

# The Impact of The Use of Reflective Picture Storybook Media on Improving Democratic Character among Fifth-Graders

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**Abstract**—Democratic character is one of the important virtues to be internalized since an early age. Unfortunately, a couple of issues is still facing the efforts to get elementary school students internalized such as character which cannot be developed optimally among students. This research aims to determine the effect of the use of the *reflective picture storybook* media on improving the democratic character of fifth-graders at elementary schools in Bantul Sub-district that adopted the 2013 Curriculum. The research employed a quasi-experimental method with a pretest-posttest nonequivalent group design. The sample consisted of fifth-graders at elementary schools *SD Bantul Timur* and *SD 1 Bantul*. Data were collected using a scale with good validity and reliability. The data were analyzed using t-test with a significance level of 0.05. Analysis results showed that the use of *reflective picture storybook* media had a greater effect on the democratic character of the students than when using media in form of textbooks with a t-value of 4.691 (sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 <  $\alpha$  = 0.05). Through the use of the *reflective picture storybook* media, students can reflect on how to internalize the democratic character in everyday life.

**Keywords**—*instructional media, reflective picture storybook, democratic character, elementary school*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Character education at school is vitally necessary to equip students and prepare them to not only become lifelong learners but also positive contributors to the wider society [1]. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia always strives to improve the quality of character education by making several changes to it and update the national education curriculum. In order to achieve the mentioned aim, it implements the 2013 Curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum applies integrative thematic learning that emphasizes the integration of competencies from various subjects in certain themes. This makes learning no longer fragmented and can include any dimensions of students' competencies holistically. What includes the implementation of character education integrated into the learning process that is expected to facilitate more effective internalization of virtues among individuals.

Individuals with characters are nurtured, not born. Therefore, internalization of virtues should begin at an early age. In this case, elementary schools are the initial level of formal education which, together with other aspects, is at the forefront of attempts to develop character education. The implementation of character education is expected to include three interrelated aspects, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior [2]. To optimally develop these three aspects within individuals, certain strategies should be possessed by them.

However, realities show that the internalization of virtues through the education system at elementary school remains requiring various efforts to improve. Based on the findings of the preliminary research conducted in elementary schools adopting the 2013 Curriculum in Bantul Sub-district, it is revealed that the implementation of character education has not run optimally. The democratic character becomes one of the virtues that still need to be improved in some students. This is reinforced by the results of observation, interviews with teachers of the fifth-graders, as well as self- and peer-assessment coupled with confirmation from classroom teachers suggesting that students remained having problems with participating actively in educational interactions during class discussion. Also, during the formation of a study group, some students still tended to be picky about whom their fellow group members were and did not budge an inch. Some students were not confident to express their opinions. Only a few actively expressed their opinions. In addition, during the instructional activities, some students remained lacking awareness to show respect to others who were still speaking, as evident from the findings that some students did not pay undivided attention to the explanation given by their teachers because these students enjoyed playing or chatting with their friends. Moreover, some students also did not do the group tasks they had agreed together.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that in everyday life, individuals are related to one another. One of the characters associated with other people is the emergence of awareness of one's rights and obligations and those of others. The virtue which is

important to be internalized in this respect is the democratic character [3]. Poor awareness of individual rights and obligations leads to actions that may harm oneself and others. Therefore, the democratic character is one of the characters that need to be fostered as early as possible among students.

On the other hand, the results of the preliminary research also reveal other problems related to one of the obstacles facing the implementation of internalization of the democratic character, namely limited media to support implementation of the integrative thematic learning in the 2013 Curriculum which integrates the values of the democratic character. Most of the existing instructional media are text-oriented books. In relation to improving the democratic character integrated into an instructional process, instructional media helps convey messages from the process of communication between the teacher and students during the process of educational interaction. This later is resulted from the instructional process while making instructions more relevant to and contextual with students' life environment. The use of instructional media can help make an instructional process more effective and efficient [4].

Starting from that point, the findings of literature review indicate that picture storybooks can be used as alternative instructional media to improve the democratic character among students. Picture storybooks help students to learn to understand others, to understand relationships that occur between people and the environment, and to be more empathic [5].

Based on the description above, this research aims to determine the effect of *reflective picture storybook* media on improving the democratic character among fifth-graders at elementary schools adopting the 2013 Curriculum in Bantul Sub-district. The contribution of this research is summarized in the following description.

- a) The test to examine the effect of *reflective picture storybook* media on improving the democratic character among students has been performed.
- b) The media *reflective picture storybook* is recommended as one of the alternative instructional media which teachers can use to improve the democratic character while creating a fun and meaningful instructional activity for students.

Following this section, this article is composed of the following sections: Section 2 presents rudimentary. Section 3 concerns materials and methodology. Section 4 describes results and discussion. Lastly, Section 5 provides research conclusions.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Democratic Character

Character education coupled with fostering democratic values at the level of primary education provides understanding and instils into students the attitude of showing respect to different views in fairly, honestly, and openly with the practice of democracy [6]. In practice, students also need to be encouraged

and taught to make mutual understanding and agreement openly, respect each other and acknowledge diversity and differences between one another and uphold the principles of truth, fairness, and the common good, and the shared purpose and expectation.

The basis of democracy is the interactive participation of each individual. In the context of character building, there are several principles to be developed to foster democratic values. The principles of developing the democratic character are, among other things, respecting others' opinions, i.e. giving equal rights to others to express their opinions according to their characteristics and understanding. The second principle is to have positive thinking over others' opinions. The third principle is a fair attitude towards others' opinions. [7]. Thus, democratic education instils in students how to speak based on good judgment by fostering unity in diversity.

The development of a democratic character will succeed only if students are confronted with a context that guides them to internalize democratic values, i.e. if growing in an educational context does enable and support them to put those values into practice and reflect on them [8]. In the instructional process, teachers do not only transfer knowledge to students, but they can also manage the learning environment where certain topics are discussed and allow them to express and respect a diversity of attitudes, views, and perspective [9].

Attempts to foster democratic values in students undertaken at an early age will be more effective. Childhood is the right time to start discussing education relating to good habits and principles [10]. Elementary schools play an important role in instilling democratic attitudes and achievements in children [11]. During the stage of primary education, children are prepared to live and understand the rules of social life, in addition, to obtain knowledge and academic skills through education at elementary school.

Specifically, the development of the democratic character at the elementary school level in Indonesia is undertaken as stipulated by the Ministry of National Education as one of the eighteen virtues fostered through character education. In connection with the research into fifth-graders, the following are indicators of the democratic character indicator which those fifth-graders need to possess according to the Ministry of National Education: 1) to get into the habit of discussing things with their friends, 2) to admit defeat in an election sincerely, 3) to express opinions about their friend who has been appointed as leader, 4) to give an opportunity to their friend who has been appointed as leader to do his/her duties, and 5) to do activities designed by their friend that has been appointed as leader [12].

Based on the description above, the indicators of the democratic character scale used in this research was developed based on the definitions and principles of the democratic character adopted by numerous experts and the indicators of the democratic character

developed by the Ministry of National Education. Those indicators include: 1) to fairly, honestly, and openly acknowledge and respect different types of knowledge and opinions, 2) to speak based on good judgment by fostering unity in diversity, 3) to get into the habit of discussing things with their friends, 4) to admit defeat in an election sincerely, 5) to express opinions about their friend who has been appointed as leader, 6) to give an opportunity to their friend who has been appointed as leader to do his/her duties, and 7) to do activities designed by their friend that has been appointed as leader.

*B. The Media Reflective Picture Storybook as Alternative Media to Foster the Democratic Character*

The media reflective picture storybook is one of the alternative media to support integrative thematic learning specified in the 2013 Curriculum whose design has been adjusted to the characteristics of elementary students. It is an example of the media developed from a picture storybook that combines learning materials and reflection about the story by presenting examples on how to implement the values of the democratic character in a more simple and concrete manner in everyday life. The use of instructional media can help explain abstract ideas and provide stimulation to students with their respective characteristics that differ from one another so as to provide an optimal learning experience for students [13].

The characteristics of the media *reflective picture storybook* in this context put emphasis on the application of reflective thinking processes inherent in such media which is expected to facilitate students think reflectively in order make it easier for them to internalize the values of democratic character and implement the, in their daily life. This is supported by components of the media, namely narration and illustrations, coupled with the component of reflection activities, including: 1) “*Messages for Student*”, 2) “*Do You Know?*”, 3) “*Questions Based on Reflection about the Story*” 4) *Reflective Journal*, and 5) *Personal Experience*. These components constitute an integral part and each facilitates the delivery of learning materials and serves as a medium to convey the moral of the story containing the values of the democratic character to students. The component of reflection activities above is based on Pickett’s explanation of several techniques that can be developed from reflective thinking processes, which includes reflective journals, comprising dialog journals, peer reflection, diaries, learning logs, audio-video recordings, and so on [14].

Those media components are expected to assist students in understanding and applying the abstract concepts of actualizing the values of the democratic character in everyday life. Through the moral of the story, storyline, and characters, it is expected that the aspects of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior of the students can be touched, thereby helping them actualize the democratic character, as well as the merits of the democratic character and

consequences resulting from the absence of the application of the democratic character in the students’ daily life.

III. MATERIALS & METHODOLOGY

This research was undertaken using a quasi-experimental approach with a pretest-posttest nonequivalent group design. The research design is presented in the table I [15] below.

TABLE I. DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH WITH A PRETEST-POSTTEST NONEQUIVALENT GROUP DESIGN

Group	Pretest	Variable	Posttest
Experiment	O1	X1	O2
Control	O3	Xc	O4

Description

- O1 : Pretest of the experimental group for instruction using the media *reflective picture storybook*
- O2 : Posttest of the experimental group for instruction using the media *reflective picture storybook*
- O3 : Pretest of the control group for instruction using the media of text-oriented books
- O4 : Posttest of the control group for instruction using the media of text-oriented books
- X1 : Instruction using the media *reflective picture storybook*
- Xc : Instruction using text-oriented books

Table I shows that the experimental and the control groups took a pretest to measure the initial democratic character of the students in the respective groups. Furthermore, a treatment was given to the experimental group, i.e. the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* in the instructional process, while the control group got a treatment of the use of media in the form of text-oriented books. After they got those treatments, at the end of the activity, students in each group took a posttest with a view to determining changes in their democratic character.

The research was conducted in Bantul Sub-district, which is a city located in the Province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The research subject consisted of fifth-graders at elementary schools adopting the 2013 Curriculum located in Bantul Sub-district consisting of two elementary schools, namely SD Bantul Timur and SD 1 Bantul. The sample was collected using the technique of simple random sampling. Data were collected using the students’ democratic character scale. To collect the data, the instrument used was the rating scale of students’ democratic character whose blueprint is presented in the table II.

TABLE II. BLUEPRINT OF OF THE DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER SCALE TABLE 2. BLUEPRINT OF THE SCALE OF THE DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER

No	Indicator	Item Number	Total
1	To fairly, honestly, and openly acknowledge and respect different types of knowledge and opinions	1,2,11,21,31	5
2	To speak based on good judgment by fostering unity in diversity	3,6,7,12,16	5
3	To get into the habit of discussing things with their friends	4,17,22,26,32	5
4	To admit defeat in an election sincerely	8,13,18,23,27	5
5	To express opinions about their friend who has been appointed as leader	5,9,14,19,33	5
6	To give an opportunity to their friend who has been appointed as leader to do his/her duties	10,15,24,28,34	5
7	To do activities designed by their friend who has been appointed as leader	20,25,29,30,35	5
	Total	35	35

Table 2 presents the blueprint of the scale of the democratic character. Obtaining a significance value of 0.05 with a df of 30 and  $r_{table} = 0.361$ , results of the test indicate that the significance value of all statement items of the democratic character scale is  $\geq 0.361$ , thus the instrument is declared valid, 2) the research instrument is deemed reliable if the alpha value is higher than the  $r_{table}$ . The research generated an alpha coefficient by 0.942, which indicates that the instrument *democratic character scale* can be used and reliable.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze data by describing the data obtained from the pretest and posttest results of the control and experimental groups, namely to describe the effect of the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* on students' democratic character interpreted through mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, minimum score, and maximum score. Furthermore, inferential statistical analysis was used to test research hypotheses, with the following steps: 1) performing a prerequisite test for the analysis of normality and homogeneity, 2) performing the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test with the statistical test *t-test* at a 0.05 significance level. The *t-test* was used to analyze differences in the effect resulting from the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* and that of the use of the media of text-oriented books upon students' democratic character.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Results

The data obtained were data on the scale of fifth graders' democratic character taken from results of the pretest and the posttest given to the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group in this research consisted of the fifth-graders of elementary school *SD Bantul Timur* with a total of 54 students, while the control group consisted of the fifth-graders of elementary school *SD 1 Bantul* with a total of 52 students. Categorization of the criteria for the mean generated using the democratic character scale

obtained from the students was analyzed by converting the total score of each aspect and/or indicator into qualitative data based on four-scale criteria with the following guidelines for scoring categorization [16].

TABLE III. CATEGORIZATION THE SCALE OF STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER SCORING CRITERIA GUIDELINES.

Score Interval	Grade	Category
$Ri + 1.5 Sdi < score \leq \text{total maximum score}$	A	Very Good
$Ri < score \leq Ri + 1.5 Sdi$	B	Good
$Ri - 1.5 Sdi < score \leq Ri$	C	Mediocre
$\text{Total minimum score} \leq score \leq Ri - 1.5 Sdi$	D	Bad

Description

$Ri = \text{ideal mean} = \frac{1}{2} (\text{max. score} + \text{min. score})$

$Sdi = \text{ideal standard deviation} = \frac{1}{6} (\text{max. score} - \text{min. score})$

Table III presents guidelines for categorization of the scoring criteria of the scale of students' democratic character. Based on these guidelines, conversion of the total score of each aspect and/or indicator into qualitative data was carried on using four-scale criteria on the scale of students' democratic character generated categorization of scoring criteria for the scale of students' democratic character as presented in the table IV.

TABLE IV. CATEGORIZATION OF THE SCALE OF STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER SCORING CRITERIA

Score Interval	Grade	Category
$Ri + 1.5 Sdi < score \leq \text{total maximum score}$	A	Very Good
$Ri < score \leq Ri + 1.5 Sdi$	B	Good
$Ri - 1.5 Sdi < score \leq Ri$	C	Mediocre
$\text{Total minimum score} \leq score \leq Ri - 1.5 Sdi$	D	Bad

Table IV presents categorization of the scale of students' democratic character scoring criteria used as guidelines to determine to which category the democratic character scale score was generated by the students belongs.

##### 1) Descriptive Analysis of the Data from the Democratic Character Scale

Results of data descriptive analysis on the democratic character pretest and posttest of experimental and control group are presented in the table V.

TABLE V. CATEGORIZATION OF STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER SCALE SCORING CRITERIA

Description	Pretest of the Experimental Group	Posttest of the Experimental Group	Pretest of the Control Group	Posttest of the Control Group
Mean	79.96	97.06	80.27	87.21
Median	77.00	97.50	77.00	88.00
Mode	76.00	98.00	76.00	88.00
Standard Deviation	21.39	18.69	21.52	19.34
Variance	457.66	349.26	462.99	374.01
Number of Students	54	54	52	52
Minimum Score	50.00	65.00	50.00	55.00
Maximum Score	125.00	138.00	125.00	128.00

Table V shows that there are differences in the increase of the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, minimum score, and maximum score of the democratic character between students in the experimental group and those in the control group. Data on results of students' democratic character scale suggest that the resulting increase in the democratic character of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group. The mean of the democratic character in the control group increases from 80.27 that falls into the "Mediocre" category to 87.21 that still falls into the same category, while for the experimental group, it increases from 79.96 that falls into the "Mediocre" category to 97.06 that falls into the "Good" category. Furthermore, the frequency distribution of the democratic character scores obtained by the students in the experimental group is presented in the table VI below.

TABLE VI. COMPARISON OF DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER SCORES FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Score Interval	Frequency Prior to Treatment	Frequency After Treatment	Grade	Category
$113.75 < n \leq 140$	7	10	A	Very Good
$87.5 < n \leq 113.75$	10	27	B	Good
$61.25 < n \leq 87.5$	23	17	C	Mediocre
$35 < n \leq 61.25$	14	0	D	Bad

Table VI shows that the frequency of students with a very good democratic character in the experimental group increases after the treatment, i.e. from 7 students to 10 students. Prior to the treatment, the frequency of the democratic character scores of the students tends to fall into the mediocre category and improves to the good category after administration of the treatment using the media *reflective picture storybook* in the instructional process. As for the control group, the frequency distribution of the democratic character scores is presented in the table VII.

TABLE VII. COMPARISON OF DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER SCORES FREQUENCIES OF STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Score Interval	Frequency Prior to Treatment	Frequency After Treatment	Grade	Category
$113.75 < n \leq 140$	7	8	A	Very Good
$87.5 < n \leq 113.75$	8	19	B	Good
$61.25 < n \leq 87.5$	24	23	C	Mediocre
$35 < n \leq 61.25$	13	2	D	Bad

Table VII shows that the frequency of students with a very good democratic character in the control group increases after the treatment, i.e. from 7 students to 8 students. Prior to the treatment, the frequency of students' democratic character scores tends to fall into the mediocre category and such condition remains, meaning that the democratic character scores tend to fall into the mediocre category, after administration of the treatment using the media of text-oriented books in the instructional process.

2) *Analysis of Data on the Effect of the Effectiveness of Media Using t-Test*

After the data have met the prerequisite test, i.e. after the data have been declared normal and homogeneous, hypothesis testing was performed using the independent sample t-test to test the hypotheses. The test was conducted to examine whether there are differences in terms of results of the democratic character scale between the experimental group that used the reflective picture storybook media and the control group and which used text-oriented textbooks during the instructional process. Results of the independent sample t-test are presented in the table VIII.

TABLE VIII. RESULTS OF THE INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST ON STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER

No	Independent Sample T-Test Group	Condition	Significance Value	Description
1	Control Group	After	0.009	There are differences
2	Experimental Group	After		

Table VIII shows that results of the independent sample t-test generate a significance value by  $< 0.05$ , i.e. 0.009. Thus,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, meaning that there are differences in the democratic character between students attending instructional activities using the reflective picture storybook media and students attending instructional activities using the media of text-oriented books.

B. *Discussion*

This research was undertaken to prove that the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* in instructional activities is more effective than the use of text-oriented books in improving students' democratic character. In this context, the term *effectiveness* refers to the extent to which the media *reflective picture*

*storybook* is effective to improve students' democratic character.

Based on the data analysis results on democratic character pretest-posttest means of the students who used the media *reflective picture storybook*, the pretest-posttest mean of the experimental group shows a higher increase compared to that of the control group. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment given to the experimental group using the media *reflective picture storybook* to improve students' democratic character has successfully facilitated internalization of the democratic character among students to be implemented in everyday life.

Moreover, results of the t-test also show that the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* is more effective in improving students' democratic character compared to the use of text-oriented books. Results of the independent t-test suggest differences in the democratic character between students attending instructional activities using *reflective picture storybook* media and those attending instructional activities using text-oriented books, each with  $\alpha < 0.05$ , i.e. by 0.009.

In this research, the media *reflective picture storybook* was developed from picture storybooks. Its effectiveness in enhancing the democratic character is supported by Mallet who states that the power of stories in picture storybooks can help change children's behavior to a more positive one [17]. Thus, the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* can help students to internalize the values of the democratic character to be applied in their daily life.

Internalization of the democratic character through six stories described in the media *reflective picture storybook* puts emphasis on the development of the aspects of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior towards the practices of democracy. This happens through reflective thinking processes involved to understand each story in the process of developing awareness among students so they possess democratic attitudes presented in the media. Each story emphasizes the presentation of the actualization examples of the democratic character that can be applied in everyday life, including good examples of democratic character and consequences resulting from the absence of its implementation in everyday life. These aspects aim to raise self-awareness among students about the importance of democratic character.

Presentation of the stories with illustrations can help students understand abstract concepts. Illustrations (pictures) and texts (words) are two different media, but in picture books, they complement each other. Illustrations make verbal writing more concrete and can enrich the meaning of the text [18]. The component *reflection activities* presented in the media also provides additional assistance to students to reflect on the moral of the story. This is reinforced by Bohlin who argues that by reading of juvenile literature, students have a chance to do moral reflection to gain moral insights and experience from the application of various characters in everyday life [19].

Instructional activities that provide students with the opportunity to reflect on the values of democratic character and the implementation of such values in everyday life contributes to the internalization of the democratic character through interactions, experiences, and learning processes. In the instructional learning, the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* can be used as a measure to perform classroom management by teachers to facilitate improving students' democratic character by discussing the topics presented in the media. This is reinforced by Khatib who discovered that a democratic classroom climate includes consideration, discussion, question-and-answer session, and problem solving as ways to practice democracy [20]. what helps students internalize the way to implement the democratic character well. Based on this perspective, individuals cannot exercise their rights at will. They are aware that the right they use may have impact on others and that they have to consider others while making decisions about their values, attitudes, and behavior [21].

As a result, it can be concluded that the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* is more effective in improving the democratic character compared with the use of text-oriented books. The use of the right instructional media can contribute to realization of learning objectives. Literature is a good teaching tool. Child and teenage characters described in the book may have a significant effect on them, which is almost as strong as the impact of people they know and meet in the real world [22]. Therefore, teachers should be able to choose effective media that can effectively enhance students' democratic character. The media *reflective picture storybook* is one of the media that have been proven effective in improving the democratic character.

## V. CONCLUSION

The use of the media *reflective picture storybook* is more effective in improving the democratic character among students. Effectiveness differs between the use of the media *reflective picture storybook* and the use of text-oriented books. The effectiveness of reflective picture storybook as media to internalize the democratic character is supported by their constituent components that facilitate the delivery of learning materials while serving as a medium to convey the moral of the story to students related to the democratic character. The students reflect on to be implemented in everyday life. The novelty of this media lies on the emphasis on the application of reflective thinking processes that can make learning more meaningful and contribute to students' better democratic character. As for the limitation of the use of this media in the instructional process is limited time. Thus, to overcome this issue, the use of the media can be combined with structured assignment outside tasks given during classroom instruction. Therefore, as an implication of this research findings, the media *reflective picture storybook* is recommended to be used as one of the alternative media to support instructional

activities in order to improve students' democratic character.

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