



The Effectiveness of Local Culture-Based Digital Comic on Elementary School Students' Story Reading Skills

Cerianing Putri Pratiwi^{1✉}, Cintya Nurika Irma² & Putri Nur Intan Kumalasari³

^{1✉}Universitas PGRI Madiun, cerianing@unipma.ac.id, Orcid ID: [0000-0002-5889-2692](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5889-2692)

²Universitas Peradaban, cintyanurikairma@gmail.com, Orcid ID: [0000-0001-6657-518X](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6657-518X)

³Universitas PGRI Madiun, putriiphu@gmail.com, Orcid ID: [0009-0006-9542-6339](https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9542-6339)

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Abstract

The interest in reading among elementary school students remains poor, especially in understanding narrative story texts. Therefore, interesting and contextual learning media is important to improve students' reading skills. This study aims to test the efficacy of the use of digital comics based on local culture on the story reading skills of 5th-grade elementary school students. The study applied an experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group model. The study subjects involved 68 students in 5th grade who were segmented into two groups: an experimental group using digital comic media based on local culture, and a control group using conventional textbooks. The instrument included a story reading skill test. Data were analysed using a t-test. The results showed that the t-count value of 6.970 was higher than the t-table of 2.035, indicating a significant discrepancy between the experimental and control groups. Students using digital comics indicated higher improvement in reading skills and responded positively to the content, display, and cultural content in the media. This study concludes that digital comics using local culture are effectively used in learning to read stories in elementary schools. The implication of this research is the need for teachers to develop and utilise local culture-based media as an innovative alternative in Indonesian language learning. In addition to improving reading skills, this media also strengthens cultural identity and student involvement in the learning process.

Keywords:

Digital Comics, Local Culture, Story Reading Skills, Elementary School

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Abstrak

Minat baca siswa sekolah dasar masih rendah, terutama dalam memahami teks cerita naratif. Oleh karena itu, media pembelajaran yang menarik dan kontekstual penting untuk meningkatkan keterampilan membaca siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji keefektifan penggunaan komik digital berbasis budaya lokal terhadap kemampuan membaca cerita siswa kelas V SD. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain eksperimen dengan model pretest-posttest control group design. Subjek penelitian melibatkan 68 siswa kelas 5 SD yang terbagi menjadi dua kelompok, yaitu kelompok eksperimen yang menggunakan media komik digital berbasis budaya lokal dan kelompok kontrol yang menggunakan buku teks konvensional. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes kemampuan membaca cerita. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan uji-t. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-hitung sebesar 6,970 lebih tinggi dari t-tabel sebesar 2,035, yang mengindikasikan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Siswa yang menggunakan komik digital menunjukkan peningkatan yang lebih tinggi dalam kemampuan membaca dan memberikan respon positif terhadap konten, tampilan, dan konten budaya dalam media tersebut. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa komik digital berbasis budaya lokal efektif digunakan dalam pembelajaran membaca cerita di sekolah dasar. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya guru mengembangkan dan memanfaatkan media berbasis budaya lokal sebagai alternatif yang inovatif dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia. Selain meningkatkan kemampuan membaca, media ini juga memperkuat identitas budaya dan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci:

Komik Digital, Budaya Lokal, Keterampilan Membaca Cerita, Sekolah Dasar

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a means invented by humans for social communication. As a very important way of communicating, language ought to be taught from an early age in elementary school (SD). The language skills comprise four aspects, namely: (1) listening; (2) speaking; (3) reading; and (4) writing (Tarigan et al., 2023). Reading is a skill that should be mastered by students. Reading is one of the four basic language skills and is part of or a combination of written communication (Suparlan, 2021). In written communication, the sound symbol of the language is decoded into a symbol or writing. Reading ability is a language ability possessed by a person in perceiving and understanding the context of the meaning contained in a reading element, such as letters, syllables, words, and sentences that are then pronounced to be able to decipher the meaning of the reading (Karim & Fathoni, 2022). Reading skills are basic skills in learning, and reading aims to inform writing; therefore, reading activities are essential to be able to understand the meaning contained in a predetermined reading (Purba et al., 2023).

Reading ability is the rudiment for other skills. Without proper reading skills, students will have difficulty understanding lessons in any subject. Reading skills are also the foundation for students in digesting all learning because innumerable knowledge are presented in written language (Debataraja, 2023). Reading is a basic skill in constructive learning, as experience and knowledge from information sources, hence reading skills are required to understand the meaning contained in the reading material. Reading provides a starting point for developing skills of active listening, speaking, creative writing, and analysing findings in reading (Islami et al., 2024). Reading skills are essential since they have the capacity to develop one's knowledge, comprehension, and communication skills (Magdalena et al., 2021). Continuous reading activities would train the brain to focus and remember information better, improve vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammatical comprehension (Silvia et al., 2021). It could help one to be a finer writer and speaker.

Reading activity with high educational value is reading stories. Reading stories, whether in the form of folklore, fables, or short stories, can help students develop language skills, enrich vocabulary, and improve their ability to understand the content (Gustiawati et al., 2020). Through story reading activities, not only can students learn to recognise words and sentences, but also understand the narrative structure, plot, characters, and moral values contained in them. In addition, stories also deliver moral messages that could shape children's character and empathy (Hadid et al., 2023).

Today, the biggest problem experienced by students in elementary school is that reading skills remain low even now, as indicated by the below minimum score results of students' reading skills (Muhaimin et al., 2023). This can be caused by several factors, such as a lack of variety in reading teaching methods, low student motivation, and poor emotional involvement of students in the text reading. The current reality is that reading is laborious for most people, and the lack of awareness from the community itself, not because of the absence of adequate facilities (Sumarni, 2017). Another fact in the field is the paucity of children's interest in reading. Even though reading materials are available, children are still reluctant to read them. This is very regrettable, because existing books cannot bring the attraction and stimulation for children to read them (Purwani, 2020). Research by Dwiyasari et al. (2023) found that students had difficulty in reading, both with regard to the relationship between letters, syllables, words, and simple sentences, and children's inability to understand the content of reading.

The solution to overcome this problem is the urge for a learning media that can improve students' reading skills. Learning media is an intermediary or means of communication to deliver messages to help students' understanding in achieving learning objectives (Ritonga et al., 2020). Learning will be more interesting and not monotonous when the learning media is accessible. Digital media is deemed interesting for learning because technology has been world-widely utilized in education (Al Mamun et al., 2020; O'Dell, 2020). Digital comics are an evolutionary form

of printed comics that are displayed in electronic format, either through applications, websites, or interactive multimedia platforms (Herrera et al., 2025). The main speciality of digital comics lies in their ability to combine text, images, and interactive elements that will increase the appeal and effectiveness of message delivery. In the context of learning and literacy development, digital comics have numerous advantages that make them a probable and relevant medium in the digital era (Damopolii et al., 2021; Senjaya et al., 2022).

Comics can be defined as a form of cartoon that expresses characters and tells a story orderly manner related to the image and is made to provide entertainment to readers (Zakiyah et al., 2022). Digital comics can be accessed anytime and anywhere without space or time restrictions. Comic books are a medium to increase students' interest in reading and learning so that they can improve their abilities. Digital comics are indeed interesting if used as a learning medium compared to textbooks that are not equipped with many images, because comics have a coherent, orderly, and memorable storyline (Wahyuniari et al., 2023). Comic media is suitably applicable in learning activities in elementary schools, because this media is valuable for both teachers and students. It is recommended to be applied in learning activities, especially in Indonesian. The use of comics as a learning media plays a significant role, i.e., comics have the ability to encourage students' interest in learning and facilitate them to comprehend the subject delivered by the teacher. The presence of digital comics as a learning medium can be used as a solution if the risk of failure in a learning process is prone to happen (Handayani et al., 2023).

Several studies have shown that digital comics are able to increase students' interest in reading. Research by Syafira et al. (2024) reveals that digital comics was proven to provide a positive response and was considered interesting and enjoyable by students. Besides being accessible and flexible in use, digital comic media could induce students' motivation to learn. Research by Willya et al. (2023) suggests that digital comic media has succeeded in improving students' reading skills, starting from reading interest, students' reading habits, and students' ability to

retell what they had read. Research by Pangriptaningrum et al. (2024) shows that the use of digital comic teaching media was regarded as effective in increasing students' interest in reading. Research by Hidayat et al. (2024) shows that the development of digital comics tailored to students' learning needs significantly improved the reading skills of school students, as shown by higher post-test scores in the experimental group than in the control group. Fitri et al. (2023) state that the use of digital comics in learning to read narrative texts shows significant differences in reading comprehension between students who use digital comics and those who do not.

Mariani et al. (2024) assert that the development of digital comics based on local wisdom for fantasy story texts significantly improved the learning outcomes of 5th-grade elementary school students, with an average score of 89.71 and a graduation percentage of 90%. Research by Ananda et al. (2024) developed digital comic learning media to improve the reading skills of 1st-grade elementary school students. The findings of the evaluation imply that this medium was pertinent for usage. In research by Sari et al. (2022), they developed digital comics in thematic learning to boost the literacy skills of 5th-grade elementary school students. The results of the evaluation showed that this media is effective in improving students' literacy skills. Tekin & İlhan (2025) examined the impact of the use of Pixton's digital comic tool in the teaching of foreign languages. The results suggested that students who made digital comics experienced significant improvements in basic language skills, including reading and writing, and exhibited increased motivation to learn. Umairah and Amaliyah (2022) state that educational digital comic media increases the reading interest of elementary school students, with expert validation results and trials showing the "excellent" category. Surya et al. (2020) state that digital-based educational comic media increases reading for elementary school students.

Based on some of these studies, it can be summarised that digital comics can be used as learning media because they are able to improve students' reading skills. Most of the existing studies still focus on the technical

aspects of reading skills, such as literal comprehension, increased vocabulary, and reading fluency. Limited research has studied the high-level reading skills (analytical, evaluative, critical) that are crucial in building long-term literacy and broader social understanding. Some of the research that has been carried out has not proposed comics based on the culture of reog ponorogo. This prompts novelty, namely the addition of local culture to the content of digital comics. This research emphasises the importance of local culture as story content, which will increase engagement and understanding of meaning. It is because students will feel closer to the content of the story. Therefore, this study takes the latest addition of culture and examines high-level reading skills so that it will affect students' literacy in the long term.

When associated with local culture, comics will be easily fathomed by students. Materials associated with local culture are somehow closer to students' lives (Sumarni et al., 2024). This helps students to understand and relate lessons to their surrounding environment, thus becoming more meaningful and less abstract. Culture is a legacy of values, norms, traditions, and works that develop in people's lives. In the basic education setting, culture has its individual privileges when used as a learning medium (Ihsan et al., 2019). Through cultural introduction, students acquire not only cognitive knowledge but also social, moral, and emotional values that shape students' character. Aligning educational content with local cultural realities is paramount to improve students' identity, sense of belonging, and critical thinking skills (Zahrika & Andaryani, 2023). Local culture will also shape one's character (Harun et al., 2020; Sumartias et al., 2020; Sakti et al., 2024)

Based on the description above, the purpose of this study is to determine the influence of the use of digital comic media based on local culture on students' story reading skills. This research is expected to contribute to the development of contextual and interesting learning media, especially in improving the literacy skills of elementary school students. The findings of this study are hoped to serve as a reference for educators and media developers in choosing learning

approaches that are relevant to the local cultural context of students.

METHODS

This research includes quantitative experiments. This research was conducted in two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. Experimental research with pretest-posttest control group design. This is an experimental design that compares two groups: one receiving treatment and the other not. In the experimental class, action was given using digital comics based on local culture, while the control class used normal media. The following is the design of this research.

Table 1. Research Design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Post-test
Experiment	O1	X	O2
Control	O3	-	O4

Information:

O1 = initial test of the experimental group

O2 = final test of the experimental group

X = treatment given

O3 = initial test of the control group

O4 = final test of the control group

The population in this study consisted of 198 students in 5th grade Islamic Elementary School (MIN), comprising 6 classes, from class 4A to class 5B. A sample is a part of the numbers and characteristics that the population possesses. The sample in this study involved 34 students in class 5A as the experimental class and 34 students in class 5B as the control class. The sampling technique used probability sampling techniques with a cluster random sampling specification.

The data collection technique in this study was a reading test and then followed by several questions related to the content of the reading. The reading test questions were validated by Indonesian subject matter experts, with the results declared worthy of revision. The test consisted of pretests and posttests. The following is an assessment rubric for reading stories for 5th-grade students.

Table 2. Story Reading Assessment Instrument

Aspects	Indicators
Content comprehension	Be able to mention the plot, characters, setting, and theme of the story
Inferential ability	Be able to guess the meaning of new words based on context
Critical evaluation	Be able to give an opinion about the actions of the characters in the story
Narrative structure analysis	Be able to identify conflicts, climaxes, and story resolution
Real-life apps	Be able to relate the content of the story to personal experiences

The data analysis techniques used in this study are descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe the average score of reading skills and determine the category of students' story reading outcomes.

Table 3. Assessment Criteria of Story Reading Skills

Score	Categories
90 -100	Very high
80 - 89	High
70 - 79	Moderate
50 - 69	Poor
0 - 49	Very poor

Inferential statistical analysis included normality, homogeneity, and hypothesis testing. The data analysis technique used a normality test. The researchers implemented the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to test the normality of the data. The homogeneity test was conducted to investigate whether the variance of the data from the analysed sample was homogeneous or otherwise. The analysis to test homogeneity is the Levene test, with $P > 0.05$ to determine if the data is homogeneous; $P > 5\%$ or the probability value is greater than 0.05. The final analysis technique (hypothesis testing) applied the t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Test Results of Students' Story Reading Skills

Based on the results of the research conducted by students of 5th grade MIN, data were obtained on the results of the pre-test of students' story reading skills prior to treatment with digital comics based on local culture. This comic tells about Reog Ponorogo. The following is an overview of digital comics based on local culture.



Figure 1. Digital Comics Based on Reog Ponorogo Local Culture

This digital comic raises folklore and cultural elements from the traditional art of Reog Ponorogo. It is displayed in an interactive digital visual format or can be accessed through devices such as tablet, laptop, or smartphone. The objective is to introduce local culture to the younger generation with an interesting and visual approach. The comic was paired with a teacher who would tell the origin of Reog Ponorogo to students. The most liked part by students was when it told the journey of Kelana Suwandana.

The experimental class and the control class were given a pretest to read the story without treatment. The following is the table that illustrates the results of reading students' stories in the experimental class and the control class.

Table 4. Description of Pre-test Result Score

Descriptive Statistics	Experiment Class	Control Class
Sample	34	34
Mean	74.8	75.0
Median	75	75
Mode	75	75
Standard Deviation	6.57	6.63

In Table 4, the mean of the students' story reading skills pretest in the experimental class was 74.8, while the control class was 75. The median and mode values in both classes were equal, which was 75, which showed a relatively symmetrical distribution of values at the beginning before the treatment was given. The standard deviation for the experimental class was 6.57, and for the control class was 6.63, indicating that the rate of value distribution in both classes was almost alike. These findings suggest that before the treatment was given, the initial reading ability of students in both classes was relatively balanced, both in terms of mean and data variation. This is worth noting because it ensures that the difference in results on the posttest is more likely due to treatment, not differences in students' initial abilities. The learning outcomes of students' reading skills are grouped into 5 categories. The frequency distribution and presentation of the scores are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Pre-Test Scores

Score Categories	Experimental Classes		Control Classes	
	F	%	F	%
90-100 Very high	0	0.0	0	0.0
80- 89 High	11	32.4	12	3.3
70- 79 Moderate	18	52.9	17	50.0

50- 69 Poor	5	14.7	5	14.7
0 - 49 Very poor	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sum	34	100	34	100

Based on Table 5, the distribution of pretest scores of story reading skills in the experimental class displayed that out of 34 students, 5 students (14.7%) were in the poor category, 18 students (52.9%) were in the moderate category, and 11 students (32.4%) were in the high category. Meanwhile, in the control class, the number of students in the poor category was identical, which was 5 students (14.7%), the moderate category was 17 students (50%), and the high category was 12 students (35.3%). This distribution suggests that both classes have a relatively balanced initial composition in terms of reading ability before the treatment was distributed. The percentage of students in each category is almost equal, both in the low, medium, and high categories. This balance is important to ensure that differences in outcomes after treatment are not due to differences in students' initial abilities, but rather to the influence of interventions applied in the study.

Post-Test Results of Students' Story Reading Skills

Based on the research that has been conducted, the results of the post-test reading stories are obtained. The results of reading students' stories is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Description of Post-Test Result Score

Descriptive Statistics	Experiment Class	Control Class
Sample	34	34
Mean	85.1	74.9
Median	85	75
Mode	90	75
Standard Deviation	6.33	6.21

Table 6 exhibits that after treatment, the average score of writing poetry in the experimental class increased to 85.1, while in the control class, it was only 74.9. The median in the experimental class was 85, while the control class was 75. The mode in the

experimental class was 90, and in the control class it was 75. The standard deviation in the experimental class was 6.33, and 6.21 in the control class, indicating a relatively similar degree of variation in scores between students in both classes. A striking increase in average scores in the experimental class showed that the use of digital comic media based on local culture contributed positively to students' poetry writing ability. Additionally, the 90 mode score in the experimental class showed that more students scored higher than in the control class, which was only 75. These findings corroborate the notion that engaging and contextual learning media will increase student engagement and understanding of reading content, compared to conventional methods. The following is the distribution of frequency and percentage of scores shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Post-Test Scores

Score Categories	Experimental Classes		Control Classes	
	F	%	F	%
90-100 Very high	14	41.2	1	2.9
80- 89 High	17	50.0	11	32.4
70- 79 Moderate	3	8.8	16	47.1
50- 69 Poor	0	0.0	6	17.6
0 - 49 Very poor	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sum	34	100	34	100

Based on Table 7, the posttest results in the experimental class showed a significant improvement compared to the pretest. Of the 34 students, 14 students (41.2%) were in the very high category, 17 students (50%) were in the high category, and only 3 students (8.8%) were in the medium category. There were no students in the poor category, showing that almost all students had good performance after receiving treatment in the form of digital comic media based on local culture. On the other hand, in the control class, out of 34 students, only 1 student (2.9%) reached the very high category, 11 students (32.4%) were in the high category, 16 students (47.1%) were in the medium category, and there were still 6

students (17.6%) in the poor category. This distribution illustrates that digital comics media using local culture not only increases average grades, but also elevates most students to higher grade categories, compared to control classes that still had moderate and even poor category dominance. These differences reinforce the conclusion that the interventions provided have a real positive impact on storywriting skills, both individually and as a group.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Normality Test

The normality test is used to find out whether the data collected is normally distributed or otherwise. The following are the results of the normality test.

Table 8. Normality Test

		Experimental Classes	Control Classes
N		34	34
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	81.1765	81.0294
	Std. Deviation	5.98215	5.74449
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.284	0.218
	Positive	0.284	0.218
	Negative	-0.122	-0.135
Test Statistic		0.284	0.218
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.222 ^c	0.100 ^c

If the significance value > 0.05 , then it is deemed normally distributed. For the initial test of the experimental group, the significance value was 0.222. In other words, $0.222 > 0.05$, thus normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test is used to find out whether or not multiple variants of the data population are homogeneous. The following are the results of the homogeneity test.

Table 9. Homogeneity Test

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.034	1	66	0.854

Based on the output table "test of homogeneity of variances" above, it is known that the significance value (sig.) of the Indonesian variable in the Experimental and Control class was 0.854. Because the value of sig. $0.854 > 0.05$, then it serves as the basis for decision-making in the homogeneity test above. It can be concluded that the variance of the Indonesian value data in the experimental and control classes is identical or homogeneous.

T-test

Hypothesis testing aims to provide the answer that the researcher formulates, with a hypothesis. The following are the results of the t-test.

Table 10. T-Test Result

Pairs	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean			
	Pre-Post Experiment	10.29	8.61			
Pre-Post Control	-0.14	9.08	1.55	-0.094	33	0.925

Based on the results of the t-test analysis calculation in the experimental class, it can be understood that the t-count = 6.970. The findings of this calculation were then consulted with t-table = 2.035 for α 5% with df = 33, if t-count = 6.970 > t-table = 2.035, which implies that there was an influence of digital comic media based on local culture with story reading skills. In the control class, the result of the t-test analysis calculation is shown by the t-count = -0.094. This calculation was then consulted with t-table = 2.035 for α 5% with df = 33, if t-count = -0.094 < t-table = 2.035, which means there was no effect. The results of the t-test calculation show that there is a significant difference in story reading skills in the experiment group before and after learning using local culture-based comic media. Otherwise there is no difference in story reading skills in the control group. The following is a comparison of the t-count and t-table in the experimental and control classes.

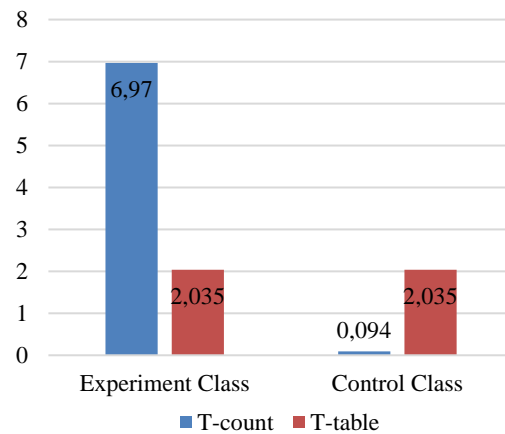


Figure 2. Comparison of T-Table and T-Count of Experimental and Control Classes

Discussion

Based on the results of the research conducted, the use of digital comics based on local culture has been proven to be effective in improving students' story-reading skills. This is presented by the increase in students' reading comprehension scores in the experimental class compared to the control class that used conventional media. From the point of view of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory, this result can be explained through the principle that learning occurs more effectively when it is associated with the social and cultural context of the student. Local culture helps students understand the content of the reading as it is directly related to the students' daily experiences. By presenting content that is closely related to students' daily lives, this media allows students to more easily associate new information with the knowledge they already possess, thereby deepening their understanding of the text (Wati & Widiana, 2024). Furthermore, the theory of engagement in literacy enforces the finding that when reading material has personal and cultural relevance, engagement increases, which in turn strengthens reading comprehension and skills.

These findings follow the multimodal learning theory that students understand material more easily when information is conveyed through various channels, such as text and images (Kardika et al., 2023). Digital comics not only present stories in the form of text, but also present illustrations that depict

the atmosphere, characters, and storyline concretely. This combination helps students to grasp meaning thoroughly, especially for those with developing literacy skills. The use of local culture as the content of stories in digital comics also contributes significantly to students' emotional engagement. Stories that embrace local characters, settings, and values feel closer to students' daily lives, increasing their reading interest and motivation. Thus, not only do students learn to understand the text, but they also acknowledge and cherish the local wisdom that is part of their identity.

This research contributes to the development of contextual literacy learning models, especially in areas with local cultural richness that have not been widely included in modern learning media. Theoretically, this research expands the application of culture-based literacy theory and supports the integration of educational technology with local values as a meaningful learning resource. However, it should be noted that the improvement of reading skills is not solely due to the use of this medium; teacher support, learning environment, and students' intrinsic motivation also play an important role. Moreover, adaptation to digital technology and students' early literacy skills can affect the effectiveness of these media.

This research aligns with previous findings that show digital comic media improves reading skills. Rasyika et al. (2025) found that e-comics based on local wisdom could significantly improve students' reading comprehension. Students in the experimental group who used this media yielded higher learning outcomes than the control group. The findings of the study by Nandasari and Al Mufti (2024) suggest a significant difference in learning outcomes between the results of students using learning through digital comic media and those who do not. Burhani et al. (2024) examined the influence of digital comic media on the reading skills of 3rd-grade elementary school students and found that this media had an outstanding influence on student learning outcomes in Indonesian learning. Similar to the study by Setianingsih et al. (2024), they applied the Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review strategy with the help of digital comic media and found that it was effective in improving the reading

comprehension skills of 5th-grade elementary school students. Research Wafa & Wiranti (2024) discovered that the use of digital comic media significantly increased the reading comprehension ability of 4th-grade elementary school students. Irnawati et al. (2024) reported that the application of comic media in learning bettered the initial reading ability of elementary school students, with an increase in the percentage of students who scored above the minimum.

The research described in the background also shows support that digital comic media improves reading skills. Tekin & İlhan (2025) researched the impact of the use of Pixton digital comic tools experienced a significant increase in basic language skills, including reading and writing. Overall, these studies show that the use of digital comics based on local culture is effective in improving the story-reading skills of elementary school students. However, this study adds a new dimension by integrating local cultural content into digital comic media, which has not been widely discussed in previous studies. This allows a unique contribution to the development of learning media that is contextual and relevant to the cultural background of students. This media not only improves reading comprehension, but also strengthens students' cultural values and character.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of local content, namely the origin of Reog Ponorogo, in which cultural values and social settings coexist and students are familiar with, and all of them are condensed in the form of digital comic media. This approach provides a familiar context for students and increases students' emotional engagement and reading motivation.

The success of using digital comics based on local culture is affected by the quality of the media, as well as the availability of digital facilities and the readiness of teachers to integrate technology. This media has been proven to be able to improve reading skills as well as a means of preserving a fun and meaningful culture for students. However, this study entails limitations in its narrow geographic context and short duration of intervention. Further research can be conducted with a wider scope and a longer

period of time to test the sustainability of its impact on student literacy.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study reveal that elementary school students need more visually and contextually engaging learning media to improve their interest and reading skills. Digital comics based on local culture, designed with attractive visuals and narratives that are close to students' daily lives, have proven to be an effective medium in improving story reading skills. This media not only helps students understand the content of the text, but also fosters their interest in reading activities in general. Quantitatively, the results of the analysis indicated a significant difference between the group with digital comics using local culture and the group with conventional methods. The reading learning outcomes scores of students in the experimental group suggested a higher increase. From a pedagogical point of view, the use of digital comics based on local culture has important implications. Apart from being a medium to improve literacy skills, this comic is also a means to instil relevant local cultural values and build students' cultural identity from an early age. Therefore, this functions as a learning aid and simultaneously as an instrument of character education and cultural preservation.

However, this study poses limitations, especially in terms of the relatively short implementation time. This restricts researchers from evaluating the long-term impact of the use of digital comics on the development of students' reading skills as a whole. In addition, the focus of the research is still limited to story reading skills, thus not covering other types of texts, such as explanatory or procedural. Based on these findings and limitations, it is recommended that further research be conducted over a longer period and on a more diverse subject. Further research can also explore the effectiveness of local culture-based media in learning different types of texts and their impact on broader literacy competencies, including critical thinking skills, understanding sociocultural contexts, and conveying ideas in writing. Furthermore, these findings have important implications for the world of education, especially in encouraging

the development of local culture-based learning media as part of an education strategy that is inclusive, contextual, and rooted in the nation's cultural identity. Collaboration between teachers, media developers, and education policymakers is required to expand the use of media like this in various regions in Indonesia.

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