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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Development of Picture Story Books Based on Living in Harmony for Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Skills

Farida Suryaningsih
Universitas Muria Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia

Sri Utaminingsih
Universitas Muria Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia

Mohammad Kanzunnudin
Universitas Muria Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia

Hendri Pratama
Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

Abstract

This study explores the development of picture storybooks themed "Living in Harmony at School" to enhance elementary students' reading comprehension skills, contributing to the growing field of educational media and literacy development. The research aimed to create effective learning tools tailored to young learners, addressing the need for engaging educational resources that foster reading comprehension. The study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach based on Borg and Gall's model, which includes ten systematic steps: identifying potentials and problems, data collection, product design, validation, revision, testing, and final production. Participants included second-grade teachers and students from SDN Pasucen, Timbrangan Gunem Rembang (intervention group), and SDN 1 Tegaldowo Gunem Rembang (control group). Data were gathered through observations, interviews, and questionnaires and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings highlighted a significant lack of suitable learning media for improving reading comprehension. The development process involved rigorous validation by experts, with media validation scoring 95.8% (valid) and material validation scoring 18.5 (very good). Teacher and student responses were overwhelmingly positive, with scores of 92% and 85%, respectively. The study concludes that the developed picture storybooks are effective and appropriate for enhancing reading comprehension among elementary students. However, limitations include the study's focus on a specific demographic, suggesting the need for further research across diverse populations. Recommendations include broader implementation and continuous refinement of the storybooks to maximize their educational impact.

*Corresponding author: hendripratama.tvet@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of changing the attitude and behaviour of a person or group to mature through teaching or training. This concept is stated in Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning SISDIKNAS namely education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed for themselves, society, nation and state (UU RI, 2003). Education seeks to humanize humans so that they grow and develop into quality beings and have advantages over other creatures. Education in Indonesia is one of the main national development programs because the nation's progress and decline can be seen and determined by the state of the education it implements (Noble et al., 2019).

The level of educational units considered as the basis for imparting knowledge to students is at the Elementary School (SD) or Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level. The education taken in basic education will become the foundation for the next educational process (A'yun et al., 2017). This was reinforced by Octaviani (2017), who explained that basic education has two main functions, namely (providing basic education related to critical thinking skills, reading, writing, arithmetic, assignments, the basis for studying science and technology, as well as communication skills, and basic education provides the basis for following education at the next level. One of the supports for basic education is to optimally be able to instil reading habits from an early age because reading is one of the keys to one's success in gaining knowledge and technology (Sunarti, 2021).

Learning activities in class cannot be separated from students' ability to read. Reading is one of the important basic skills because, through good reading skills, students will be able to follow other subjects. The reading ability of elementary school students, especially at the beginning reading level, plays an important role in their learning success because the reading ability is the basis for reading skills at the next, more complex level. Students' reading ability is distinguished by several types of skills (Sya'Bani, 2018). Reading comprehension is a type of reading that aims to understand literary standards or norms, critical reviews and patterns of fiction (Harianto, 2020).

Reading activities need to be used as a necessity and become fun for students. Reading is done anywhere and anytime as long as there is desire, passion and motivation. Of course, this requires persistence practice reading habits so that reading skills, especially reading comprehension, can be achieved. The fact shows that most of the School Final Examination (UAS) questions require students to understand and determine main ideas, main sentences, reading graphs, plots, mandates, settings, and so on. Without high reading comprehension skills, students can't be able to answer questions. This is where reading comprehension's important role is in determining the correct answer (Noble et al., 2019). This reading ability cannot be obtained naturally but through a learning process, which is partly the responsibility of the teacher. It is necessary to develop a special learning model for reading comprehension activities (Nurhayani et al., 2024).

Efforts to support the success of learning activities are learning strategies, learning methods or models, and learning media and teaching materials (Nurgiyantoro, 2010; Castro et. al (2018). Learning resources are basically all materials (both information, tools, and text) that are systematically arranged, which display a complete figure of competencies that must be mastered by students and used in the learning process with the aim of planning and studying the implementation of learning (Guslinda & Kurnia, 2018). Media/teaching materials that can be used in student learning consist of several forms such as videos, thematic books and story books. Story books have several advantages, namely students are more focused on reading and following the plot of the story. Story books can be in the form of full stories or picture story books. Teaching materials in the form

of picture story books are expected to attract students' attention to improve students' reading skills and curiosity (Mirdad, 2020).

Picture story book teaching materials are teaching materials that integrate academic knowledge, skills, and competencies that children need to have. The substance of the development of teaching materials for picture story books is to direct students to be able to develop and improve students' reading abilities all the way through and then be able to master the following skills (Titik, 2020). Learning media products in the form of picture story books for elementary school students are appropriate for use in learning activities, besides that the effectiveness test which is useful to support research results shows that story book media can improve elementary students' reading and writing skills (Nugraheni et al., 2019). Storytelling is an effective method and is most popular with children Storytelling encourages children to develop their imagination, because messages are conveyed in the form of verbalism which encourages children to think, imagine and guess so that it will stimulate children to continue reading (Astawa et al., 2015). Apriliani and Radia (2020), found that the development of local wisdom-based picture story book instructional media can improve students' reading comprehension skills.

Farenda (2018) in his research showed that the level of validity by the material validator obtained an average of 4.8 with a very valid category and the language validator, namely 4.4 with a very valid category. The practicality of picture story books from the teacher's response obtained a value of 4.75 with a very valid category, student responses with a percentage of 4.6 with a very valid category.

The results of observations and interviews found that the reading comprehension skills of class II students were still not in accordance with basic competencies. The results of interviews with students obtained statements that the teacher explained material about reading, especially reading comprehension without using interesting teaching materials. Teaching materials, especially in Indonesian subjects, can be said to be still not optimal and inadequate, teaching materials in Indonesian lessons only use teacher's books and student books from the government. The lack of use of teaching materials results in low student learning outcomes in reading comprehension skills. The story books shown to students place the student's point of view as the center of learning, so students can choose picture story books with student interests, especially with the theme of living in harmony at school. Picture story books can improve students' reading skills.

The problems found in this study include students' reading comprehension skills have not met the expected target. The teaching materials for reading learning are not interesting enough, so students feel bored. Learning is still centred on the teacher even though the 2013 Curriculum has been used. Teachers' creativity in creating or determining learning media is not in accordance with students' interests. The teaching materials used to improve reading comprehension skills are not in demand by students. The teaching materials used by teachers and students are only one, namely the Teacher's Book and Student Book from the government because teachers still have difficulty in developing teaching materials. Teachers have not been able to maximize students' concentration, which has so far, with effective learning, has made students' reading comprehension skills less than optimal. Lack of student motivation when participating in learning activities to improve reading comprehension skills.

The purpose of reading comprehension is for students to have the ability to understand and pronounce writing with natural intonation for further reading. In reality, achievement in reading comprehension is still low. This is influenced by various factors, one of which is the use of media in learning. Media is very important because it is useful for educators in helping with their educational tasks. Media that can be used in beginning reading is picture book media. Based on the problem above, this study aims to develop

and test the feasibility of Picture Story Books Based on Living in Harmony in Schools in Learning Reading Comprehension Skills for Elementary School Students.

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a comprehensive Research and Development (R&D) design, structured around ten systematic steps: (1) Research and Information Collecting, (2) Planning, (3) Developing the Preliminary Form of the Product, (4) Preliminary Field Testing, (5) Main Product Revision, (6) Main Field Testing, (7) Operational Product Revision, (8) Operational Field Testing, (9) Final Product Revision, and (10) Dissemination and Implementation. This iterative process ensured that the educational materials developed were rigorously tested, refined, and validated before being finalized and implemented.

Participants and Sampling Procedures

The study's participants were second-grade students from SDN 1 Tegaldowo Gunem Rembang (control group) and SDN Pasucen and Timbrangan Gunem Rembang (intervention group). The schools were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the sample was representative of the population relevant to the study's objectives. This sampling method was chosen to focus on students likely to benefit from the educational interventions being tested, thereby providing a meaningful context for evaluating the effectiveness of the developed storybooks.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data were gathered through a combination of interviews, observations, questionnaires, tests, and product validation instruments. Interviews and observations were conducted to gather qualitative insights into the students' engagement and comprehension. Questionnaires were distributed to both teachers and students to assess their responses to the educational materials, while tests were used to measure the impact of the storybooks on students' reading comprehension skills. The product validation instruments included expert evaluations of the content, design, and overall educational value of the materials.

Research Tools, Including Validity and Reliability

The research tools used in the study were carefully selected and developed to ensure both validity and reliability. The questionnaires and tests were pre-tested and refined to ensure they accurately measured the intended outcomes. The validity of the tools was established through expert reviews and pilot testing, ensuring they effectively captured the constructs of interest. Reliability was assessed using internal consistency measures, such as Cronbach's alpha, to confirm that the tools produced consistent and reliable results across different contexts and time points.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from the tests and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentages, to provide a clear picture of the students' performance and responses. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed thematically, identifying key patterns and insights that informed the interpretation of the quantitative findings. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the study's outcomes, ensuring that both numerical data and contextual insights were considered.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to protect the rights and well-being of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from both the students' parents or guardians and the teachers involved in the study. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the research process, with all data securely stored and used only for the purposes of the study. Additionally, the study was conducted with respect for the participants' cultural and educational contexts, ensuring that the interventions were appropriate and beneficial for the students involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Development of Picture Story Books Based on Living in Harmony in Schools in Learning Reading Comprehension Skills for Elementary School Students

The results of the needs analysis, obtained through interviews and observations, highlighted several key findings. Interviews with 10 children revealed that they were interested in teaching materials that improved reading skills and preferred media that made learning fun, easy, coherent, interesting, and accessible. Conversely, interviews with 5 teachers indicated that current teaching practices lacked appropriate instructional media, relying solely on existing books, making it difficult to stimulate students' reading comprehension.

Kiky (2021), emphasized that picture storybooks attract students and are easy to remember, enhancing learning motivation and enthusiasm. Khairisofa (2017) similarly found that needs analysis in early development stages is crucial to understand students' requirements for reading instruction. Tarigan (2019) noted that students preferred visually appealing learning media with engaging pictures and colors.

Pratama (2016) highlighted the importance of identifying needs through interviews, questionnaires, and observations to develop goals and suitable teaching materials. Observations revealed that teachers often used traditional lecture methods and outdated materials, leading to disinterest among students. Most teachers did not utilize instructional media effectively, resulting in unengaging and unclear learning activities that failed to stimulate reading development.

Observation results showed that only 2 out of 10 children understood the material presented, with minimal student engagement and enjoyment of the media used. Teachers reported using materials that were easy to accept but did not specifically target critical reading skills or incorporate scientific methods. Previous studies by Susilowati (2020) and Sugiarto et al. (2017) corroborate these findings, emphasizing the lack of effective reading materials and the potential of picture storybooks to stimulate interest in reading. Susilowati (2020) noted that attractive, easily accessible picture books could significantly enhance children's reading enthusiasm. Endriano (2019) further supported the development of storybooks as a means to cultivate a love for reading from an early age. This aligns with the observation that students responded poorly to the existing materials, underscoring the need for resources that are not only educational but also engaging and enjoyable for young learners.

The implication of these generalized results is clear: there is a critical need for educational materials that are both engaging and specifically designed to develop critical reading skills. Educators should consider integrating picture storybooks and other visually appealing, interactive resources into their teaching practices to address the gaps in student comprehension and engagement. Furthermore, curriculum developers should prioritize the creation of materials that incorporate scientific methods and critical thinking

exercises, ensuring that students not only enjoy the learning process but also develop essential literacy skills. This approach could lead to improved educational outcomes and a stronger foundation for lifelong learning.

Development of Picture Story Books Based on Living in Harmony in Schools in Learning Reading Comprehension Skills for Elementary School Students

The study's results showed that the development process began with thorough planning, which included analyzing the RPPH, storybook material, steps for using the media, and assessing the teaching materials. The researchers outlined core and basic competencies and developed the content by defining themes, objectives, learning resources, cover designs, content designs, and binding processes. Apriliani and Radia (2020) notes that picture storybooks, designed with colorful images and engaging stories reflective of everyday life, significantly boost students' interest in reading. Following the material presentation, the book includes a bibliography, author identity, and illustrator identity with their respective biodata.

In the development stage, competencies for students were clearly defined, including core competencies, basic competencies, and specific indicators. The picture storybook, based on the theme of living in harmony at school, aimed to enhance reading comprehension skills for elementary students. The book is divided into an initial section, a core section, and an ending section. The researchers selected the theme, objectives, learning resources, and dimensions of the teaching materials. The graphic design aspect involved creating a cover on 210g art paper, ensuring the design aligned with the book's content. The content design, including typography, was developed using Comic Sans MS font at size 12, structured from the cover page, preface, competencies and indicators, table of contents, main content, bibliography, and biographies. The production was executed using Corel Draw X7, and the final book was bound using stapler binding. The development steps are illustrated in Figure 1.
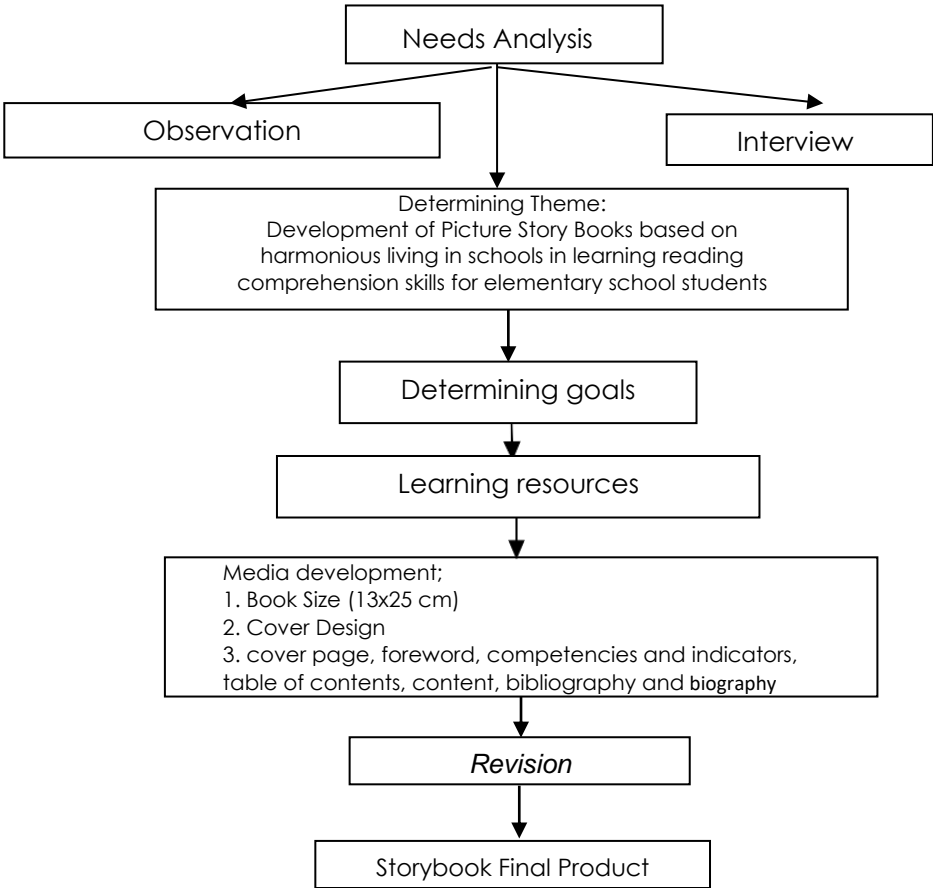

Figure (1) The development steps of Picture Story Books

The need for storybooks in schools is critical because they support learning and stimulate students' imagination. A significant issue hindering students' reading interest is the lack of varied reading materials, leading to decreased enthusiasm for reading. Therefore, there is a need for engaging learning media that captures students' interest (Tarigan, 2019). Endriano's research highlights the importance of developing picture books as they can replace verbal vocabulary, make abstract concepts concrete, and enhance human observation. Images clarify ideas or information, acting as a visual medium that conveys real-life situations, whether landscapes, objects, goods, or school life (Endriano, 2019).

Kiky (2021) noted that picture storybooks facilitate children's translation of ideas into language by providing high inspiration and motivation, particularly in teaching reading. Sugiatro's research supports this, stating that picture storybooks are an effective medium to increase children's interest in reading. Books with fewer words and striking, bright colors can attract children's attention and develop their curiosity about the content (Sugiarto et al., 2017).

The development process involves formulating objectives for the teaching materials, creating sketches and drafts, and planning the materials needed for production. The initial product draft includes designs for the front and back covers, the content pages, usage instructions, and material content, such as descriptions, examples, exercises, and evaluation questions (Kurniawati & Koeswanti, 2020). Rizky (2020) explained that picture storybooks are effective for teaching culture, as they attract students' attention with interactive elements, such as mini-games or quizzes, and bright colors to engage them further.

Storybooks add value to learning by presenting real situations and conditions, making development tailored to students' needs essential (Magdalena et al., 2023). Consistency in development is crucial, involving the use of uniform fonts, layout, margins, and spacing. The teaching material format is designed on A3 paper, divided horizontally into two equal parts. The content is organized systematically, with interesting images and manuscripts arranged in an easy-to-understand flow. Product attractiveness is enhanced by combining appropriate colors, images, shapes, font sizes, and engaging tasks and exercises (Rahmawati, 2018). These elements work together to create an appealing and stimulating learning environment that encourages active participation. The implication of this result is that educational materials should be designed with a strong focus on visual appeal and interactivity, as these factors can significantly increase student motivation and engagement, leading to improved learning outcomes.

Overall, these findings suggest that the careful design and development of educational storybooks, with attention to relevance, consistency, organization, and visual appeal, are key to maximizing their educational impact. Educators and material developers should consider these factors in their future projects to create more effective and engaging learning resources for students.

The Feasibility of Developing Picture Story Books Based on Living in Harmony in Schools in Learning Reading Comprehension Skills for Elementary School Students

The study developed a Picture Story Book Based on Living in Harmony in Schools to enhance reading comprehension skills for elementary school students. A validity test was conducted with media experts to determine the feasibility of the designed teaching materials, followed by necessary revisions. Material expert validation, which evaluated both content and presentation, scored 18.5, categorizing it as very good. Media expert validation, focusing on display, form, and learning aspects, scored 95.8%, classifying it as valid according to the media expert score table.

Previous research on the Putri Mandalika folklore book showed similar results, with material, media, linguist, and practitioner experts rating it very valid. Material experts rated it at 98%, media experts at 97.8%, and linguists at 95.83% (Ety, 2022). The product's feasibility was determined by its validity and practicality, with a storybook product validity rate of 93%. Notes and inputs from media and material experts were addressed before field trials (Nugraheni et al., 2019).

Apriliani and Radia (2020) involved validation by two material expert lecturers and one media expert lecturer. Material expert validation scored 82%, placing it in the very high category within the 81-100% interval. Validation aspects included relevance, accuracy, presentation completeness, and language appropriateness, with the relevance aspect scoring 80% in feasibility.

The teacher questionnaire for validation assessment showed 46 out of 50 positive responses, equating to 92% in the very like category. The children's response questionnaire for the Development of Rembang Folklore Books in Learning Reading Comprehension Skills for Class II students showed 136 positive responses or 85% in the very like category. This is promising for improving children's reading skills. Previous research supports these findings; individual trials rated storybook media products' attractiveness at 84.11%, and field trials rated them at 93% with very attractive criteria (Nugraheni et al., 2019). The alignment of current findings with previous studies reinforces the conclusion that well-designed, culturally relevant picture storybooks enhance reading comprehension among young learners. This approach not only addresses the immediate needs of students but also supports long-term literacy development. Educators and curriculum developers should consider adopting and expanding the use of such educational media across various subjects and grade levels to capitalize on their proven effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that developing picture storybooks focused on the theme of "Living in Harmony at School" significantly enhances elementary students' reading comprehension skills. This finding has important pedagogical implications, as it underscores the value of using thematic and visually engaging materials to promote active and independent learning among young students. The use of picture storybooks not only facilitates better comprehension but also fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment, encouraging students to take a more active role in their own learning process. Practically, the study suggests that teachers should incorporate more interactive and visually appealing teaching media into their instructional practices. This approach can help address the challenges of limited student engagement and comprehension, making learning more accessible and enjoyable for students. The positive reception of the storybooks by both teachers and students further indicates their potential as effective tools in the classroom, highlighting the need for continued development and integration of such resources into the curriculum. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on the use of multimedia and thematic content in education, particularly in the context of early literacy development. It supports the theory that multimedia learning materials can enhance cognitive processing and retention, improving overall learning outcomes. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educators and curriculum developers invest in the creation and implementation of similar educational media across different grade levels and subjects. Future research should explore the effectiveness of these materials in diverse educational settings and investigate how they can be integrated more comprehensively into teaching practices to maximize their impact on student learning. Further studies could also explore the long-term effects of picture storybooks on students' reading skills and overall academic performance.

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