

Can Tarsul Kutai inspire culturally responsive counseling practices?

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ABSTRACT

Tarsul Kutai is a traditional oral literary work of the Kutai people in East Kalimantan that is rich in moral, social, and spiritual values. In the context of counseling, these values are highly relevant to character building and strengthening the psychosocial aspects of individuals. This study aims to identify the potential for implementing the values of Tarsul Kutai in culturally responsive counseling services. The method used is a qualitative literature study, through an analysis of manuscripts, cultural studies, and contextual counseling theory. The results of the study show that Tarsul Kutai contains counseling messages that are in line with the principles of guidance and counseling, such as respect for parents, honesty, responsibility, and spirituality. These findings indicate that Tarsul Kutai values can be integrated into classical guidance services, individual counseling, and groups in educational and community settings.

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1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and express emotions appropriately in social relationships. In the context of education, emotional intelligence is an important factor that supports students' academic, social, and personal success (Gkintoni et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2020). show that students with high emotional intelligence tend to be better able to deal with academic pressure, have positive social relationships, and be able to make decisions carefully (Ullah et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, ideally, every educational institution should not only emphasize the cognitive aspect but also develop the emotional dimension of students systematically.

However, reality shows that not a few students have difficulty managing emotions properly (Jurado et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2024). Research shows that around 52% of junior high school students in East Kalimantan show low levels of emotional intelligence, especially in aspects of self-control and empathy (Khorasani et al., 2023). This condition hurts students' social interactions, such as increased conflicts between friends, aggressive behavior, and low tolerance and empathy (Sutoyo et al., 2023). In addition, low emotional intelligence is also correlated with high levels of academic stress and low motivation to learn (Garaigordobil, 2020; Trigueros et al., 2020). These issues point to the need for more holistic and contextual interventions in fostering students' emotional aspects.

As a form of culture-based innovation, the use of Tarsul Kutai traditional oral literature from East Kalimantan in counseling services offers new and promising opportunities (Handari, 2020). Tarsul contains poems that embody moral, spiritual, and social values such as respect for parents, the importance of responsibility, and the importance of self-control and gratitude (Herawati, 2023; Wati et al., 2025). These values are in line with aspects of emotional intelligence and can be used as a reflective medium in group counseling services (Rismi et al., 2020). In counseling practice in

Indonesia, the application of a local culture-based approach is still limited, even though there are many oral traditions that contain moral and psychosocial values that are in line with counseling principles (Budiasa et al., 2024; Rofiq et al., 2020; Yurika & Nugroho, 2022). Tarsul Kutai, as one of the unique oral traditions of East Kalimantan, has not been widely studied from a counseling perspective, so its integration potential has not been optimally utilized (Pratama et al., 2021; Vivian et al., 2024). Therefore, this article aims to explore the opportunities for implementing Tarsul Kutai in counseling services, particularly in developing students' emotional intelligence through a local culture-based group guidance approach (Apriliana & Nalle, 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

Literature studies reveal that counseling services have a crucial role in providing psychological support and helping individuals overcome life's challenges. In this context, a deep understanding of counseling concepts and practices is becoming increasingly important, in line with efforts to create a society that cares more about mental well-being (Pester et al., 2023). Therefore, this journal aims to investigate and summarize the findings of the latest literature that highlights how the opportunities for the implementation of tarsul kutai in counseling services can be seen from various aspects, especially in the context of local cultural approaches in supporting counseling services in the Kutai area of East Kalimantan.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative literature review method, which allows researchers to explore and interpret the meaning of counseling messages contained in the Tarsul Kutai text based on its local cultural context. The data were obtained from various relevant sources, including Tarsul Kutai manuscripts, studies on Kutai culture, and theoretical literature on culturally responsive counseling and moral values. In addition, previous research discussing the application of cultural approaches in counseling services was reviewed to strengthen the analysis.

Data collection was conducted by reviewing scientific publications in the form of books, journal articles, and conference proceedings related to the research focus. The search process was carried out through the Google Scholar database using the keywords Tarsul, local wisdom, culture, and counseling. The inclusion criteria consisted of publications that were (a) relevant to the research theme, (b) academically credible, and (c) published between 2014–2025. A total of 40 literature sources were obtained from this search. The selection was then refined based on topic relevance and research credibility, resulting in 37 qualified references that were further analyzed. These are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the identification of literature sources

No.	Search engine	Literary form	Total literature
1	Google Scholar (GS)	Research Articles	35
		E-Book	5
Total			40

Based on the results of 40 studies, the researcher sorted based on keywords that used Tarsul, Local Wisdom, Culture, and Counseling. The results are found as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Identification results using keywords

No.	Keywords	Total literature
1	Tarsul	10
2	Local Wisdom	12
3	Culture	9
4	Counseling	9
Total		40

Then the researcher selected and identified articles from a total of 40 articles that could answer the formulation of the research problem. After studying and identifying, sorting out the results and discussing the article, the researcher found 40 articles that fit the problem formulation. Furthermore, it will be processed in depth, which will be presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Literature Identification Images

The identification was carried out using Prisma Flow which identified journals that had duplicate titles, abstracts, or research results. Then screening was carried out on the title and abstract of the article in accordance with the research question. Next, a decent and complete article that can answer the research question is determined, then get an article that is in accordance with the research objectives.

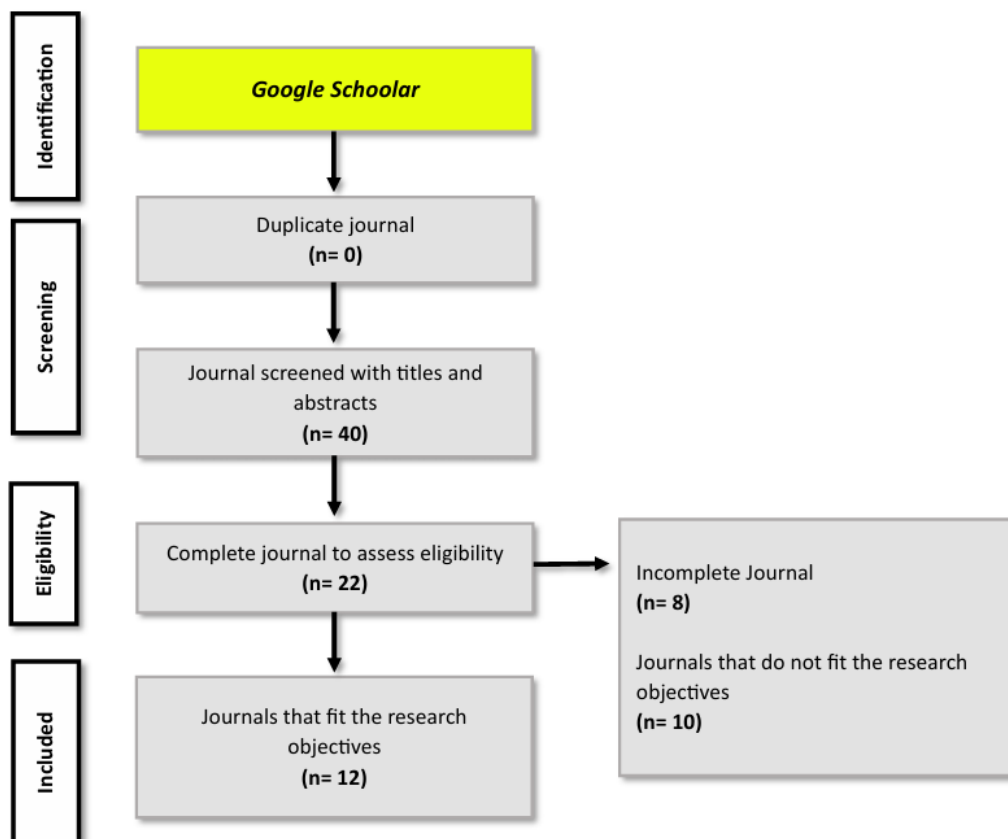


Figure 2. Prisma Flow Diagram

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the literature search and thematic analysis, twelve scholarly articles were identified that explore the integration of Tarsul Kutai values and other dimensions of local wisdom within counseling services. These studies represent a diverse range of research approaches, encompassing conceptual analyses, qualitative investigations, and empirical studies that collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how indigenous values can be embedded in counseling practices. The review highlights the growing recognition of cultural sensitivity and contextual relevance in counseling, emphasizing the importance of aligning therapeutic approaches with the socio-cultural realities of clients. Furthermore, the key characteristics of these studies—including the authors, publication types, research designs, instruments, participants, major findings, and practical implications—are systematically summarized in Table 3 below to facilitate a clearer comparison and synthesis of their contributions to the field.

Table 3. Article Characteristics Analysis

Author Name	Article Type	Research Design	Instruments	Subjects	Result	Implication
(Herdiana et al., 2021)	NES	Qualitative	Documentation	5	The local cultural values of Karia and Kutai have similarities in the formation of spirituality-based characters.	Tarsul Kutai can be used as a model for strengthening religious character in counseling.
(Roziqi, 2025)	ICE	Qualitative	Observation, Literature Study	N/A	Local cultures such as Tarsul can shape students' character through a narrative-based counseling approach.	Application of Tarsul in narrative counseling
(Zulkifli et al., 2023)	ICE	Mixed Method	Questionnaire & Interview	25	The moral values of the Papaseng (Bugis) are similar to those of Tarsul Kutai in fostering cooperation.	Tarsul can be used as a guidance medium based on local values.
(Aswar et al., 2022)	NES	Qualitative	Documentation	N/A	Local cultural speech contains the value of responsibility and honesty that can be internalized.	Tarsul can be used in culture-based counseling to build student identity.
(Hayati et al., 2022)	NES	Qualitative	Literature studies	N/A	Local values-based character education plays a role in the prevention of violence and the personal formation of students.	Tarsul as a preventive medium in counseling

Based on the data presented in Table 3, all reviewed articles share a common focus, namely the utilization of local cultural values as the foundation for developing guidance and counseling services. Each study positions local culture as a source of moral, spiritual, and social values that can be internalized within the counseling process. The majority of these studies employed a qualitative approach, using documentation, observation, and literature review techniques for data collection. Such an approach enables a contextual and in-depth exploration of cultural meanings that reflect the characteristics of the local community.

Findings from several studies (Herdiana et al., 2021); (Roziqi, 2025); (Zulkifli et al., 2023); (Aswar et al., 2022); Hayati et al. 2022 indicate that the values contained in *Tarsul Kutai* are closely aligned with the principles of multicultural counseling, as they emphasize responsibility, honesty, spirituality, and cooperation as the foundations of character formation. The integration of local values has been shown to strengthen moral awareness, reinforce cultural identity, and foster prosocial behavior among students. Furthermore, the implementation of character education based on local cultural values plays a preventive role in reducing school violence and contributes to the development of ethical and empathetic personalities.

Taken together, these findings illustrate that *Tarsul Kutai* holds significant potential to be integrated into various forms of counseling services such as classical guidance, group counseling, and narrative counseling. Noble values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, and spirituality can serve as reflective materials that help students develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Thus, *Tarsul Kutai* functions not only as a cultural heritage but also as a valuable source of insight that enriches culture-based counseling practices, aligning with the direction of culturally responsive guidance and counseling services in Indonesia.

Moreover, the noble values embedded within *Tarsul Kutai* including divinity, responsibility, self-introspection, and respect for others are highly relevant to the goals of guidance and counseling, which emphasize character development and moral integrity. As a medium of reflection and moral education, *Tarsul Kutai* has the capacity to engage students' affective domain through poetic expressions that are emotionally moving, culturally resonant, and spiritually meaningful. The

application of these values can be implemented through value-based group counseling, culturally oriented classical guidance, and narrative counseling that centers on storytelling and meaning-making processes.

Beyond its function as a counseling approach, the implementation of Tarsul Kutai also plays a vital role in strengthening local cultural identity within schools, thereby creating a more contextual and meaningful learning atmosphere. Counselors who understand the philosophical and moral dimensions of Tarsul Kutai can utilize it as a culturally sensitive tool to address behavioral issues, reinforce ethical understanding, and foster students' spiritual growth. This integration not only enhances the cultural relevance of counseling services but also encourages harmony between educational values and the local wisdom of East Kalimantan.

In conclusion, Tarsul Kutai possesses substantial potential as a medium and approach in guidance and counseling that is not only preventive but also educational and transformative. The cultural wisdom embedded within Tarsul Kutai provides a holistic framework that bridges traditional values and modern counseling practices. Its integration into counseling services contributes to character formation, emotional development, and culturally grounded problem-solving, embodying the essence of culturally responsive guidance and counseling in Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that Tarsul Kutai embodies a rich collection of moral, spiritual, and social values that are highly relevant to the goals of guidance and counseling services. The literature analysis revealed that integrating local cultural elements particularly those reflected in Tarsul Kutai supports the development of character, strengthens moral awareness, and fosters prosocial attitudes among students. These values, such as respect, responsibility, honesty, and spirituality, serve as essential components for promoting students' self-awareness, emotional regulation, and moral reasoning.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that Tarsul Kutai can be effectively applied in various counseling formats, including value-based group counseling, culturally oriented classical guidance, and narrative counseling. The integration of Tarsul Kutai within counseling practice contributes to the realization of culturally responsive services that are both contextually relevant and psychologically meaningful. It also reinforces the preservation of local wisdom while creating an environment that nurtures emotional balance and moral growth in students.

In essence, Tarsul Kutai functions not only as a medium of cultural preservation but also as a transformative counseling approach that bridges traditional wisdom with modern psychological practice. Future research and counseling practice are encouraged to further explore the adaptation of Tarsul Kutai in different educational and cultural settings, thereby enriching the development of indigenous and culturally grounded counseling frameworks in Indonesia.

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Declarations

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|-------------------------------|---|---|
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