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Research Article

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Elements in Pekal Songs: A Literary Analysis of Man Pekal's *Salam Sakapoh Iban* Album

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the Pekal songs in *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, an album by Man Pekal, to explore how these songs convey both literary aesthetics and socio-cultural meanings. Song lyrics, often considered poetic, serve as artistic expressions while simultaneously reflecting cultural values. Despite their significance, Pekal songs remain underexplored in Indonesian literary studies. This qualitative descriptive research examines ten selected songs through transcription, translation, classification, and thematic interpretation. Data were collected via textual analysis and interviews, distinguishing intrinsic elements (such as diction, imagery, concrete words, figurative language, rhyme; theme, emotion, tone, and message) and extrinsic elements (biographical, social, and value-based contexts). The findings reveal that Pekal songs merge aesthetic and cultural functions. Intrinsically, the songs utilize vivid diction, repetition, figurative imagery, and rhyme to express themes of love, longing, migration, solidarity, and cultural identity. Extrinsically, they reflect the composer's biography, socio-cultural environment, and values such as care, obedience, religiosity, and historical memory. Songs like *Maratau* emphasize migration struggles, while *Salam Sakapoh Iban* foregrounds unity and tradition. The interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic elements demonstrates how Pekal songs function as both artistic and cultural texts, preserving identity and imparting moral teachings. These songs contribute to understanding local identity in a globalized world while maintaining ethnic values. This study concludes that analyzing Pekal songs enriches Indonesian literature and sustains regional identity amidst cultural transformation.

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Introduction

Song lyrics occupy a unique position at the intersection of literature and music, embodying both aesthetic form and cultural content. In literary scholarship, lyrics are often studied as poetic texts that use imagery, diction, rhythm, and figurative language to convey meaning (Bradby, 2018). Yet beyond their intrinsic features, song lyrics also serve as cultural documents, preserving the values, experiences, and identities of the communities that produce them. In Indonesia, with its immense cultural and linguistic diversity, regional songs are vital vehicles for sustaining intangible heritage and expressing collective identity. Among these traditions, the songs of the Pekal ethnic group in Bengkulu Province remain relatively underexplored despite their cultural richness.

The Pekal community has preserved oral traditions that encode personal emotions, communal solidarity, and spiritual values. Songs by Man Pekal, especially those compiled in the album *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, articulate themes of romance, longing, migration, and cultural pride. However, scholarly research on these songs has been limited, overshadowed by studies on more dominant traditions such as Javanese or Minangkabau folk music (Utami & Arifin, 2019; Yuliani, 2021). This lack of attention risks the marginalization of Pekal cultural expressions within the broader discourse of Indonesian literary and ethnomusicological studies.

The analysis of literary works often relies on the dual framework of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements refer to textual features such as diction, imagery, rhyme, tone, and theme, while extrinsic elements encompass external contexts like biography, history, social background, and cultural values (Fosbraey & Melrose, 2019; Zhongyi, 2023). This framework facilitates a holistic interpretation, allowing researchers to uncover how artistic techniques interact with socio-cultural realities.

In song lyrics, intrinsic elements may appear in the repetition of phrases that heighten emotion or in figurative imagery that conveys longing and loss. Extrinsic elements, meanwhile, may reflect the songwriter's life story, migration experiences, or the moral values of the community. Applying this framework to Pekal songs enables us to appreciate their dual function: as works of art that achieve poetic resonance and as cultural texts that articulate ethnic identity.

Indonesian researchers have increasingly examined regional song lyrics as cultural texts that transmit values and preserve identity. Silalahi et al., (2022), analyzed that repetition, diction, and figurative language were inseparable from the cultural context that shaped their meanings. Moeis et al., (2022), studied Minangkabau folk and concluded that intrinsic structures reinforced communal values such as respect and cooperation.

Fu, (2025) and Wang (2024), highlighted how regional songs function as cultural preservation tools, reinforcing ethnic pride amid globalization pressures. Yet specific attention to Pekal songs remains limited. The present study addresses this gap by systematically analyzing both intrinsic and extrinsic elements in *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, positioning the songs as literary and cultural artifacts that deserve broader academic recognition.

Globally, scholars agree that song lyrics function as cultural storytelling. Born (2011) and Nelson (2003), argued that popular music encodes personal and collective narratives, bridging individual emotion and societal experience. Pettan and Titon (2019), in *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, emphasized the importance of studying both textual and contextual dimensions of music to reveal how it reflects and shapes cultural identities (link).

Recent studies also show that fantasy and folk narratives within music enhance cultural appreciation. Bai et al., (2022)demonstrated that embedding fantasy elements into gamified learning environments improved student engagement and reinforced cultural knowledge. These findings suggest that the imaginative and narrative qualities of song lyrics are central to their pedagogical and cultural functions. Thus, analyzing Pekal songs through intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives can illuminate how they simultaneously preserve identity and adapt to modern contexts.

The songs in *Salam Sakapoh Iban* express diverse themes: romance and longing (*Maratau*), solidarity and tradition (*Salam Sakapoh Iban*), migration and resilience (*Rantau*). Intrinsically, they use vivid diction, repetition, rhyme, and figurative language; extrinsically, they reflect the composer's biography, social setting, and collective values of religiosity, care, obedience, and historical memory.

These align with UNESCO's (2021) call for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through documentation and scholarship.

By situating Pekal songs within both local and global frameworks, this study underscores their importance as cultural texts. While deeply rooted in Pekal tradition, they resonate with broader Indonesian and global experiences of migration, love, and solidarity, making them both particular and universal.

Despite the growing body of research on Indonesian folk songs, Pekal songs have not been comprehensively studied using a combined intrinsic-extrinsic approach. Most existing studies focus on descriptive or cultural aspects but neglect the interplay between textual artistry and socio-cultural contexts. The novelty of this study lies in its holistic application of literary analysis to Pekal songs, revealing their dual role as aesthetic works and as vehicles of cultural preservation.

This research not only enriches Indonesian literary scholarship but also contributes to international discussions on music as a form of cultural identity. By highlighting the Pekal case, the study demonstrates how marginalized traditions can be brought into broader conversations about heritage and globalization.

In light of the foregoing, the study aims to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Pekal songs in Man Pekal's *Salam Sakapoh Iban* album, with a view to uncovering how these works convey literary aesthetics while simultaneously expressing socio-cultural narratives. The dual perspective seeks to demonstrate that Pekal songs function not only as artistic texts but also as cultural heritage that sustains identity in the face of modern transformations.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Pekal songs in Man Pekal's *Salam Sakapoh Iban* album. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it enables researchers to provide rich, detailed accounts of cultural texts without reducing them to quantifiable variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data sources consisted of ten selected songs from the album, which were first transcribed and then translated from Pekal language into Indonesian to ensure textual accuracy. The analysis followed two major stages: (1) intrinsic analysis of textual features such as diction, imagery, figurative language, rhyme, theme, emotion, tone, and message; and (2) extrinsic analysis of contextual aspects including the songwriter's biography, socio-cultural environment, and value systems embedded in the lyrics. To strengthen validity, the study also employed triangulation through interviews with cultural practitioners and Pekal community members, thereby aligning textual interpretation with lived cultural perspective (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Harris & Patton, 2019). Data were coded thematically and interpreted using a literary–cultural framework that integrates text and context, following the approach of applied ethnomusicology that emphasizes cultural significance alongside aesthetic form (Erlina et al., 2025; Koderi et al., 2023; Pettan & Titon, 2019a; Pribowo et al., 2024). This methodological design ensured that the study captured both the poetic qualities of Pekal songs and their broader cultural meanings, situating them as living texts that reflect the identity and values of the Pekal community.

Results and Discussion

Intrinsic Elements of Pekal Songs

The intrinsic analysis focuses on diction, imagery, figurative language, rhyme, theme, emotion, tone, and message. The results reveal that the album demonstrates both literary richness and consistency in stylistic devices.

Diction in Pekal songs is marked by a balance between everyday vocabulary and poetic expressions. The use of vernacular Pekal words enhances authenticity, while repetition of key terms (such as *maratau* "to migrate" or *iban* "togetherness") reinforces thematic emphasis.

Table 1. Intrinsic Elements – Diction

Song Title	Key Words (Repetition/Marked Diction)	Function of Diction
Maratau	*maratau* (migration), *rindu* (longing)	Highlights struggles of separation
Salam Sakapoh Iban	*iban* (togetherness), *salam* (greeting)	Emphasizes unity and solidarity
Rantau	*rantau* (overseas), *balik* (return)	Expresses yearning for homeland

Base on table 1, the diction employed in the songs *Maratau*, *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, and *Rantau* demonstrates a consistent reliance on repeated key lexemes that foreground central themes. In *Maratau*, the repeated use of *maratau* (migration) and *rindu* (longing) highlights both the physical and emotional dimensions of separation. This choice of words serves not only as a linguistic anchor but also as a cultural marker of the Pekal community's frequent experiences with migration, making the theme resonate strongly with local listeners who share similar realities.

In *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, diction revolves around terms such as *iban* (togetherness) and *salam* (greeting), which function as cohesive devices to emphasize unity and communal solidarity. Unlike the melancholic tone of *Maratau*, this song's lexical choices carry celebratory and affirming undertones, underscoring the collective identity of the community. The repetitive invocation of *iban* suggests that solidarity is not an occasional occurrence but a persistent cultural value embedded in everyday practices.

The song *Rantau* further extends the dictional focus to *rantau* (overseas) and *balik* (return), emphasizing the cyclical nature of migration and homecoming. The use of these terms crystallizes the dual tension between displacement and rootedness, expressing both the inevitability of departure and the enduring desire to reconnect with one's homeland. Collectively, the diction across the three songs illustrates how word choice functions semantically to highlight migration, solidarity, and longing, while emotionally evoking collective experiences of departure, reunion, and community resilience.

Table 2. Intrinsic Elements – Imagery and Figurative Language

Song Title	Imagery Example	Figurative Device	Interpretation
Maratau	"The river carries my longing"	Personification	Migration as flow, longing as inevitable
Salam Sakapoh Iban	"Unity as strong as a mountain"	Simile	Solidarity likened to enduring natural force

| Rindu di Perantauan | "Stars guide my heart" | Symbolism | Hope and spiritual guidance amid displacement |

Based on Table 2, the imagery and figurative language in *Maratau*, *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, and *Rindu di Perantauan* reveal that natural surroundings serve as powerful metaphors for the Pekal community's lived experiences. In *Maratau*, the phrase *"The river carries my longing"* employs personification to depict migration as a flowing and unstoppable process, while longing becomes an inseparable emotional current. This image suggests that leaving one's homeland is as natural and inevitable as the river's flow, symbolizing both continuity and the pain of separation.

In *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, the simile *"Unity as strong as a mountain"* underscores the enduring value of solidarity within the community. The mountain, as an immovable natural force, symbolizes permanence and resilience, thereby elevating unity from a social sentiment to a cultural principle deeply rooted in nature. By associating communal togetherness with mountains, the lyrics reassure listeners that solidarity can withstand challenges, reinforcing cultural pride and identity.

Meanwhile, *Rindu di Perantauan* uses symbolism in *"Stars guide my heart"* to reflect hope and spiritual direction amid displacement. The stars function as metaphors for divine presence and guidance, offering a sense of orientation for those navigating the uncertainty of migration. Collectively, the figurative devices across the three songs demonstrate that imagery in Pekal lyrics is not ornamental but functional, transforming individual emotions into shared cultural symbols that resonate widely with both the local community and broader human experiences of longing, solidarity, and faith.

Table 3. Intrinsic Elements – Rhyme and Tone

Song Title	Rhyme Pattern	Dominant Tone	Function
Maratau	AABB	Melancholic	Reinforces sorrow of separation
Salam Sakapoh Iban	ABAB	Celebratory	Builds communal energy and pride
Doa untuk Iban	AAAA (repetition)	Reverential	Elevates religious tone, invoking divinity

Based on Table 3, rhyme patterns and tonal variations in the songs *Maratau*, *Salam Sakapoh Iban*, and *Doa untuk Iban* demonstrate how literary devices shape emotional resonance and cultural functions. In *Maratau*, the AABB rhyme scheme supports a melancholic tone that reinforces the sorrow of separation. The tight rhyme pattern mirrors the confinement of longing, encapsulating the migrant's inability to escape the emotional burden of distance.

By contrast, *Salam Sakapoh Iban* employs an ABAB rhyme scheme that creates a rhythmic alternation, reflecting dynamism and interaction. This structure complements the celebratory tone, which builds communal energy and pride. The rhyme serves not only as a poetic ornament but also as a mnemonic device, allowing the song to be easily remembered and collectively performed in communal gatherings.

Meanwhile, *Doa untuk Iban* makes use of AAAA repetition, producing a chant-like quality that elevates its reverential tone. This pattern invokes divinity, aligning the song with religious rituals and reinforcing the role of music as a medium of spiritual communication. Overall, the variation in rhyme and tone illustrates how intrinsic structures are deliberately crafted to serve broader cultural purposes: melancholic tones validate emotional struggles of migration, celebratory tones energize solidarity, and reverential tones anchor spiritual devotion.

The themes across the album converge on five major motifs: romance, longing, migration, solidarity, and religiosity.
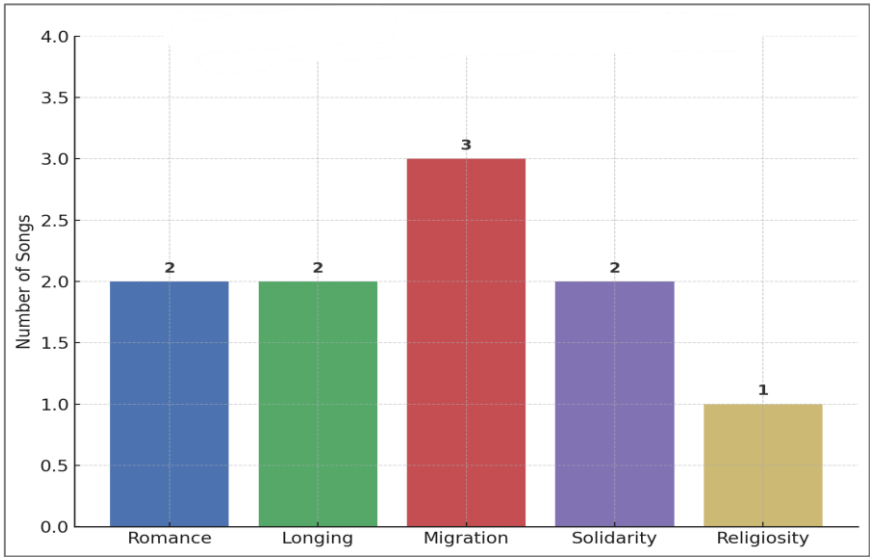

Figure 1. Distribution of Themes in Pekal Songs

Figure 1 illustrates the thematic distribution of Pekal songs, showing that migration dominates with three songs, followed by romance, longing, and solidarity with two songs each, and religiosity with one song. This distribution highlights how migration serves as a central narrative reflecting the socio-economic realities of the Pekal community, while romance and longing express personal dimensions of human experience. Solidarity emerges as a cultural counterbalance, reinforcing communal ties in the face of displacement, and religiosity provides spiritual grounding. Together, the themes demonstrate that Pekal songs interweave individual emotions with collective values, functioning as both personal expressions and cultural texts that sustain identity.

Migration emerges as the most frequent theme, reflecting the socio-economic realities of Pekal communities. However, solidarity and religiosity underscore collective resilience, indicating that individual hardships are framed within communal and spiritual contexts.

Extrinsic Elements of Pekal Songs

The extrinsic analysis situates the songs within biography, socio-cultural context, and embedded values. Man Pekal's personal background significantly influences lyrical content. Having lived both within and outside Bengkulu, his works articulate experiences of displacement and return. Songs such as *Maratau* and *Rantau* are direct reflections of his migration journeys.

Biographical readings illuminate how personal narratives transform into collective metaphors. Migration in Man Pekal's life becomes a symbol of Pekal resilience, bridging individual memory with communal identity. The Pekal community values solidarity (*iban*), respect for elders, and religious devotion. These values are encoded in the lyrics through themes of togetherness, greetings, and prayer.

Table 4. Extrinsic Elements – Socio-Cultural Values

Value Dimension	Lyrics Example / Song	Interpretation
Solidarity	"Let us walk together, *iban*" (*Salam Sakapoh Iban*)	Unity as communal survival strategy
Respect/Obedience	"Children bow to elders" (*Doa untuk Iban*)	Encodes hierarchy and intergenerational respect

Religiosity	"God listens to my longing" (*Doa untuk Iban*)	Expresses spiritual anchoring in hardship

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The extrinsic values align with Pekal cultural ethos. The songs function as pedagogical texts that transmit values intergenerationally, affirming cultural continuity. Migration is not only personal but also historical for Pekal people, driven by economic and educational pursuits. The recurrence of migration themes across songs reflects collective memory of displacement. By embedding migration into lyrical narratives, the songs preserve historical experiences as cultural memory. They also provide emotional vocabulary for future generations facing similar challenges.

Integrated Interpretation

The integration of intrinsic and extrinsic analyses reveals how form and context are intertwined. Intrinsically, vivid diction and figurative imagery express longing; extrinsically, this longing is rooted in actual migration. Similarly, celebratory tones (intrinsic) amplify solidarity values (extrinsic).
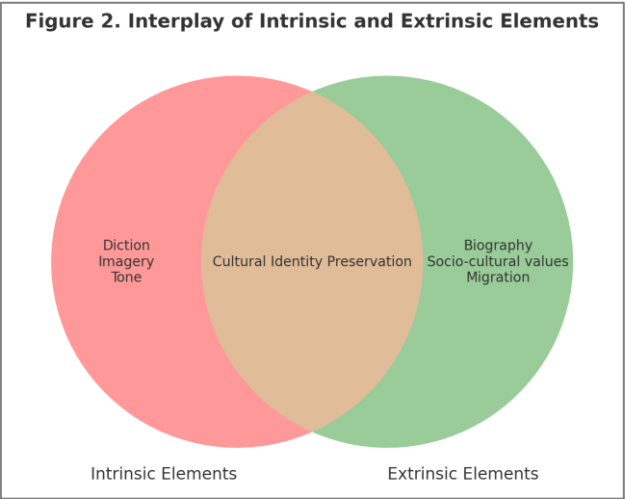

Figure 2. Interplay of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Elements

Figure 2 illustrates the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic elements in Pekal songs, showing that literary features such as diction, imagery, and tone are inseparable from broader contexts including biography, socio-cultural values, and migration. The overlapping area represents cultural identity preservation, emphasizing that the poetic qualities of the lyrics cannot be fully understood without considering the lived realities and traditions of the Pekal community. This synthesis demonstrates that the songs function simultaneously as artistic expressions and cultural texts, with their aesthetic forms reinforcing communal values while their contextual roots ensure continuity of identity across generations.

That interpretation demonstrates that Pekal songs cannot be reduced to either textual or contextual analysis alone. Their power lies precisely in the synthesis of poetic form with cultural function. The analysis indicates that Man Pekal's *Salam Sakapoh Iban* album is not merely entertainment but a cultural archive. The intrinsic elements ensure literary beauty, while the extrinsic elements anchor them in cultural identity and historical experience. Together, they form a body of work that sustains Pekal heritage in the face of globalization.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Pekal songs in Man Pekal's *Salam Sakapoh Iban* album embody a dual richness: intrinsic literary aesthetics and extrinsic socio-cultural significance. Intrinsically, the songs are characterized by purposeful diction, vivid imagery, figurative language, and structured rhyme patterns that enhance emotional resonance and memorability. Themes of migration, longing, romance, solidarity, and religiosity dominate the lyrical landscape, with migration emerging as the most prominent motif, reflecting the socio-economic realities of the Pekal people. Extrinsically, the songs mirror the biography of the composer, the socio-cultural values of the community, and the historical context of migration. Collectively, these dimensions converge in preserving cultural identity, demonstrating that the songs function as both artistic texts and cultural heritage.

The results align with global scholarship that regards song lyrics as a form of cultural storytelling. Frith (2017), emphasized that popular music operates as a narrative device that encodes both individual emotions and collective memory. In the Pekal context, migration lyrics such as those in *Maratau* serve as repositories of shared struggles, universalizing individual experiences into communal narratives. Similarly, the use of figurative imagery resonates with findings by Bradby (2018), who argued that song lyrics achieve resonance by embedding personal emotions within cultural metaphors.

Ethnomusicological perspectives reinforce this interpretation. Pettan and Titon (2019) underscored that applied ethnomusicology must account for both textual and contextual aspects of music, as songs often function simultaneously as art and as social practice. The findings of this study directly reflect that principle, as intrinsic features like rhyme and tone cannot be separated from extrinsic factors such as socio-cultural values and migration histories. Furthermore, research on cultural identity preservation in music UNESCO (2021) highlights the role of songs in sustaining intangible heritage within globalizing contexts. The Pekal songs analyzed here serve precisely this role, offering a cultural anchor amid modern pressures of homogenization.

The study also resonates with national scholarship on Indonesian folk and regional songs. Utami & Arifin, (2019) concluded that repetition, metaphor, and diction work in tandem with cultural contexts to produce meaning. Similarly, Issahaku et al., (2024) highlighted how folk songs embed values of cooperation and respect into their intrinsic structures. The Pekal songs in this study show similar patterns, embedding values such as solidarity (*iban*), obedience, and religiosity through diction and imagery.

Closer to Bengkulu, Dfa & Su (2024) demonstrated that regional songs play a critical role in cultural preservation, reinforcing ethnic identity amid external cultural pressures. The present findings extend Saputra's conclusion by offering a more detailed literary analysis, highlighting not only descriptive cultural functions but also how poetic devices like rhyme and tone actively serve

identity-building processes. By integrating intrinsic and extrinsic analysis, this study provides a more comprehensive framework than prior descriptive accounts of regional songs.

Theoretically, this research reinforces the argument that literary works must be studied through the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives. Zhongyi (2023) long posited that intrinsic analysis alone is insufficient for understanding literature's full meaning. The findings here exemplify this claim: while diction and rhyme provide poetic resonance, their true significance emerges when linked to migration histories and communal values.

Furthermore, the results contribute to the theory of cultural memory. Assmann (2011) defined cultural memory as a repository of shared experiences transmitted across generations through symbolic forms. Pekal songs embody such symbolic forms, encoding migration struggles, solidarity, and religiosity into lyrical patterns that preserve identity. The imagery of rivers, mountains, and stars is not merely decorative but functions as cultural shorthand that communicates resilience, unity, and hope. This positions Pekal songs as living archives that align with theories of literature as a vessel of cultural continuity.

Pedagogically, the study highlights the value of regional songs as teaching resources in language, literature, and cultural education. The intrinsic features of diction, imagery, and rhyme provide material for linguistic and literary instruction, while extrinsic elements supply content for discussions of cultural heritage and social values. Integrating Pekal songs into curricula could enhance student engagement by linking language learning to lived cultural experiences, an approach consistent with global calls for contextually responsive education (Sugiarto et al., 2025).

Policy implications are equally significant. Local and national governments have recognized the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, but efforts often focus on major traditions. The findings here underscore the need to extend such initiatives to marginalized ethnic groups like the Pekal. Supporting documentation, dissemination, and incorporation of Pekal songs into formal education could help ensure cultural continuity. Moreover, collaboration with cultural practitioners, as advocated by applied ethnomusicology, can enhance sustainability by grounding preservation in community ownership (Pettan & Titon, 2019b).

The novelty of this study lies in its systematic application of intrinsic–extrinsic analysis to Pekal songs, a corpus largely absent from academic discourse. While prior research has described regional songs as cultural artifacts, few studies have integrated close literary analysis with socio-cultural interpretation. This dual approach provides new insights into how poetic devices and cultural contexts interact to preserve identity.

Additionally, the focus on Pekal songs contributes to diversifying Indonesian literary scholarship, which has often privileged larger ethnic traditions. By foregrounding Pekal voices, the study decentralizes the discourse and demonstrates that marginalized cultural forms offer equally rich insights into the dynamics of literature, music, and identity. Internationally, the research contributes to broader debates on the role of local music in sustaining cultural heritage, illustrating how even small-scale traditions embody global themes of migration, solidarity, and spirituality.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. First, the analysis was limited to ten songs from a single album, which may not capture the full range of Pekal musical expression. Expanding the corpus to include other albums or oral traditions could provide a more comprehensive picture. Second, while interviews with cultural practitioners added validity, broader community perspectives

including younger generations would enrich understanding of how these songs are received and transmitted.

Future research should explore the performative dimensions of Pekal songs, examining how rhythm, instrumentation, and communal performance contexts enhance their cultural functions. Comparative studies across different Indonesian ethnic groups could also illuminate shared themes and distinctive variations in how song lyrics preserve identity. Finally, digital humanities approaches such as corpus linguistics or computational analysis could offer innovative methods for mapping patterns of diction, imagery, and thematic recurrence across larger datasets.

Conclusion

This study focused on examining the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in Man Pekal's *Salam Sakapoh Iban* album. The findings indicate that Pekal songs are shaped by two fundamental components: intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic dimension, comparable to the analysis of poetry, is divided into physical elements (diction, imagery, concrete words, figurative language, and rhyme) and inner elements (theme, emotion, tone, and message). Meanwhile, the extrinsic dimension consists of biographical, social, and value-based contexts that frame the lyrics within broader cultural and historical realities. The songs explore diverse themes such as unity, tradition, romance, longing, migration, care, and social critique, expressed through a wide range of emotional tones melancholic, patriotic, or even ironic. Messages within the lyrics emphasize values of solidarity, filial piety, religiosity, loyalty, fate, and moral discipline. These findings affirm that Pekal songs are not merely musical expressions but literary and cultural texts that embody both artistic beauty and socio-cultural narratives, thereby functioning as vital tools of cultural preservation and identity transmission. Future research is recommended to extend this analysis to other regional traditions to ensure continuity in documenting Indonesia's diverse musical and literary heritage.

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