

**The Implementation of Digital Picture Text Story Media
in Developing Character Education**

Badruli Martati

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya
E-mail: badrulimartati@um-surabaya.ac.id

Idhoofiyatul Fatin

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya
E-mail: Idhofatin.pbsi@fkip.um-surabaya.ac.id

Dewi Setianingsih

SD Muhammadiyah 8 Surabaya
E-mail: dsetianingsih87@gmail.com

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Abstract

Integrating character values with school subjects can be used as powerful medium in the academic environment or classroom. By underscoring illustrated stories with digital technology will help teachers to foster students' essential attitudes and characters education in elementary level. The purpose of the study is to find students characters in education. The research method used was quantitative with the type of pre-experimental one group post-test only design. The third students were included in the category of concrete operational development, which could help their imaginations in delivering stories, pictures or other things. The research finding showed that the use of illustrated stories with digital technology greatly helped the students' understanding. Instilling character values was carried out by teachers by inserting in the school subjects. Assessment of mutual cooperation attitudes as much as 89% of students have appeared in the learning process. This means that they were able to cooperate with group members and were open to accepting their friends' ideas. As many as 100% of students showed an attitude of responsibility, they were able to work on tasks according to the steps of instructions from the teacher so that they could accomplish the tasks on time. As many as 82% of students showed an independent attitude, were able to do tasks without much dependence on friends or teachers. As the conclusion, the use of picture story text media with digital technology has proven effective in developing characters education among elementary school students.

Keywords: Elementary level, digital picture story text media, characters education

INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technology in education is very significant in the context of enhancing character education and cognitive development in elementary school students. Since, education is regarded as an effort to change one's behavior to conform to the values, norms and morals in society. One of these educational efforts is carried out in schools as an ecosystem that is deliberately created. Schools are established with the aim that students behave according to the values of compassion, responsibility, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, courtesy, not bullying and others (Martati, 2021; Syakrani et al., 2022; Kamza et al., 2020). As a deliberately created ecosystem, it is very necessary to be willing to organize the learning process properly. Because schools are places where teachers and students interact, good facilities and infrastructure are needed in order to achieve optimal learning goals (Rahayu, 2019; Fitria, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2022; Nikita et al., 2023).

Sanusi in (Martati, 2020) states that in organizing education it is necessary to pay attention to: (1) teacher, is someone who has knowledge, attitudes and experienced behavior so that it has been known to many people; (2) educating has a function to provide knowledge, communicate, provide value, test, ask questions, give praise and encouragement, provide answers and explanations; (3) is a continuous process by doing habituation and acculturation consciously and has the aim to mature students; (4) applied using style, gesture, language, tools and various media; (5) implementation together as learners, students, educated people in trusted people, there are interests, expectations and goals; (6) there is material in the learning process.

Teachers in carrying out the learning process, need to pay close attention to the characteristics of students, so that they can understand the potential that must be owned according to chronological age and understand the differences in learning styles, motivation and talents of students so that they can help their development optimally (Septianti & Afiani, 2020; Astini & Purwati, 2020; Rahayu, 2019). The developmental tasks of students that need attention: (1). the need to develop concepts in running everyday life; (2). development of values, conscience and morals; (3). obtaining personal freedom that can be accounted for; (4). the need for growth and development of attitudes towards social groups and institutions (Zulvira et al., 2021).

Smart teachers should be 'adaptive' to survive by proving themselves that they are 'competent' in technology. (Lee & Lee, 2024). Digital technology can be used as learning media, and has a very important and irreplaceable role in the learning process at school. Media has an extraordinary role to clarify material that may still be vague or poorly understood by students, and can also be used to generate interest, motivation, and enthusiasm in the learning process (Putra & Pratama, 2023). Digital technology offers easy opportunities for anyone who needs and wants it. In education, this has a positive impact that can be felt by teachers and students, learning that uses digital technology can explore the ability to utilize digital (Rahma et al., 2023).

In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the cognitive development of students, namely the ability in the field of study or scientific competence of students. It is the human ability to think, explore and solve existing problems. Cognitive can be said to be a form of human development about knowledge, skills, problem solving, and dispositions that help students understand the world around them. Cognitive is an internal process in the center of the nervous system that occurs when humans are thinking. Third grade elementary school students based on Piaget's opinion are in the concrete operational stage aged 7-12 years, individuals have been able to recognize symbols and are able to

manipulate symbols realistically. Furthermore, there are four aspects of personality that also grow, namely: maturity, experience, social transmission, equilibration or ability that fixes the individual's personality to be able to maintain harmony and adjust to the surrounding environment. In addition, a person's language skills depend on their cognition, information or something they see or know can determine a child's language skills (Ramadhani et al., 2024; Badi'ah, 2021; Nisa et al., 2023); Handika et al., 2022).

Cognitive theory proposed by Jean Piaget, contributes to the stages of individual cognitive growth and can be used to differentiate students' learning styles in learning. In contrast to the social cognitive theory proposed by Walter Mischel which focuses on character building and psychological attitudes that are seen when individuals experience certain conditions or circumstances from their environment. The arrangement of individual characteristics is a form of response to social stimulus is the definition of social cognitive theory. It can also be said that individual behaviour is the result of their subconscious and individual responses to the desires of others or themselves. And influenced by the encouragement of other individuals around him (Tiara, 2022). A teacher needs to have the ability and willingness to create learning by considering the needs of students and their characteristics, such as differences in learning styles, which can be met with appropriate learning media.

The success of character education can be influenced by the approach used in the teaching and learning process. Teachers can choose from four learning models in character education, namely: (1) Monolithic Model, character education is considered as a special subject. The advantage is that the concept of character education is conveyed to students clearly. However, this means that the values learned by students depend on the curriculum design which is artificial. (2) Integrated Model, instilling character values to students is the responsibility of every teacher. Teachers can choose some character values to be inserted in their subjects. (3) Out-of-School Time Model, character education can also be done outside school hours. This is usually more focused on some activities outside school and then followed by discussions after the activities. (4) Integration Model, combining the integrated model and the out-of-school model. This can be done through cooperation between teachers and some other people outside the school. This model leads to joint and cooperative activities between school academics and people around the school. (Rokhman et al., 2014).

Character can also be realized in a person's attitude when facing a problem. The formation of an attitude in a person will affect his behaviour. According to Myers, attitude is a reaction of like or dislike to objects in the form of beliefs, feelings or expected behaviour. Attitude is an evaluative response to an object, which is positive-neutral-negative based on education and experience (Martati et al., 2019). According to Ahmadi in (Martati, 2021) attitudes can be changed by providing a stimulus. In this case, the stimulus given is the learning process using technology-based picture story text media. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine the application of picture story text media with digital technology on the theme of my obligations and rights to develop character education for elementary school students.

However, while these theories and models offer valuable insights, gaps remain in their practical application. Specifically, there is limited research on the use of digital technology in fostering character education in elementary school students, particularly for third graders at the concrete operational stage. Furthermore, studies integrating cognitive development theories with character education practices through innovative media are scarce. This gap necessitates research to explore how technology-based picture

story text media can address these needs. Based on the background and gaps above, this study is trying to investigating the use of picture story text media with digital technology to enhance character education.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative method with a pre-experimental one group post-test only design. The selection of quantitative methods was because the data collected and analyzed were in the form of numbers. The research design used in this study was pre-experimental with a one-group post-test-only design. The data came from students' attitude scores and students' competency scores. The students studied were students of SD Muhammadiyah 8 Surabaya class III, totaling 19 students. Population members are sample members so that the saturated sampling technique is used because there is only one class. Students' attitude scores were measured using a research instrument in the form of a closed questionnaire with a scale of 4. There are 3 picture story texts used as the data, namely “The Consequences of Sleeping Late, A Messy Class, and Creative Ideas.” The three texts contain elements of writing and illustration, as something that does not stand alone but supports each other to express the message. The aspects of attitude assessed were mutual cooperation, responsibility, and independence. The data collected were then analyzed using the percentage formula. In addition to attitude scores, competency assessments were also carried out which were obtained from tests. In the test, there are multiple choice questions and essay questions in accordance with the material achievements. Both multiple choice and essay questions contain aspects of problem identification, causes of problems, and suggestion sentences based on the text. Furthermore, the collected student scores were grouped based on the achievement of *KKM/Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (minimum completeness criteria). Then, the data was analyzed using the percentage formula. Both data in the form of attitude scores and competency scores are taken after giving treatment to students in one class so that it is referred to as a type of pre-experimental one group post-test only design.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The application of character education is based on the Integrated Model approach, which instills character values in students by selecting several character values to be inserted in subjects, namely Indonesian Language and Civics. This is done to see changes in attitude as a result of student learning, through process assessment as feedback to improve learning strategies, through observation techniques with indicators of (a) mutual cooperation, (b) responsibility, and (c) independence. The results of the assessment can be described in Figure 1.

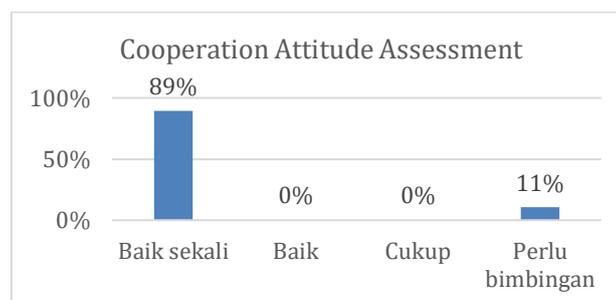


Figure 1. Assessment of mutual cooperation attitude

In Figure 1, it can be seen that during discussion activities, 89% or 17 out of 19 students showed a very good mutual cooperation attitude, meaning that students were able to cooperate with group members and were open to receiving ideas from friends. While the remaining 11% or 2 people still need guidance in working with friends. The attitude of mutual cooperation has the value of mutual respect, empathy, care and cooperation. The three components of attitude are: cognitive (beliefs), emotions, and behavior (actions). Students need to have the belief that mutual cooperation is good, it is necessary to foster mutual cooperation and is manifested in student behavior. Attitudes have characteristics: not brought from birth, but formed by the environment and learning outcomes, have objects, can occur in a long or relatively short time. Attitudes to objects are not solely determined by how the attitude is, but are influenced by aspects of knowledge, experience and culture (Rindiyanto et al., 2023).

Thus, it is very important to familiarize the attitude of mutual cooperation in students, especially the ability to work together considering that mutual cooperation aligns with 21st century life skills like teamwork, collaboration, and interpersonal communication. In academic context, the positive outcomes, such as the improvement of academic performance, stronger rapport, and better conflict-resolution skills among students. This skill is also very crucial in preparing students for future dynamics workplace and societal contributions.

Mutual cooperation skill can be integrated into various subjects, such as group projects in science or collaborative storytelling in language arts. This is for the purpose of ensuring students practice this soft attitude in diverse contexts. Later on, it will appear the practical applications and implementation and the broader significance of fostering mutual cooperation in education. Furthermore, results of responsibility attitude assessment can be seen in Figure 2.

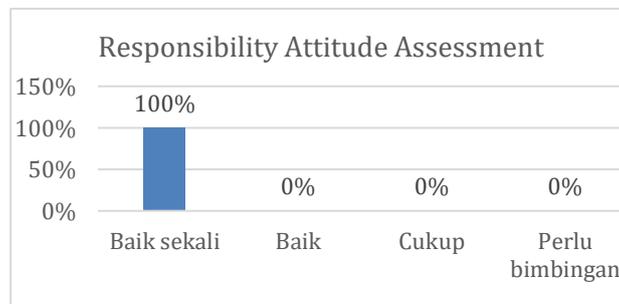


Figure 2. Results of Responsibility Attitude Assessment

Figure 2 shows that 100% (all students) show an attitude of responsibility with an indicator that students are able to work on tasks according to the steps of instructions from the teacher so that they are completed on time. This is in line with the results of research on Civic Education Learning can make students behave smart and good citizenship in shaping students to be responsible and caring at school and in their surroundings (Irwan et al., 2022).

The attitude of responsibility is deeply intertwined with the broader objectives of education, emphasizing the holistic development of individuals who can thrive academically, socially, and professionally. Responsibility fosters self-management skills, discipline, and accountability, all of which are fundamental not only for lifelong learning

but also for personal growth and success. In the academic context, nurturing a sense of responsibility among students enhances their ability to set and achieve goals, meet deadlines, and effectively manage their time and resources. These traits contribute not just to improved academic performance but also to a sense of achievement and confidence in their abilities.

Beyond the classroom, responsibility is an indispensable soft skill that prepares individuals to navigate the complexities of real-world environments. It instils in them the capability to adhere to professional and ethical standards, make informed decisions, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and society at large. Whether it's meeting workplace expectations, fulfilling civic duties, or engaging in collaborative endeavours, responsibility equips individuals to handle challenges with resilience and integrity. By cultivating this attitude, educational systems not only prepare students for immediate success but also lay the foundation for them to lead impactful and purpose-driven lives.

In line with the character education programs, it shows that how teaching responsibility contributes to building essential values like integrity, respect, and diligence in students. Therefore, teachers should create a supportive classroom environment where students feel motivated to take ownership of their tasks. Furthermore, results of independent attitude assessment can be seen in Figure 3.

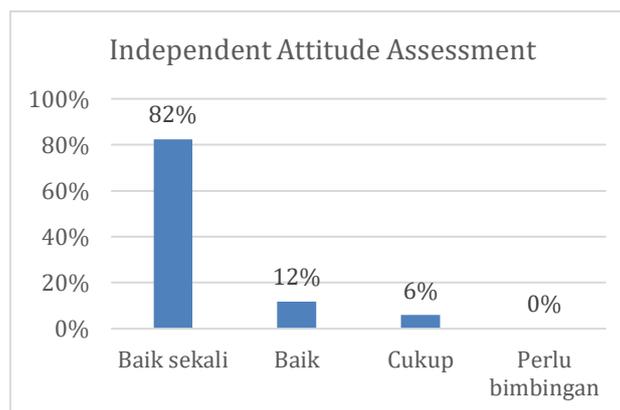


Figure 3. Results of Independent Attitude Assessment

Figure 3 shows that 82% (14 out of 19 people) of students are in the excellent category in an independent attitude, which is able to do assignments from teachers without much dependence on friends or teachers. While 12% (2 people) are in the good category, meaning that they occasionally rely on the help of friends in doing assignments, and 6% (1 person) in the sufficient category, which is able to do assignments but sometimes not confident so they wait for the teacher's help. This is in accordance with research Susilawati & Hidayat (2023) from data analysis of the results of research conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics in the SPSS application, showing that there is a positive relationship between learning motivation and independent character of students. It can be interpreted that motivated students are more likely to take initiative. This soft skill reinforces their intrinsic motivation and creating a positive feedback loop. Fostering independence contributes to developing critical life skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and resilience. This attitude also aligns with the *Pancasila Student Profile* which emphasizes self-management and independence as key components of character education.

In real-world society, cultivating independence equips individuals with the ability to navigate complex scenarios, such as managing diverse and dynamic tasks in the workplace, resolving challenges autonomously, and adapting to unfamiliar or rapidly changing circumstances without relying on constant external guidance. These skills are essential in fostering resilience, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities that empower individuals to take initiative, embrace responsibilities, and thrive in various professional and personal settings.

The role of educators and peers is crucial in this developmental process. Teachers serve as facilitators and mentors, providing structured opportunities and supportive environments where students can gradually build autonomy. This involves allowing students to make choices, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning, and guiding them through reflective practices that enhance their problem-solving and self-regulation skills. Beyond individual interactions, the dynamics of peer collaboration play an equally pivotal role.

Collaborative learning experiences within peer groups offer students a unique platform to exercise independence while benefiting from collective support. Working in teams fosters accountability as students learn to manage their contributions, respect deadlines, and negotiate differences of opinion. It also allows them to experience real-world dynamics such as sharing responsibilities and working cohesively to achieve common goals. Such settings not only reinforce independence but also teach interpersonal skills, empathy, and adaptability, all of which are invaluable in preparing students for the complexities of life and work in a connected, interdependent world. By intertwining teacher guidance with peer collaboration, educational experiences can holistically shape students into autonomous and proactive members of society.

Additionally, there were 3 picture story texts used in learning, namely picture story texts with the titles *Consequences of Sleeping Late at Night*, *Messy Class*, and *Creative Ideas*. The three texts contain elements of writing and illustrations. As seen in Figure 4, illustrations and writing on the media are not something that stands alone but support each other to express the message. In text 1 there is an illustration of a student who is sleepy during learning activities. By looking at the picture and title in the text, students can already guess the content of the story. This means that the illustration helps students to capture the message the author wants. The three illustrated story texts are somewhat different from what teachers usually use, which are fairy tales with animal characters and songs are mostly found to be an important approach to teaching character education about right and wrong behavior to children (Birhan et al., 2021).

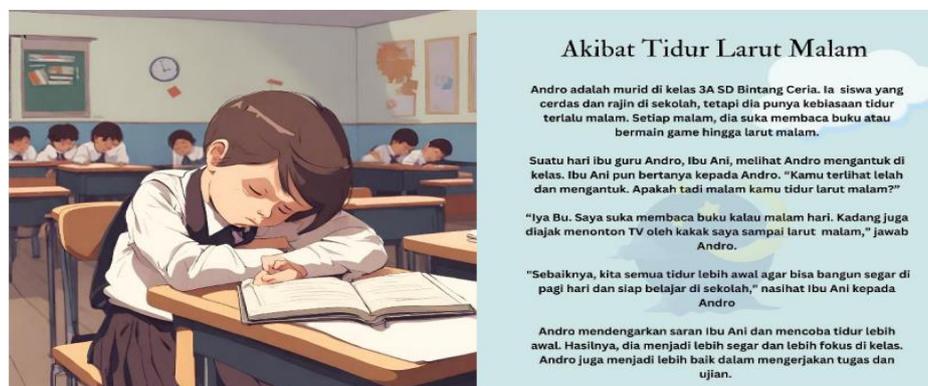


Figure 4. Illustrated Story Text

The text in Figure 4 tells the story of a student named Andro who was reprimanded by his teacher, Mrs. Aini, for looking sleepy during class. Apparently, Andro has a habit of sleeping late at night because he reads books and plays games. Mrs. Aini advised Andro to go to bed early. At the end of the story, Andro follows Mrs. Aini's advice so that Andro can be better at doing assignments and exams. The text is used as a learning media for the sub-theme of my obligations and rights at school, integrated content of Indonesian Language and Civics. In the Indonesian content, the learning indicator is to find and write suggestion sentences. In the KDP content, the learning indicator is to identify and write obligations as a school citizen. The sentence "Andro is a student in class 3A Bintang Cerita Elementary School" at the beginning of the text shows that he is a school citizen. As a school citizen, Andro has an obligation to study at school. However, Andro did not fulfill this obligation properly because he slept while studying at school.

The next character in the text is Mrs. Aini. Bu Aini is a teacher so she has an obligation to reprimand and give advice to her students so that they can learn optimally at school and fulfill their obligations as students. The sentence "We should all go to bed early so that we wake up fresh in the morning and ready to learn at school" is the advice given by Mrs. Aini to Andro. Andro, who had followed Mrs. Aini's advice, got good grades because he could be more focused and fresher during the learning activities. The good grades that Andro got were Andro's right for his efforts. This is shown by the sentence "Andro also became better at doing assignments and exams".

The story of Andro and Mrs. Aini serves as an effective learning medium to teach the theme of "My Obligations and Rights at School" by integrating Indonesian Language and Civics content. The text not only illustrates the obligations and rights of school citizens but also emphasizes the importance of fulfilling responsibilities to achieve positive outcomes. Through relatable characters and situations, students can learn valuable lessons about their roles and the benefits of adhering to advice and performing their duties responsibly, fostering both academic success and character development.

Discussion

The illustrated story text is one of the learning media because it functions to channel messages from teachers to students. As learning media, text and images must be selected to match the learning outcomes. The use of this media is important in learning activities because it can be a determinant in the success of learning. This is in line with research findings that ICT integration in schools affects the performance of students and other stakeholders. Various factors influence the impact of digital technology on education. It can be said that ICT can make a positive contribution to the digital transformation of schools in achieving effective and efficient change (Timotheou et al., 2023).

When viewed from the stages of cognitive development of students, illustrated story texts are suitable for use in grade III students. The age of grade III students is included in the concrete operational development category, which means that in delivering stories, pictures or other things that can help students' imagination are needed. At this stage, students are able to think logically but still need help because they are not yet able to think abstractly. Illustrated story texts provide visual context, which helps students connect concepts more easily, bridging the gap between abstract ideas and tangible understanding. This support aligns with Piaget's emphasis on the need for concrete materials in learning during this stage.

The use of illustrations in educational materials serves as a powerful tool to capture students' attention and sustain their interest, transforming the learning process into a more engaging and enjoyable experience. This is especially significant for grade III students, whose cognitive development thrives on visual and contextual stimuli. At this age, children are in the concrete operational stage of cognitive growth, as outlined by Piaget's developmental theory (Piaget, 1971). During this phase, their thinking becomes more logical, yet it is still closely tied to tangible and concrete representations. Illustrations bridge the gap between abstract concepts and students' existing understanding, providing them with accessible entry points to complex ideas.

By engaging with illustrations, students are not merely passive recipients of information; they actively participate in interpreting visual cues and linking them to the narrative or content being presented (Willis, 2007). This practice enhances their ability to make inferences, deduce meanings, and connect different pieces of information—a process that builds critical thinking and logical reasoning skills. Furthermore, the act of decoding illustrations encourages creativity and imagination, as students learn to visualize scenarios and anticipate story developments, thus enriching their overall learning experience. Illustrations also play a key role in fostering emotional connections to the material. By relating to characters and scenarios depicted visually, students are more likely to empathize with the story, internalize its messages, and retain the lessons taught. The visual appeal helps maintain focus and reduces cognitive overload, allowing students to process information more effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that illustrated story texts are effective learning media that support character education in students. These texts, such as *The Consequences of Sleeping Late*, *A Messy Class*, and *Creative Ideas*, integrate writing and illustrations to convey messages clearly and engagingly. For example, the illustration in *The Consequences of Sleeping Late* helps students quickly understand the story's content and moral lesson. Character education which are integrated into subjects focuses on attitudes like mutual cooperation, independence, and responsibility. These are key dimensions of the Pancasila Learner Profile. Assessing these attitudes trains students to collaborate, respect peers' opinions, prioritize shared goals, take initiative, and build self-discipline. These attitudes not only enhance the learning process but also prepare students for social life. By using attitude assessment as feedback, teachers can refine and improve learning strategies effectively.

In line with the results of the study, several suggestions are offered to support the improvement of learning processes and the development of student attitudes and skills. *Firstly*, continue integrating illustrated story texts into the learning process as they effectively combine visual and textual elements to engage students and help them grasp messages more easily. *Secondly*, assess and adapt regularly the use of illustrated texts to align with students' developmental stages and learning preferences, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness. *Thirdly*, provide professional development for teachers to create and use illustrated story texts effectively, focusing on integrating character education seamlessly into various subjects. *Finally*, develop frameworks or guidelines for assessing attitudes such as mutual cooperation, independence, and responsibility, ensuring consistency and fairness in evaluations.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of teaching strategies and student development

in fostering desired attitudes and competencies. *Firstly*, expand the range of illustrated story texts to cover more themes and subjects, enabling a broader application in character education and other areas of the curriculum. *Secondly*, incorporate digital tools to create interactive versions of illustrated texts, enhancing engagement and promoting digital literacy alongside character building. *Thirdly*, conduct studies to compare the effectiveness of illustrated story texts with other media in teaching character education and improving learning outcomes. *Fourthly*, explore the long-term impact of attitude assessments on students' personal and social development to refine and validate their use in classrooms. *Finally*, Explore the relationship between classroom environment and characters education or implement specific pedagogical methods to support students in the "sufficient" soft skills or attitudes.

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