

Integration of Folktale-Based Digital Comics to Improve English Language Skills for the Children and Youth Service Group of the Imanuel Oepura Congregation, Kupang City

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Article Info

Article history:

Accepted: 26 December 2025

Publish: 28 December 2025

Keywords:

English,
folklore,
digital comics,
biblical values,
community service

Abstract

This community service activity aims to improve English language skills and instill biblical values in children and adolescents at the Imanuel Oepura Congregation in Kupang City through the integration of digital comics based on folklore. This initiative was motivated by the urgency of mastering English in the era of globalization and efforts to preserve local wisdom. The implementation method involved 49 participants, where students delivered Sunday school material using digital comics that combined folklore with biblical values, followed by a quiz to evaluate understanding. The results of the activity showed a significant increase in children's engagement and understanding of the values conveyed. The developed digital comics have undergone expert validation tests (media, language, materials) with excellent percentages (e.g., 95.13% and 98.26% of trials, 100% by media experts, and 94% by language experts), confirming their quality and suitability as effective and engaging learning media. Positive responses from participants also indicate that digital comics have successfully increased reading interest and learning motivation. It was concluded that the integration of folklore-based digital comics is an effective method to increase engagement and understanding of the material, although the success of its implementation depends on the availability of supporting infrastructure. This activity is expected to be a reference for similar programs in the future in developing innovative and relevant educational media

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1. INTRODUCTION

This community service activity aims to integrate folklore-based digital comics to improve English skills in children and adolescents at the Imanuel Oepura Congregation in Kupang City, given the urgency of mastering English in the era of globalization (Amelia, 2021). This initiative was motivated by the observation that children's knowledge of local folklore is still minimal, even though folklore is rich in moral values that can shape character (Palondongan et al., 2018). Therefore, reintroducing folklore through digital comics that are relevant to the younger generation is expected to be a bridge to instill these values while improving English literacy (Kudadiri, 2023; Putri et al., 2024). The use of digital comics has proven effective in facilitating narrative comprehension and developing language skills, particularly in reading and writing (Azis et al., 2023). This innovative approach also aligns with efforts to improve basic literacy in Indonesia, including language and digital literacy, through fun and relevant learning methods for children (Mulyadi et al., 2021; Sakriani et al., 2022). However, integrating digital comics as an educational medium often faces challenges in aligning entertainment content with substantive

learning objectives, particularly in the context of English language teaching (Sitasari & Trisurini, 2018). This highlights the need for careful teaching strategies to ensure that the appeal of digital comics does not override pedagogical objectives, particularly in developing the 4C competencies (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication) essential for the 21st century (Megawati et al., 2023). Therefore, this activity specifically focuses on storytelling training using English-language digital comics based on folktales, which not only improves children's emotional intelligence and English language skills but also hones their soft skills in public speaking through engaging storytelling (Mulyadi et al., 2021; Sulistianingsih et al., 2018). Varied learning methods, including mentoring and training, have been shown to increase students' motivation to learn English, particularly through storytelling (Habibullah et al., 2020). The use of folktales in the form of digital comics can also address the lack of relevant reading materials for students, in line with a curriculum that emphasizes meaningful English learning (Mulyati & Soetopo, 2018). Furthermore, this approach is also expected to preserve local wisdom by highlighting local tales, thereby preserving cultural identity and the richness of oral literature (Mulyadi et al., 2021; Mulyati & Soetopo, 2018). In line with this, the development of digital comics based on folklore also has the potential to foster appreciation for local literary works while facilitating effective communication in Indonesian and English (Johan et al., 2021). This community service activity, organized by a team of lecturers and students from the English Language Education Study Program at Nusa Cendana University, represents a concrete implementation of this approach. This activity specifically involves the integration of digital comics that utilize folklore, which has been shown to increase learning interest and facilitate message absorption, particularly in the context of language learning (Azis et al., 2023). The use of this medium not only attracts children's attention but also helps them focus on specific objects, where the rich visual and narrative elements in digital comics make the stories feel more real and engage readers' emotions (Nurhuda et al., 2020). In line with this, the effectiveness of digital comics in conveying character education has been proven in previous research, demonstrating the media's great potential to not only entertain but also educate (Kudadiri, 2023). The Community Service Activity held by a team of lecturers and students of the English Language Education Study Program at Nusa Cendana University was held on Sunday, August 24, 2025, shifted from the original schedule in July 2025. This event took place from 08.00 WITA and ended at 12.00 WITA, taking place at the PART Sunday school of the Imanuel Oepura Congregation, Rayon 22 and 24.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The event was attended by 49 participants, consisting of 32 Sunday school children, 4 Sunday school teachers, 8 lecturers, and 5 students who actively participated in the entire series of events. Initially, a team of lecturers and students introduced themselves to the participants, followed by the delivery of Sunday school material by the students using digital comics that integrated folklore with biblical values relevant to the weekly topic. This delivery of material optimized the visual appeal and narrative of comics to facilitate the understanding of spiritual values. ([Wardiati, 2022](#)). After the teaching session was completed, the Sunday school children were given a simple quiz as a form of feedback to evaluate their understanding of the material presented, as well as to measure the effectiveness of digital comics as an educational medium. The event then closed with a group photo session and the distribution of lunch and snacks, marking the formal end of the activity. The expected outputs of this activity include digital comics based on folk tales, video documentation, and community service articles that will be published in national journals. The first output, digital comics, has been completed in both digital and print formats, and has been implemented in PKM activities at the Sunday school PART Imanuel Oepura Congregation Rayon 22 and 24. The next output in the form of activity videos is still in the editing stage by the teaching team, while activity reports and articles to be published in national journals are also still in the preparation stage.



Figure 1. Narration of Comic Stories by Students

A comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of this activity, including feedback from participants and direct observations, will be a major focus in the preparation of the final report to identify areas for future improvement. (Aulia et al., 2022) The use of digital comics in teaching aligns with the needs of the alpha generation growing up in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, where innovation in delivering religious material is crucial to fulfilling their spiritual needs. (Panuntun et al., 2019) This approach not only encourages active interaction but also ensures the relevance of the teaching material to the context of children's daily lives, referring to the creative-innovative principle in learning. (Panuntun et al., 2019) As such, the evaluation of the success of this project will include an in-depth analysis of the level of children's participation and their understanding of the values conveyed through the digital comics, in line with evaluation practices carried out in similar community service activities. (Fortinasari & Malasari, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2022) The use of comics as an alternative learning medium has been proven effective in facilitating the learning process, both in the home and school environment, and evaluations have shown a high level of excellence in this kind of mixed media. (Estimate, 2023). The products resulting from this activity, such as digital comics, will continue to be refined based on trials and feedback received during the program implementation. (Panuntun et al., 2019) This evaluation process includes expert validation and product trials on students, based on the results of the questionnaire and the responses of the trial subjects, to ensure that the digital comic media successfully achieves its initial objectives. (Andriani et al., 2022) This evaluative approach is important to identify areas of improvement and ensure product optimization, similar to the waterfall development model, which involves stages of evaluation and revision. (Puspita et al., 2022).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Synthesis of data from participant feedback questionnaires and field observations showed that the integration of digital comics of folk tales successfully increased the engagement of Sunday school children in learning Biblical values. (Gunadi et al., 2023; Panuntun et al., 2019) Studies show that digital comics with attractive designs and easy-to-understand material can make learning more enjoyable and encourage students' independent learning. (Nurjanah et al., 2023) This positive impact is crucial considering the challenges of maintaining children's attention in the digital era, full of distractions. Furthermore, evaluation of digital comic products through expert validation tests has shown a very good category percentage (93.44%), which is reinforced by the results of one-to-one and small group trials with average scores of 95.13% and 98.26%, respectively, indicating high quality and suitability as a learning medium. (Andriani et al., 2022).



Figure 2. Singing Together

The development of this digital comic media also involved a validation stage by media experts, language experts, and material experts, which consistently resulted in a "Very Suitable" assessment for use in the learning process, with a validation percentage reaching 100% from media experts and 94% from language experts.(Andriani et al., 2022; Rusheryanti et al., 2025). These results significantly indicate that the developed digital comics not only meet academic and pedagogical standards, but also have great potential for widespread application in other non-formal educational contexts.(Nurjanah et al., 2023). The overall results of expert validation and field trials confirm that this folktale-based digital comic is very suitable and effective as an educational medium.(Andriani et al., 2022; Kudadiri, 2023; Setiawati et al., 2022). Thus, the results of this evaluation and validation support the continued development and implementation of similar media in the context of religious and character learning in various communities.(Kurniati et al., 2022; Rusheryanti et al., 2025; Setiawati et al., 2022). Furthermore, this digital comic has also been proven to have very high feasibility based on expert assessments of material, language, media, and design, reaching an average of 1 with a very valid category, confirming its potential as an effective teaching aid.(Jannah & Reinita, 2023; Wahyuni & Lia, 2020)This is in line with research findings, which show that comic-based learning media have a high level of practicality and validity, reaching a percentage of 76.25% for expert validity and 80.75% for small group trials.(Nopianti et al., 2022)Other research also supports that digital comics are highly effective in increasing students' interest and understanding of learning materials.(Puspita et al., 2022)For example, a limited trial of fourth-grade students showed that digital comics significantly increased reading interest and comprehension of the material, with most students agreeing that this medium facilitated the learning process and increased motivation.(Nurjanah et al., 2023). Furthermore, the validation results from material experts showed a percentage of 96% and from media experts 91%, indicating the very high feasibility of interactive comics for testing.(Farahiba, 2022)Other studies also show that digital comic learning media is very suitable for use as a learning medium in schools, with validation from media experts of 100%, language experts 94%, lecturer material experts 88%, and teacher material experts 92%(Rusheryanti et al., 2025)This is consistent with research showing that the validity of comic strip media based on the test by learning media experts reached 91.1% and learning design experts 90.00%, both in the good category, as well as learning content experts getting a value of 0.92 with a very valid category.(Safitri, 2023)Based on the evaluation, the developed digital comic not only meets the substantive and visual feasibility criteria, but also significantly supports the achievement of effective and engaging learning objectives for a child audience.(Jannah & Reinita, 2023; Wibowo & Koeswanti, 2021)This suitability is reinforced by validation results from material and media experts, which show that digital comics have adequate content and presentation quality to support the learning process.(Fadillah et al., 2021; Zakiyah et al., 2022). In particular, digital comic media has proven effective in facilitating the understanding of subject matter due to its attractive visual design and structured narrative.(Hasanah et al., 2023)Studies

show that the combination of visual and narrative elements in comics can improve information retention and motivate readers, especially children, to explore complex topics more easily. This aligns with research indicating that digital comics can arouse student interest, support experiential learning, and effectively motivate learning activities.(Hasanah et al., 2023). Therefore, digital comics can be a powerful tool to enhance learning in various educational contexts, including in teaching religious values to children.(Nurjanah et al., 2023). Furthermore, the results of other studies also confirm that digital comics based on a scientific approach are considered very feasible to be developed based on the assessment of learning design experts and learning media experts, as well as individual and small group trials.(Senjaya, 2022).

Activity Description

This community service activity took place in the church environment, beginning with an official opening session and introduction of the community service team, aimed at establishing positive initial interactions with participants. Next, students delivered Sunday school material using digital comics that integrated folklore with biblical values, in line with the week's topic.(Estimate, 2023) This approach was chosen to make the material more relevant and engaging for the children, while also strengthening their understanding of moral and spiritual teachings. Following the presentation, a simple quiz session was held as a form of interactive feedback to gauge participants' understanding of the topics presented, followed by the distribution of lunch and snacks.(Rina et al., 2021) The entire series of activities concluded with a group photo session, which immortalized the moments of togetherness and the successful implementation of digital comics as an innovative educational medium.(Yemima & Stefani, 2019) The implementation of this activity is not only focused on delivering material, but also on creating a participatory and enjoyable learning environment, considering that the effectiveness of comics as an educational medium has been proven to be able to attract students' interest in learning.(Guntur et al., 2023; Yuliarni et al., 2023). Benson in Pattinama emphasized that Sunday School ministry is an essential foundation for the continuity of generations and the dissemination of knowledge about the fundamental truths that underpin human civilization (S et al., 2023). Therefore, this community service activity strategically chooses digital comics as a means to strengthen this foundation, especially amidst the challenges of digitalization that require adaptation of learning methods. The use of digital comics also demonstrates the implementation of the Tridharma of Higher Education, particularly in community service, to apply knowledge practically and innovatively in specific communities.(Nasia et al., 2022) This approach is in line with various community service initiatives undertaken by higher education institutions, where lecturers and students are actively involved in transferring knowledge and skills to the wider community.(Apriani et al., 2023; Januardin et al., 2021) The application of this method is also in line with research results that show high student enthusiasm for comics that have been printed and distributed in socialization activities.(Wijaya et al., 2022) This shows that comic media has great potential as an effective and interesting educational tool, especially in the context of teaching spiritual values to children.(Darmawan & Priskila, 2020) This success also demonstrates the potential of digital comics in facilitating interactive and enjoyable religious learning, as evidenced by similar research indicating that children are very enthusiastic about storytelling activities held to entertain and motivate them to learn through the stories presented.(Suratno et al., 2023).



Figure 3. Games and Quiz Session

The use of comics as an educational medium has been proven to increase children's knowledge, even in the context of health promotion, such as information about COVID-19.(Wardiati, 2022). Other studies also confirm that digital comics have significant appeal to children, helping them engage and enjoy reading, and are effective in the two-way learning process.(Jannah & Reinita, 2023)The use of digital comics has also been proven to significantly increase students' interest in reading and active participation in learning, making it an educational tool that is suitable for the needs of today's educational world.(Sakriani et al., 2022; Wardianto & Hadi, 2022)In this context, community service activities not only implement learning innovations, but also fulfill one of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which requires universities to contribute directly to society based on scientific-rational reasoning.(Zulhazmi et al., 2022). Furthermore, community service is the crystallization of theoretical knowledge obtained on campus to be applied in real life in the daily lives of the community.(Yasa & Wiguna, 2022), creating synergy between academics and the community as a form of knowledge democracy(Shofiro et al., 2023). This is also in line with the main objective of community service, namely providing innovative solutions to problems in society and improving their quality of life through the transfer of knowledge and technology.(Kamariyah et al., 2022; Shofiroh et al., 2023).

External Service Activities

The output of this activity is a digital comic that has been used in community service activities, video documentation, and scientific article publications in national journals. This digital comic is an adaptation of a folktale combined with Biblical values, specifically designed to engage children and facilitate the internalization of religious character values.(Asiyah et al., 2021; Susanto et al., 2021)The video documentation serves as a visual record of the entire activity process, from preparation to implementation, which can be used for evaluation and dissemination of information regarding the program's success. Furthermore, the output, in the form of a scientific article published in a national journal, aims to disseminate the results of this innovation to a wider academic audience and serve as a reference for future research and development of similar educational media.(Amalia et al., 2023). The publication process of this article is an integral part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which prioritizes the dissemination of knowledge and practical experience to the academic community and the wider community.(Kosasih et al., 2023)This community service activity is in line with the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which aims to help the community solve problems in order to create a prosperous society and as a learning process for living in society.(Ali, 2021; Kiptiyah et al., 2023). Thus, universities carry out their moral obligations in organizing community service programs.(Fitriasari et al., 2021), not only as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a means to make a real contribution to community development.(Fadillah et al., 2023). Mandatory outputs in the form of activity reports and articles to be published in national journals are both still in the preparation stage by the team of lecturers and students involved, considering the importance of documentation and dissemination of community service results for the sustainability of the program and scientific references.(Kristianti et al., 2020).

Problems and Solutions

Although this activity has demonstrated success, several issues have emerged, particularly related to the availability of technological devices and a stable internet connection at the service locations. These issues often hinder the implementation of technology-based programs in remote areas, necessitating innovative adaptation strategies. Therefore, solutions such as providing offline devices or developing applications that do not rely on an internet connection are needed to ensure program accessibility and sustainability. ([Marwinda et al., 2022](#)). In addition, providing training for Sunday school teachers on the optimal use of digital comics is also crucial to maximizing the educational impact of the media that has been developed. ([Ningrum, 2023](#)) Developing a comprehensive guide to using digital comics, including integration methods within the curriculum and impact evaluation strategies, can further strengthen teachers' capabilities in applying this medium effectively. ([Zulfa et al., 2022](#)) It's also important to consider developing ongoing training modules to ensure teachers have the latest skills in utilizing educational technology. The urgency of higher education for society lies in its commitment to providing solutions to existing societal problems, particularly those related to the basic educational knowledge gained in higher education that is not widely known to the public. ([Sitinjak et al., 2022](#)) This community service program also provides a platform for lecturers to implement the principles of higher education, including through activities that have a direct impact on the community, such as mentoring in the creation of IT-based teaching materials. ([Setiani et al., 2022](#)).

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this activity confirms that integrating digital comics based on folklore is an effective method for increasing children's engagement and understanding of biblical material. This not only motivates them to learn but also aligns with students' preferences for digital media. ([Estimate, 2023](#)). Evaluation of curriculum, learning design, and media shows that digital comics have great potential as a fun and effective learning tool to achieve educational goals. ([Estimate, 2023](#)) However, the successful implementation of digital learning media such as e-comics still depends heavily on the availability of supporting infrastructure, particularly a stable internet network and adequate equipment at the activity location. ([Afifah et al., 2025](#); [Cahyani et al., 2023](#)) It is hoped that this training activity can be used as a reference for similar activities in the future, both in the Kupang City area and in other areas, considering the great potential of digital comics in introducing national character and interesting new learning. ([Fortinasari & Malasari, 2023](#); [Rahayu et al., 2023](#)). The development of digital comics that are relevant to learning objectives, curriculum, and student absorption has shown a positive impact on learning interest and learning outcomes. ([Estimate, 2023](#)). The survey results showed that participant responses were very positive, with 86.7% stating that the material was relevant and very useful, indicating the program's success in improving participants' understanding and skills. ([Sadikin et al., 2024](#)). The increase in participant motivation was also seen to be significant, where 86.7% felt highly motivated to integrate learning technology after participating in this community service activity. ([Sadikin et al., 2024](#)) Overall, the positive response from participants shows that digital comic media has great potential to increase reading interest and understanding of the material, as shown by the increase in reading interest in elementary school students through the use of comics. ([Palondongan et al., 2018](#)).

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author's team would like to express their highest appreciation to the English Language Education Study Program at Nusa Cendana University for their moral and financial support that has made this community service activity possible. Furthermore, they would like to express their gratitude to the PART of the Imanuel Oepura Congregation in Kupang City for their collaboration and the facilities provided, ensuring the smooth running of the activity and its achievement. Special appreciation is also extended to all participants, both Sunday school children and teachers, for their active participation and enthusiasm throughout the activity, which was a crucial factor in

the success of this program. (Waryanto et al., 2017) This support and enthusiasm is also in line with the finding that participants felt highly motivated to integrate learning technology after participating in similar activities. (Sadikin et al., 2024).

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