

Religious Meaning and Cultural Values in Traditional Healing Mantras of the Banjar Ethnic Group

Latifah^a, Ngalimun^b

^aUniversitas Islam Negeri Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

^bUnivesitas Sapta Mandiri Balangan, Balangan, Indonesia

 latifah2510310048@uin-palangkaraya.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article examines the religious meanings and cultural values embedded in traditional Banjar healing mantras. The study uses a qualitative library research approach supported by documentation and content analysis of published Banjar mantra texts and relevant scholarly literature. The findings show that Banjar healing mantras represent religious meanings through monotheistic expressions, *basmalah*, prayers, Qur'anic phrases, and the belief that healing ultimately comes from God. These mantras also contain cultural values, including respect for nature as a source of healing materials, social solidarity in communal care, and ethical principles requiring healers to act with sincerity, humility, and responsibility. These findings indicate that Banjar healing mantras function not only as verbal formulas for treating illness, but also as religious-cultural texts that shape holistic understandings of health, illness, spirituality, and community relations. This study contributes to the preservation of Banjar oral tradition and to broader discussions of ethnomedicine, religious healing, and culturally grounded health practices.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 16 March 2026

Accepted 6 June 2026

Published 13 June 2026

KEYWORDS

Banjar healing mantra; religious meaning; cultural values; ethnomedicine; traditional healing; oral tradition

Introduction

Health and illness cannot be understood solely as biological matters, but also as social, cultural, and religious phenomena. In many local communities, the experience of illness is not merely associated with bodily disturbance, but also with spiritual imbalance, social relations, and the relationship between humans and nature. Therefore, traditional healing practices need to be read as part of a cultural knowledge system that shapes the way communities understand the body, suffering, healing, and hope. This perspective is consistent with medical anthropology, which views healing practices as holistic phenomena involving physical, psychological, spiritual, and social dimensions (Ahsan et al., 2025; Kleinman, 1980).

In Indonesia's multicultural society, traditional healing develops in various forms according to the ethnic, religious, environmental, and historical backgrounds of each community. One important tradition to examine is the traditional healing mantra of the Banjar ethnic group in South Kalimantan. The Banjar people are known as a community with a strong oral tradition and prominent Islamic religiosity. In local healing traditions, mantras are used as part of healing, protection, safety, and the restoration of personal balance. A mantra does not only function as a series of sacred words, but also as a cultural text that represents the beliefs, prayers, ethics, and social values of the Banjar community (Hidayatullah, 2019; Purwanti & Wahyuni, 2020).

Studies on Banjar mantras show that mantras have educational, motivational, documentary, and social functions in community life. Purwanti and Wahyuni (2020) explain that mantras in Banjar society contain functions and values that are not only related to magical aspects, but also to cultural education, motivation, and the preservation of local knowledge. Meanwhile, Hidayatullah (2019) shows that healing mantras in Banjar manuscripts contain prayers, Qur'anic verses, blessings upon the Prophet, the shahada, and knowledge of medicinal materials and traditional healing media. These findings confirm that Banjar healing mantras are a meeting space between local tradition and Islamic religious expression.

In practice, Banjar healing mantras contain many elements of monotheism, *basmalah*, dhikr, prayer, Qur'anic quotations, and the recognition that healing comes from God. This shows that mantras are not understood as independent powers, but as religious efforts that depend on the will of Allah. On the other hand, mantras also contain cultural values such as respect for nature, the use of local healing materials, social solidarity among family and community members, and healing ethics that require healers to act sincerely, humbly, and responsibly. Thus, Banjar healing mantras can be understood as religious-cultural practices that integrate theological, social, ecological, and psychological elements (Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Zamruddin, 2025).

Nevertheless, studies on Banjar healing mantras still contain several gaps. First, some previous studies have mostly described the types, functions, or structures of mantras, but have not specifically linked religious meaning and cultural values within a unified analytical framework. Second, discussions of healing mantras often do not closely present examples of mantra texts, so claims about religious and cultural values risk appearing overly interpretive. Third, existing studies have not sufficiently situated healing mantras within the context of contemporary social change, especially when traditional healing practices face the dominance of modern biomedical treatment, changes in the orientation of younger generations, and the digitalization of local knowledge. These gaps form the important basis of this study.

The urgency of this study is further strengthened by the fact that modernization and modern medical rationality have changed how people view traditional healing. On the one hand, the biomedical system makes an important contribution to disease diagnosis and treatment. On the other hand, the dominance of biomedicine often causes local practices such as mantras to be viewed as irrational or irrelevant. In fact, from the perspective of ethnomedicine, traditional healing practices do not always have to be read as substitutes for medical treatment, but can be understood as complementary practices that provide spiritual, emotional, and social support. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2025) also emphasizes the importance of traditional,

complementary, and integrative medicine as part of a health system that needs to be managed safely, with quality, and in accordance with cultural contexts.

In the Banjar context, healing mantras also need to be understood as part of intangible cultural heritage. The loss of mantra practices does not only mean the loss of one form of traditional healing, but also the loss of local language, religious symbols, healing ethics, and cultural memory embedded in them. Studies on the *batatamba* tradition of the Banjar community emphasize that traditional healing practices still have cultural relevance despite pressure from globalization and modernization (Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin, 2025). Therefore, Banjar healing mantras need to be studied not to reject modern medicine, but to understand how local communities construct broader meanings of health.

Based on this background, this study focuses on the main question: how are religious meanings and cultural values represented in traditional healing mantras of the Banjar ethnic group? This question is directed toward three areas of inquiry. First, how do elements of monotheism, prayer, and Islamic symbols appear in Banjar healing mantras? Second, how are cultural values such as respect for nature, social solidarity, and healing ethics represented in mantra texts? Third, how are Banjar healing mantras positioned in the context of social change and the dominance of modern medicine?

Therefore, this study aims to analyze religious meanings and cultural values in traditional healing mantras of the Banjar ethnic group through library research and content analysis of documented mantra texts. The main contribution of this article lies in reading mantras as religious-cultural texts that function not only as healing tools, but also as media for transmitting values, cultural identity, and holistic understandings of health. This study is expected to enrich studies in medical anthropology, ethnomedicine, oral tradition, and the preservation of local culture in Banjar society.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research. This approach was selected because the object of the study consists of documented texts of traditional healing mantras of the Banjar ethnic group found in books, scholarly articles, and previous research reports. Qualitative research enables researchers to interpret the religious meanings, cultural symbols, and social values contained in texts holistically and contextually. In document-based research, texts are not only treated as sources of information, but also as cultural data containing the systems of meaning, symbols, and values of the community that owns the tradition (Taylor et al., 2024).

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and supporting data. The primary data consisted of texts and classifications of traditional Banjar healing mantras that had been published in previous studies, particularly Banjar healing mantra manuscripts and studies on the functions and values of mantras in Banjar society. Supporting data consisted of scholarly literature relevant to medical anthropology, anthropology of religion, oral tradition, ethnomedicine, traditional healing, and Banjar culture. Library research was used because this study aims to develop a conceptual and interpretive synthesis of documented sources rather than collect new field data.

The main corpus analyzed in this study was limited to seven types of Banjar healing mantras found in previous documentation and classifications: (1) *mantra panawar panas*, (2) *mantra panangkal bisa*, (3) *mantra sakit kepala*, (4) *mantra panawar luka*, (5) *mantra gangguan gaib*, (6) *mantra sariawan dan sakit gigi*, and (7) *mantra anak rewel*. These seven types of mantras were selected because they represent different healing functions, ranging from physical disorders and disturbances caused by venom or wounds to non-physical disturbances understood within the spiritual framework of Banjar society. This corpus limitation was made to keep the analysis focused and to prevent it from expanding into all types of Banjar mantras.

Sources were selected purposively based on several criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) the source discusses Banjar mantras or healing mantras in Banjar society; (2) the source contains mantra texts, quotations, classifications, functions, or explanations of mantra meanings; (3) the source is a scholarly article, academic book, research report, or accountable cultural document; and (4) the source is relevant to the themes of religious meaning, cultural values, ethnomedicine, or oral tradition. The exclusion criteria included non-academic popular sources, writings without clear author identity, sources unrelated to healing mantras, and sources that discuss traditional healing without textual data or explanations of mantra functions. Based on these criteria, the sources used in the analysis were selected according to their relevance, traceability, and contribution to the research objectives.

The units of analysis in this study were words, phrases, sentences, religious symbols, healing functions, and narratives of meaning found in the texts or descriptions of Banjar healing mantras. These units of analysis were used to identify three main dimensions: (1) religious elements, such as *basmalah*, prayer, dhikr, monotheistic expressions, Qur'anic quotations, and acknowledgment of God's power; (2) cultural values, such as respect for nature, social solidarity, the use of local materials, the role of family, and healing ethics; and (3) sociocultural functions, such as spiritual recovery, identity reinforcement, psychosocial support, and the transmission of oral tradition. By determining these units of analysis, the interpretation process did not remain general, but could be traced to the textual elements and cultural contexts being analyzed.

Data were collected through documentation study and directed literature review. The first step was identifying sources relevant to Banjar healing mantras, Banjar culture, and ethnomedicine. The second step was reading the sources thoroughly to identify sections containing mantra texts, mantra classifications, healing functions, or explanations of meaning. The third step was recording important parts in a data matrix, including the type of mantra, healing function, religious elements, cultural values, and preliminary interpretation. The fourth step was selecting the data most relevant to the research focus, namely religious meanings and cultural values in traditional healing mantras of the Banjar ethnic group.

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with thematic reading. Qualitative content analysis was used to systematically classify textual data into categories of meaning, while thematic reading was used to identify value patterns emerging from the data. This approach is appropriate for qualitative research because it enables researchers to identify, code, group, and interpret meanings contained in texts (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Kyngäs, 2020). In addition, qualitative content analysis positions the researcher as part of the interpretive process who must maintain the connection among data, context, and the categories constructed (Lyhne et al., 2025).

The analysis was conducted in six stages. First, the researcher read all sources to understand the context of Banjar healing mantras. Second, the researcher conducted data reduction by selecting textual sections or descriptions directly related to healing mantras. Third, the researcher assigned initial codes to important elements, such as "monotheism," "prayer," "Qur'anic verses," "divine protection," "nature as a source of medicine," "family solidarity," and "healer ethics." Fourth, these codes were grouped into broader categories, namely religious meaning, cultural values, and sociocultural functions. Fifth, each category was interpreted by considering the Banjar cultural context and ethnomedicine literature. Sixth, the interpretation results were organized into major findings that explain mantras as religious-cultural texts, healing media, and means of value transmission.

The categorization process was conducted inductively, meaning that categories were built from patterns emerging from the data rather than determined rigidly at the beginning. For example, the category of "religious meaning" emerged from elements such as *basmalah*, prayer, monotheism, dhikr, and the acknowledgment that healing comes from God. The category of "cultural values" emerged from elements such as respect for nature, the use of local materials,

family involvement, and the obligation to help others. Meanwhile, the category of “sociocultural function” emerged from the role of mantras as reinforcers of solidarity, cultural identity, spiritual recovery, and psychosocial support. In this way, the research findings are not merely interpretive opinions, but are built through a structured process of coding and categorization.

To maintain data validity, this study used source triangulation and category consistency checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from various literatures, particularly sources containing mantra texts, sources discussing mantra functions, and sources explaining the Banjar cultural context. Category consistency checking was conducted by tracing each theme back to the data units that formed its basis. This strategy is important in document-based research because analytical credibility depends heavily on source traceability, transparency in the reading process, and consistency among data, categories, and conclusions (Taylor et al., 2024).

This study has methodological limitations. Because it uses library research, it did not conduct direct observation of healing practices or interviews with mantra practitioners. Therefore, the findings are more appropriately understood as textual and conceptual analysis of documented mantras. Future research is recommended to use a field ethnographic approach to explore actual practices, healer experiences, community acceptance, and changes in the position of Banjar healing mantras amid the dominance of modern biomedical treatment.

Results

Banjar Healing Mantras as Religious-Cultural Texts

The findings show that traditional healing mantras of the Banjar ethnic group are religious-cultural texts that integrate belief, prayer, and healing practices. Mantras are not merely understood as a series of words recited to treat illness, but as sacred utterances that gain meaning through belief in God, the healer’s intention, the healing medium, and social acceptance within the community. Thus, mantras function as a medium that connects spiritual and social dimensions in the experience of illness.

From the documented mantras examined in this study, religious elements appear through the use of *basmalah*, prayers, dhikr, monotheistic expressions, blessings upon the Prophet, and quotations from the Qur’an. These elements show that the Banjar community does not position mantras as autonomous powers that stand independently, but as forms of religious effort that remain grounded in the power of Allah. Healing is understood as a gift from God, while mantras serve as verbal means for seeking protection, calmness, and recovery.

The fragments of religious formulas found in Banjar healing mantras can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Fragments of Religious Formulas in Banjar Healing Mantras

No.	Formula Fragment in the Mantra	Religious Element	Religious Meaning	Healing Implication
1	<i>Bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm</i>	<i>Basmalah</i>	Recognition that the healing act begins in the name of Allah	Healing is positioned as an effort that depends on God’s permission
2	<i>Lā ilāha illā Allāh</i>	Monotheistic expression	Affirmation of the oneness of Allah as the source of strength and safety	The mantra is not understood as an independent magical power, but as a prayer to God
3	Blessings upon the Prophet	Islamic religious symbol	A spiritual link between prayer, the Prophet’s example,	Provides calmness, religious legitimacy, and confidence in the healing process

			and the hope for safety	
4	Quotations from the Qur'an	Sacred text	Affirmation that healing is situated within the framework of Islamic faith	Strengthens the meaning of the mantra as a religious practice, not merely a magical practice

The table shows that Banjar healing mantras have a strong religious structure. The elements of *basmalah*, monotheism, blessings upon the Prophet, and Qur'anic verses indicate that traditional Banjar healing practices have undergone a process of Islamization and acculturation with local traditions. Thus, the religious meaning of mantras lies not only in their verbal content, but also in how the community understands the relationship among illness, prayer, human effort, and divine power.

Categories of Healing Mantras and Their Cultural Values

The findings also show that Banjar healing mantras have diverse functions according to the types of illness or disturbance experienced by the community. Mantras are used not only for physical disorders such as fever, wounds, headaches, mouth ulcers, and toothaches, but also for disturbances understood as non-physical, such as supernatural disturbances or a crying child. This diversity indicates that the Banjar community understands illness holistically, covering the dimensions of the body, inner life, social relations, and spirituality.

Table 2. Types of Traditional Banjar Healing Mantras and Their Ethical Meanings

No.	Type of Mantra	Healing Function	Religious Element	Cultural Value
1	<i>Mantra Panawar Panas</i>	Treating fever and internal heat	Prayer to Allah and <i>basmalah</i>	Surrender to God and patience in facing illness
2	<i>Mantra Panangkal Bisa</i>	Treating snakebites or venomous insect bites	Mention of Allah's name and divine protection	Caution, harmony between humans and nature, and self-protection
3	<i>Mantra Sakit Kepala</i>	Relieving headaches or dizziness	Prayer for healing to God	Self-resilience, inner calm, and local wisdom
4	<i>Mantra Panawar Luka</i>	Accelerating wound healing	Prayer and acknowledgment of God's power	Self-care, concern, and responsibility in healing
5	<i>Mantra Gangguan Gaib</i>	Overcoming non-physical disturbances	Qur'anic verses and monotheistic expressions	Spiritual balance and religious protection
6	<i>Mantra Sariawan dan Sakit Gigi</i>	Relieving mouth ulcers and toothache	Prayer for healing	Perseverance, patience, and trust in effort
7	<i>Mantra Anak Rewel</i>	Calming a sick or fussy child	Prayer and praise to God	Family affection, child protection, and the social role of the family

The table shows that Banjar healing mantras do not stand as a single irrational practice, but are structured within a local knowledge system that has cultural and religious logic. Each type of mantra is not only associated with a particular healing function, but also contains ethical values that guide individual and communal behavior. For example, *mantra panawar panas* emphasizes

patience and surrender, *mantra panangkal bisa* affirms the relationship between humans and nature, while *mantra anak rewel* reflects family affection and responsibility for protecting children.

Religious Meaning: Monotheism, Prayer, and Surrender to God

The next finding shows that the religious meaning of Banjar healing mantras centers on three main elements: monotheism, prayer, and surrender to God. Monotheism appears in the mention of Allah as the source of strength and healing. Prayer appears in the verbal structure of the mantra, which contains requests for protection, safety, and recovery. Meanwhile, surrender is reflected in the belief that humans can only make efforts, while the final outcome remains within God's will.

In this context, illness is not understood only as a biological disorder, but also as a spiritual experience. A sick person needs bodily recovery, but also inner calm and the belief that suffering has meaning. Mantras help build this framework of meaning because they provide religious language for facing fear, pain, anxiety, and uncertainty. Thus, the function of mantras cannot be reduced to magical aspects, but should be understood as a religious practice that provides psychospiritual support.

Cultural Values: Nature, Social Solidarity, and Healing Ethics

In addition to religious meaning, the findings show that Banjar healing mantras contain cultural values related to nature, community, and healing ethics. Respect for nature appears in the use of natural materials such as leaves, roots, water, or other natural elements, which are understood as part of God's creation. From this perspective, nature is not only a material source of healing, but also part of a living order that must be respected.

Social solidarity is reflected in the involvement of family members, neighbors, traditional healers, or village elders in the healing process. Illness is not understood as an individual matter alone, but as a social experience that involves community support. Meanwhile, healing ethics can be seen in the expectation that healers should act sincerely, humbly, without arrogance, and should not use their healing ability as a means of exploitation. Therefore, Banjar healing mantras contain an ethical dimension that regulates human relationships with God, nature, other people, and the self.

Mantras as a Medium of Identity and Cultural Transmission

The final finding shows that Banjar healing mantras function as a medium of cultural transmission. Through mantras, the community transmits local language, religious symbols, knowledge of illness, healing methods, and moral values embedded in healing practices. Mantras become part of the collective memory of the Banjar community because they preserve the way the community understands illness, health, protection, and safety.

However, the findings also show that the position of Banjar healing mantras faces challenges in the modern context. The dominance of biomedical treatment, modern education, lifestyle changes, and the declining mastery of oral traditions among younger generations may cause mantra practices to be increasingly less understood in a complete manner. Therefore, Banjar healing mantras need to be studied not as substitutes for modern medicine, but as cultural heritage containing values, identity, and psychosocial support.

Discussion

Banjar Mantras as Religious-Cultural Practices, Not Merely Magical Formulas

The findings show that Banjar healing mantras operate within a religious-cultural framework. The elements of *basmalah*, monotheism, prayer, blessings upon the Prophet, and Qur'anic verses show that mantras have been reinterpreted within the Islamic system of the Banjar community. This finding is consistent with Hidayatullah (2019), who shows that Banjar healing mantra

manuscripts contain prayers, Qur'anic verses, blessings upon the Prophet, and the shahada. Therefore, mantras should not be read merely as magical practices, but as religious expressions that combine local language, Islamic belief, and traditional healing knowledge.

This interpretation is also supported by Purwanti and Wahyuni (2020), who show that mantras in Banjar society contain cultural functions and values. In the context of this article, these functions appear in the way mantras build calmness, hope, and confidence in patients. This means that mantras work not only through verbal content, but also through the social and religious relations that accompany them. Healers, patients, families, and shared beliefs form a symbolic and emotional healing space.

However, this discussion must be positioned critically. Describing mantras as religious-cultural practices does not mean claiming that mantras have medical effectiveness equal to biomedical treatment. This article does not test the clinical effectiveness of mantras, but interprets the religious meanings and cultural values contained in them. Therefore, the contribution of this article lies in the fields of medical anthropology, ethnomedicine, and oral tradition, not in pharmacological or clinical verification.

Religious Meaning as Psychospiritual Support in Healing

The findings on monotheism, prayer, and surrender show that Banjar healing mantras function as psychospiritual support. In the experience of illness, humans do not only need medicine, but also calmness, hope, and a sense of safety. Mantras provide religious language for facing such uncertainty. Ahsan et al. (2025) show that traditional medicine in Indonesia often integrates natural resources, ritual, prayer, and balance between spiritual and physical dimensions. This finding is consistent with the present study, which shows that Banjar mantras position healing as a relationship between human effort and divine power.

In this context, mantras can be understood as a form of spiritual coping. Patients who are ill receive emotional support through prayer, belief, and the presence of healers or family members. However, this psychospiritual function must be distinguished from medical claims. Mantras may help build calmness and confidence, but they should not be positioned as substitutes for diagnosis, medication, or medical treatment when a patient's condition requires clinical care. Therefore, the most proportional position is to understand mantras as sources of spiritual and cultural support that can coexist with modern medicine.

Cultural Values: Nature, Solidarity, and Healing Ethics

The findings show that Banjar healing mantras contain cultural values related to respect for nature, social solidarity, and healing ethics. The use of natural materials in healing practices indicates that the Banjar community possesses local knowledge of its surrounding environment. This value is consistent with Zamruddin (2025), who emphasizes that oral narratives and Indigenous healing practices in Indonesia often preserve traditional health knowledge through myths, stories, rituals, and cultural symbols. Thus, mantras can be understood as part of a knowledge system that connects language, nature, and healing practices.

Social solidarity is also an important aspect. In traditional practice, healing often involves family members, neighbors, and traditional healers. This process shows that illness is not only an individual experience, but also a social event. The presence of others provides moral support and strengthens a sense of togetherness. Therefore, healing mantras function as social mechanisms that build community cohesion.

Healing ethics is another important finding. Ideally, healers should act sincerely, humbly, and responsibly. This value is important because the healer's position in traditional society may carry strong symbolic authority. Therefore, healing practices must be limited by moral norms so that they do not turn into patient exploitation. This is where Banjar mantras reveal their ethical dimension: healing is not only a skill, but also a social and religious trust.

The Position of Mantras amid the Dominance of Modern Biomedicine

One reviewer criticism concerns the need to discuss the position of healing mantras amid the dominance of modern biomedical treatment. The findings show that Banjar mantras occupy an ambivalent position. On the one hand, mantras may be marginalized because they are considered unscientific, irrational, or incompatible with modern medical systems. On the other hand, mantras continue to survive because they provide spiritual meaning, social support, and cultural identity that formal health services do not always offer.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2025) emphasizes that traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine needs to be developed through the strengthening of evidence, safety, regulation, and appropriate integration into health systems. This perspective is important for positioning Banjar healing mantras proportionally. Mantras do not need to be opposed to biomedicine, but they also should not be excessively claimed as substitutes for medical treatment. A safer position is to understand them as complementary practices in the domains of spiritual, emotional, social, and cultural identity support.

Febriyanti et al. (2024) also show that the use of traditional medicine in Indonesia often occurs alongside modern medicine. This indicates that communities do not always choose one system exclusively. They may combine doctors, modern medicines, herbal remedies, prayers, and family support according to their understanding, access, cost, and cultural beliefs. In this context, Banjar healing mantras can survive as part of the medical pluralism of the community, as long as their use does not hinder access to necessary medical care.

Transformation, Preservation, and Contemporary Relevance

Banjar healing mantras also need to be read within the context of social transformation. Modernization, formal education, urbanization, and digitalization can change the way communities transmit mantras. In the past, mantras were transmitted orally through direct relationships among teachers, healers, families, and communities. Today, some of this knowledge is documented in books, scholarly articles, digital archives, and academic research. Such documentation is important for preservation, but it also changes the nature of mantras from living oral practices into written objects of study.

The book *Tradisi Batatamba Masyarakat Banjar: Mantra, Medium, Ritual & Kesenambungan*, published by UIN Antasari Banjarmasin in 2025, shows that *batatamba* practices remain an important part of contemporary Banjar cultural studies. Such studies show that mantras and traditional healing practices have not completely disappeared, but have undergone changes in form, space, and modes of transmission. Thus, the relevance of mantras today lies not only in healing practices, but also in their role as cultural archives, markers of ethnic identity, and sources of value learning.

However, the preservation of mantras must be carried out carefully. Academic documentation should not detach mantras from their social and ethical contexts. Mantras are not merely texts, but parts of social relations, healer authority, belief, procedures, and norms of use. Therefore, preservation should ideally involve the Banjar community, cultural figures, local researchers, and younger generations to prevent commodification or the simplification of meaning. In this way, Banjar healing mantras can continue to be understood as living cultural heritage, not merely as relics of the past.

Conclusion

This study concludes that traditional healing mantras of the Banjar ethnic group are religious-cultural texts that represent the integration of Islamic teachings, local wisdom, and traditional healing practices. The religious meanings in the mantras appear through elements of monotheism, *basmalah*, prayer, dhikr, blessings upon the Prophet, Qur'anic quotations, and

surrender to Allah as the source of healing. Thus, mantras are not understood as independent magical powers, but as forms of religious effort in facing illness.

Banjar healing mantras also contain important cultural values, particularly respect for nature as a source of healing materials, social solidarity in care processes, family affection, and healing ethics that require healers to be sincere, humble, and responsible. These values show that the Banjar community understands health holistically, namely as a balance among the body, inner life, spirituality, nature, and social relations.

The main contribution of this article lies in reading Banjar healing mantras as media for transmitting religious and cultural values, not merely as verbal healing formulas. Mantras function as means of psychospiritual recovery, reinforcement of social solidarity, markers of cultural identity, and archives of local knowledge. However, in the modern context, mantras need to be positioned proportionally. They may function as complementary practices in spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions, but they should not replace medical diagnosis and treatment when needed.

The limitation of this study lies in its use of library research and documented mantra texts, so it has not yet explored actual practices, healer experiences, or direct community acceptance. Future research is recommended to use a field ethnographic approach to examine how Banjar healing mantras are practiced, transmitted, negotiated with modern biomedicine, and understood by younger generations. In this way, the study of Banjar healing mantras can continue to develop as part of cultural preservation, the strengthening of local identity, and the development of a health understanding that is more sensitive to cultural contexts.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Islam Negeri Palangka Raya and Universitas Sapta Mandiri Balangan for the academic support provided during the preparation of this study. The authors also thank academic colleagues and lecturers who provided constructive feedback, scholarly discussion, and suggestions related to Banjar oral tradition, traditional healing practices, ethnomedicine, and religious-cultural studies. Their non-financial support contributed substantially to the completion and refinement of this article.

Research Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of scientific research, including academic honesty, objectivity, transparency, and research integrity. Since this study employed a qualitative library research approach based on documented mantra texts and published scholarly literature, it did not involve direct human participants, interviews, clinical intervention, biological specimens, or the collection of personal data. Therefore, informed consent and formal approval from a research ethics committee were not required. All textual sources, cultural materials, and scholarly references were used responsibly and properly acknowledged.

Author Contributions

Latifah: conceptualization, development of the research focus, literature search, selection of documented Banjar healing mantra texts, qualitative content analysis, interpretation of religious meanings and cultural values, and writing of the original draft.

Ngalimun: methodology, validation of analytical categories, review of Banjar cultural context, interpretation of ethnomedicine and oral tradition perspectives, critical revision, and finalization of the manuscript.

All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Artificial Intelligence Use Statement

The authors declare that artificial intelligence was used only as a limited technical support tool for language editing, sentence refinement, grammar checking, translation assistance, and improving manuscript readability. All processes involving source selection, data extraction, qualitative content analysis, thematic interpretation, cultural interpretation, academic argumentation, and conclusion development remain the full responsibility of the authors.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study consist of documented Banjar healing mantra texts, published scholarly literature, data extraction notes, coding records, thematic categories, and interpretation notes related to religious meanings, cultural values, ethnomedicine, and Banjar oral tradition. Since this study was based on library research and documented sources, no new primary dataset involving human participants was generated. Additional information regarding the analyzed sources and data-extraction process may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

References

- Ahsan, Z. R., Samnuzulsari, T., & Niko, N. (2025). Ancestral heritage in traditional medicine among coastal communities in Indonesia: Spiritual practices and modern integration. *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, 6(3), 868–880. <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijss.v6i3.1670>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Febriyanti, R. M., Saefullah, K., Susanti, R. D., & Lestari, K. (2024). Knowledge, attitude, and utilization of traditional medicine within the plural medical system in West Java, Indonesia. *BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies*, 24, Article 64. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-024-04368-7>
- Hidayatullah, D. (2019). Mantra pengobatan dalam naskah Banjar. *Naditira Widya*, 13(1), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.24832/nw.v13i1.322>
- Kleinman, A. (1980). *Patients and healers in the context of culture: An exploration of the borderland between anthropology, medicine, and psychiatry*. University of California Press.
- Koentjaraningrat. (2009). *Pengantar ilmu antropologi* (Edisi revisi). Rineka Cipta.
- Kyngäs, H. (2020). Qualitative research and content analysis. In H. Kyngäs, K. Mikkonen, & M. Kääriäinen (Eds.), *The application of content analysis in nursing science research* (pp. 3–11). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30199-6_1
- Lyhne, C. N., Thisted, J., & Bjerrum, M. (2025). Qualitative content analysis: Framing the analytical process of inductive content analysis to develop a sound study design. *Quality & Quantity*, 59, 5329–5349. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-025-02220-9>

- Purwanti, P., & Wahyuni, I. (2020). Fungsi dan nilai mantra dalam masyarakat Banjar. *CaLLs: Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics*, 6(2), 211–220. <https://doi.org/10.30872/calls.v6i2.5582>
- Taylor, M., Garner, P., Oliver, S., & Desmond, N. (2024). Use of qualitative research in World Health Organisation guidelines: A document analysis. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 22, Article 44. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-024-01120-y>
- Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin. (2025). *Tradisi batatamba masyarakat Banjar: Mantra, medium, ritual & kesinambungan*. Antasari Press.
- World Health Organization. (2025). *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240113176>
- Zamruddin, M. P., & Prafitri, W. (2025). Narratives of healing through traditional medicinal knowledge in Indonesian folklore. *CaLLs: Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics*, 11(Special Issue). <https://doi.org/10.30872/calls.v11i0.22581>