Development of Multicultural-Based Illustrated Story Books for Children

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Abstract:
This study aims to develop a multicultural-based picture story book for children. The relocation of the nation's capital to the island of Kalimantan has become a stimulus for increasing population movement from various regions and increasing the diversity of Indonesian culture to Kalimantan. Understanding diversity is a must for both indigenous Kalimantan people and domestic migrants communities. The type of research used in this study is the research and development method. The development model used is the 4D model from Thiagarajan, Semmel and Semme including the definition, design, development, and dissemination stage. This study only reaches the development stage by conducting a media feasibility test through expert appraisal, student responses and teacher responses. The research subjects selected were grades 3 and 4 and teacher. Material aspects in the form of aspects of cultural representation and precision, aspects of interaction and multicultural values and aspects of presentation and suitability, media validation in the form of aspects of content and narrative, visual and design aspects, aspects of representation and diversity, aspects of education and development, student response questionnaires and teacher responses. Based on media expert validation, it got 4.91 with the category of "Very Good", material expert validation got a score of 4.87 with the category of "Very Good", the average score of the overall student response got a score of 4.7 with the category of "Very Good", while for the average score of teacher response 3.8 with the category of "Good". It can be concluded that the illustrated story book media for children is suitable for use in learning in Elementary Schools.

Keywords: *multicultural; picture story book; primary school.*

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the global education landscape, triggering a series of unprecedented challenges. One significant impact of the pandemic is the decline in students' early reading skills in elementary schools. The low early reading skills of students after the pandemic have become a serious concern in the world of education.

Based on the results of the study, early reading skills after the pandemic in Menteng Village, there are still 16.29% of students who are in the very poor and poor categories in early reading. Learning during the pandemic is faced with various problems including internet access, lack of face-to-face interaction between teachers and students, uncertainty in learning due to policies that are always changing to adjust to conditions, psychological well-being and family support (Diplan, et al., 2023).

Appropriate learning innovations are needed to improve students' reading skills. Some criticisms of the low reading ability of our students are due to non-innovative reading learning media. The presence of early reading learning media in elementary schools is very minimal. Teachers only rely on textbooks and LKS (student worksheets).

According to Mentei & Kevin (Ratnasari & Zubaidah, 2019) picture story books are one of the important visual aids that can be accessed by children and can provide children with the opportunity to explore personal experiences and understand the values contained in the family and society.

The relocation of the capital city of Indonesia from Jakarta to East Kalimantan has brought major changes not only in administrative and political aspects, but also in social and cultural dynamics. With the start of the new capital city development project, the flow of internal migration to this region is predicted to increase significantly. Thousands of construction workers, government employees, and professionals from various sectors will come from all over the archipelago, bringing with them rich ethnic and cultural diversity.

This wave of domestic migrants will include various tribes from the large islands of Indonesia. The Javanese with their distinctive traditions and languages, the Sumatran people with various sub-ethnicities such as the Batak, Minangkabau, and Acehnese, as well as people from Eastern Indonesia such as the Bugis, Makassar, and Papuans, will mingle in the land of Kalimantan. Each of these groups brings their own cultural heritage, regional languages, culinary specialties, and unique customs, creating a cultural melting pot in the heart of Borneo.

The interaction between the domestic migrants and the indigenous people of Kalimantan, such as the Dayak and Kutai tribes, will form an interesting social dynamic. The process of acculturation and cultural exchange will occur naturally, giving rise to new syntheses in various aspects of life. The Indonesian language will be further enriched by the entry of local terms, while fusion cuisine that combines flavors from various regions will emerge.

The main challenge in this process is maintaining social harmony amidst diversity. The government and society need to work together to ensure smooth integration between domestic migrants and locals, avoiding potential social and cultural conflicts. Programs that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and inclusivity will be key to building a strong social foundation in the new capital. Education is the foundation for building strong character for future generations. In an increasingly connected and open world, understanding multicultural values is a crucial aspect in shaping individuals who are tolerant, inclusive, and able to adapt to cultural diversity. This is especially important at the elementary school level, where children begin to form their views of the world around them. In this context, understanding multicultural values by elementary school students has many profound implications.

Understanding multicultural values helps elementary school students develop tolerance and appreciation for differences. In the school environment, students often come from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the process of learning about different cultures, traditions, and beliefs, students learn to accept and appreciate these differences. They become more open to other people's perspectives and develop inclusive attitudes, which are essential in building a harmonious society.

Understanding multicultural values helps overcome stereotypes and prejudices. At a young age, children tend to gain knowledge about the world from direct experiences and social interactions. Multicultural education in elementary schools provides opportunities for students to recognize and understand that negative stereotypes about certain ethnicities, religions, or cultures are inaccurate. This helps prevent the formation of unhealthy prejudices and encourages positive intercultural cooperation.

In addition, understanding multicultural values prepares students to become open-minded and cross-culturally competent global citizens. In this era of globalization, the ability to interact with people from different cultures is becoming increasingly important. Students who understand multicultural values tend to be better at communicating, collaborating, and adapting to individuals from different cultural backgrounds. They have an advantage in facing the challenges of an increasingly connected and complex world.

Understanding multicultural values helps strengthen identity and appreciation for one's own culture. When students learn about other cultures, they also develop a deeper understanding of their own culture. This helps to increase their sense of self-esteem and cultural identity, while remaining open and appreciative of other cultural diversity. Overall, the importance of elementary school students understanding multicultural values is evident.

Multicultural education in elementary schools is not only about introducing other cultures, but also about developing inclusive, tolerant, and open-minded characters. Thus, through understanding multicultural values, elementary school students can become agents of positive change in an increasingly connected and diverse society.

Methods

This research is a type of development research (Research & Development). Educational Research and development (R&D) is a process used to develop and validate educational products (Borg & Gall, 1983: 772). Research and development is a process to develop new products, and can also develop an existing product and can be accounted for, (Sukmadinata, 2016). In this study, the 4D development model adopted by (Thiagarajan, Semmel and Semme, 1974) was used, which includes the define stage, design stage, develop stage, and disseminate stage. This research was conducted up to the development stage, not dissemination stage. This research produced a product in the form of a multicultural-based picture story book for elementary school students.

The subjects of this research were grade 3-4 elementary school students. The data collection technique used was a questionnaire. Data obtained from media expert appraisal, content expert appraisal, student and teacher responses. The data analysis technique used in this study used descriptive statistics. The scores obtained were then converted into qualitative data on a five-point scale using the following formula (Widoyoko, 2009: 238).

Table 1. Convertion Score

Average Score	Classification
> 4,2	Very Good
> 3,4 - 4,2	Good
> 2,6 – 3,4	Adequate
> 1,8 – 2,6	Insufficient
≤ 1,8	Highly insufficient

Results and Discussion
Result

In this study, the 4D development model adopted by Thiagarajan, Semmel and Semme (1974) was used, which includes the define stage, design stage, and develop stage. The results of the development of multicultural-based picture story book products are as follows.

1. Define

The first stage, Define, is the foundation of the entire process. At this stage, the development team conducts an in-depth analysis of the purpose of making the book, the needs of the target readers and relevant multicultural themes. Researchers conduct literature studies, identify cultural elements to be included, and formulate key messages to be conveyed. The Define stage includes Front-end analysis, Lerner analysis, task analysis, concept analysis, specifying instructional objectives.

The Define stage in developing multicultural children's books begins with a comprehensive front-end analysis. This process involves an in-depth survey of the sociological conditions of the community, interviews with stakeholders such as teachers, and predictions of future developments. Characteristics of the Palangka Raya community Most of them are Dayak and Banjar ethnic groups, followed by Javanese and other ethnic groups. In learning, teachers have not developed teaching materials or media independently related to multicultural education and increasing reading interest. Future developments after the relocation of the National Capital to East Kalimantan will have an impact on increasing population movement from outside Kalimantan to the province, especially East Kalimantan. This will have an impact on the suspected areas, one of which is Central Kalimantan.

An attitude of mutual understanding and tolerance for each other is needed so that life runs harmoniously, both for indigenous and domestic igrant communities. As expressed by Tarman & Gürel (2017), this analysis allows developers to understand cultural representation in the current curriculum and identify areas where more diverse perspectives are needed.

The multicultural theme raised is "Kapuhunan" where kapuhunan is the misfortune experienced by someone because they refuse an offer of food/drink. Kapuhunan has developed in the Banjar community to this day. Currently, kapuhunan is perceived as a plague or misfortune or disaster that we get. Someone will get hurt or a disaster if they do not eat the food offered.

The next stage is learner analysis focusing on the characteristics of target readers of elementary school children aged 6-12 years. This includes an in-depth understanding of their cognitive and social-emotional developmental stages, reading preferences, learning styles, and previous experiences with multicultural concepts. Louie (2016) stresses the importance of understanding that children in this age range are beginning to

develop a more complex understanding of differences and similarities, making it an ideal time to introduce deeper multicultural concepts.

Task analysis involves identifying specific activities that will help children achieve multicultural learning goals. These include tasks such as identifying cultural elements in stories, recognizing cultural diversity outside of their own and appreciating cultural differences, developing cross-cultural empathy, recognizing and challenging stereotypes. Gorski (2016) suggests that these tasks should be designed to stimulate critical thinking and cross-cultural empathy, which can be achieved through reflective activities, discussion questions, or problem-solving scenarios.

Concept analysis involves identifying and structuring key multicultural concepts that will be included in story elements. This includes themes such as cultural diversity, inclusivity, cultural and ethnic identity. Sims Bishop (2015) stresses the importance of introducing these concepts carefully and contextually, often through engaging narratives and characters that are relatable to children. Ethnic diversity is presented through the characters of Dayak and Javanese ethnic groups as domestic migrants, cultural elements are presented in the form of illustrations such as traditional houses, community customs, food, and clothing motifs.

Specifying instructional objectives involves formulating specific and measurable learning objectives. This can include objectives such as children's ability to identify cultural differences and similarities between characters, demonstrate an understanding of the value of inclusivity, or recognize and discuss examples of stereotypes in the story. Husband (2019) emphasizes that these objectives should include not only knowledge, but also the development of skills and attitudes that support cross-cultural understanding.

By combining all of these elements in the Define stage, developers can build a strong foundation for creating multicultural children's books that are not only entertaining, but also effectively educational, encourage empathy, and promote cross-cultural understanding in young readers.

2. Design

At this stage to design a prototype of illustrated story book media. Developers begin to take concrete forms. Develop a story plot rich in multicultural elements, creating diverse and representative characters from various cultural backgrounds. Storyboards are created to visualize the storyline and illustration layout. Illustration styles, color palettes, and typography are carefully selected to create visual appeal while supporting multicultural themes. This stage produces a complete prototype for the book being developed. The design stage includes media selection, format selection, and initial design.

Media selection is the stage where the form of a children's story book is selected as a medium to convey multicultural content. Children's story books are effective for developing cross-cultural understanding in children. Children's story books are an effective medium for introducing the concept of multiculturalism because they can present cultural information in an interesting and easily understood way by children (Nurgiyantoro & Efendi, 2017). The selected book media in print form does not use digital forms (digital books, pdfs or other forms).

Format Selection of books needs to be considered carefully to adjust to the conditions of prospective readers. "The selection of the right book format, including the number of pages and size, is very important to ensure readability and appeal to child readers" (Hsiao & Chang, 2016). The number of pages chosen was not too many, amounting to 16 pages, because children's reading ability is still lacking. The following are details of the book format that was developed.

Table 2. Developed Book Format

No	Aspect	Description
1	Reader Age	6-12 years
2	Page Length	16 pages
3	Size	20 cm x 20 cm
4	Paper Type	Artpaper 260
5	Cover	Softcover
6	Illustrations	berwarna penuh

The final step in the design stage is the initial design. Initial design considers several things such as story structure, visual elements, consideration of story text. The story structure is developed from two different cultural backgrounds, namely Dayak and Javanese. The storyline involves interaction with characters from various cultures. Emphasizing shared values and cultural appreciation. "Stories that feature positive interactions between cultures can help children develop positive attitudes towards diversity" (Yokota & Teale, 2017). Visual elements of various cultures are presented in this book. The use of accurate and culturally representative illustrations is very important in multicultural children's books to avoid stereotypes and promote deeper understanding (Koss, 2015). Visual forms of culture include traditional houses, community conditions, food, and clothing motifs. Consideration of age-appropriate text. Inclusion of selected words from the language displayed with pronunciation guidance. Balanced text-picture ratio for optimal engagement. The use of words from various languages with pronunciation guidance can increase children's linguistic awareness and respect for language diversity (Cummins, 2015).

3. Develop

At this stage, the prototype that has been developed is improved before finally becoming the final version of the product. At the development stage there are two steps, namely expert appraisal and developmental testing. After the product is developed, the next step is the assessment of material experts and media experts, while developmental testing is carried out on students and teachers.

Expert Appraisal
Media Expert Appraisal

The results of the expert assessment of the local wisdom-based picture story book entitled "Kapuhunan" showed a high level of feasibility based on the assessment of experts in the fields of content, design, education, and cultural diversity. This validation covers four main aspects: Content and Narrative, Visual and Design, Representation and Diversity, and Education and Development. Overall, the story book "Kapuhunan" was declared valid and suitable for use in an educational context, with an overall average score of 4.91 out of 5. The validator stated that this media is suitable for use in learning about Indonesian cultural diversity.

In the Content and Narrative aspects, this media received an average score of 5 out of 5 with the category "Very Good". Experts assessed that the material presented was in accordance with the child's cognitive development level, the narrative used was considered easy to understand, the storyline was clear and the multicultural message was clear.

The Visual and Design aspects received an average score of 4.8 out of 5 with the category "Very Good". The validator assessed the attractiveness of the illustrations, the suitability of the illustrations and the content of the story, the accuracy of the color

selection, the quality of the images, and the appropriate layout. Animation and illustrations are considered interesting and helpful in conveying information.

In terms of Representation and Diversity, this media scored very well, namely 5 out of 5 with the category "Very Good". Experts appreciated the efforts to include diverse representations of various ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups in Indonesia. Inclusive and stereotype-free depictions are considered the main strengths of this media. Suggestions for improvement include showing the uniqueness of the typical Central Kalimantan betang house. Several cultural elements have appeared in the children's story entitled "Kapuhunan".

The Education and Development aspect received an average score of 5 out of 5. The validator assessed that this media is effective in stimulating the cognitive, social, and emotional development of students. The illustrations depicted are considered able to encourage children's imagination. Experts suggest Some suggestions for improvement include adjusting the habits of people who like fishing.

Material Expert Appraisal

The assessment of material experts was carried out to assess the accuracy of the values of cultural diversity, tolerance and inclusiveness. Several aspects assessed were aspects of representation and cultural accuracy, aspects of interaction and multicultural values, aspects of presentation and suitability. Overall 4.87 out of 5 with the category "Very Good"

In the aspect of representation and cultural accuracy, this media received a very good score, namely 5 out of 5 with the category "Very Good". Several cultural elements have appeared in the children's story entitled 'Kapuhunan'. These elements appear through illustrations of traditional Dayak houses (it would be much better if the illustrations of the traditional houses were equipped with typical Dayak ornaments). Also, the strongest cultural element and the basis of this children's story is about the belief/myth of 'kapuhunan' that exists in the Kalimantan community. In my opinion, this story has summarized several cultural elements in it, both through dialogue and story narratives and through illustrations

In the aspect of interaction and multicultural values, this media received a very good score, namely 5 out of 5 with the category "Very Good". The depiction of culture is clearly visible in it through traditional houses, clothes, community activities, and also food. In terms of presentation and suitability, this media received a very good score, namely 5 out of 4.5 with the category "Very Good". Some words or sentences need to be changed and adjusted in their diction to make them easier for children to understand.

Developmental testing
Student and Teacher response testing

In the Student and Teacher Response Trial, it was conducted to validate the product developed directly to prospective users. The target readers of the development of the story "kapuhunan" are lower classes with a minimum of initial reading mastery skills and teachers who teach in the class. There are 3 aspects assessed in the student response trial, namely the presentation and design aspect, the content and understanding aspect, the impact and interest aspect. In the presentation and design aspect, the score was 4.69 with the category "Very Good", the content and understanding aspect scored 4.67 with the category "Very Good" and the impact and interest aspect scored 4.72 with the category "Very Good". While for the overall average score of student responses, the score was 4.7 with the category "Very Good". For the results of teacher responses, the presentation and design aspect scored 4.5 with the category "Very Good", the content and

understanding aspect scored 3.67 with the category "Good" and the impact and interest aspect scored 3.8 with the category "Good".

Analysis

In short, picture books are storytelling media that combine text and visual images in conveying a story or a particular message to the reader. One of the main advantages of picture books is their ability to convey information efficiently and attract the reader's attention. Rich and dynamic visual illustrations in comics help strengthen the delivery of the story and build the desired emotions and atmosphere. According to Faizah (2009) picture book media is effective in improving students' reading abilities and skills. The definition of multicultural education consists of two words, namely education and multiculturalism. Education is the process of developing a person's attitudes and behavior in an effort to mature through the process of teaching, training, and education. According to Yudi Hartono (2003; 420) in principle, multicultural education is education that respects differences. So that later these differences will not become a source of conflict and division. This attitude of mutual tolerance will eventually create dynamic diversity, a cultural richness that is the identity of the nation that should be preserved.

In an increasingly diverse society, multicultural education is very important to instill an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for differences. One effective medium for conveying multicultural values is illustrated stories or comics. Through a combination of text and rich visual illustrations, comics are able to convey multicultural messages in an interesting and easily understood way by readers from various backgrounds.

Picture books have the power to tell stories from a variety of cultural perspectives. With their unique and dynamic storytelling style, picture books can explore themes such as identity, traditions, stereotypes, discrimination, and intercultural conflict in a way that is engaging and provokes critical thinking in readers. The rich visual illustrations in picture books also help visualize abstract cultural concepts into something more concrete and easy to digest.

In the context of education, picture books can be integrated into the curriculum and classroom learning as a medium to promote understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Teachers can use picture books as reading materials or discussions to discuss multicultural issues, such as identity, prejudice, discrimination, and tolerance. Thus, students not only gain knowledge about other cultures, but also develop empathy, respect, and critical thinking skills in dealing with differences.

In addition, picture books can also be a medium to express and voice students' own cultural experiences. Students can be involved in comic-making projects that explore their cultural identity, traditions, or multicultural issues they face in everyday life. This process not only provides space for students to express themselves, but also helps them understand and appreciate the diversity around them.

In the era of globalization and increasingly diverse society, multicultural education is very important to instill an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for differences. Illustrated stories or comics can be an effective medium to convey these multicultural values in an interesting, easy-to-understand way, and provoke critical thinking in readers. By integrating comics into education, we can help the younger generation build an open attitude, empathy, and appreciation for the cultural diversity around them.

Multicultural-based picture books have become one of the effective media in increasing students' interest in reading and deepening their understanding of diversity and tolerance. Recent studies have shown that the use of picture books with multicultural

themes can have a positive impact on the development of students' literacy and social attitudes.

The use of multicultural-based picture books has been proven to increase students' interest in reading. Research conducted by Koss (2015) shows that picture books with diverse character representations can attract students' attention and encourage them to read more. This is due to the presence of interesting visual elements and stories that are relevant to their life experiences.

In line with this, a study conducted by Hefflin (2018) revealed that students tend to be more interested in books that feature characters and cultural backgrounds that are similar to their own. When students feel represented in the stories they read, they become more engaged and motivated to read further. Multicultural picture books also play an important role in increasing students' understanding of diversity. Research conducted by Koss and Daniel (2018) shows that exposure to stories that feature cultural diversity can help students develop a broader perspective on the world around them.

Furthermore, a study by Crisp et al. (2016) revealed that multicultural picture books can help students develop empathy and understanding of the experiences of others who may be different from them. Through these stories, students can learn about traditions, values, and life experiences from various cultural backgrounds.

In addition to increasing understanding, multicultural picture books can also help develop an attitude of tolerance in students. Research conducted by Horning (2017) showed that students who were exposed to multicultural stories tended to show more positive attitudes towards differences and were more open to diversity.

Another study by Husband (2019) revealed that the use of multicultural picture books in learning can help reduce prejudice and negative stereotypes towards certain groups. Through stories that show positive interactions between cultures, students can learn about the importance of tolerance and mutual respect.

The use of multicultural picture books in learning requires the right approach in order to provide maximum impact. Research conducted by Agbaw (2019) emphasized the importance of post-reading discussions and reflections to help students process information and develop a deeper understanding of multicultural issues. In addition, a study by Manning et al. (2018) showed that the integration of multicultural picture books into the curriculum on an ongoing basis can have a more significant impact than sporadic use. This shows the importance of a systematic and consistent approach in using these books as a learning medium.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the development of a picture story book entitled Kapuhunan is suitable for use in learning to instill multicultural values. Picture story books can increase students' interest in reading and make it easier to understand the message of tolerance for cultural diversity. Based on the validation of media experts, it got 4.91 with the category "Very Good", validation of material experts got a score of 4.87 with the category "Very Good", the average score of the overall student response got a score of 4.7 with the category "Very Good", while for the average score of teacher responses 3.8 with the category "Good".

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