Implementation of Digital-Based Torajan Folk Story Media to Improve Students' Reading Interest

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ABSTRACT

National Education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to make the nation's life intelligent. The need to increase insight and knowledge certainly begins with the Literacy Movement which can be started by reading. However, according to UNESCO data, the reading interest of Indonesian people is very concerning, only 0.001%. This means that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only 1 person is an avid reader. Ironically, according to the Ministry of Communication and Information, although the interest in reading books is low, wear social data reveals that Indonesians can stare at gadget screens for approximately 9 hours a day. Gadget addiction by children today also has an impact on the social and cultural environment so that their understanding of local culture begins to fade. Thus, there is a need for innovative and interesting media to attract students' reading interest by highlighting local wisdom. The purpose of this study was to analyze the application of digital-based folklore media in increasing students' interest in reading. This study was conducted using a mix-method method on 20 fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Rantepao. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, tests, and documentation. The results of this study were an increase in students' interest in reading after using the media. Digital-based folklore by utilizing interactive technology and interesting visual elements is used as an alternative learning media to increase student participation in reading activities. This research is useful for other schools that want to use digital-based learning media as well as a forum for preserving culture.
Keywords: Folklore; Digital Media; Interest in Reading; Culture

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important basic skills in education, because it is the most important basis for gaining knowledge and understanding information. In his book, he said "good reading skills support the development of students' cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor skills"(Sudianto & Kisno, 2021). However, especially at elementary school age, low interest in reading can have a negative impact on

students' reading and writing abilities, which ultimately affects their overall academic achievement.

The exchange of information through social media in the digital era allows everyone to connect, communicate, and interact, especially the most dominant users are generation Z (27.94% of the population of Indonesia) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). Generation Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012 (Inglehart, 1997), meaning that elementary school students today are included in generation Z who make digital media an inseparable part of their lives.

At SDN 1 Rantepao, especially in grade IV, based on the results of observations conducted by the author, it was found that students' reading interest is still relatively low. This is caused by the use of conventional or monotonous learning media, such as printed books that are less attractive to students. These media are unable to provide the visual appeal or interactivity needed to arouse children's interest in reading. As a result, students tend to be less motivated to read and understand learning materials.

In addition, the use of digital media in learning at SDN 1 Rantepao is still very minimal. In fact, digital media has great potential to attract students' attention because it is more interactive, easily accessible, and mobile. This media allows students to learn anytime and anywhere, making it more relevant to the needs of today's digital generation. The lack of utilization of this technology is one of the obstacles in increasing students' interest in reading. Not only is the interest in reading a concern, but also the lack of students' knowledge of local culture, including Toraja folklore. Folklore is one of the cultural heritages that is rich in moral, social, and local wisdom values. However, the low level of recognition of folklore shows that students are missing an important aspect in their character education and cultural identity. The use of monotonous media such as black and white textbooks does not attract students' interest in reading or getting to know culture through reading.

In this context, the use of digital-based folklore can be an effective solution to overcome these problems. Digital media containing Torajan folklore not only attracts students' attention through visual and interactive displays but also provides insight into local culture. Through this approach, students not only increase their interest in reading, but also strengthen their understanding of Torajan cultural heritage. Digital-based folklore also allows the integration of cultural values in literacy learning. By combining traditional elements and modern technology, learning becomes more interesting and relevant to students' lives today. This approach is in line with constructivist learning theory, where students can build understanding through meaningful learning experiences. The digital media used is packaged in the form of a self-designed application so that the novelty in this study is the use of innovative media designed according to needs to stimulate students in reading while introducing cultural values. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the

application of digital-based folklore media in increasing reading interest in grade IV students of SDN 1 Rantepao. It is hoped that this solution can be an innovative learning model that not only improves literacy but also preserves local culture through a creative and fun approach.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Previous Related Study

There are previous studies that are considered relevant to the research and development conducted by current researchers. The following is a literature overview of several previous research results related to the use of learning models. Helena Anggidesialamia's (2020) research entitled Efforts to Increase Reading Interest Through Review of Folk Tale Content on the Youtube Application. The results of this research showed that students' reading interest increased because from the results of the interviews conducted, many of them were interested in the program carried out by the researcher.

Rina Rochiana's research (2023) entitled Increasing Interest in Intensive Reading Based on Folk Tales Through Audio Visual Media in Grade V Elementary School Students. The results of the study showed an increase in students' reading interest using audio visual media based on folk tales in increasing this intensive reading interest. This was carried out during 4 face-to-face meetings with teachers. The provision of folklore content was assisted by various learning media that supported the ongoing KBM process to achieve learning objectives, namely, to increase students' reading interest. The process took place in the classroom and each face-to-face meeting a format was always prepared.

Bonggala'bi' research (2024) entitled Principal's Leadership Strategy Through School Literacy Movement to Increase Students' Interest in Reading at SMP Negeri 1 Seseanpadang. The results of this study indicate that the principal's leadership strategy through the school literacy movement to increase students' interest in reading at SMP Negeri 1 Seseanpadang is to urge teachers to give students assignments and time to read, motivate students to read, add book collections from various sources and carry out religious literacy.

From the three studies above, it can be concluded that there are differences and similarities. The differences between the three studies that have been described lie in the use of media, while the similarities are that they both increase students' interest in reading through folklore.

According to Alim & Paris (2020) in the context of culture-based learning, digital media can be used to express local identity, culture, and students' experiences. This is in line with the ethnopedagogical approach, where digital media acts as a means of preserving and exploring local culture (eg, folklore). Deci & Ryan (2020, in the context of literacy) explain that reading interest develops if three basic needs are

met: autonomy, competence, and social relations. In the context of reading, students will be more interested if they are free to choose reading material, feel able to understand its contents, and are supported by an environment that values literacy. Abdurrahman et al. (2020) stated that ethnopedagogy is the actualization of learning towards the instillation of local wisdom values of an ethnic group. Ethnopedagogy plays an important role in developing students' attitudes towards the values of national culture and has a positive impact on physical, emotional, and communication development. This article also discusses the challenges in implementing ethnopedagogy, such as the lack of teacher competence and the need for further conceptual development.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study uses a mixed-method research design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The combination was chosen to balance the strengths and weaknesses of each method, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted at SDN 1 Rantepao with grade IV students as the main sample. This school was selected because the reading interest of students had not yet met the goals of the School Literacy Movement (GLS), and teachers were still limited in their creativity in developing innovative literacy media and in utilizing available technology.

Instruments and Procedure

The instruments used in this study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative tools. Quantitative data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests designed to measure students' knowledge and learning achievement before and after the use of innovative media. The pre-test aimed to identify students' initial knowledge, while the post-test measured changes after the intervention. Qualitative data, on the other hand, were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included interviews with grade IV teachers and classroom observations, while secondary sources were documents such as archives and teaching modules related to GLS.

The procedure of the study was carried out in several stages, starting with research planning, continuing with implementation, and ending with report preparation. Data collection began with the administration of the pre-test, followed by the integration of innovative media in the classroom learning process, after which the post-test was conducted. Simultaneously, interviews, observations, and document reviews were undertaken to capture qualitative insights. The entire research process took place from September to November 2024.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed statistically to identify differences in student achievement before and after the intervention, and the results were described narratively to provide further context. Qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive techniques, which included organizing data into patterns and categories, reducing unnecessary information, presenting findings, and drawing conclusions (Moleong, 2002). Finally, the two sets of data were integrated through a parallel convergence technique. This approach allowed the researcher to compare and contrast findings from both methods, and triangulation was applied to strengthen the validity of results by highlighting consistencies between the quantitative and qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data from observations and interviews with several related data sources, such as class teachers, librarians, and students. Based on the data obtained as a whole from the results of observations and questionnaires filled out by students about their reading intensity in one day, from these data it can be seen that reading interest in grade IV students of SDN 1 Rantepao is still very low, because most students read during the learning process only, even during holidays or outside of learning hours most of them do not have time to read.

The following is a graph showing the distribution of reading interest of elementary school students in grade IV of SDN 1 Rantepao. This graph illustrates that most students are in the "Low" and "Very Low" categories.
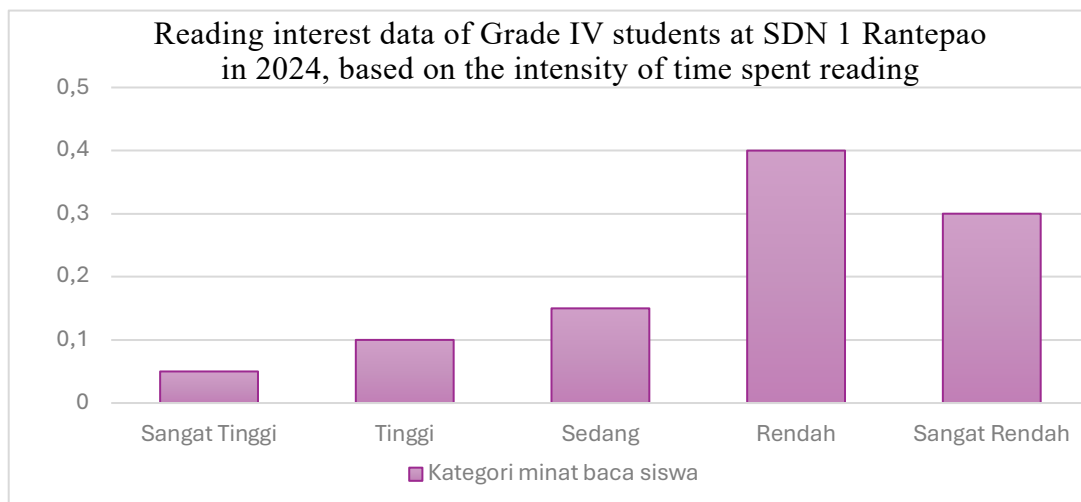
Graph 1. Category of reading interest of grade IV students at SDN 1 Rantepao before using media

From the data, it can be seen that only 5% of students have a very high interest in reading or only 1 out of 20 students. This can be seen from the reading journals they made and the questionnaires they filled out. Based on the journal, he routinely prepared time outside of class hours to read and record information obtained from the reading. This can be seen from several indications, namely the number of readings read and also the time used when reading.Dalman (2017: 145) stated that indicators for determining how high or low a person's interest in reading is can be seen based on how often the person reads, how much time is spent reading, and the quantity of reading sources.

In addition to the results of the questionnaire to determine the category of students' reading interests, the author also conducted a pre-test on students to explore their understanding before using digital-based folklore media. Because one way to get information is of course from reading results. The following is data from the pre-test results of grade IV students of SDN 1 Rantepao.

Table 1. Pre-test scores of fourth grade students at SDN 1 Rantepao

No	National Identity Number	Name	M/F	Mark	Caption
1	0129365023	ASMK	F	75	P
2	01342403091	AQRP	F	55	F
3	0127744067	A	F	45	F
4	0137989734	CBT	F	65	F
5	0132498696	CCS	M	60	F
6	3138105768	DGS	M	55	F
7	3138348246	ESPA	M	55	F
8	3138348246	EP	F	65	F
9	0139638632	FPNR	F	55	F
10	0124201986	FAB	F	60	F
11	0129247988	GPG	M	75	L
12	3137118996	GL	F	60	F
13	0124839424	HYM	M	65	F
15	3135897199	JFTA	M	70	F
16	0127515361	JJL	M	50	F
17	0128173721	KP	F	65	F
18	3128175310	KT	F	65	F
19	3125995122	LO	F	55	F
20	0125682909	LPP	F	70	F

From the data above, only 10% of students graduated or only 2 out of 20 students. This shows that the literacy skills of grade IV students of SDN 1 Rantepao are still very low due to the lack of interest in reading. Low interest in reading will affect the level of reading ability.(Kamala et al., 2024). This will also affect the level of ability to understand texts so that their understanding of something will be limited.

This opinion is reinforced by the opinion that says that one of the factors causing low learning outcomes is due to low interest in reading.(Riyanti & Rahmi, 2024). To strengthen the data, interviews were conducted with several elements of the SDN 1 Rantepao educational unit, including the homeroom teacher of grade IV. The following is the result of the interview with the Class IV Homeroom Teacher, Mrs. Lusyana Duma, S.Pd., which was conducted on Thursday, September 5, 2024, in the Teacher's Room of SDN 1 Rantepao at 11.00 WITA:

"We have implemented a 15-minute reading program before class starts, but many students are still bored with the books available. I also recommend them to read books about Toraja local wisdom, hoping that they will be more familiar with the local cultural values that I see are starting to fade. I see them bored with the available textbooks because they are not interesting to them. In addition, I also collaborate with parents to find out the students' conditions at home. From this information, many students are more interested in using gadgets at home to play games."

The interview indicates that students' interest in reading remains low. This statement is reinforced by the librarian of SDN 1 Rantepao, who was also interviewed by the researcher. The following is the result of an interview with the librarian, Ms. Rita Kaseng, S.Pust., conducted on the same day, Thursday, September 5, 2024, at 13.00 WITA in the school library:

"The School Literacy Movement (GLS) is a program that has long been planned by the school, but in reality, it has not succeeded in encouraging students to go to the library to read books. From the visitor data, it can be seen that grade 4 students rarely visit the library. I noticed that children are now less interested in reading books, while the Literacy Movement is a good thing to implement because it has a positive impact on students' insight. However, since students are less interested in reading, teachers should find ways or strategies to build students' reading habits in a more innovative and interesting way so that their interest in reading grows."

Based on observations, questionnaires, and interviews, it can be concluded that the reading interest of grade IV students at SDN 1 Rantepao is still very low. This lack of interest also affects their knowledge of local cultural values, which remains minimal. To address this issue, researchers offered a solution by utilizing technology. The use of digital media is considered effective because Generation Z students are closely connected to the digital world. Increasing interest in reading is crucial, as it contributes significantly to intellectual development, critical thinking, and lifelong learning (Indayanti & Alawiyah, 2023).

The proposed program aims to redirect students' use of gadgets from less productive activities, such as playing games, toward more meaningful purposes, such as reading digital texts. Innovatively, the researcher designed interesting reading materials in digital form to foster reading interest and habits anytime and

anywhere. Students were also required to keep daily reading journals to record the values and information they obtained.

After implementing the program for one month, positive results were observed. Based on interviews with teachers, the librarian, and evidence from student diaries, it was found that students' interest in reading increased significantly. They began to develop the habit of reading not only digital texts but also printed books to enrich their references. The results of these improvements are presented in the following data:
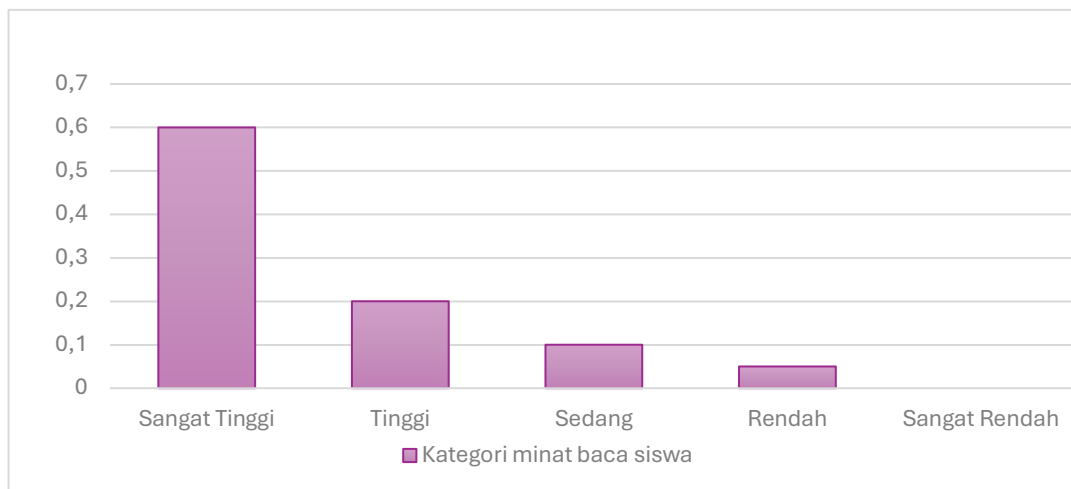
Graph 2. Reading interest categories of grade IV students at SDN 1 Rantepao after using media

The data in the graph above shows that there is a very significant increase in reading interest in grade IV students of SDN 1 Rantepao. From previous data we know that only 1 child or 5% have reading interest in the high category. However, after the use of digital-based folk story media, the very high category has now reached 60% or 12 children and for the high category 4 children out of 20 samples.

From the data above, it can be supported by the results of the students' post-test which showed an increase in value. The increase is certainly the impact of increasing student interest due to the influence of the use of interesting innovative media such as using technology.In the learning process, technological developments can influence (Gusty et al., 2020). One of them is on reading interest, because along with technological developments, students are required to be able to adapt to technology such as gadgets (Pustikayasa, 2019). Some students use gadgets as a tool to make their learning easier, they can access anything about learning and with trusted sources (Hendrawan, 2021). From this explanation, it can be said that the use of technology can be a solution to increase students' reading interest.

Table 2. Post-test scores of grade IV students at SDN 1 Rantepao

No	National Identity Number	Name	P/L	Mark	Caption
1	0129365023	ASMK	P	90	L
2	01342403091	AQRP	P	80	L
3	0127744067	A	P	75	L
4	0137989734	CBT	L	85	L
5	0132498696	CCS	L	80	L
6	3138105768	DGS	L	75	L
7	3138348246	ESPA	L	75	L
8	3138348246	EP	P	80	L
9	0139638632	FPNR	P	75	L
10	0124201986	FAB	P	80	L
11	0129247988	GPG	L	95	L
12	3137118996	GL	P	75	L
13	0124839424	HYM	L	80	L
15	3135897199	JFTA	L	85	L
16	0127515361	JJL	L	65	TL
17	0128173721	KP	P	80	L
18	3128175310	KT	P	85	L
19	3125995122	LO	L	70	TL
20	0125682909	LPP	P	80	L

The table shows data that out of 20 students only 2 students failed. It is enough to illustrate that there is an increase in the value of the post-test that was carried out. In the pre-test value, only 2 students got the standard value and after using the media drastically increased to 18 students or 90%. The value above is one of the benchmarks that increasing reading interest will affect the understanding of the text to be able to answer test questions. This statement is in line with the opinionwhich says that the higher the interest in reading, the greater the understanding of reading texts (Tang et al, 2017).

The increase in students' interest in reading can also be observed from a follow-up interview with the Grade IV homeroom teacher, Mrs. Lusiana Duma, S.Pd.**,** conducted in the classroom on Monday, November 4, 2024, at 09.00 WITA. She stated:

"After the digital-based reading program, I now see a significant change in students' reading interest. I check their journal results regularly, and the majority of students can finish reading routinely every day. This is supported by information from parents who said that their children are now making more use of their gadgets to read the readings that have been provided. The existence of this program has become a new habit that increases their reading interest. In addition to using gadgets, they are also aware of the importance of reading textbooks to add to their reading references."

Further evidence was obtained from the librarian, Mrs. Rita Kaseng, S.Pust., who supported the homeroom teacher's statement. The interview was conducted in the Library Room of SDN 1 Rantepao on the same day, Monday, November 4, 2024, at 11.00 WITA. She explained:

> *"From the visitor data in the library records, I see a very significant change in grade IV. The data shows that currently, grade IV students are the visitors with the highest intensity at SDN 1 Rantepao. Some of them even borrow books to take home. From there, it can be seen that there is a more innovative program that has been implemented by teachers that has succeeded in increasing students' interest in reading."*

From the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that the use of digital-based media has proven effective in increasing students' interest in reading while simultaneously enriching their knowledge of local culture. This finding is consistent with the perspective that local wisdom-based education helps students develop critical skills (Sakti et al., 2024). The results also indicate that the integration of digital folklore media has a positive impact on fostering a genuine desire to read, which is characterized by intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, and sustained engagement (Elendiana, 2020).

Furthermore, students demonstrated increased involvement in understanding storylines and moral messages contained within the readings. This aligns with Kamala's (2024) view that folk tales, which are rich in moral values and local wisdom, can serve as an effective medium for communicating educational values about life to the community. Through this method, students not only become more literate but also strengthen their cultural identity.

The use of digital-based folklore media also addresses limitations found in traditional learning. Mobile digital platforms allow students to access stories anytime and anywhere, offering both flexibility and freedom to explore materials according to their interests and needs. This approach resonates with the characteristics of today's digital generation, who are more inclined toward technology-supported learning.

The findings of this study are also aligned with constructivist learning theory, which posits that students play an active role in constructing meaning rather than merely receiving information. Their understanding develops through personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and interactions. The development of innovatively packaged digital media demonstrates practical implications for teachers, enabling them to integrate cultural education with technology-based learning. Moreover, this media has the potential to be further developed and implemented in other schools or even more broadly within the community, contributing not only to increased reading interest but also to the preservation and promotion of local culture.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study with the title Application of Folklore Media Digital Based to Increase Students' Reading Interest with research using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods (mix-method) with data collection techniques through observation, pre-test and post-test, interviews, questionnaires and documentation, it was found that the reading interest of fourth grade students at SDN 1 Rantepao could increase significantly. There are several suggestions from the results of this study, namely that the use of this media should continue to all levels or be disseminated to other schools, there needs to be media development both in terms of more complete features and more varied displays to attract students' interest, making the Ethnopedagogy approach a part of the national literacy policy by the government and education offices, especially in areas that have cultural riches that can be preserved.

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