

Crafting cultural narratives: developing storybooks enriched with Bali's local heritage to improve students' understanding of spiritual and social attitude

Komang Trisna Mahartini^{1*}, I Wayan Suastra², I Nyoman Sudiana³, I Ketut Gading⁴, Dewa Bagus Sanjaya⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Elementary Education, Postgraduate Program, Ganesha University of Education, Indonesia; trisna.mahartini@undiksha.ac.id (K.T.M.).

Abstract: Character education is the main focus of the learning process at the elementary school level in Indonesia. To support the implementation of character education, researchers developed children's stories enriched with local Balinese cultural values that teach spiritual understanding and social interaction. This study specifically aims to identify the effectiveness of the developed stories in building students' spiritual and social attitudes. This study was conducted using a single-shot case study design. Researchers involved one class of elementary school students in Bali. They were given a pre-test to measure spiritual and social attitude understanding before they were taught using the developed stories. After that, they were given a post-test to measure spiritual and social attitude understanding after they were taught using the developed stories. The pre-test and post-test data were analyzed quantitatively using paired-sample t-test inferential statistical analysis. The paired-sample t-test analysis showed that the difference in the pre-test and post-test results was significant. Thus, it can be concluded that implementing children's stories enriched with local Balinese cultural values has proven effective in shaping students' spiritual and social attitudes.

Keywords: Local culture, Storybooks, Social interaction, Spiritual understanding.

1. Introduction

The 2013 Curriculum in elementary schools in Indonesia carries the concept of integrated thematic learning. Thematic learning can be interpreted as a learning activity by integrating the material of several subjects into one topic of discussion so as to provide meaningful experiences for students [1], [2]. It is said to be meaningful if students can understand the concepts learned through direct experience and connect them with other concepts they already understand [3]. Furthermore, the basic competencies in each subject at each level are integrated to form themes into a theme network. The theme network creates a learning sequence. The themes are the container for the process of achieving basic competencies. So that learning is no longer compartmentalized based on the discipline or learning content [4]. Learning content is a derivative of basic competencies. Learning content deals with the material or knowledge content contained in the discipline itself. The content or learning material in the 2013 curriculum is transferred to students through integrated thematic learning. In other words, the material is taught to students, not separated according to the subjects. Learning themes will contain each learning content according to their respective proportions [5]. So, learning no longer describes the material in gambling, but is presented implicitly in learning.

In applying and implementing thematic learning, there are several basic principles that need to be considered, namely it is integrated with the environment, meaning that the learning carried out needs to be packaged in a linkage format. The discussion of a topic is related to the conditions faced by students or when students find problems and solve real problems faced by students in everyday life related to the topic discussed; the form of learning is designed so that students find themes, meaning that learning

activities are designed so that students work seriously to find real learning themes while applying them. Efficiency: thematic learning has efficiency values, among others, in terms of time, material load, methods, and use of authentic learning resources to achieve competency completeness appropriately [6].

However, based on the empirical analysis of the 2013 curriculum teachers' and students' books, there are still some problems. Some learning activities directed in the book are still not in accordance with the characteristics of elementary school children. Elementary school children aged 6-12 years are at the *concrete operational* stage [7]. At this stage, children can think about concrete situations or things logically [8]. Therefore, the learning characteristics of children at this stage are learning through real things and avoiding the way of learning to imagine or guess. However, some books found in the field still do not present concrete situations in learning. So, the assumption arises that these books are not fully relevant to the learning characteristics of elementary school-age children.

In addition, it was also found that the material coverage was still expository or explanatory. Exposure to too much material is not in accordance with the developmental characteristics of elementary school students because it is less able to activate the literacy culture of students. The content of the book explains many issues without being able to influence readers so that students find it difficult to understand and are interested in reading. Exposure in learning books should be more narrative, which can explain and describe an issue at the core of the topic discussed in the book. So that children can more easily understand the contents of the book. The evidence is that children in the concrete operational stage can easily remember and explore their knowledge through storybooks [9].

Currently, many storybooks are circulating in schools. However, children's storybooks following local culture-based learning content are unavailable. For this reason, it would be very good if the storybook could be directly related to the learning content and come from local culture as a companion to the 2013 curriculum book. Storybooks can be an essential supporting media for young learners because children normally love stories [10], [11]. Learning using storybooks is also more in line with the characteristics of elementary school children who are in the concrete operational stage. Stories can connect students with their lives or experiences in the real world [12]. Values and learning materials can be revealed by utilizing the play, setting, or storyline in it. That way, learning will be more memorable and meaningful for students.

Considering the potency of storybooks in enhancing young learners' literacy, the researchers developed a storybook entitled "*Impian Ayu*" or "Ayu Dreams" in English. This storybook is enriched with Bali's local heritage, which is specifically developed to improve students' understanding of spiritual and social attitudes. The storybook was designed to improve students' understanding of spiritual and social attitudes because the current curriculum in Indonesia focuses on character education, and at elementary school levels, character education covers two major things: spiritual and social attitudes. Spiritual attitudes are related to the formation of students who believe in and fear God Almighty. The word spiritual is often associated with religion in everyday life. Based on the 2013 curriculum covers accepting, practicing, and respecting the teachings of the religion he adheres to. Meanwhile, social attitudes tend to do something in individuals' interactions [13]. The formation of an attitude is greatly influenced by stimuli from the social and cultural environment, such as family, school, norms, religious groups, and customs. Based on the 2013 curriculum, social attitudes include honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring, tolerance, cooperation, politeness, and confidence in interacting with family, friends, teachers, and neighbors. Thus, the research aims to determine the effectiveness of the developed storybook enriched with Balinese local culture in improving students' spiritual and social attitudes and understanding.

2. Method

Since the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the developed storybook in improving students' spiritual and social attitudes and understanding, this study was conducted by following the pre-experimental approach. Specifically, this study followed the single-shot case study. *This study involved 28 fourth-grade students at a state elementary school in Bali. The first calculation was done to calculate the average research sample with the following formula [14].*

$$M = \frac{\Sigma x}{N} \quad (\text{James L. Burning. 1997})$$

Description:

- M = Sample mean
 Σx = Total score
 N = Number of subjects involved (individuals in the sample)

The second calculation calculates the average population set with the following formula.

$$u = \frac{0,65 \times SMI}{N} \quad (\text{James L. Burning. 1997})$$

Description:

- U = The average of the specified population (referring to the minimum passing grade)
 SMI = Ideal maximum score
 N = Number of subjects involved (individuals in the sample)

The third calculation was to calculate the t-test coefficient determined by the following formula.

$$t = \frac{M - U}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2 - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}} \quad (\text{James L. Burning. 1997})$$

Description:

- t = Coefficient of t-test
 M = Sample mean
 U = The average of the specified population (referring to the minimum KKM)
 Σx^2 = Number of Square scores
 $(\Sigma x)^2$ = Square of the sum of the scores
 N = Number of subjects involved (individuals in the sample)

The fourth calculation was to calculate the purity of effectiveness determined by the following formula.

$$ES = t \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}} \quad (\text{James L. Burning. 1997})$$

Description:

- ES = Purity effectiveness
 t = Coefficient of t-test
 N = Number of subjects involved (individuals in the sample)

After the calculation is complete, the effectiveness purity calculation results are compared with the Effectiveness Purity Table. The analysis of all student questionnaires shows how effective the use of storybooks as a companion to the 2013 Curriculum textbooks is. After the calculation is complete per

variable (student attitudes and learning outcomes), the results are compared to the Purity of Effectiveness (ES) table, as in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Purity of effectiveness.

Effect Size (ES)	Description
ES < 0.2	Less effective
0.2 < ES < 0,5	Effective
0.8 < ES	Very effective

3. Results

Based on the calculation, the effectiveness of using storybooks on student attitudes is **1.45**, classified as very effective. This means that the storybook "*Impian Ayu*" is classified as very effective in improving students' spiritual and social attitudes. This can be seen from observations during learning activities using the "*Impian Ayu*" storybook; students showed positive attitudes, such as respecting friends of different religions when praying. The summarized results can be presented in Table 1 below.

Table 2.
Summary of the effectiveness of storybooks on attitudes.

Mean	μ	t	Effectiveness (ES)	Category
84.64	4.52	7.78	1.45	Very effective

4. Discussion

In agreement with this, Kimmel (1970) states that children's stories appear to have a positive effect, at least for a while. Children's attitudes toward Eskimos were definitely shaped by the stories they heard. The positive stories reinforced positive initial attitudes. From the above quote, it can be interpreted that children's stories can have a positive impact, as evidenced by the attitudes of Eskimo children, shaped by what they hear through their stories.

In connection with the fact that using storybooks can affect attitude change, research conducted by Booker also states that using picturebooks can empower and inspire writers and readers in the upper grades [15]. Similarly, O'Malley states that an evaluation of a storybook targeting parental attitudes, intention, and self-efficacy to change their child's oral health behavior [16]. Another supporting research study by Walker reveals that storybooks are often used as a pedagogical tool to convey moral lessons to children and to spontaneously provide the "moral" of a story [17]. Students are able to pray according to their respective religions before learning activities begin. Students play together during breaks without discriminating between religions. They even showed an attitude of sharing either food or storybooks with their friends; this was also seen when they read the story "*Impian Ayu*" together at recess. Although one or two students still act like they disturb other friends, based on observations made by the teacher, overall, students have a good attitude after being taught using storybooks. In the learning process, especially at the elementary school level, it must be supported by concrete media.

This is because the thinking pattern of elementary school children is still narrative. Using storytelling patterns that are in accordance with the surrounding environment will certainly be more interesting for children. The desire will arise from these different storytelling patterns for children to read themselves. Moreover, the story in question can directly relate to spiritual and social attitudes. Students tend to reflect and feel what happened according to the story they read. Indeed, another tendency is that they will have positive morals towards their behavior. Especially if the story describes the local Balinese culture, it follows research conducted by previous studies that revealed picture stories can increase the development of the child's personality [18]–[20]. The storybook "*Impian Ayu*" raises the storyline by integrating local culture. So, the use of local culture in the context of learning is in accordance with the theory of socio-cultural constructivism. A person's acquisition of knowledge comes from social sources outside himself [21]. It emphasizes the interaction between internal and external

aspects of learning and its emphasis on the social environment of learning. In addition, children will learn meaningfully more easily if they themselves can learn according to their cultural context.

In addition to these spiritual attitudes, during learning activities, students show social attitudes that they should have after learning the sub-theme of *Me and My Ideals*. Social attitudes are formed from social interactions experienced by individuals so that they can form a mindset influenced by personal experience, culture, mass media, educational institutions, religion, and emotional factors in individuals [22]. This is shown by students who can complete teacher assignments on time, carry out obligations in their class such as pickets, and mediate friends who are arguing or during group discussions. These attitudes show the attitude of responsible students. The attitude of confidence is shown in students who scramble to come forward to the front of the class when asked by the teacher. Students dare to express their opinions during lessons in class or group discussion activities, and some students can provide strong arguments when expressing their opinions.

The storybook "*Impian Ayu*" is thought to be very good because it contains local culture. Local culture is an effective tool in instilling values and knowledge into students. Vygotsky supports the idea that children find knowledge in their social world or environment. Local culture, which consists of beliefs, values, knowledge, structured relationships, and spoken and written language symbol systems, is very important in learning attitudes. From the explanation above, social attitudes are related to values or norms related to a subject matter [23]. While spiritual attitudes for certain subjects are generic, meaning that they apply to all subject matter.

Overall, the results showed that using children's storybooks with Balinese local cultural nuances based on attitude content and learning is very effective in improving changes in spiritual attitudes and social attitudes towards a better direction for students in the *Me And My Dreams Curriculum 2013* sub-theme. As for what can be suggested from this research, it is necessary to further test how the effect of using storybooks on changes in reading interest and student learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that children's stories enriched with local Balinese cultural values effectively foster elementary school students' spiritual and social attitudes. The significant improvement in students' understanding, as evidenced by the paired-sample t-test analysis of pre-test and post-test results, highlights the potential of integrating local cultural elements into character education. These stories serve as engaging teaching materials and align with the educational focus on character development in Indonesia. However, this study was limited to a single class of elementary school students in Bali, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts. Future research could explore the implementation of similar culturally enriched stories across different regions and educational levels to assess their wider applicability. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or observations could provide deeper insights into students' experiences and the long-term impact of such stories on character development.

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