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REINTERPRETING WAR LITERARY TEXTS AS A MODEL CONFLICT MITIGATION AND GLOBAL PEACE EDUCATION: A HERMENEUTIC STUDY OF ACEHNESE WAR HIKAYAT

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ABSTRACT

War-related literary texts are often interpreted narrowly as narratives that legitimize violence and glorify armed struggle. In the Acehese context, Hikayat-Hikayat Perang have long been positioned as texts of resistance and warfare, resulting in limited scholarly attention to their potential role in peace-building discourse. This study aims to reinterpret Acehese war hikayat as a model for conflict mitigation and global peace education by uncovering their deeper moral, ethical, and sociocultural dimensions. Employing a qualitative hermeneutic approach, this research analyzes selected Acehese war hikayat through close textual reading and contextual interpretation to examine how narratives of conflict simultaneously construct values of restraint, moral responsibility, collective ethics, and reconciliation. The findings reveal that, beyond their overt depictions of war, these texts embed strategies of conflict mitigation such as moral persuasion, social negotiation, spiritual reflection, and ethical boundaries of violence. These elements indicate that Acehese war hikayat function not merely as instruments of mobilization but also as cultural texts that encode peace-oriented knowledge grounded in local wisdom. This study contributes theoretically by expanding the interpretation of war literature within peace and conflict studies and practically by proposing Acehese war hikayat as alternative pedagogical resources for global peace education. By repositioning traditional war narratives within a framework of conflict mitigation, this research demonstrates the relevance of local literary heritage in addressing contemporary global challenges related to social conflict and peace-building.

KEYWORDS: War Literary Texts, Conflict Mitigation, Global Peace Education, Hermeneutic Study, Acehese War Hikayat.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social conflict remains a persistent global challenge, manifesting in identity-based polarization, intergroup hostility, and recurrent cycles of violence that affect social cohesion and human security. Contemporary peace and conflict scholarship increasingly emphasizes that mitigation cannot rely solely on elite political agreements or security approaches (Webel & Galtung, 2007), it requires attention to the everyday micro-dynamics of conflict and peace, including community meaning-making, memory, and the narratives through which groups interpret historical injury and collective identity (Askandar, 2021; Sulistiyo *et al.*, 2020). Recent work highlights how peace and conflict processes are shaped by localized practices and the “micro” interactions that sustain either reconciliation or renewed antagonism (Brett *et al.*, 2024; Houmanfar *et al.*, 2024).

Within this broader agenda, peace education and peacebuilding education interventions have gained renewed attention as practical pathways for mitigating social conflict (Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2014), improving intergroup perceptions (Kuntarto *et al.*, 2021), and supporting reconciliation in post-conflict societies (Rusli *et al.*, 2022). Evidence from recent empirical work indicates that targeted peacebuilding education interventions, especially those combining experiential and transformative learning, may contribute to shifts in intergroup contact quality and reductions in unfavorable outgroup perceptions (Opacin & Cehaji, 2025). At the same time, recent scholarship in peace education argues for stronger alignment between peace education, global citizenship education, and pedagogies that address structural injustice and shifting conflict landscapes (Phillipson, 2018). Suggesting that peace education must be attentive to both local contexts and global ethical challenges (Kester, 2025).

A second major direction in the last five years is the call to move beyond “one-size-fits-all” templates of peacebuilding and instead treat knowledge production and evaluation itself as contested terrain (Ansori *et al.*, 2015). Recent research stresses the need to scrutinize whose knowledge counts in post-conflict settings and how “the local” is represented, measured, and legitimized in peacebuilding discourse (Džuverović, 2025). In parallel, work on civil society inclusion shows that sustainable peace processes often depend on meaningful societal participation and mechanisms that connect formal negotiations to broader social reconciliation (Cuhadar, 2024; Rusli & Mukhlis, 2023). Together,

these debates support an important implication for humanities-based inquiry: cultural texts and narrative repertoires are not merely reflections of conflict; they are also resources through which communities negotiate norms, moral limits, and future-oriented visions of coexistence (Lehtonen, 2000).

In Indonesia, social conflict has historically been linked to the dynamics of pluralism, uneven development, contested governance, and collective memories of violence across different regions (Nur & Susanto, 2020; Mukhlis & Rusli, 2023). While many conflict studies in Indonesia prioritize political settlement, post-conflict institutions, and governance outcomes, educational and cultural approaches remain comparatively underdeveloped as systematic models of conflict mitigation (Manan *et al.*, 2021). This gap is particularly visible in post-conflict regions where formal peace agreements may reduce armed violence, yet social polarization, trauma, and unresolved grievances continue to shape everyday life (A. Rahman *et al.*, 2022).

Aceh provides a distinctive case. The province’s conflict history and post-conflict governance architecture have attracted continued scholarly attention (Zulfatmi, 2023), including recent analyses of the legal-institutional foundations shaping development and post-conflict policy pathways (Wijatmoko *et al.*, 2023). Yet Aceh also possesses a rich cultural archive of war-related literary traditions, Hikayat-Hikayat of War, which are frequently read primarily as texts of resistance, mobilization, and legitimization of violence (Rusli *et al.*, 2022). Such a dominant reading limits the pedagogical and ethical possibilities of these texts for peace discourse, especially when viewed through contemporary frameworks of conflict mitigation and peace education (Sari *et al.*, 2022; Ansori *et al.*, 2015).

This article advances the argument that war literary texts can be reinterpreted as culturally grounded models of conflict mitigation and global peace education when approached through hermeneutic inquiry (Rusli *et al.*, 2020). A hermeneutic lens allows the analysis to move beyond surface narratives of warfare and instead examine how texts encode moral reasoning (T. Rahman, 2018), community ethics (Arianto *et al.*, 2021), and implicit mechanisms of restraint and reconciliation (Manan *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, Hikayat-Hikayat Perang may function not only as historical testimonies or ideological artifacts, but also as repositories of indigenous peace-oriented knowledge that can inform contemporary peace pedagogy, particularly when the “local” is treated as a legitimate epistemic

domain rather than a decorative add-on to universal peace frameworks (Džuverović, 2025).

The novelty of this study is threefold. First, it repositions Acehese war hikayat from a primarily mobilizational/violent interpretive frame into a conflict-mitigation model grounded in textual ethics and sociocultural meaning (Rusli et al., 2022). Second, it bridges peacebuilding education debates with humanities-based hermeneutic analysis, offering a pathway to translate cultural narratives into peace education resources that speak to global audiences (Opacin & Cehaji, 2025). Third, it contributes methodologically by showing how hermeneutic interpretation can complement dominant peacebuilding approaches that often privilege institutional or policy-centric explanations over narrative and cultural infrastructures of peace (Brett et al., 2024).

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) identify and map the key narrative patterns in selected Acehese War Hikayat that represent social conflict (actors, causes, escalation, and consequences); (2) interpret hermeneutically the moral and ethical structures embedded in the texts (e.g., moral persuasion, restraint, responsibility, communal norms, and reconciliation cues); (3) formulate a text-based conflict mitigation model derived from the hikayat, specifying its main components (values, strategies, and narrative mechanisms) and how these correspond to contemporary conflict mitigation concepts; (4) translate the model into a peace education framework by outlining how the hikayat can be used as pedagogical material (learning aims, competencies, and thematic modules) for peace education with global relevance; and (5) position the findings within recent international debates on peace education, localization, and peacebuilding knowledge production, demonstrating the contribution of Acehese literary heritage to broader peace and conflict studies (Kester, 2025).

2. METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in a hermeneutic-grounded analytical framework to reinterpret Acehese war literary texts (Hikayat-Hikayat Perang) as models of conflict mitigation and global peace education (Mukhlis et al., 2024). A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate for examining meaning-making processes, moral reasoning, and sociocultural values embedded in literary narratives, where the objective is not hypothesis testing but theory building and conceptual refinement (Creswell, 2016).

Hermeneutics is used as the primary interpretive

lens to engage deeply with textual meaning, while grounded theory principles are adopted as an analytical strategy to systematically derive categories and conceptual models of conflict mitigation from the data itself (Age, 2011). This integration allows the study to move beyond descriptive interpretation toward the formulation of a theoretically grounded conflict mitigation model rooted in indigenous literary texts (O'Shea & DeBrun, 2019).

2.1. Research Approach and Theoretical Framework

The research is theoretically anchored in philosophical hermeneutics, particularly the works of Gadamer and Ricoeur (Ediyono et al., 2025), which view texts as dialogical entities whose meanings emerge through interpretation across historical and cultural horizons (Regan, 2012; Tan et al., 2009). Hermeneutics enables the analysis of war hikayat not merely as historical artifacts but as living cultural texts that encode ethical judgments, social norms, and collective values relevant to conflict and peace (Rusli & Mukhlis, 2023).

To strengthen analytical rigor and theoretical contribution, this hermeneutic approach is complemented by grounded theory methodology, particularly its constructivist orientation (Khan, 2014; Age, 2011). Grounded theory is employed not to generate a formal theory in the positivist sense, but to systematically induct conflict mitigation concepts from recurring textual patterns. In this study, grounded theory functions as a methodological logic that supports inductive category development, constant comparison, and theoretical abstraction, key processes for building a conflict mitigation model derived from literary data (Boell, 2014).

This methodological synthesis is further informed by contemporary conflict resolution and peacebuilding theory (Arifinsyah & Ag, 2015), which emphasizes moral persuasion, social negotiation, restraint, reconciliation, and community-based ethics as central mechanisms of conflict mitigation (Isnaini, 2019); (International Center for Ethnic Studies, n.d.). These theories serve as sensitizing concepts rather than prescriptive frameworks, ensuring that interpretations remain grounded in the textual and cultural context of Acehese war hikayat.

2.2. Data Sources and Corpus Selection

The primary data consist of selected Acehese war hikayats that occupy a significant position in Acehese literary and historical traditions. Text selection was guided by three main criteria: (1) explicit representation of war and social conflict; (2)

sustained cultural circulation and recognition within Acehese society; and (3) availability in documented manuscripts or authoritative published editions to ensure textual reliability.

Based on an initial inventory of Acehese war hikayats, a wide range of texts was identified that narrate conflicts from different historical and socio-political contexts. These narratives can be broadly categorized into: (1) conflicts during the colonial period, particularly resistance against foreign powers; (2) conflicts during the period of the Aceh Sultanate, encompassing both external warfare and internal political struggles; and (3) internal conflicts in the post-independence era, after the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia and Aceh's incorporation into the unitary state.

Drawing on this inventory, the representation of Acehese war hikayats in this study was systematically balanced according to three analytical dimensions: (a) historical periodization, (b) thematic diversity of conflict, and (c) narrative and social scope. Accordingly, the corpus includes multiple hikayats to enable comparative interpretation and to avoid reliance on a single narrative perspective. This multiplicity aligns with grounded theory's principle of theoretical variation, allowing patterns of conflict mitigation to emerge inductively across texts rather than being imposed a priori.

Secondary data comprise peer-reviewed international journal articles on conflict mitigation, peace education, indigenous knowledge, hermeneutics, and grounded theory. These sources are employed to situate the findings within broader academic debates and to refine the analytical categories generated from the primary texts (Erasiah & Zain, 2025).

To further ensure analytical balance and methodological rigor, the texts were purposively selected based on: (1) temporal coverage (colonial, sultanate, and post-independence periods), (2) thematic variation (external warfare, internal conflict, moral persuasion, and reconciliation narratives), and (3) narrative significance in articulating culturally grounded conflict mitigation values. This clarification strengthens the transparency and replicability of the study's research design.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is conducted through systematic textual documentation and repeated close reading of the selected hikayat. Each text is examined to identify narrative segments related to conflict dynamics, including causes of conflict, escalation, moral

justification, ethical limits of violence, negotiation practices, reconciliation efforts, and post-conflict reflection (Namey et al., 2008).

Relevant excerpts are documented and coded iteratively. In line with grounded theory procedures, initial open coding is applied to capture key concepts emerging directly from the text, followed by focused coding to group related concepts into higher-level categories of conflict mitigation (Regan, 2012; Saldana, 2009).

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis follows an iterative hermeneutic-grounded process. First, a descriptive narrative analysis maps the structural elements of conflict within each hikayat. Second, interpretive analysis examines how conflict is morally framed through symbolism, metaphor, evaluative language, and character positioning. Third, grounded theory techniques constant comparison and category refinement, are employed to synthesize recurring patterns into conceptual dimensions of conflict mitigation, such as moral persuasion, communal responsibility, ethical restraint, negotiation, and reconciliation (Ekwentī, 2019).

Throughout this process, the hermeneutic circle is applied, whereby interpretations of specific textual units are continuously related back to the overall narrative and cultural context. This circular movement ensures analytical coherence and guards against decontextualized readings, while grounded theory procedures enhance conceptual abstraction and model development (Sihombing et al., 2022).

2.5. Trustworthiness and Analytical Rigor

Trustworthiness is ensured through established qualitative criteria, including credibility, dependability, and interpretive transparency (Kocaman, 2025). Credibility is achieved through prolonged textual engagement and the systematic presentation of textual evidence supporting interpretive claims (Mukhlis & Rusli, 2023). Dependability is strengthened by a transparent analytical procedure that integrates hermeneutic interpretation with grounded coding stages. Interpretive transparency is maintained by explicitly linking emergent categories with conflict mitigation and peace education theory.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

As this research relies exclusively on textual analysis of publicly accessible literary works, it does not involve human participants and therefore does not require formal ethical approval. Nevertheless,

ethical responsibility is upheld by respecting the cultural and historical significance of Acehese literary heritage and by avoiding reductive or instrumental interpretations that detach the texts from their sociocultural foundations (Rusli, Mu'Jizah, et al., 2025).

Importantly, the analysis of the primary texts was conducted and cross-validated within a hermeneutic framework, ensuring interpretive rigor, contextual sensitivity, and analytical depth. The researchers engaged in iterative reading, contextual interpretation, and reflexive dialogue with the texts, allowing meanings to emerge in relation to historical,

cultural, and narrative contexts. Moreover, the research team consists of native Acehese speakers with high proficiency in reading and interpreting classical and modern Acehese texts. This linguistic and cultural competence strengthens the reliability and comprehensiveness of the analysis, particularly in capturing idiomatic expressions, symbolic nuances, and culturally embedded meanings that may not be accessible through translation alone.

The flow of this research can be seen in the following diagram.

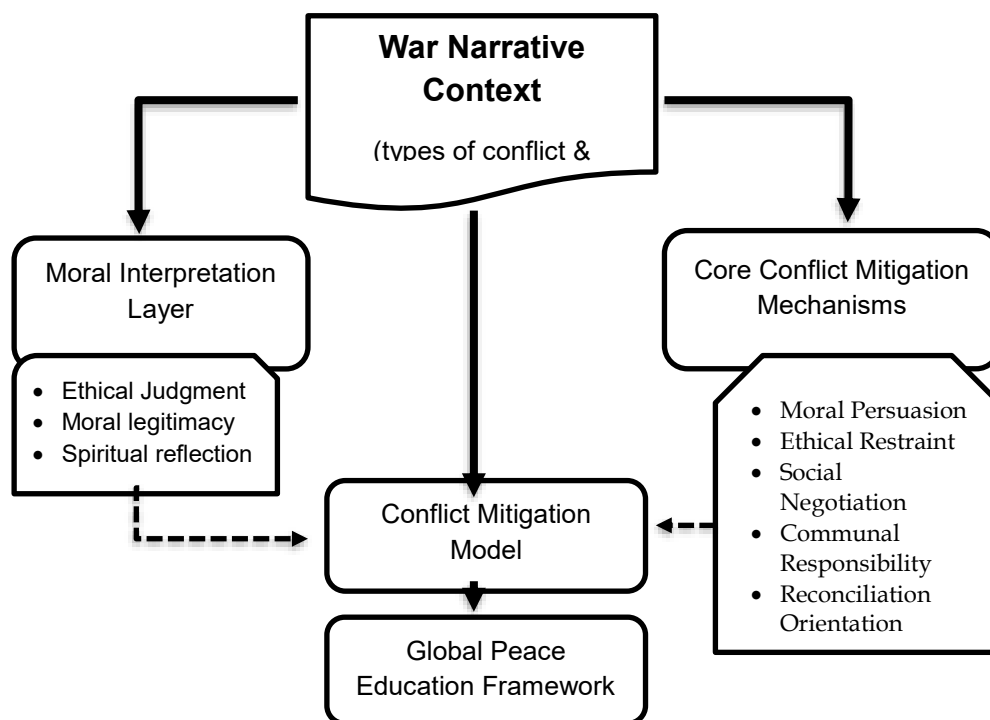


Diagram 1: Research Flow Of Interpretation Of War Hikayat Texts.

This grounded conflict mitigation model illustrates how Acehese war hikayat function as culturally embedded mechanisms for managing and transforming social conflict (Yazid, 2015). Rather than positioning war narratives as linear calls for violence, the model demonstrates a layered interpretive process in which conflict narratives are ethically reframed through moral interpretation and transformed into peace-oriented knowledge (Mukhlis & Rusli, 2023).

At the core of the model are five conflict mitigation mechanisms inductively derived through grounded theory analysis: moral persuasion, ethical restraint, social negotiation, communal responsibility, and reconciliation orientation (Isnaini, 2019). These mechanisms emerge consistently across the analyzed hikayat and reflect indigenous

strategies for regulating violence, maintaining moral boundaries, and restoring social harmony (Rusli, Syamsulrizal, et al., 2025).

The model further shows how these mechanisms serve as a bridge between local literary traditions and global peace education, enabling war narratives to be repurposed as pedagogical resources that promote ethical reflection, conflict sensitivity, and intercultural peace values (Manan et al., 2021). In this way, Acehese war hikayat are repositioned not merely as historical or ideological texts, but as dynamic cultural infrastructures for conflict mitigation and peacebuilding (Long & He, 2021).

3. RESULTS

The hermeneutic-grounded analysis of selected Acehese War Hikayat reveals that war narratives in

these texts are not constructed solely as instruments of mobilization or glorification of violence. Instead, they consistently encode multilayered mechanisms of conflict mitigation embedded within moral reasoning, ethical regulation, and communal values.

The findings are organized into four interrelated result domains that correspond directly to the research objectives and the grounded conflict mitigation model developed in this study.

3.1. Representation of Social Conflict

The analyzed hikayat depict social conflict as a complex phenomenon rooted in collective grievance, perceived injustice, and threats to communal dignity rather than as spontaneous or irrational violence. Conflict is typically framed as emerging from

external domination, moral transgression, or disruption of social order. Importantly, conflict escalation is rarely portrayed as inevitable; instead, narrative attention is given to the ethical deliberation preceding acts of violence.

Characters involved in conflict are positioned within clear moral frameworks. Protagonists are not defined merely by physical bravery but by their moral composure, spiritual awareness, and sense of responsibility toward the community. Antagonistic forces are frequently described as violating ethical norms, thereby legitimizing resistance while simultaneously establishing moral boundaries that regulate conduct during conflict. This narrative structure indicates that conflict is conceptualized as a moral event requiring ethical judgment rather than as a purely military encounter.

Table 1: source on the forms of social conflict from hikayat Aceh war

Types of Social Conflict	Text Quotes from War Hikayat	Text Source
Internal family conflict	<p><i>Ulon he judo ulon jak sajan</i> <i>Bah le talawan kafe Beulanda</i> <i>Teuma geuseuot le ureueng agam</i> <i>Bah ulon tuan dilee lon cuba</i></p> <p>'I will leave immediately Go fight the Dutch infidels Then her husband answered Let me go to war'</p>	<i>Hikayat Aceh War</i>
Internal government conflict	<p><i>Han tom di gob na di geutanyoe</i> <i>Saboh nanggroe dua raja</i> <i>Nyankeuh sabab Tuanku droe</i> <i>Bangta jinoe jikeumeung bungka</i></p> <p>'Never in someone else's place, but in ours One country, two kings That's why, Your Honor There are people who want to rebel'</p>	<i>Hikayat Pocut Muhammad</i>
External conflicts among the compatriots	<p><i>Sabab jeuheut pi jahee ngon keuji</i> <i>Nanggroe jiyue bri keukaphe budok</i> <i>Jipateh haba Nica jak taki</i> <i>Teungoh jitem bri sikrak ija brok</i></p> <p>'Because he was evil, stupid, and cruel This country was handed over to the leper infidels He believed the lies of NICA Just because of a gift of old cloth'</p>	<i>Hikayat Cumbok War</i>
Global external conflict	<p><i>Wahe syeedara adek abang,</i> <i>Tajak muprang ngon Beulanda.</i> <i>Meung tahue tapak tajak bak prang,</i> <i>Tan ngon timang he syeedara</i></p> <p>'O brothers and sisters Let's fight against the Dutch</p>	<i>Hikayat Prang Sabi</i>

	We drag the soles of our feet into the battlefield Win or lose we are together'	
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The table 1 presents the diverse types of social conflict that have occurred throughout the history of warfare in Aceh. In terms of form, these conflicts can be classified into two main categories: internal conflicts and external conflicts. Internal conflicts are defined by the scale of conflict occurring within Aceh and involving actors from within Acehnese society itself. External conflicts, by contrast, involve interactions between actors from Aceh and those from outside the region. Furthermore, the types of social conflict can also be identified based on their domains, including familial conflicts, governmental conflicts, and national-level conflicts.

3.2. Moral Interpretation Layer: Ethical Framing of War Narratives

Hermeneutic analysis demonstrates that Acehnese war hikayat consistently embed an explicit moral interpretation layer that guides readers or listeners in evaluating conflict-related actions. This layer operates through evaluative language, symbolic imagery, and narrative commentary that distinguishes between justified resistance and excessive violence.

Spiritual reflection plays a central role in this ethical framework. References to divine accountability, moral consequences, and communal harmony serve as narrative devices that constrain the impulse to violence. Acts of violence are often accompanied by reminders of ethical responsibility, signaling that war is not an end in itself but a morally contingent response to injustice. This can be seen in the social events in every Acehnese war lore text, whether the Hikayat Prang Sabi, the Hikayat Perang Aceh, or the more local Hikayat Prang Cumbok. This finding challenges the dominant interpretation that reduces the lore to a unilateral call for jihad or war.

3.3. Core Conflict Mitigation Mechanisms

Conflict mitigation mechanisms are a set of culturally embedded moral, social, and narrative processes that regulate the escalation of conflict, limit violence, and orient social relations toward reconciliation and peace. Through iterative coding and constant comparison, five core conflict mitigation mechanisms emerge as grounded categories across the corpus.

Moral persuasion appears as a dominant mechanism, manifested through advisory speech, didactic expressions, and narrative exhortations that

encourage ethical conduct, patience, and wisdom. Characters frequently persuade others through moral reasoning rather than coercion, indicating a preference for ethical influence over brute force.

Ethical restraint is articulated through explicit and implicit limits on violence. The hikayat emphasize self-control, proportional response, and avoidance of harm to non-combatants. This restraint reflects a normative framework that regulates conflict behavior and prevents uncontrolled escalation.

Social negotiation is represented through dialogue, mediation efforts, and collective deliberation. Before and during conflict, leaders and community figures are depicted engaging in consultative processes, highlighting negotiation as a legitimate and culturally sanctioned conflict management strategy.

Communal responsibility emerges as a central value, where individual actions are consistently evaluated based on their impact on collective well-being. Conflict is framed as a shared burden rather than an individual pursuit, reinforcing solidarity and mutual accountability.

Reconciliation orientation is evident in post-conflict narratives that emphasize restoration, forgiveness, and social reintegration. Victory is not defined solely by military success but by the reestablishment of moral order and social harmony. Together, these mechanisms form an integrated system of conflict mitigation grounded in Acehnese cultural logic rather than externally imposed frameworks.

3.4. Formulation of a Text-Based Conflict Mitigation Model

Synthesizing the grounded categories, the study formulates a text-based conflict mitigation model derived directly from Acehnese war hikayat. The model demonstrates a sequential yet flexible process in which conflict narratives move from situational depiction to moral interpretation, followed by the activation of mitigation mechanisms that regulate behavior and guide resolution.

This model illustrates that war hikayat function as cultural infrastructures that simultaneously acknowledge conflict and discipline it through ethical norms. Rather than promoting unchecked violence, the texts operate as moral compasses that transform conflict into a regulated social process

oriented toward restoration.

3.5. Implications for Global Peace Education

The findings further indicate that Acehese war hikayat possess significant pedagogical potential for global peace education. The embedded mitigation mechanisms align with core peace education competencies, including ethical reflection, conflict sensitivity, dialogue facilitation, and reconciliation awareness. When reinterpreted through a hermeneutic-grounded lens, these texts can be mobilized as culturally grounded learning resources that bridge local wisdom and global peace values.

The results demonstrate that local war narratives, often marginalized in peace discourse, can contribute substantively to contemporary discussions on conflict mitigation and peace education when analyzed beyond surface-level representations of violence.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study resonate strongly with Lederach's concept of conflict transformation, which emphasizes moral imagination, relational change, and the long-term transformation of social relationships rather than short-term conflict settlement (Sujatmiko, 2012). Lederach argues that sustainable peace emerges when societies are able to envision relationships beyond violence while remaining grounded in lived cultural realities (O'Shea & DeBrun, 2019). The Acehese war hikayat analyzed in this study embody precisely such a moral imagination.

Although framed as war narratives, the hikayat consistently situate violence within ethical and relational constraints. For instance, in Hikayat Prang Sabi, the call to struggle is accompanied by moral exhortations that regulate intention and conduct.

Bek ta peureulee nyawa ngon nafsu,
Peureulee iman nyang jroh di dada
(Do not be driven by desire and rage,
Let pure faith guide the heart.)

This excerpt demonstrates that armed struggle is subordinated to ethical intention, echoing Lederach's emphasis on the moral quality of action and the transformation of destructive impulses into disciplined responsibility. Violence is not glorified as an end in itself but framed as morally contingent and socially accountable. Such narrative logic aligns with Lederach's claim that conflict transformation requires ethical regulation rather than denial of conflict.

Conventional peace education literature often

privileges narratives of harmony, tolerance, and nonviolence, sometimes marginalizing war-related texts due to their perceived incompatibility with peace values. However, recent peace education scholarship argues that effective peace learning must engage critically with conflict realities rather than avoid them. The results of this study support this position by demonstrating that Acehese war hikayat function as critical peace pedagogy texts, capable of fostering ethical reflection and conflict literacy.

The identified mitigation mechanisms—moral persuasion, ethical restraint, social negotiation, communal responsibility, and reconciliation orientation—correspond closely with peace education competencies such as ethical reasoning, empathy, dialogue skills, and reconciliation awareness. For example, in Hikayat Prang Cumbok, collective deliberation is emphasized before violent escalation.

Tuha peut ngön ulama ta peuguet musyawarah,
Bek ta peugah darah hana peuharah.

(Elders and religious leaders convene in deliberation,

Bloodshed must not occur without careful consideration.)

This narrative underscores dialogue and collective decision-making as prerequisites for action, reinforcing peace education's emphasis on deliberative processes and shared responsibility. Rather than promoting blind aggression, the text models conflict-sensitive reasoning, suggesting that war literature—when hermeneutically reinterpreted—can serve as powerful pedagogical tools for peace education at both local and global levels.

Localization Debates and Indigenous Peace Knowledge

The study's findings also contribute directly to contemporary localization debates in peacebuilding and peace education. Recent scholarship critiques the dominance of externally imposed peace frameworks that marginalize local epistemologies and reduce "the local" to a symbolic or decorative role. This study demonstrates that Acehese war hikayat constitute a sophisticated indigenous knowledge system that articulates conflict mitigation principles organically embedded in narrative tradition.

The grounded conflict mitigation model derived from the hikayat illustrates that local narratives do not merely reflect conflict but actively discipline and regulate it through culturally legitimate mechanisms. For instance, reconciliation is repeatedly foregrounded as the ultimate moral horizon of

conflict.

Ureuëng meuprang hana keu dendam,
 Damai nyang ka lheueh peusujuk gampông.
 (Those who fight do not harbor vengeance,
 Peace restores harmony to the village.)

This passage reflects a restorative rather than retributive logic, aligning with contemporary peacebuilding principles while remaining deeply rooted in Acehnese cultural norms. Such findings challenge the assumption that local war narratives are inherently incompatible with peace and instead position them as contextually grounded peace infrastructures.

By foregrounding indigenous literary texts as legitimate sources of peace knowledge, this study responds to calls for epistemic justice in peacebuilding and education. It shows that localization is not merely about adapting global models to local contexts, but about recognizing that local traditions already contain conceptual frameworks capable of contributing to global peace discourse.

The dialogue between Acehnese war hikayat and global peace theories demonstrates that local narratives can enrich, rather than undermine, universal peace values. The grounded conflict mitigation model articulated in this study bridges the gap between local cultural heritage and global peace education by translating indigenous narrative ethics into transferable pedagogical principles.

In this sense, the hikayat operate as what Lederach terms “cultural resources for peace,” offering narrative spaces where societies learn how to confront injustice without surrendering ethical restraint or social responsibility. This integrative perspective challenges binary oppositions between war and peace texts and advances a more nuanced understanding of how societies narrate, regulate, and ultimately transform conflict.

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5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Acehnese war literary texts (hikayat-hikayat perang) can be reinterpreted as culturally grounded resources for conflict mitigation and peace education. Using a hermeneutic-grounded analytical framework, the research moves beyond conventional readings that treat war hikayat merely as narratives of mobilization or violence legitimization. Instead, these texts are shown to articulate ethical mechanisms for regulating conflict and sustaining social harmony through moral reasoning and communal values.

Theoretically, this article contributes to peace and conflict studies by expanding conflict transformation discourse beyond institutional and policy-centered approaches. By placing Acehnese war hikayat in dialogue with Lederach’s theory, the study highlights local literary narratives as moral infrastructures of peace that enable ethical restraint, relational accountability, and reconciliation-oriented thinking. This challenges rigid binaries between war and peace narratives and underscores the role of conflict literature as a space for ethical negotiation.

Methodologically and pedagogically, the study advances an integrative hermeneutic-grounded approach that affirms the epistemic legitimacy of indigenous literary traditions in generating conflict mitigation models. The findings offer a culturally sensitive framework for peace education, in which local war narratives can be translated into pedagogical resources that foster ethical reflection, dialogue, and reconciliation awareness. More broadly, this research demonstrates that culturally embedded war narratives can inform global peace education without erasing their historical specificity, reinforcing the relevance of local wisdom in contemporary peacebuilding efforts.

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