

Textbooks Transformation Into Digital Comics As Innovative Learning Media for Social Science Studies in Junior High School

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Abstract— The utilisation of comics as learning media to elevate students' interest towards social science studies is not an unfamiliar phenomenon, however, based on the literature review written by the author, it is known that the existing social science comics still have shortcomings, namely, first, the content materials only cover economic-themed comics, even though social science studies at junior high school level or MTs is an integrated learning which is supposed to integrate the concepts of geography, sociology, economics and history in the learning process; and second, social science comics are less efficient in terms of cost, as it is still available in the conventional form. Hence, this study is aimed to address this gap through the transformation of existing textbooks into comic textbooks in the form of a platform called Line Webtoon as learning media for social science studies. The inquirer conducted a literature review of 37 selected articles from the year of 2016 to 2020 from Q1-Q3 or S1-S3 accredited journals. The review results show that (1) KOBUT IPS is a learning media innovation; (2) digital comics able to increase student interest; (3) contents are relevant to the characteristics of social studies; (4) borderless/not limited in the classroom; (5) relevant to the characteristics of millenials; (6) learning process becomes more interactive; and (7) easier to read than printed comics. Overall, this study provides an appropriate suggestion for further research on the effectiveness of utilising KOBUT IPS in the social studies learning process.

Keywords— textbook, textbook comics, social studies learning

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A. INTRODUCTION

At present time, Indonesian are faced with the realities of the 21st century, where the changing situation and advancement are developing rapidly. Especially in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 which now begins stepping to the era of society 5.0, where both are the life transformation phases that generate opportunities as well as complex challenges in various aspects of life, not only in the technology aspects, but also in the aspects of economy, environment, politics, law, and in the social aspect (Hecklau, Galeitzke, Flachs, & Kohl, 2016; Prasetyo & Trisyanti, 2018). Citizens as an integral part of the advancement dynamics

play fundamental and strategic role in taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming existing challenges.

Henceforth, Indonesian citizens need to be prepared in an effort to face these challenges. One of the early attempts to prepare the Indonesian generation for the upcoming era is through social studies subjects. Sapriya (2019, p. 12) mentions that the social science studies aim to prepare students to become citizens who master the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that can be used to solve personal problems or social problems that are happening around them.

Nevertheless, the fact is that there is a previous study that concludes that social science studies learning is seen as less interesting by students. This is supported by evidence of students' low interest, response, and enthusiasm in the social science studies learning process. The cause of this is the lack of creativity of teachers in utilising learning models, teaching materials, or learning media, resulting in the domination of lecturing methods that do not stimulate students in the social studies learning process (Agustina, 2016; Setiaji, 2016; Utami, 2016). In the end, students' low interest can transform social science studies learning unqualified. Thus, if the learning process itself is no longer qualified, then the authentic goals and aspirations of the social science studies will only be nothing but dream.

These problems are getting more complex with the occurrence of Covid-19 pandemic. Due to this pandemic, several countries have issued school closure policies, forced the need of transforming direct learning into distance learning (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020; Mohammed, Khidhir, Nazeer, & Vijayan, 2020). This rapid transformation has brought resulted in several changes, causing culture shock and challenges for students, parents, or teachers (Hamilton et al., 2020; Wyse, Stickney, Butz, Beckler, & Close, 2020). Therefore, an applicable innovation is needed to elevate students' interest in social science learning. So that the learning can be more meaningful and optimised even when conducted through distance learning.

These problems could be overcome by optimising the utilisation of learning media. Because, Yaumi (2019, p. 17) states that the urgency of learning media includes: First, enhancing the quality of learning; Second, the demands of a new paradigm; Third, market needs; Fourth, the vision of global education. One that can be used as a learning media is comics. Comics are one of the popular artworks that can be a potential media used in educational field and in communication activities to elevate students' interest, develop vocabulary, and improve reading skills (Ariyanto & Laksana,

2017; Chen, Fan, Chang, Chang, & Chen, 2018; Ogier & Ghosh, 2018). In fact, based on research conducted by Yuliana, Siswandari, & Sudiyanto (2017, p. 137) it is known that 86.36% of students enjoy reading comics or pictorial stories.

There are several studies related to the use of comics as learning media, one of which is a study done by Marwiyah and Ratnawuri (2018) which conclude that the utilisation of comics as a learning media in social science studies have some positive outcomes, namely: First, social science comics are easy to use; Second, social science comics are able to foster students' interest in learning; Third, social science comics attracts students to like social science studies; and Fourth, social science comics make it easier for students to understand materials regarding economic activities.

However, the comics that were developed still have flaws, such as (1) the content is only about economic things, whereas the social science subject in junior high school/MTs is an integrated one containing the concept of geography, sociology, economy, and history in learning process; and (2) the social science comics are less efficient in terms of costs, due to the fact that the form is still conventional (printed form).

Based on the explanation above, it can be decided that the main focus for the problem of this research is the lack of students' interest in social science learning which is caused by the unvaried and less attractive use of learning model, teaching materials, or learning media. This has become worse with the implementation of distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study aims to answer these problems by completing and perfecting the previous research through the existing textbook transformation into digital comics based on the Line Webtoon platform as a learning media, in order to improve the students interest of social studies in junior high school.

B. METHOD

This research was conducted online and supported by relevant and available

secondary sources. This is inseparable from the uncertainty of Covid-19 pandemic condition. This research uses the Narrative Review method, which is a review process of secondary sources in order to produce a structured script relating to the new understanding from the discussed topic. The steps of Narrative Review that the authors has done are as follows:

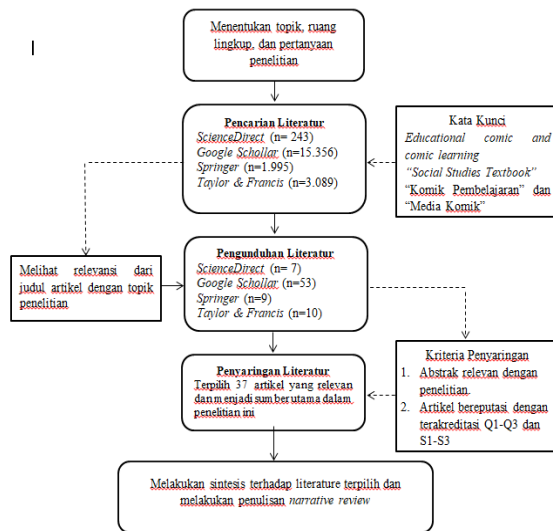


Figure 1. The Steps of Making Narrative Review

1. Deciding the research topic, scope, and question.
2. Looking for literature materials relating to the research topic from several databases, such as ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, Springer, and Taylor & Francis. The keywords used to obtain those literature materials are educational comic or comic learning, social studies textbook, social studies learning, and comics. Furthermore, the authors also restricted the publication year in a range from 2016 to 2020. Based on that research, the cumulative number of published articles are ScienceDirect (n=330), Google Scholar (n=15.356), Springer (n=2.449), and Taylor & Francis (n=3.830).
3. Downloading some literature materials based on the authors' assessment towards the title of each articles; whether they are relevant to the research topic or not. Based on that process, a total of 79 articles were successfully downloaded with details of ScienceDirect (n= 7), Google Scholar (n=53), Springer (n=9), and Taylor & Francis (n=10).

4. Not all of the downloaded articles were directly used as the references in making Narrative Review. However, they were first sorted based on the predetermined criteria, which are: (1) the content of abstract is relevant to the research topic of the authors; and (2) the articles are reputable one with Q1-Q3 and S1-S3 accreditation based on the website sources from scimagojr.com/ and sinta.ristekbrin.go.id/. As a result, there are only 43 relevant articles for this research.
5. Analysing the content of articles that suitable with the predetermined criteria. The results of the analysis will be presented in a table, so that the advantages, disadvantages, and contribution to the authors' research will be known.
6. Conducting the final arrangement of the Narrative Review based on the references that the authors had gained.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Textbook in Learning Process

Technology advancement through digitalisation has been helping us in many aspects of life, including education. However, in this situation, it appears that textbook still play an important role as one of the necessary educational media (ÖZKARAL, 2019; Ratmelia, 2018). It is inseparable with the functions of textbook itself, such as (1) reference materials for teacher or student; (2) evaluation materials; (3) teaching aids in curriculum implementation; and (4) materials for considering teaching methods or techniques that will be used by the teacher (Supriatna, Fauzi, & Holilah, 2019).

The use of textbook in learning process has been considered as the strategic media in affecting the education quality, and it becomes the effective way to deliver information from teacher as a source to the teacher as a recipient. The function of textbook as teaching materials is pivotal to support the achievement of student competency (Fitriansyah, 2019; Supriatna et al., 2019). This also emphasizes that textbook, which is the conventional learning media and source, still has a big role in learning process at school.

2. Comics as a Learning Media

Comics is a potential media that can be used for matters regarding students' communication and educational process. It is inseparable from the fact that children naturally have an interest in comics (Lazarinis, Veryklos, & Panagiotakopoulos, 2016; Ogier & Ghosh, 2018). Students are interested in comics due to its simple form; it contains understandable explanation, humorous content, and presents light materials based on students' daily lives (Chung & Chung, 2018; Toh, Cheng, Ho, Jiang, & Lim, 2017).

The fact that comics become an attractive media for students can actually encourage students to be active in learning process due to the fact that students have high enthusiasm for learning, or it can be said that comics can increase students motivation and interest in learning (Affeldt, Meinhart, & Eilks, 2018; Farapatana, Anwar, & Abdillah, 2019; Joshi et al., 2019). This condition shows that the use of comics in learning is relevant and useful.

The use of comics in learning can be an effective and efficient tool in bridging knowledge or learning concepts which are formally presented into a language that is closer to students' daily personal experiences (Matuk, Hurwich, Spiegel, & Diamond, 2019; Wijayanti, Hasan, & Loganathan, 2018). This condition will be able to assist teachers in creating a conducive environment and provide significant support for students in the learning process (Delgado-Algarra, 2017; Piróg & Rachwał, 2019). Even comics have been proven to be able to enhance learning outcomes and have great potential to reach a broader audience (Aulia, Niki, Zarkasih, & Nova, 2020; Farinella, 2018).

Although comics in learning offers a great benefit, it requires a greater time and energy to design and develop comic-based teaching materials. Since teachers must concentrate on the suitability of the syllabus content, learning objectives, and comic content (Affeldt *et al.*, 2018; Farapatana *et al.*, 2019; Hendarto, Maridi, & Prayitno, 2018; Toh *et al.*, 2017). Other than that, as the results of a study by Golding & Verrier

(2020, p. 10) that the use of comics as an educational tool will be less effective if the students do not have a good visual literacy.

Kobut IPS as a Social Studies Learning Media in Junior High School

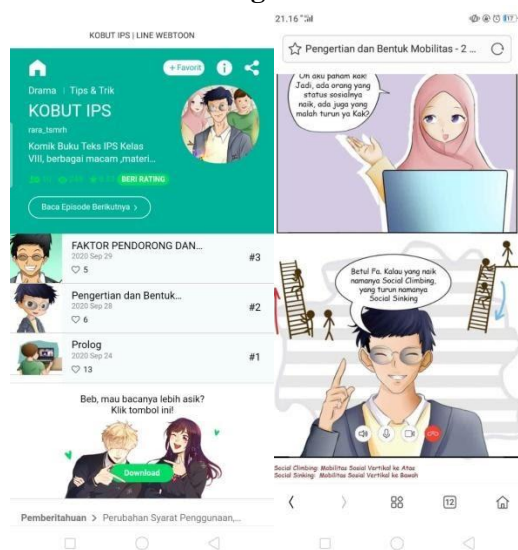


Figure 2. The Display of KOBUT IPS

KOBUT IPS is a learning media innovation by transforming social studies textbooks into a comic based on the Line Webtoon platform. The webtoon itself is a digital comic that can be used as an interactive learning media to make students more enthusiastic, comfortable, and easier to read rather than most printed comics since the panels are arranged vertically. However, the material contains in the webtoon can remain accurate and have good feasibility (Lesmono, Bachtiar, Maryani, & Muzdalifah, 2018; Muyassaroh, Asib, & Marmanto, 2019; Ningrat & Mayasari, 2019). The transformation carried out by utilizing webtoon is to make KOBUT IPS more beneficial than other social sciences' conventional comics.

The making process of KOBUT IPS which utilises Line Webtoon is also intended for students to be accessible anytime and anywhere. This is because the use of digital comics makes learning not only limited to classrooms, but it also aims to adjust the characteristics of junior high school students who feel more comfortable in reading comics on their phone (Chen *et al.*, 2018; Chung & Chung, 2018). The benefits of it

will make the social studies learning more flexible while keeping students enthusiastic. The transformation of social sciences textbooks to comics is an attempt to elaborate on the advantages of textbooks and comic media. What distinguishes KOBUT IPS from other social studies comics is that the content material comes from textbooks which are packaged in comic form. This is inseparable from the fact that comics can increase students' interest in the learning process rather than using only traditional textbooks that have long texts (Chu & Toh, 2020; Gavaldon & McGarr, 2019). Apart from that, the use of textbooks that are transformed into comics is also intended for the content of KOBUT IPS to follow the characteristics of social studies subjects which integrates history, sociology, economics, and geography.

D. CONCLUSION

The transformation of textbooks into comic textbooks based on the Line Webtoon platform is a potential learning media innovation to increase student interest in social studies learning, especially in this condition of distance learning due to Covid-19. This is due to things such as:

1. The material content is sourced from student textbooks. So that the content will be relevant to the characteristics of social studies subjects in junior high school (SMP/MTs) which integrate the concepts of geography, sociology, economics, and history in the learning process.
2. Students have an interest in comics because of its simple form, easy explanations that are close to student life, simple presentation that is easy to read, and equipped with attractive visuals.
3. Learning is more interactive and easy to read than printed comics or textbooks, because it can be accessed anytime and anywhere on smartphone or mobile device. So that it makes students more enthusiastic and comfortable using it, because it is relevant to the students' characteristics as millennials.

4. Transforming textbooks into comic book textbooks based on the Line Webtoon platform can improve students' memory of a material. This is due to the use of media in the form of images and graphics.

Based on these, this Narrative Review can be used as a basis for further research such as classroom action research or experimental research as a direct test of the effectiveness of transforming textbooks into digital comics based on the Line Webtoon platform.

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