Education and Social Sciences)</i>.</p>	<p>Students discover and understand the moral values or concepts of the hero's story as a basis for taking certain moral attitudes and actions through the process of internalization, i.e., the developmental changing of behavior which is controlled externally by internally controlled behavior. The lecture model, as still practiced by some teachers in history teaching practice in Indonesia, tends to be indoctrinated and can undermine character education itself.</p>
<p>Pramono, S. E., Ahmad, T. A., &amp; Wijayati, P. A. (2021, May). Mapping the national heroes in Indonesia to strengthen national identity in history learning. In <i>IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science</i> (Vol. 747, No. 1, p. 012072). IOP Publishing.</p>	<p>Since 1959–2019, Indonesia has had 186 national heroes. Most of them came from Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. Heroes have relevance as material in history lessons. The most popular heroes in the textbook are Pattimura, Diponegoro, Sukarno, Moh. Hatta, and Hamengkubuwono IX. In terms of quantity, not all heroes have been accommodated in learning. It is because the number of national heroes continues to increase every year. In terms of distribution, learning has adjusted heroes from various regions. It is beneficial for eroding primordialism and raising awareness that all areas contribute to Indonesia's existence.</p>
<p>Hasriani, A., Syamsuri, A. S., &amp; Hasriani, R. (2018). Representation of character education values in nonfiction stories of national heroes biography (A study of children's literature). <i>Journal of Humanities and Social Science</i>, 27(3), 6–11.</p>	<p>Character education's value in reading nonfiction text of national hero biography is in the form of religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, the spirit of nationality, love the country, appreciate achievement, communicative, friendly, love peace, love to read, environmental care, education social care, and responsibilities. The contents of the character education value in reading nonfiction text of national hero biography consist of the value of character education against God Almighty, the value of character education to us, the value of character education to fellow man, and the value of character education to the public, group or community. The functions of the character education value in reading nonfiction text of national hero biography consist of religious function, cultural function, educational function, and social function.</p>

## 4 Result and Discussion

In this section, we present the result of the analysis regarding (1) how the Indonesian national hero's stories have been constructed in school textbooks, movies, and other media; (2) how the academic scholars perceive, critic, and encourage the development of Indonesian children's storybooks about national heroes. Secondly, we elaborate the findings with existing body of knowledge to move the intellectual dialog forward based on the focus of this study.

### A. *The Construction of Acehnese Hero's Stories: Themes and Storylines*

This finding is based on the first research question: How do Indonesian national heroes' stories have been constructed in school textbooks, movies, and other media? As we can see from Table 1, from four studies related to six Acehnese heroes, it is found that each hero has an identical storylines and themes. For instance, a study of a heroine of Cut Nyak Dien was found to have an identical themes and storylines with the study of the other heroines namely Cut Meutia and Malahayati. Both studies used a qualitative research method focusing on literature study and historical research method that includes interpretation and historiography. The themes of the story for each hero were portrayed as strong female figures as leaders who actively contribute to political and military affairs as an admiral, and a great war strategist that challenge the mainstream social construction predominantly dominated by male figures. The values that each study found from these heroines are also identical, including patriotism, nationalism, gender equality, and benevolent.

Following the storylines of the aforementioned heroines, Cut Nyak Dien was described as a gallant woman figure who always stepped in the battlefield, who knew very well how to use the Aceh's traditional dagger (called Rencong), and had no mercy for the Dutch army during the Aceh war in 1873. She always told her followers to not give up and always called for a war with the Dutch. She was described as a prominent noble lady in Aceh who upholded patriotism and fought in the name of religion despite the gender stereotype of the time in Aceh where the common practiced religion is Islam. In the same vein, both Cut Meutia and Malahayati, were also known to always stepped in the battlefield and terrific weapon users, and that they immensely influenced their husband's nationalism, as well as people around them to keep fighting the Dutch. Subsequently, the three Acehnese heroines were described to come from a similar background which was closely associated with a repressed situation that requires their contributions to achieve freedom. Their strategy against colonialism was subversive toward power relations which was inspired by Islamic interpretation in promoting gender equality.

Accordingly, studies about Acehnese heroes, namely Teuku Nyak Arief, Teuku Umar, and Teuku Muhammad Hasan were also found to have identical themes and storylines. A study about Teuku Nyak Arief showed similar values and identical storylines with a study about Teuku Umar and Teuku Muhammad Hasan. The themes of the story for each hero were portrayed as a visionary nationalist figure who upholds nationalism, a great leader and war strategist in fighting the Dutch. The studies used descriptive qualitative research and described the same values of each hero which are patriotism, benevolent, nationalism, religious, and leadership.

Concerning the storylines of these heroes, Teuku Umar was described as a philanthropic leader who was benevolent towards people around him. He was a clever and discerning war leader and a skilled fighter in the battlefield with his mastery in using traditional weapons, such as Rencong, swords, and spears. The Acehnese at that time looked up to him as a great leader in the battlefield. Similarly, both Teuku Nyak Arief and Teuku Muhammad Hasan were also described as great leaders for Aceh people in upholding nationalism. Teuku Nyak Arief was known as the hero of three eras during the Dutch and Japanese colonialism, as well as early independent of Indonesia, alongside Teuku Umar and Teuku Muhammad Hasan who were known to be actively involved in politics. In spite of that, there were slight different of storylines between the three of them, in which Teuku Umar was described as someone who solely involved in politics and battlefield, Teuku Nyak Arief and Teuku Muhammad Hasan were actively involved in building education for Aceh people.

Having reviewed the stories about three Aceh's heroines, we can clearly see that the storylines are identical. They have the same themes and tell the same struggles that they were uneducated, in repressed situations, experienced gender inequality and subversive power abuse. How they overcome the struggles as female figures in that era was also similar. Subsequently, the stories about the three Acehnese heroes also have an identical storyline and tell the same values with slightly different heroic actions. To conclude, all six stories about Indonesian national heroes from Aceh Province lead to predictable ends and tell a singular moral perspective as each hero's stories, which are identical.

#### *B. The Development of Acehnese Hero's Stories in Literature: Violence and Heroism*

This finding is based on the second research question: How do academic scholars perceive, criticize, and encourage the development of Indonesian children's storybooks about national heroes? According to the prior finding, it is evident that the stories of 6 Acehnese heroes portrayed a courageous act of each hero which also tell the same moral values namely patriotism, nationalist, religious, benevolent, as well as great leadership figures. Regardless of gender, each hero was portrayed as a heroic figure who upholds nationalism and a reliable fighter in the battlefield with a terrific use of weapons. Despite the portrayal of courage and patriotism, some critics revealed that Indonesian national heroes' stories still contain some inappropriate acts namely underage marriage, multiple marriages, hatred, and mention of acts of violence that make the stories told with less value in peace and harmony.

As we can see from Table 1 and Table 2, eight studies were found related to how the values told from the stories of these 6 national heroes related to the development of children's literacy. These 8 studies used Qualitative research methods focusing on content analysis, data analysis, as well as experimental studies. The studies range from how literary works affected cultural memories development to national hero's story as a literacy content.

According to the studies, all 8 studies show a perceptible result that all the national heroes' stories deliver good moral values such as nationalism, humanity, and courageous acts for students. One study found that learning using role models of national heroes was better than conventional learning on a student's social responsibility attitude. Another study supporting prior results also found that students understand the moral values or

the concept of the hero's story as a basis for taking certain moral attitudes and actions as it is culturally relevant for them. Hence, relating it with a culturally relevant pedagogy, the story of the national hero is a culturally relevant content for Indonesian students as it is highly related in terms of cultural background and history [32].

However, multicultural perspective in children's literature is not only related for historical and cultural background, but also should be something to help students understand that learning should be connected to everyday problems of living in a society to support cultural competence, academic excellence, and socio-political consciousness for all learners in every educational context [31]. Thus, four studies found that despite the portrayal of courageous acts from national hero's stories, acts of violence still mainly told in the story. Mentions of violent acts, such as the hero initiating the war, killing the enemy, and other harsh words were still used inside the story. Furthermore, the unrealistic storyline such as continuous war, multiple marriages and the hero's religious traits make the national hero character become more vague and make it an unrealistic being.

Considering it as children's literacy content, children might mistake the violent acts as a part of being heroic to the country and might develop the idea that those acts are common things that had happened in the past. This is supported by the findings that found out how national hero's stories construct cultural memories of children. The study found that since national heroes' stories came indoctrinated through school books and other media, children might unconsciously use national heroes' character as a role model for their citizenship and social responsibility. Furthermore, storyline such as underage marriage experience by the three Acehese heroines, as well as the practice of having more than one wife (polygamy) by the three Acehese heroes should be presented carefully for children's literature [33, 34]. The idea might be inappropriate and not culturally relevant in many contexts.

It should come as no surprise that the issue of violence and savagery has been extensively addressed in literature and plays a key role in any discussion of war and peace. Many academics feel that suitable use of violence can be found in some children's literature. They point out that children's violent behavior is frequently not caused by violent literature; rather, the incorporation of violence in good literature can have a positive impact on children's life.

## 5 Conclusion

This study highlights two points: (1) how the Indonesian national heroes' stories have been constructed in school textbooks, movies, and other media, (2) how the academic scholars perceive, critic, and encourage the development of Indonesian children's story-books about national heroes. Through a systematic review of literature, we found some important findings suggesting the needs for further research and better production of children's literature about Indonesian hero's stories.

Considering its impacts on children's cognitive and social development, stories for children should ideally be educational and healthy for children to consume. They should be able to go not only to the minds but also to the hearts of Indonesian children. It is with this objective that the stories of Acehese local heroes have been introduced to Indonesian children in many forms: course books, videos, and graphic novels. However,

our study revealed that the stories have been identical in their storylines and themes. We found that the female heroes had to put up a fight against uneducated, repressed situations, gender inequality, and subversive power abuse.

The values that each story of the Acehnese heroines (Cut Nyak Dien, Malahayati, and Cut Nyak Meutia) also contained three identical values such as, patriotism, nationalism, gender equality, and benevolence. The three Acehnese heroes (Teuku Umar, Teuku Nyak Arief, and Teuku Muhammad Hasan) were portrayed as great leaders that have visionary nationalism and great war strategists to fight colonialism. The stories about these three heroes also have an identical storyline and tell the same values with slightly different heroic actions, depending on the contexts of their fights. In a nutshell, all the six stories of Aceh's heroes lead to predictable ends and tell a singular moral perspective.

According to the studies, that all the national heroes' stories deliver good moral values such as nationalism, humanity, and courageous acts for students. Despite the portrayal of courageous acts from national hero's stories, acts of violence still dominated the stories. Mentions of violence acts such as the hero initiating the war, killing the enemy, and profanities were used inside the story. Furthermore, the narrative revolving around issues such as polygamy and heroic actions that make them unrealistic, or close to fictional beings need to be reconstructed in children's literature. However, the Acehnese hero's stories have great potentials to use as means to foster peace and harmony with the implementation of appropriate classroom instruction and scaffoldings. We suggest that the writing of the Indonesian national heroes need to be deconstructed and restructured.

**Acknowledgment.** We would like to extend our gratitude to the Directorate of Research, Technology, and Community Service, Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This research would not have been possible without their generous support through research fund of *Penelitian Dasar Kompetitif Nasional* (PDKN) based on contract number 251/E5/PG.02.00/PT/2022. We ensure that any findings and interpretation of this research is solely the responsibility of the authors.

## References

1. W. Wright, "Introduction: The Hero In Popular Stories," *J. Pop. Film Telev.*, vol. 32, no. 4, hal. 146–148, Jan 2005.
2. Y. H. Samsi Haryanto Asrowi, Mulyoto dan, "Moral Literacy in Historical Stories of National Heroes: Studies in Character Educations on History Learning at Surakarta High School," *PROCEEDING ICTESS (Internasional Conf. Technol. Educ. Soc. Sci.*, no. 2018: PROCEEDING ICTESS, 2018.
3. E. F. Ningrum, "Literature on Student Book and its Effect for Developing Elementary School Teaching Materials," *Ling. Cult.*, vol. 12, no. 2, hal. 209–214, 2018.
4. Hasriani, Anshari, A. S. Syamsuri, dan R. Hasriani, "Representation of Character Education Values in Nonfiction Stories of National Heroes Biography (A Study of Children's Literature)," *IOSR J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 23, no. 7, hal. 6–11, 2018.
5. J. Peck, "Using Storytelling to Promote Language and Literacy Development," *Read. Teach.*, vol. 43, no. 2, hal. 138–141, Sep 1989.

6. I. Y. Maureen, H. van der Meij, dan T. de Jong, "Supporting Literacy and Digital Literacy Development in Early Childhood Education Using Storytelling Activities," *Int. J. Early Child.*, vol. 50, no. 3, hal. 371–389, 2018.
7. T. Rokhmawan dan M. B. Firmansyah, "Cultural Literacy Development Based On Local Oralstories As The Cultural Identity Of Kebonsari Elementary School.," *ISLLAC J. Intensive Stud. Lang. Lit. Art. Cult.*, vol. 1, no. 1, hal. 224–238, 2017.
8. A. Gidwitz, "What Makes a Children's Book Good?," 2016..
9. C. N. Srikandi, "Konstruksi Ingatan Budaya dan Identitas Pahlawan Nasional dalam Karya Sastra Sebagai Budaya Materia (The Construction of Cultural Memory and Identity of National Heroes in Literary Works as Material Culture)," *Sirok Bastra*, vol. 7, no. 2, hal. 207–215, 2019.
10. S. YAZICI dan M. ASLAN, "Using Heroes as Role Models in Values Education: A Comparison between Social Studies Textbooks and Prospective Teachers' Choice of Hero or Heroines," *Educ. Sci. Theory Pract.*, vol. 11, no. 4, hal. 2184–2188, 2011.
11. G. R. Goethals dan S. T. Allison, "Chapter four - Making Heroes: The Construction of Courage, Competence, and Virtue," vol. 46, J. M. Olson dan M. P. B. T.-A. in E. S. P. Zanna, Ed. Academic Press, 2012, hal. 183–235.
12. S. E. Pramono, T. A. Ahmad, dan P. A. Wijayati, "Mapping the national heroes in Indonesia to strengthen national identity in history learning," *IOP Conf. Ser. Earth Environ. Sci.*, vol. 747, no. 1, hal. 12072, 2021.
13. E. Supriatna dan R. T. Savira, "The Potential of Jenderal Soedirman's Short Film as Learning Media in National Events of the Colonial Period's Material for Fifth Graders: A Semiotics Analysis," *J. Educ. Technol.*, vol. 5, no. 3, hal. 409–416, 2021.
14. S. Bigazzi *et al.*, "Social Representations of Heroes: Triggers from the Past, Values in the Present, Patterns for the Future," *Hum. Arenas*, 2021.
15. K. Frisk, "What Makes a Hero? Theorising the Social Structuring of Heroism," *Sociology*, vol. 53, no. 1, hal. 87–103, Apr 2018.
16. J. Pope dan J. Round, "Children's Responses to Heroism in Roald Dahl's Matilda," *Child. Lit. Educ.*, vol. 46, no. 3, hal. 257–277, 2015.
17. A. Kohen, M. Langdon, dan B. R. Riches, "The Making of a Hero: Cultivating Empathy, Altruism, and Heroic Imagination," *J. Humanist. Psychol.*, vol. 59, no. 4, hal. 617–633, Mei 2017.
18. O. Efthimiou dan S. T. Allison, "Heroism Science: Frameworks for an Emerging Field," *J. Humanist. Psychol.*, vol. 58, no. 5, hal. 556–570, Mei 2017.
19. J. Usman dan Y. Q. Yusuf, "The dehumanizing metaphors in the culture of Acehnese in Indonesia," *Indones. J. Appl. Linguist.*, vol. 10, no. 2, hal. 397–405, 2020.
20. T. Gibson, "The Hero Legend in Colonial Southeast Asia," *Philipp. Stud. Hist. Ethnogr. Viewpoints*, vol. 61, no. 4, hal. 437–476, 2014.
21. W. Januarti, "Symbols of Heroes in the Indonesian and Chinese Movies," *Ling. Cult.*, vol. 15, no. 1, hal. 29–38, 2021.
22. K. W. Fogg, "Making an Indonesian National Hero for Lombok," *Indones. Malay World*, vol. 47, no. 137, hal. 1–22, 2019.
23. A. Asnafiyah, "Leadership Character in the Social Science Subject Theme 'My Hero' of the 4th Grade at State Elementary School Purwomartani Kalasan Sleman Yogyakarta," *Tarbawi J. Keilmuan Manaj. Pendidik.*, vol. 6, no. 02, hal. 185, 2020.
24. Y. Xiao dan M. Watson, "Guidance on Conducting a Systematic Literature Review," *J. Plan. Educ. Res.*, vol. 39, no. 1, hal. 93–112, Agu 2017.
25. C. Audrin dan B. Audrin, "Key factors in digital literacy in learning and education: a systematic literature review using text mining," *Educ. Inf. Technol.*, vol. 27, no. 6, hal. 7395–7419, 2022.

26. M. Vaughn, B. G. Jang, V. Sotirovska, dan G. Cooper-Novack, "Student Agency in Literacy: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Read. Psychol.*, vol. 41, no. 7, hal. 712–734, Okt 2020.
27. Yulsafi dan Fusrida, "Nilai-Nilai Nasionalisme Dalam Novel Cut Nyak Dhien Karya M.H. Skelely Lulofs," *J. Hum.*, vol. 2, no. 1, hal. 74–78, 2018.
28. S. K. Soraya, Samingan, dan Y. T. Roe, "Cut Nyak Dien : Ratu Perang Aceh Dalam Melawan Pemerintah Kolonial Belanda Tahun 1878–1908," *Sajaratun J. Sej. dan Pembelajaran Sej.*, vol. 6, no. 2, hal. 55–68, 2021.
29. R. Kustina, "Analisis Nilai-Nilai dalam Cerita Sejarah Teuku Umar (Sebuah Kajian Persepsi) [Analysis of historical values of Teuku Umar: A perception studies]," *J. Metamorf.*, vol. 6, no. 2, hal. 171–179, 2018.
30. T. Christ dan S. A. Sharma, "Searching for Mirrors: Preservice Teachers' Journey Toward More Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," *Read. Horizons A J. Lit. Lang. Arts*, vol. 57, no. 1, hal. 55–73, 2018.
31. K. A. Silva, "Examining Elementary Teachers' Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching," Eastern Illinois University, 2017.
32. R. Herman, Mukhlis, F. Parlindungan, L. Lisyati, dan R. Nuthihar, "CHARACTER EDUCATION IN AN ACEHNESE CULTURAL SAGA : HIKAYAT PRANG SABI," *Ling. Cult.*, vol. 14, no. 2, hal. 179–186, 2020.
33. Husensah, Murniati, I. Hasan, dan H. Ibrahim, "Enculture of Patriotism Value of Teuku Umar : An Applied Model of Learning History in West Aceh," *Psychol. Educ.*, vol. 57, no. 9, hal. 2151–2154, 2020.
34. F. Sari, R. Jannah, dan Y. Q. Yusuf, "A Portrayal of Heroism Values in a Literary Work of the Acehnese Heroine : Keumalahayati," in *Proceedings of the 11th Annual International Conference (AIC) on Social Sciences*, 2021, no. 2004, hal. 213–221.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

