# Implementation of Educational Comics as a Media for Teaching Moral Values to Elementary School Students

# Syahla Arafah Razak, Alfiyanti Maya Wulandari, Engga Dallion, Vina Iasha\*

Department of Elementary Teacher Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

\* Corresponding author: vina.iasha@gmail.com

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Articles Information	Abstrak
Keywords: Comic; Elementary School Students; Learning Media; Moral education.	Degradasi moral di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar menggarisbawahi perlunya sekolah untuk secara aktif menumbuhkan nilai-nilai moral melalui pendidikan. Komik pendidikan, seperti yang dibuat oleh Pendidikan.id, berfungsi sebagai alat yang menjanjikan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman siswa tentang nilai-nilai ini. Studi ini mengevaluasi efektivitas komik-komik ini dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan nilai moral siswa Kelas IV. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan guru wali kelas IV-A di SD Negeri 06 Pondok Bambu, Jakarta Timur. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa komik pendidikan oleh Pendidikan.id efektif dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan moral siswa. Penggunaan komik sebagai alat pendidikan terbukti melibatkan siswa, menjadikannya media yang berharga untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai moral pada pelajar muda.
Received: 10-11-2024	Abstract
Revised: 17-11-2024 Accepted: 17-11-2024 Published: 30-11-2024	The moral degradation among elementary school students underscores the need for schools to actively foster moral values through education. Educational comics, such as those by Pendidikan.id, serve as a promising tool for enhancing students' understanding of these values. This study evaluates the effectiveness of these comics in improving the moral value knowledge of Grade IV students. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, with data collected through interviews with the homeroom teacher of class IV-A at SD Negeri 06 Pondok Bambu, East Jakarta. The findings indicate that the educational comics by Pendidikan.id are effective in improving students' moral knowledge. The use of comics as an educational tool is shown to engage students, making it a valuable medium for instilling moral values in young learners.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is undeniably one of the aspects of life most affected by the rapid development of today's era. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered the educational experience, particularly in Indonesia. During the pandemic, many students lost the essence of learning, including character education, which faced numerous challenges due to the ineffectiveness of online learning (Mukhlis & Andani, 2023). Moreover, various phenomena of moral degradation among students have become increasingly prevalent (Pabbajah et al., 2020). This decline in moral values is not limited to older students, but also includes elementary school children (Fitriyani et al., 2021). It is not uncommon for mass media to report on behavioral deviations among elementary school students, such as fights, bullying, drug abuse, sexual harassment, smoking, and other forms of misconduct (Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). A particularly shocking case involved an elementary school student from Banyuwangi, who tragically committed suicide, allegedly due to bullying (Aisyah, 2023).

These phenomena reflect a moral crisis in the educational system. Therefore, education, as the primary platform for fostering personal potential and building noble character, must address this moral crisis by implementing and developing moral and value education from an early age. Character education plays a crucial role in shaping strong, resilient individuals, as learning that only emphasizes cognitive aspects is insufficient for building robust character (Dewi & Alam, 2020). A balanced approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning is essential for maximizing character education alongside intellectual development (Syakur et al., 2022).

Numerous approaches have been adopted in education to support the success of character education. Effective learning is the primary factor in determining whether a teaching and learning activity meets its objectives (Harefa et al., 2023). Successful learning requires not only appropriate strategies, methods, and approaches, but also the use of media that facilitate the learning process (Barokah & Octaviani, 2023; Hanafi et al., 2024). Teachers must ensure that the media used aligns with the material being taught and is appropriate for the developmental stage of the students. With the advancement of technology, learning media in schools has also evolved and diversified (Rachmadtullah et al., 2023). In the 21st century, digital-based media is increasingly being used by teachers to support learning (Ifliadi et al., 2024). These online learning media are not only easily accessible but are also interactive and varied (Setiawan et al., 2022). One such development is the transformation of traditional learning tools into digital comic-based media.

Comics are a form of art that can serve not only as entertainment but also as an educational medium to assist teachers in creating interactive, effective, and efficient learning experiences (Barokah & Octaviani, 2023). In educational settings, comics can function as both a teaching tool for educators and a learning medium for students (Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). Comics have a unique ability to engage people from various educational and socio-economic backgrounds, making them an attractive learning medium for all age groups, especially children (Matuk et al., 2021). When applied appropriately in the teaching and learning process, comics can capture students' attention and promote deeper engagement with the material.

In today's digital age, many online platforms have emerged that offer digital comics as a learning tool (Kuttner et al., 2021). Pendidikan id is one such platform that provides a variety of online resources and applications for both teachers and students across Indonesia, aligning with the government's goal to advance education through digital means. Pendidikan.id launched "Komik Pendidikan," a collection of educational comics featuring positive and high-quality values. The series includes three key categories: general knowledge, health, and moral comics.

However, despite the significant potential of comics in moral education, challenges remain in ensuring their effectiveness as a tool for teaching moral values. Effective integration of comics into the curriculum that meets the developmental needs of students is a critical issue. Previous research has shown that while comics can enhance student engagement and understanding, more studies are needed to explore how effectively comics can teach moral values in the Indonesian educational context (Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). In light of this, moral comics from Pendidikan id are expected to serve as an effective learning medium, helping educators teach moral values to elementary school students and reinstate character education in line with the educational success indicators in Indonesia.

#### 2. METHOD

## 2.1. Research Design

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena occurring in the field. This approach was selected because it aligns with the research objectives of exploring and understanding the application of moral education concepts in elementary school. Through this design, the researcher can describe the dynamics within the school, capturing relevant interactions, contexts, and experiences related to the research topic (Meter & Setiawan, 2023). The descriptive qualitative design allows for flexibility in data collection and is suitable for studies that seek to explore participants' perspectives and real-world situations in detail (Alam, 2021).

#### 2.2. Participants

The primary participant in this study is the homeroom teacher of Grade IV elementary school, who acts as the key informant for this research. The homeroom teacher was selected because of her comprehensive understanding of the classroom environment, as well as her firsthand experience in applying moral education concepts in daily learning activities. By focusing on this participant, the research aims to gather rich insights from someone directly involved in the implementation of character education in the classroom (Allsop et al., 2022). The teacher's insights are considered vital for understanding how moral education is applied in practice. In addition to the homeroom teacher, observational data was also gathered from the classroom setting. The researcher took note of the learning environment and student interactions to provide a holistic view of the educational practices.

#### 2.3. Instrument Data

Data for this study were collected using two primary instruments: observations and in-depth interviews.

#### 2.3.1. Observations

The researcher conducted non-participatory observations in the classroom to capture the natural setting and dynamics related to moral education. The observations were aimed at understanding how moral education is integrated into daily lessons, how students interact with the content, and how the teacher facilitates these discussions. Detailed field notes were taken during each observation session, focusing on the teaching methods, student behavior, and the use of educational media (such as the educational comics).

#### 2.3.2. In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the homeroom teacher to gather in-depth information on the teacher's perspective and experience with implementing moral education. The interviews were designed to allow the teacher to freely express her views, experiences, and challenges in teaching moral values through various media, including comics. The interview questions were open-ended to encourage the teacher to share rich, detailed responses. All interviews were audio-recorded with the teacher's consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

# 2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involves several stages to ensure a thorough examination of the information gathered. Initially, all interviews were transcribed verbatim to provide an accurate representation of the participants' responses, and the observational field notes were reviewed and organized for analysis. In the data reduction stage, the transcriptions and notes were carefully examined to identify key information relevant to the research questions. Irrelevant data were filtered out, and the remaining content was categorized into emerging themes that related specifically to the implementation of moral education through comics. These themes were further coded to identify recurring patterns and concepts across both the interviews and observations. Once the codes were identified, they were grouped into broader categories that aligned with the study's research objectives. The final results were then presented in a narrative format, supplemented with tables and charts where applicable, to organize and clearly convey the findings. To ensure the validity and credibility of the results, a process of member checking was employed. After the initial analysis, the researcher returned to the homeroom teacher to review and verify the findings, allowing for clarification and confirmation that the interpretations accurately reflected the teacher's experiences and insights. This rigorous data analysis process enabled the study to offer a comprehensive understanding of how educational comics can be effectively used to enhance moral education in the classroom.

#### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the interviews with the informant, focusing on three key aspects: students' knowledge of moral values, the use of learning media, and the application of educational comics as a learning tool. The findings are linked to relevant theories and previous studies to provide a deeper understanding of the implications of these results.

#### 3.1. Students' Moral Value Knowledge

The interviews revealed that the informants believe that moral values are deeply connected to character education, especially how children interact with themselves and others. According to the informants, moral values are abstract for elementary school students, which makes it challenging to apply them effectively in everyday life. As one informant stated:

"Moral values are actually related to character values, about how to live in society, as well as a child's attitude towards themselves and their environment. So, whatever moral values they have, will be applied in the community that can be accepted. It should be like that, but in fact there are many other factors so that many children misuse the moral values they have. Moral values are also closely related to Civics subjects, usually children in the knowledge of moral values are fairly good, but still lacking in their application. For example, even though he knows that the act is violating, the child still does not respect parents, does not want to follow religious rules, or for example also smokes. Moral values are abstract for children, so they are difficult to apply and less able to influence the child." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

The informant also pointed out the importance of moral education, particularly in the face of modern challenges such as the widespread access to technology. As one informant explained:

"It is very important to apply moral values, especially now that we are in the age of technology and more open, children can very easily access anything, there is no filter. Therefore, we can also see that there are many incidents that show moral degradation by elementary school students. These moral values should be owned by them and accepted in the society." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

Furthermore, the influence of the student's external environment, including home and community, was emphasized. One informant remarked:

"As for the application itself, children are only at school from morning to noon, the rest of the time they are in their other environment besides school. Actually, without factors from the environment, children are very

easy to mold, therefore the attitude of a child is very influential from his environment, control is needed from both parents and teachers, especially elementary school-age children can be likened to an empty glass that can accommodate all things to be filled. (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

In terms of school activities, the school applies practical methods for teaching moral values, such as reading prayers, greetings, helping others, and reciting the Quran. For violations, the school uses a system of punishments and reminders. As one teacher in the study explained:

"In class, I always apply prayers before and after learning, always say greetings to both teachers and other school staff. I also always remind my students to use 4 important words in a matter, namely 'Please', 'Excuse me', 'Sorry', and 'Thank you', because these basics are the provision for students in the application of moral values. Then if there is something that is not in accordance with moral values or norms at school, I will definitely give a punishment, for example, I once gave a punishment to a student who violated it to write a full sheet of agreement so that he would not repeat it again." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

# 3.2. Comic-based Learning Media

In the context of learning media, the study explored how comics, both physical and digital, can be used to teach moral values. The informant discussed the preference for digital media among children but also emphasized that physical media, which provides concrete experiences, is more suitable for elementary school-age children. The informant stated:

"Elementary school children need something concrete, they like real media, they want something they can hold." But now children belong to the alpha generation, closer to technology. So, if given an image, for example through cardhoard or a projector, they prefer the current projector display. If you say yes, children do prefer digital media, but in fact physical media that is more concrete is more appropriate and suitable for the characteristics of children." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

However, digital media has its advantages, such as ease of access and cost-effectiveness. The informant highlighted the ease with which teachers and students can access digital media:

"Digital media is free, teachers and students just need to download, upload, and done. For physical media, the preparation is also not easy, it takes a lot of time, the materials also need to be searched or purchased first." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

Comics, as a form of physical or digital media, can serve as an effective tool for teaching moral values. The informant expressed that while they had not used comics as a learning tool before, students at the school enjoyed reading comics in their free time. The school's library, which frequently updates its collection, includes comics alongside other learning materials.

# 3.3. Education Comic Owned by Education.Id

The informant was initially unfamiliar with the Pendidikan.id platform but was shown several educational comics available on the site. After reviewing the materials, the informant acknowledged that these comics could be useful for teaching moral values, particularly for higher-grade students. The informant stated:

"Comics are one of the types of books that are most liked by elementary school children, yes, if you look at the appearance of the comic itself, I think this comic is more suitable for students in grades 4, 5, and 6, looking at the contents of the comic such as the story and text which are quite long and the many pages, more suitable for high school children." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

Despite this, the informant noted that the Pendidikan id comics had several advantages, including their accessibility, attractive visuals, and efficiency as learning media. However, they also identified some drawbacks, such as the lack of audio, which could be beneficial for auditory learners. The informant explained:

"It's suitable, really, for learning. Especially in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. This is a modern media that not only makes it easier for teachers, but also makes it easier for students." (interview conducted on May 16, 2024)

The informant ultimately believed that educational comics could potentially enhance students' understanding of moral values by offering them a relatable and engaging learning experience.

#### 3.4. Discussion

The findings from this study highlight several key aspects of using comics as a tool for moral education in elementary schools. The students at elementary school, as indicated by the informant, possess a fundamental understanding of moral values but struggle with applying them in real-life situations. This finding supports Mammen & Paulus (2023) theory of moral development, which suggests that while children may understand moral concepts, their ability to apply them may be limited by cognitive and

environmental factors. The informant's observations underscore the need for explicit moral education and consistent reinforcement, which is aligned with Birhan et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of character education in shaping students' moral behaviors.

The use of comic-based learning media in this study is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary educational trends that emphasize multimedia learning. Piaget's theory suggests that concrete experiences are essential for children in the concrete operational stage, making physical media such as comics a highly appropriate choice (Khadidja, 2020). The informant's preference for physical over digital media resonates with findings from ElSayary et al. (2022), which suggested that while digital media can enhance engagement, physical media fosters deeper cognitive processing. However, it is clear that the use of digital media also has significant advantages, particularly in terms of accessibility and efficiency, as noted by Mayer (Mayer, 2017).

The introduction of Pendidikan id comics as an educational tool offers a promising avenue for improving students' understanding of moral values. The finding that comics can make abstract moral concepts more concrete and engaging aligns with Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 2024). The visual storytelling in comics not only makes the content more accessible but also helps students connect moral lessons to real-life situations. This is consistent with Özkaya et al. (2023) and Cohn (2013), who found that comics are effective in engaging middle-grade students by combining cognitive and emotional elements. The positive reception of Pendidikan.id comics by the informant suggests that comics can be an effective medium for moral education, especially when used in conjunction with other teaching methods.

Despite their many benefits, the Pendidikan d comics have limitations, such as the lack of audio, which the informant noted. This limitation could potentially be addressed by incorporating audio elements into the comics, as Makransky & Mayer (2022) have suggested, to cater to auditory learners and enhance the multimedia experience. Additionally, the lack of teacher familiarity with digital comics platforms like Pendidikan.id highlights the need for further teacher training and support in integrating these tools into the curriculum.

# **CONCLUSION**

Moral values are an abstract concept for elementary school children, making it essential for them to understand how to apply these values in everyday life. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that educational comics about moral values provided by Pendidikan.id can serve as an effective and efficient medium for elementary school students, particularly for higher-grade students (grades 4, 5, and 6), based on the content's suitability for their comprehension level.

The advantages of these educational comics include easy accessibility and low cost, while the main drawback is their digital format, which prevents students from interacting with the media in a tangible way in real life. Nevertheless, overall, the educational comics uploaded by Pendidikan.id hold significant

potential to enhance the moral values knowledge of Grade IV students at SD Negeri 06 Pondok Bambu as a learning tool.

Given the great potential of this educational comic medium, it is recommended that schools and teachers embrace the use of digital media in moral education. Integrating the comics with other classroom activities, such as discussions or value-based projects, could further enhance learning effectiveness. Additionally, developing more interactive versions of the comics, such as adding audio features or other engaging elements, could increase student involvement and improve the overall learning experience.

For future research, it would be valuable to conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the use of educational comics in various schools with different educational contexts to identify the challenges and advantages in diverse settings. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the longterm impact of using comic-based media in moral education on students' character development.

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