



## **Dynamics of Oral Literature of the Moskona Tribe in the Current of Modernization: Between Preservation and Transformation**

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### **Abstract**

Oral literature is an integral part of the culture of indigenous peoples, including the Moskona tribe in West Papua. This tradition plays a role in transmitting moral values, customary law, and the relationship between humans and nature. However, modernization brings changes in the pattern of delivery and sustainability of oral literature. This study aims to analyze the impact of modernization on the oral literature of the Moskona tribe and identify strategies for its preservation. Using a qualitative approach and ethnographic methods, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The results of the study show that although the oral literature of the Moskona tribe still survives, the transmission pattern has changed from direct oral communication to written and digital documentation. The interest of the younger generation in oral delivery is starting to decline, with only 35% still actively listening to stories from traditional elders. In contrast, digital media such as videos, podcasts, and social media have become new means of spreading folklore. The preservation strategy involves various parties, including schools, local governments, cultural communities, and the younger generation, with efforts such as integration into the curriculum, cultural festivals, and digital documentation. This study confirms that modernization is not always a threat to oral literature, but can be an opportunity for its transformation and preservation. Further studies are needed to explore the effectiveness of digital strategies in maintaining the sustainability of oral traditions in indigenous communities.

**Keywords:** Oral literature, Moskona tribe, Modernization, Cultural preservation, Digital transformation.

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### **1. Introduction**

Oral literature is an integral part of a society's culture, especially for communities that still uphold oral traditions in their daily lives. Oral literature not only functions as a means of entertainment, but also as a medium for education, conveying moral values, and the social identity of an ethnic group. The existence of oral literature in indigenous communities, such as the Moskona tribe in West Papua, has a very important role in shaping social character and maintaining local wisdom. Folk tales, myths, legends, and various other forms of oral literature are passed down from generation to generation as part of a collective knowledge system that supports cultural sustainability (Ladzekpo et al., 2024; Syam et al., 2024).

The Moskona tribe is one of the ethnic groups in Papua that has a rich oral literary tradition. This tradition is passed down from generation to generation through storytelling by traditional elders or community members who are considered to have in-depth knowledge of the tribe's culture and history (Juma, 2022). The stories told not only function as entertainment, but also as a means of conveying ethical values, customary law, and the relationship between humans and nature (Apriliyani et al., 2023). However, in the midst of the increasingly rapid flow of modernization, the existence of oral literature of the Moskona tribe faces various challenges that can threaten its sustainability.

Modernization brings various changes in people's lives, both in social, economic, and cultural aspects. The development of information technology, increasing access to formal education, and wider interaction with outside cultures have changed the way indigenous people communicate and convey their cultural heritage (Li et al., 2023; Rohmadi et al., 2023). This change has caused a shift in oral traditions, where the younger generation is more interested in digital media and technology-based communication compared to the tradition of direct storytelling. As a

result, many aspects of oral literature have begun to be marginalized, and some forms of traditional stories are at risk of extinction (Gutor et al., 2023).

In addition, the influence of Indonesian as the main language in formal education has also contributed to the reduced use of regional languages in oral literature. The younger generation of the Moskona tribe is increasingly using their mother tongue in everyday life, which has an impact on weakening their ability to understand and continue oral traditions. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of written documentation regarding the oral literature of the Moskona tribe, so that many stories and cultural values only survive in the collective memory of traditional elders without any systematic preservation efforts (Rusminto et al., 2021; Aikhenvald, 2021).

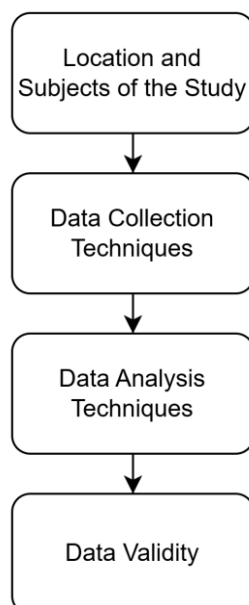
On the other hand, modernization also opens up new opportunities for the preservation of oral literature through various innovations in media and technology. Efforts to digitize and document oral literature in the form of audio recordings, videos, and digital publications can be an effective strategy in maintaining the sustainability of this cultural heritage. In addition, the integration of oral literature into the local education curriculum can also be a strategic step in ensuring that the younger generation continues to know and appreciate their cultural heritage (Siliutina et al., 2024).

Various studies have shown that the transformation of oral literature in indigenous communities is not always negative. Several indigenous communities have succeeded in adapting their oral stories into performing arts, documentary films, and digital platforms such as social media and podcasts (Jones, 2023). Thus, the transformation in oral literature can be seen as a form of cultural adaptation that allows this tradition to remain relevant in the lives of modern society.

However, to better understand the dynamics that occur in the oral literature of the Moskona tribe, a more comprehensive study is needed on how modernization affects the existence, function, and form of adaptation of this oral literature. This study aims to analyze the changes that have occurred in the oral literature of the Moskona tribe due to the influence of modernization, as well as to identify the strategies used by the community in maintaining the sustainability of their oral traditions.

## 2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with an ethnographic method to deeply understand the dynamics of the Moskona tribe's oral literature in the context of modernization. The ethnographic method was chosen because it allows researchers to observe and explore cultural practices in the natural environment of the community, as well as understand the internal perspectives of indigenous peoples on the changes that occur in their oral literary traditions (Susanto et al., 2024). With this method, research can reveal how modernization affects the transmission, function, and adaptation of oral literature in the lives of the Moskona tribe. The steps in this study can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** research flow

### 2.1. Location and subjects of the study

This study was conducted in the Moskona tribe's residential area, located in Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that this community still maintains the oral literary tradition as part of their culture, even though it has experienced the influence of modernization. The research location

also has rich socio-cultural characteristics, which allow further exploration of oral communication patterns, storytelling practices, and preservation strategies implemented by the local community.

The research subjects consist of three main categories. First, traditional elders and storytellers, who are the guardians of the Moskona tribe's oral literary heritage and have in-depth knowledge of folklore, myths, legends, and the cultural values contained therein. Second, the young generation of the Moskona tribe, who are the main target in understanding the changes in the pattern of oral literature transmission and their interest in cultural preservation. Third, education figures and local government, who play a role in cultural preservation policies and education based on local wisdom, so that they can provide perspectives on efforts that have been or are being made in maintaining oral literature amidst the social changes that are occurring.

## **2.2. Data collection techniques**

The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through three main methods, namely participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation and literature studies.

- a) Participatory observation was carried out by participating in storytelling activities and cultural discussions in the Moskona tribe community in order to directly understand the context of the delivery of oral literature and the social dynamics that accompany it. Researchers were involved in social interactions in the community to observe how oral literature is inherited, who is involved in the practice, and how the younger generation responds to this tradition.
- b) In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured with traditional elders, traditional storytellers, and the younger generation to gain an understanding of the changes in their oral literature traditions. This approach allows informants to express their views freely, but still within the research framework. Interviews with education figures and local governments were also conducted to determine the policies that have been implemented to support the preservation of oral literature.
- c) Documentation and literature studies include the collection of folklore recordings, interview transcriptions, and analysis of previous research related to the oral literature of the Moskona tribe and cultural modernization. These documentation sources are used as comparative material to see changes in the delivery and form of oral literature over time.

## **2.3. Data analysis techniques**

Data analysis in this study uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. At the data reduction stage, information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation is filtered and simplified to focus on aspects that are relevant to the research objectives. Unrelated or repetitive data will be eliminated so that the analysis is more systematic.

Furthermore, data presentation is carried out in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic categorization, thus facilitating interpretation of the patterns found in the data. The results of this data presentation are the basis for understanding how oral literature has transformed amidst the influence of modernization. The final stage is drawing conclusions and verification, where an in-depth analysis is carried out to understand the dynamics of changes in the oral literature of the Moskona tribe and its preservation strategies. The conclusions obtained will be re-tested through re-checking with field data to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research results.

## **2.4. Data validity**

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies triangulation techniques, which include source triangulation, method triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various informants, namely traditional elders, the younger generation, as well as education and local government figures, to obtain more diverse perspectives and avoid subjective bias. Method triangulation was applied by combining various data collection techniques, such as observation, interviews, and documentation, to strengthen the validity of the findings and ensure that the research results do not depend on just one method.

Meanwhile, time triangulation was conducted by collecting data on various different occasions to avoid temporal bias and obtain a more accurate picture of changes in oral literature in the Moskona community. Data collection was carried out in several stages to see the consistency of information provided by informants and how social changes impacted the oral literature tradition over a certain period of time.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1. Sustainability of moskona tribe oral literature in the current of modernization

This study found that Moskona tribe oral literature is still maintained in community life, although it has undergone changes in the form of delivery and the context of its use. Oral literature that was previously delivered orally from generation to generation is now beginning to be documented in written form and digital recordings.

The results of interviews with traditional elders and storytellers show that although the older generation is still active in delivering folktales and myths, the interest of the younger generation in listening to and continuing this tradition is starting to decrease. On the other hand, there are efforts from several education figures and local communities to reintroduce Moskona tribe oral literature through digital media and formal education. To further understand the sustainability of oral literature in the Moskona community, the following data is presented regarding the frequency of delivery of oral literature in various social contexts based on observations and interviews conducted, which can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1:** Frequency of delivery of moskona tribe oral literature in various social contexts

| No | Context of Delivery   | Frequency in a Month | Generations Involved     | Media Used       |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1  | Traditional Ceremony  | 4-5 times            | Customary elders, adults | Oral             |
| 2  | School Education      | 2-3 times            | Teachers, students       | Books, digital   |
| 3  | Family Activities     | 1-2 times            | Parents, children        | Oral, recordings |
| 4  | Social Media          | 3-4 times            | Young generation         | Video, text      |
| 5  | Cultural Performances | 1-2 times            | Local artists            | Oral, music      |

From table 1, it can be seen that although oral delivery still occurs in traditional ceremonies and family activities, the use of digital media is starting to increase, especially in the form of recordings and texts uploaded to social media. This shows that modernization has affected the pattern of oral literature transmission, which is now no longer entirely dependent on direct oral interaction, but also through digital media. Documentation of the delivery of Moskona Tribe Oral Literature in Various Social Contexts can be seen in figures 2.



**Figure 2:** Documentation of the moskona tribe's oral literature delivery activity

#### 3.2. Changes in oral literature transmission patterns

Along with the social changes that have occurred, the transmission pattern of oral literature of the Moskona tribe has shifted. If previously the delivery was carried out through direct communication between traditional elders and the younger generation, currently there is a tendency to document stories in the form of writing and digital recordings.

From interviews with the younger generation of the Moskona tribe, it was found that most of them were more interested in accessing folklore through digital media than hearing directly from traditional elders. This can be seen from the data in table 2 below regarding the preferences of the younger generation in accessing oral literature.

**Table 2:** Preferences of the younger generation in accessing oral literature

| No | Oral Literature Access Methods           | Percentage (%) |
|----|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1  | Hearing directly from traditional elders | 35%            |
| 2  | Reading folklore books                   | 20%            |

|   |                              |     |
|---|------------------------------|-----|
| 3 | Watching folklore videos     | 25% |
| 4 | Hearing through podcasts     | 10% |
| 5 | Reading through social media | 10% |

From table 2 above, it can be concluded that only 35% of the younger generation still actively hear folklore directly from traditional elders, while the rest prefer alternative media such as videos and books. This shows the challenges in maintaining traditional transmission patterns, but on the other hand it also opens up new opportunities in preserving oral literature through digital media.

### 3.3. Oral literature preservation strategies in the digital era

Based on interviews with education figures and local governments, several strategies have been found to maintain the existence of Moskona tribe oral literature amidst the flow of modernization. Some of them include including folklore in the school curriculum, documenting folklore in the form of books and videos, and holding cultural festivals that feature Moskona tribe oral literature.

Another strategy that is starting to develop is collaboration with digital communities to introduce oral literature to the younger generation through social media and audio-visual-based platforms. Several documentation projects have been carried out by local communities to record and distribute folklore in the form of videos and podcasts. The following are forms of preservation efforts that have been carried out based on observation data and interviews with various stakeholders. The results can be seen in table 3.

**Table 3: Oral literature preservation efforts by various parties**

| No | Parties Involved     | Conservation Efforts                         | Media Used               |
|----|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | Traditional elders   | Oral delivery in traditional ceremonies      | Oral                     |
| 2  | Schools              | Integration in local curriculum              | Books, classes           |
| 3  | Local government     | Cultural festivals and folklore competitions | Performances, recordings |
| 4  | Cultural communities | Documentation and digitization of stories    | Videos, podcasts         |
| 5  | Young generation     | Dissemination through social media           | Instagram, YouTube       |

From table 3, it can be seen that various parties have contributed to the preservation of oral literature, with various approaches according to their target audience. Traditional ceremonies remain the main media for traditional communities, while the younger generation makes more use of digital media as a means of preserving and disseminating oral literature.

### 3.4. Implications of research results

The results of this study indicate that modernization has brought significant changes to the transmission patterns of oral literature of the Moskona tribe. Although there are challenges in maintaining oral delivery, new opportunities in digitalization can be an effective strategy in maintaining the sustainability of this cultural heritage. Support from various parties, including indigenous communities, educational institutions, and local governments, is needed so that oral literature remains sustainable without losing the essence of the culture it inherits.

Academically, these findings contribute to the study of oral literature and local culture, especially in understanding how technology can play a role in preserving oral traditions. Further studies can focus on the effectiveness of digital media in increasing the involvement of the younger generation in oral literature and how this strategy can be applied more widely in other indigenous communities in Indonesia.

## 4. Conclusion

This study shows that the oral literature of the Moskona tribe still survives in the lives of the community, although it has experienced changes in the pattern of delivery and the context of its use due to the flow of modernization. The oral tradition that was previously only delivered orally is now beginning to be documented in the form of writing and digital recordings. Although the older generation is still active in telling fairy tales and myths, the interest of the younger generation in this tradition is starting to decrease. However, on the other hand, the adaptation of oral literature into digital media and formal education opens up new opportunities for the preservation of this cultural heritage.

Changes in the pattern of transmission of oral literature can be seen from the shift in preferences of the younger generation who are more interested in accessing folklore through digital media than hearing it directly from traditional

elders. Only around 35% of the younger generation are still actively listening to stories directly, while the rest prefer to read books, watch videos, or listen to stories through social media and podcasts.

The strategy for preserving the oral literature of the Moskona tribe in the digital era involves various parties, including traditional elders, educational institutions, local governments, cultural communities, and the younger generation. Preservation efforts are carried out through the integration of folklore into the school curriculum, cultural festivals, digital documentation, and the dissemination of stories through social media. This shows that although modernization brings challenges in maintaining oral traditions, innovation in documentation and utilization of technology can be an effective solution in maintaining the sustainability of oral literature of the Moskona tribe.

This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of changes in oral literature in indigenous communities and offers strategic recommendations in cultural preservation. Further studies are needed to explore the effectiveness of digital strategies in maintaining the continuity of oral traditions and their impact on the cultural identity of indigenous communities in the modern era.

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