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Development of the Book Home 1: A Childrens's Fiction Based on Mental Health and Montessori Paradigm (Set Within a Muslim Family Background)

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ABSTRACT

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montessori thought; children fiction; mental health This research aims to determine the intrinsic elements that will be used as a basis for developing Home 1: A children's fiction with mental health nuances and Montessori paradigm (set within a Muslim Family background); describe the development process; and the results of its development. This research is Research and Development with the Borg and Gall flow. However, the Borg and Gall path taken in this research only reached stage six, namely product development and validation testing. This product development is aimed at children aged 5 to 7 years. The use of this product is expected to continue with parental assistance. Some of the characters in this product include Lili, mama, and papa. In the validation test results, a good score was obtained, and it was considered capable of being developed. This research uses research data collection techniques in the form of observation. The result of this research is a draft of HOME 1 which consists of 10 fiction titles. As a continuation of the study, it is necessary to develop HOME 2 with a different fiction title. However, this text only mentions one storyline that represents the overall content in HOME 1.

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INTRODUCTION

Human development and children's mental health are intricately connected. Research indicates that a child's mental well-being significantly impacts their cognitive and emotional development, enabling them to acquire essential life skills. A supportive environment fosters resilience, emotional stability, and problem-solving abilities. Conversely, adverse conditions, such as parental mental health issues or socioeconomic challenges, can lead to emotional and behavioral difficulties, hindering overall development and self-esteem.

As noted by Billick, Gotziz, and Burgert, children's anxiety may be linked to parents' dependency on substance abuse, which often correlates with parental physical health challenges.¹ Furthermore, studies emphasize the role of parenting styles. Authoritative parenting is believed to reduce depressive symptoms and promote positive mental health outcomes in children and adolescents.² It is also widely acknowledged that the family plays a crucial role in safeguarding values at every stage of a child's life.³

From a broader perspective, mental health is a core aspect of human development, as it enables individuals to live fulfilling lives, work productively, and contribute to their communities. Addressing mental health issues in children early prevents lifelong challenges, as many mental health conditions begin before adulthood. Effective integration of mental health strategies in schools, homes, and healthcare systems ensures that children grow up in environments that support their emotional and cognitive needs, fostering healthier societies.

The combination of human development and the rapid evolution of digital technology presents both opportunities and challenges, especially in the context of children's social and emotional growth. As children go through various developmental stages, their exposure to the digital world becomes increasingly significant. Digital technology has now entered the realm of education. However, even the most advanced educational technologies may not yield optimal results if they do not align with students' existing abilities or real-world challenges. Access to information through digital platforms can support learning and foster creativity. However, it also introduces potential risks, such as reduced face-to-face interactions and excessive exposure to inappropriate content. One example is the use of the ChatGPT application, which has the potential to foster negative behaviors such as academic integrity violations. This is also true in the case of children who are often left to use devices without supervision, causing them to explore the gadgets. Although it may seem to make tasks more efficient, when a teacher assigns a task with a short deadline, students may be

¹ Michelle L. Kelley, et al., "Substance-Abusing Mothers and Fathers' Willingness to Allow Their Children to Receive Mental Health Treatment," *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 47, no. 1 (2014): 106–11.

² World Health Organization, "Improving the Mental and Brain Health of Children and Adolescents," Portal Informasi, 2024, https://www.who.int/activities/improving-the-mental-and-brain-health-of-children-and-adolescents.

³ Annet Maria Trobert, "A Life in The Service of Mental Health," *European Journal of Mental Health* 10, no. 1–2 (2016): 157–160.

⁴ Christina Lengfelder, "Mental Health: A Fundamental Component of Human Development," *Human Development Report*, 2017, https://hdr.undp.org/content/mental-health-fundamental-component-human-development.

⁵ Ferdi Çelik and Meltem Huri Baturay, "Technology and Innovation in Shaping the Future of Education," *Smart Learning Environments* 11, no. 54 (2024): 1–6.

⁶ Chelsea Wilkinson, Michelle Oppert, and Mikaela Owen, "Investigating Academics' Attitudes Towards ChatGPT: A Qualitative Study," *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 40, no. 4 (2024): 1–16.

inclined to take quick shortcuts to complete it.

Parents play a crucial role in balancing these dynamics, ensuring that children can benefit from digital advancements while fostering healthy emotional and social development. Chamizo emphasizes that developing emotional competencies enables individuals to navigate complex and stressful situations, potentially reducing student involvement in cyberviolence behaviors.⁷ This highlights the importance of guiding children through the digital world as an integral part of their overall growth.

Human development is a very interesting theme to research. One of the key areas is the development during the stages of childhood. Social and emotional development in children is particularly intriguing, especially when linked to current trends. The rapid digitalization of information allows people to access knowledge more smoothly. The speed of the digital world, which keeps pace with children's development today, is something parents must not overlook. These platforms are dynamically able to adjust to students' needs based on interactions and performance quality. Moreover, the content structure provided is highly organized, ranging from simple to complex, which aligns with students' learning needs to facilitate progress. Parents need to be more aware of the influence of the digital world on their children to support their healthy social and emotional development. There is a consensus that when a digital product, such as AI, is used to assist in deep and meaningful learning, it is likely to become increasingly difficult to understand and justify. In simple terms, while AI tries to process information, it tends to be opaque.

The alpha generation is the generation born in 2010 and above. ¹¹ Currently, the oldest alpha generation is 12 years old. Parents who have children from the alpha generation must be able to keep up with the times. Children have natural behavior that must also be developed, such as freedom of movement, the ability to understand things, the ability to think critically. The development area is divided into aspects, namely social-emotional aspects, physical aspects, cognitive aspects and language. This shows that child development is not just one aspect. ¹² Therefore, the importance of media that helps children's development. One of them is a book.

Books are a medium that can introduce and provide positive habits. Positive habits that can be developed in childhood are the development of thought patterns. Meanwhile, on the affective side, children are required to be able to develop socioemotional and psychomotor skills. This is about how children will learn through motor skills that are appropriate to their developmental stage. This explanation aligns with the three domains

⁷ Mario Pena Garrido, "Mental Health, Violence, and Emotional Competencies in Adolescents," *EducacionXX1* 27, no. 2 (2024): 9–16.

⁸ Neng Nenden Mulyaningsih et al., "Penerapan Media Pembelajaran Digital Book," *Jurnal Pendidikan Fisika* V, no. 1 (2013): 14.

⁹ Elvira G. Rincon-Flores et al., "Improving the Learning-Teaching Process Through Adaptive Learning Strategy," *Smart Learning Environments* 11, no. 27 (2024): 1–27.

¹⁰ Mohammed Saqr and Sonsoles López-Pernas, "Why Explainable AI May Not be Enough: Predictions and Mispredictions in Decision Making in Education," *Smart Learning Environments* 11, no. 52 (2024): 1–16.

¹¹ Christine Michel Carter Carter, "The Complete Guide to Generation Alpha, The Children of Millenials," Informasi, *Forbes* (blog), 2016, https://www.forbes.com/sites/christinecarter/2016/12/21/the-complete-guide-to-generation-alpha-children-of-millenials/#564a2c663623.

¹² F.J. Monks, A.M.P. Knoers, and S.R. Haditomo, *Psikologi Perkembangan: Pengantar dalam Berbagai Bagiannya*. (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 2001), 43.

essential to a child's learning process, specifically corresponding to Bloom's Taxonomy of learning theory.

The increasing use of gadgets, especially in the digital age, raises significant concerns regarding children's development, particularly their mental health and happiness. Research has highlighted the negative impacts, especially when excessive screen time is involved. One of the key issues revolves around the development of Android applications designed for children, which must be carefully regulated. Strict guidelines, such as limiting screen time, are essential to prevent overuse.¹³ Alternative media, such as books, can serve as a valuable substitute, encouraging children's engagement with content that is not centered on gadgets. Further, studies suggest that children under sixteen should not be exposed to mobile phones due to the potential harms caused by mobile radiation, as their brains are still developing and are more vulnerable to such effects. Prolonged use of gadgets can lead to addiction and emotional instability, with children exhibiting tantrums and disruptions in brain functions, particularly in the frontal lobe, which is responsible for regulating emotions. It, means, the presence of devices contributes to students' cognitive learning outcomes.¹⁴ When parents manipulate their child's condition by using gadgets, it is very likely that the child will feel addicted and repeat it.¹⁵ Another impact is that children will often have tantrums when they use their devices too often. This is also referred to as dysfunction or disruption in normal life and distress that can be recognized by parents. 16 This is related to brain function which has begun to be disrupted, especially the frontal lobe which regulates children's emotions. In the long term, research by Herrero indicates that smartphone addiction not only affects psychological well-being but also increases susceptibility to online security threats and cybercrime.¹⁷ This highlights the need for responsible device usage and the promotion of healthier, balanced activities for children.

As a form of concern for children's development, a new effort is needed to provide alternative media that is child and parent-friendly. This is important, considering the psychological well-being of both parents and children plays a significant role in the impact of parenting practices. ¹⁸ One such effort is the creation of books, which can serve as interactive media. These are not conventional books containing only text or diction for children, but rather, there is a content packaging approach that makes it easy for children to understand. ¹⁹ Through books, especially fiction, it can become a connecting medium that

¹³ Weni Tria Anugrah Putri, "Dampak Penggunaan Media Sosial secara Berlebihan terhadap Regulasi Diri Anak," *Islamic Early Childhood Education* 2, no. 2 (2017): 243–249.

¹⁴ Elmira Daulethanovna Bazhenova et al., "The Impact of Mobile Learning on Undergraduate Students' Cognitive Learning Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Interantional Journal of Engineering Pedagogy* 12, no. 5 (2022): 42–53.

¹⁵ Ulufiyatul Kamilah et al., "Pengaruh Perilaku Kecanduan Gawai terhadap Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini," *Child Education Journal* 2, no. 2 (20202): 61–67.

¹⁶ Nicholas David Bowman and C. Shawn Green, "Behavioral Addiction to Technology," *Technology, Mind, and Behavior* 5, no. 4 (2024): 1–3.

¹⁷ Juan Herrero et al., "Smartphone Addiction and Social Support: A Three-year Longitudinal Study," *Psychosocial Intervention* 28, no. 3 (2019): 111–118.

¹⁸ Farzaneh Kosari, Parviz Sabahi, and Shahrokh Makvand Hosseini, "Comparative Effects of Parent Management Training Combined with ACT and Mindful Parenting on Parent-child Relationship," *Journal of Research and Health* 14, no. 2 (2024): 177–188.

¹⁹ Marissa L. Indrayana, Hendro Aryanto, and Aniendya Christianna, 'Perancangan Buku Interaktif

fosters family harmony. Fictional books are expected to present engaging content for children, including choices of colors, themes, and the use of diction that encourages interaction between children and parents.

Fiction books are indeed an engaging medium for children, offering not only entertainment but also valuable lessons for their growth and development. These books can provide insights to parents about how to nurture qualities like empathy, sympathy, respect, and compassion in their children. However, for this guidance to be effective, there needs to be a sense of satisfaction and connection between parents and children. With storybooks, parents can introduce both moral values and religious teachings simultaneously. As stated by Fathurahman, these two aspects are taught together. The interaction that is successfully built is undoubtedly very valuable. The interaction between parents and children represents a dialogical family. This family prioritizes dialogue between its members, addressing both major and minor issues. The long-term impact is the prevention of negative environmental influences, including digital traps.²¹

The increasing influence of technology, particularly the phenomenon of phubbing (when individuals ignore others in favor of their phones), has been shown to negatively impact relationships. Research by Pancani suggests that phubbing can lead to feelings of disconnection and social distance between parents and children, which can hinder emotional bonding.²²

In this context, fiction books that focus on family themes can help bridge the gap in communication by emphasizing emotional connection and the importance of family interaction. The early attachment of a child to their family makes these themes especially significant. Moreover, such books can serve as tools to promote self-love and compassion, both of which are essential for personal growth and family harmony.

In accordance with the explanation above regarding society's need for substitute media for gadgets, it is important to develop the book Home 1: A Children's Fiction Series "Me and Mama" with mental health nuances and Montessori thinking. It is hoped that this fiction will be able to contribute to instilling positive behavior in children from an early age and provide a new feel for interesting fiction books for children. One of the things that is attractive is the ease with which children can understand the words in the book. Of course, the words chosen are appropriate to the child's language development.

The issue of mental health is an issue that is of great concern among society. Starting from just a joke to serious discussion by practitioners. Meanwhile, the number of practitioners treating mental illness is still very limited. There is even a perception that someone who suffers from mental illness is a disgrace and does not know what to do. Including the current suicide case which has been reported via dertik.com about students

Pembelajaran Pengembangan Karakter pada Generasi Alfa' (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Kristen Petra, 2018).

²⁰ M. Fathurahman, "Agama dan Ego Orang Tua (Telaag Kritis atas Spontanitas Anak dalam Pendidikan Keluarga)," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 14, no. 2 (2016): 317–332.

²¹ Azam Syukur Rahmatullah, "Pendidikan Keluarga Seimbang yang Melekat Sebagai Basis yang Mencerahkan Anak di Era Digital," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 15, no. 2 (2017): 212–224.

²² Yeslam Al-Saggaf and Rachel Hogg, "The Effect of Children's Phubbing on Parents' Psychological Wellbeing: A Moderated Mediation Analysis," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1–12.

who committed suicide".²³ This is a reflection for all groups, that what is happening now is a result of previous parenting patterns or the environment. In the hope that cases of mental illness will not recur, it is necessary to take preventive steps by preparing the early generation by making children into a mentally healthy generation.

The fiction book to be developed in this research will offer solutions as a preventive step in nurturing mental health, starting with simple topics. The fiction topic to be raised will focus on family. This aims to ensure that emotional bonds can be formed from an early age. Specifically, the book will make it easier for parents to understand how they should behave with their children. This is related to the indulgent parenting style. The realization of this style involves parental engagement in the child's life. It has a positive correlation with the child's future academic performance.²⁴ The fiction book is expected to serve as a tool to support this parenting style.

The religiosity factors will be presented with an applicative Montessori perception and supported by a consequential dimension which will provide more measurable behavioral insight in the form of religiously based behaviors. Being very interesting, this fiction book has the complexity of content that parents expect. Apart from that, the existence of this fiction book will also have an impact on increasing interest in reading. The ability and interest in reading must be developed from an early age, accompanied by the cultivation of a healthy mentality in accordance with the religion adhered to by the child and family. Through this book that promotes mental health, the hope is to be able to change the mindset of the next generation.

The following is news sourced from the Kominfo portal which is very disturbing in the world of education, "The first fact, UNESCO said Indonesia is second from the bottom in terms of world literacy, meaning interest in reading is very low. According to UNESCO data, Indonesian people's interest in reading is very worrying, only 0.001%. This means that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only 1 person is an avid reader. The different research entitled World's Most Literate Nations Ranked conducted by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, Indonesia was stated to be ranked 60th out of 61 countries regarding interest in reading, just below Thailand (59) and above Botswana (61). In fact, in terms of infrastructure assessment to support reading, Indonesia's ranking is above European countries. The second fact is that 60 million Indonesians have gadgets, or the world's fifth largest number of gadget owners. The digital marketing research institute Emarketer estimates that in 2018 the number of active smartphone users in Indonesia will be more than 100 million people. With that number, Indonesia will become the country with the fourth largest active smartphone users in the world after China, India and America. Through this news, it can be predicted that not only adults, but also children will be exposed to using

²³ S. Wawan and Jauh Hari, "Begini Langkah UGM Cegah Kasus Mahasiswa Bunuh Diri Terulang." Portal Berita dan Informasi," 2022, https://www.detik.com/jateng/jogja/d-6342341/begini-langkah-ugm-cegah-kasus-mahasiswa-bunuh-diri-terulang.

²⁴ Ana M. Tur-Porcar, Javier Jiménez-Martínez, and Vicenta Mestre-Escrivá, "Substance Use in Early and Middle Adolescence. The Role of Academic Efficacy and Parenting," *Psychosocial Intervention* 28, no. 3 (2019): 139–145.

²⁵ OECD, PISA 2015 Results: Excellence and Equity in Education, vol. 1 (OECD, 2015), https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/education-at-a-glance-2015_eag-2015-en.html.

devices more actively. Meanwhile, the use of gadgets poses quite a big danger to children's brain development.

Along with this fiction series, it is hoped that parents will be assisted in providing interactive media for their children's development. The media does not necessarily have to be digital. As we know, providing media is part of the process of educating children, particularly in enhancing their competencies to a higher level than before. More specifically, this relates to the provision of content that can facilitate the development of literacy skills, which is a continuation of mastering the alphabetic principle. It should be noted that providing digital media aimed at solving digital problems does not positively impact a child's higher competency levels. Simply put, this process will also help children achieve maturity in both physical and spiritual aspects. This maturity can be manifested through the exploration of the child's potential. As stated in the following Hadith of Bukrawi:

"The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Every child is born in a state of fitrah (purity). It is their parents who make the child a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian, just as animals give birth to their own kind."²⁸

Educating children by providing them with reading materials not only addresses their needs but, from another perspective, is considered an act of charity. This is reflected in the following hadith:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "A person educating their child is better for them than giving away a sha of charity every day." ²⁹

In this regard, the researcher believes that every good deed contributes to a person's happiness. This is because helping others triggers the release of oxytocin, which acts as a countermeasure against the stress hormone cortisol. Thus, this can enhance mood quality. Given this condition, it can be assured that the resulting behavior will tend not to harm others, particularly in relation to the development of children. This creates a cycle of stimulus and response. When parents educate with kindness, their psychological state is far from stress, which is easily perceived by the child. The child then adjusts to the guidance of the

²⁶ Marina L. Puglisi et al., "The Home Literacy Environment Is a Correlate, but Perhaps Not a Cause of Variations in Children's Language and Literacy Development," *Scientific Studies of Reading* 21, no. 6 (2017): 498–514.

²⁷ Marcos Cabezas-González, Sonia Casillas-Martín, and Ana García-ValcárcelMuñoz-Repiso, "Mediation Models Predicting the Level of Digital Competence of 12-14 year old Schoolchildren in the Area of Digital Problem Solving," *Journal of New Approaches In Educational Research* 11, no. 2 (2022): 168–185.

²⁸ Muhammad Rubini, "Hadits Tarbawi tentang Potensi Anak," *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2019): 25–54.

²⁹ Agung Setiyawan, "Konsep Pendidikan Anak dalam Hadis Nabi SAW (Kajian Ma'anil Hadis Sunan Ibn Majah No. 3661)," *Jurnal An Nur* 7, no. 1 (2015): 18–35.

parents. When this happens, parents have the opportunity to continue educating their child, allowing the cycle to repeat until the child's potential emerges.

What is written here means that if parents nurture their child's potential, the outcomes will reflect the developed potential. Referring to the current research, reading activities can indeed be undertaken independently by children. However, parents must continue to accompany their children to ensure that the essence of children's fiction is effectively conveyed. The presence of this storybook refers to an informal literacy activity, a printed book that provides an opportunity for parent-child interaction. The key moment is when parents read the storybook to their children. This is crucial for the child's mental health, allowing them to successfully explore other developmental tasks.

Choosing books for children to read is a realization of educating the next generation, and beneficial for the academic success of the child.³¹ Because not all books or reading materials have language that is appropriate for a child's development. Storybooks can be used to map reality in certain fields, especially for the most vulnerable groups.³² A child may be able to read all the texts they encounter, but that does not necessarily mean they will understand them. Psychologically, this will form closeness between parents and children. This is especially true for the first series between family children. Because the closeness that is formed from the start will make it easier for a mother to communicate and interact with her child. The formation of closeness makes it easier for mothers to instill good things in their children.

An empirical gap in this research problem can be identified in the limited studies that integrate child health theory with the practical application of media and educational materials in child care. While many studies address child care separately, there is a lack of research focusing on how media and educational materials grounded in child health theory can be optimized to improve children's well-being in everyday settings. Additionally, while theories such as Montessori or developmental psychology have been widely applied in education, there is a gap in research exploring how these theories can be integrated into studies specifically focused on educational media for child health. The main theory used is the Montessori theory, which has been adapted with characteristics such as shorter work periods, special classes, and additional teachers for extracurricular activities, grades, and homework.³³ This study refers to these aspects.

Furthermore, there is a scarcity of concrete empirical data on the effectiveness of educational media in child care, particularly regarding its direct impact on children's mental and physical health. This gap suggests the need for further research to measure the specific effects of educational media on child well-being, and how existing theories can be

³⁰ Gintautas Silinskas et al., "Home Literacy Activities and Children's Reading Skills, Independent Reading, and Interest in Literacy Activities from Kindergarten to Grade 2," *Frontier in Psychology* 11 (2020): 1–15.

³¹ Caroline Gaudreau et al., "Preschoolers Benefit Equally from Video Chat, Pseudo- Contingent Video, and Live Book Reading: Implications for Storytime During the Coronavirus Pandemic and Beyond," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 1–17.

³² Manuela Pulimeno, Prisco Piscitelli, and Salvatore Colazzo, "Children's Literature to Promote Students' Global Development and Wellbeing," *Health Promotion Perspectives* 10, no. 1 (2020): 13–23.

³³ Angeline S. Lillard, "Preschool Children's Development in Classic Montessori, Supplemented Montessori, and Conventional programs," *Journal of School Psychology* 50, no. 3 (2012): 379–401.

systematically applied to meet the developmental needs of children at various stages of their lives. Research that bridges this gap could provide valuable insights into the potential of media and educational materials as tools for enhancing children's health and development.

This book will be developed by considering the choice of diction and language as well as simple sentences that are easy to understand. Apart from that, visuals such as images and colors will be a priority in the development of this book. So, this book series which will be developed in the current research seeks not only from the quality of the written content but also from the visualization side which will be interesting for children and there will be interaction between children and parents when reading the fiction book series Home 1: A Children's Fiction Series "Aku Sayang Mama" with Mental Health Nuances.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the Research and Development (R&D) method. The product and product effectiveness are the results of this research method.³⁴ The reason for choosing this method is because it is in accordance with the main objective of this research, namely to produce a product in the form of a storybook in the children's fiction genre with a Mental Health perspective, and Montessori Thought. It is hoped that the storybook that has been prepared will be a solution for children's psychological development so that it is appropriate to their stages. In more detail, this product consists of 10 children's fiction stories packaged in a book entitled Home 1. However, the intrinsic elements have not been found considering that in-depth observations are needed about the social issues that will be used as the theme of this book.

This research will be carried out in stages. The number of stages in this research was 10 (ten) stages. All of these stages were adapted in the research design for developing the Borg and Gall model. The reason for choosing this research design is the assumption that: firstly, compiling a storybook with various children's fiction is not an easy activity, so this research design is able to help researchers be easier in applying research steps, considering that the research stages are very clear. The second reason, internalizing the three perspectives combined in a book, not to mention adjusting the intrinsic elements of an essay, certainly requires not just one revision. The detailed stages in this research design are able to accommodate this complexity. Although there are 10 stages in total, only 6 stages were implemented in this research. The breakdown is as follows:

First, Preliminary Study and Information Collection. The preliminary study is conducted as an effort to identify the needs or issues that require resolution through product development. This study, which is the initial step of Research and Development (R&D), can be carried out by gathering information. This preliminary study is conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. The aim of this study is to gather information through field studies and literature analysis. The field study is conducted in two districts close to the researcher's environment, namely Magetan and Ponorogo. The preliminary research is conducted with the help of key informants as an opening for the study.

Second, Planning. After conclusions are drawn regarding the direction of the

³⁴ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2007), 404.

research through discussions with colleagues and the research team, the next step is determining the research objectives. Three important points in formulating these objectives include identifying the intrinsic elements of children's fiction, the development process (writing), and the outcomes of children's fiction. Once the research objectives have been determined, the research proposal must be developed. This proposal should include the background of the problem, research objectives, problem formulation, research focus, research benefits, relevant previous studies, relevant theories, research methodology, discussion plan, budget plan, and the research implementation organization. Additionally, the proposal should be accompanied by a plagiarism check through Turnitin. Next, the proposal presentation is conducted in accordance with the regulations set by the Institute for Research and Community Service (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat) at IAIN Ponorogo for the 2023 budget. The presentation is carried out online and reviewed by several reviewers.

Next, the development of the intrinsic elements of the book, which includes the theme, plot, characters and characterization, point of view, and the underlying message, is carried out. The sub-aspects in this research include respect for oneself and others, having insight and a sense of humor, displaying appropriate emotional responses, thinking realistically and objectively, being free from psychological disorders, being creative and innovative, open and flexible, having the freedom to make choices, exhibiting empathy and affection, fostering healthy interactions with the environment, respecting others without differentiating based on social status, education, religion, race, and skin color. Meanwhile, the Montessori aspects used as indicators include freedom, independence, the elimination of external rewards and punishments, and discipline.³⁵ The freedom aspect is detailed into freedom to move, choose, speak, grow, love and be loved, freedom from danger, freedom from competition, and freedom from pressure.³⁶ Other aspects are not elaborated on. However, this text only mentions one storyline that represents the overall content in HOME 1.

Third, early product development. The storybook development phase employs a descriptive approach. This approach is chosen because this stage of the research requires a detailed explanation of the product development process. To be more specific, the process of creating a children's storybook includes pre-writing, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. However, in this study, it only covers up to the editing phase. Two stages were carried out: pre-writing and drafting. The pre-writing activities include developing story ideas, gathering narrative language, deciding on the story's title, determining the characters, creating a synopsis, and making a storyboard. The drafting phase consists of starting the story, bringing characters to life, preparing dialogues, developing the plot, and concluding the story.³⁷

Since the story in HOME 1 contains more than one chapter, after completing each chapter, it was directly handed over to the illustrator to streamline the process. Before submitting the fictional children's conversation drafts, the research team first hired the

³⁵ Lengfelder, "Mental Health: A Fundamental Component of Human Development."

³⁶ Ni Made Sri Laksmi, I Made Suardana, and Arifin Imron, "Implementasi Pembelajaran dan Penilaian Berbasis Metode Montessori," *Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan* 6, no. 5 (2021): 36-38.

³⁷ Bambang Trimansyah, *Panduan Penulisan Buku Cerita Anak* (Pusat Pembinaan Bahasa dan Sastra-Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa- Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2020), 5.

services of an illustrator. The stories created by the research team were based on real-life experiences of the research subjects (the children). The substance of the stories reflects what the children experienced, while the moral messages were aligned with the research variables used. As a reminder, the variables include the themes of mental health, the Montessori paradigm, and the consequential dimension.

Fourth, Expert Validation. The validation of the storybook draft in this research involved two teams of validators: content validators and media (physical appearance) validators. The developed draft of the fiction is expected to align with the story's theme and the research variables, ensure the accuracy of the content, be age-appropriate for children, be easy to understand, use sentences consistent with the research theme, employ words suitable for children aged 5-7 years, use clear and attractive typography, and have a coherent storyline. The media validator is concerned with the appearance of the book, including the alignment of illustrations with the theme, the completeness of the material presentation, and the language used. Additionally, this validator assesses the aesthetic qualities of the illustrations, ensuring they are appealing to children. They evaluate whether the character depictions align with the variables of the study, whether the images reflect the story described in the theme, and whether the scenes depicted match the intended theme. The validator also considers whether the colors used are attractive to children and whether the illustrations accurately correspond with the text written. The instrument used is a validation questionnaire that is analyzed descriptively and quantitatively.

Fifth, product revision. Product revisions are carried out after both validation teams return their reviews. The revision process is done internally among the team members but still in communication with the illustrator regarding the alignment of the dialogue text with the illustrations. Based on the validation criteria, which include content and physical (media) validation, improvements are made in both areas step by step. To facilitate communication between the research team and the illustrator, a planned forum group discussion is organized.

Sixth, early test. This stage of research is carried out using a descriptive method and a qualitative approach. By using this method, the condition of an object is obtained without comparing it to other variables. In this phase, the data aimed to be gathered consists of responses from the children who are the research sample, regarding the draft of the children's fiction. By using a descriptive qualitative method, the researcher is able to analyze and describe the conditions observed in the field. More specifically, this method focuses on natural objects as the researcher acts as the key instrument. As a result, the outcomes tend to reflect the real situation without manipulation by the researcher.

To obtain the data, purposive sampling was used as the sampling technique. This technique was chosen due to the ease of access between the researcher and the subjects who will provide information. As stated by Sugiyono in his book, purposive sampling can be carried out with specific considerations aimed at facilitating the researcher in exploring a particular social situation. Additionally, with this technique, the data to be obtained is adjusted to the research needs through a selection process until saturation is reached. The determination of the sampling area is of course limited to Magetan and Ponorogo. Therefore, this includes children from the surrounding area where the researcher resides. The aim is to become more familiar with the informants who are the research subjects, so that

comprehensive data can be obtained. As for the research subjects, the data sources currently consist of 8 children aged five years, 6 children aged six years, and 6 children aged seven years.

To save time, of the various short story titles collected into a book titled *HOME 1*, the first, middle, and last stories were selected. It is assumed that by selecting these three stories, the quality of the writing (by the research team) can be evaluated from the beginning to the end of the book. This approach helps to identify whether the writing and illustration quality remains consistent throughout, from the first story to the last. It cannot be denied that, as time progresses, limitations and challenges in creating children's storybooks (fiction) will always arise. In this limited trial opportunity, it is hoped that children will easily understand the content and illustrations in the story. This is aimed at assessing the children's cognitive abilities. As stated by McNeill et al., the quality of readability of reading material can be measured by the readers' responses. If the children can comprehend the storyline, it is assumed that the book meets the principles of good readability. The reason why this children's fiction must have good readability is due to its significant influence on learning interest, memory retention, reading speed and efficiency, and consistency in reading habits.³⁸

The testing mechanism is as follows: 1) The researcher provides 3 chapters of the story to all the samples and one adult (parent) in printed form. Initially, it is estimated that each chapter contains one storyline and is about 10 pages long. Thus, 30 pages are provided to the parents to read to the children. If the child is already able to read, the parent will only need to assist or accompany the child to help improve reading fluency; 2) All the parents involved are asked to provide feedback according to the instructions in the storybook; 3) The researcher provides an open-ended questionnaire to be filled out by both the parents and children. This open-ended questionnaire is given online via Google Forms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First, during the research and preliminary data collection stage, it was found that the parenting styles employed by parents exhibited unique characteristics. Despite these differences, all parenting styles were rooted in expressions of love for their children. Parents generally expressed concern about their children encountering undesirable situations. Various responses were observed, even if the underlying reasoning differed. While these justifications cannot be deemed entirely correct or incorrect, the diversity in parenting styles allowed the researchers to explore the events children experience in their daily lives. This exploration offered a compelling opportunity to compile such experiences into a book narrating the children's stories. It was equally intriguing to combine parents' experiences into the same book alongside their children's stories. By integrating real-life events with specific moral messages, the book aims to convey that all events in a child's life contribute positively to their development, provided these experiences are addressed constructively. Second, based on the focus group discussions, the book was designed for children aged 5 to 7 years and developed as a picture storybook. This format was chosen to meet the needs identified during the interviews and to simplify the illustration process compared to comics.

³⁸ D.D. Tampubolon, *Kemampuan Membaca :Teknik Membaca Efektif dan Efisien* (Bandung: Angkasa, 1990), 32.

Additionally, opting for a collection of short stories ensures that insights gained from interviews with parents of pre-literate children are not overlooked. Third, the planned product output consists of a book that portrays activities and unique parenting practices. The primary output is a picture storybook targeted at children. Fourth, this stage also involved determining the data requirements and concluding the development process.

Second, during the research planning stage, the following data were obtained: the formulation of research objectives, allocation of human resources and time, selection of testing methods, and the preparation of the research proposal. Additionally, a review of the research proposal presentation was conducted. Furthermore, results were achieved in developing intrinsic elements of the product, conducting limited feasibility studies, and implementing the revision process.

Third, during the early product development stage, the data collected included the process of hiring an illustrator and determining product characteristics such as the printed book's size. The process of writing children's fiction also commenced with the prewriting phase. Subsequently, a draft was compiled, including a story titled *Aku Sayang Papa dan Mama*. While the study does not detail the entire content, this example serves as a representation of the HOME 1 project. The activities in this phase are as follows:

Arranging Intrinsic Elements. The intrinsic elements in a story are the theme, storyline, characters and setting of the story. The theme created is in accordance with the title, namely Children's Fiction with Mental Health Nuances and Montessori Perspective. The plot of the story is structured starting from introducing the existing situation to give rise to the conflict experienced. Next, the solution section is displayed as a solution. Parents are directed to be able to improvise when reading stories together with their children. The characters in the story will also be conveyed clearly through the identities of characters such as girls or boys who have Indonesian backgrounds with Asian culture. Meanwhile, the background of the story can be described through the situations in the storybook.

Arranging Extrinsic Elements. Extrinsic elements are elements that function to build ideas from stories that are related to the socio-cultural background of the community and the background of the author as well as the values contained in the stories created in the storybook. Of course, the background created in the story is in accordance with the conditions that occurred from the results of observations and interviews during pre-research. The majority of socio-cultural conditions come from Java, because in general Javanese culture also overlaps with Indonesian culture. Therefore, the storybooks that have been prepared can be used by all groups from different cultural backgrounds. Because the issues raised are general issues related to mental health with the Montessori thinking.

Results of Storyboard Preparation. Based on the product development indicators used, the text and illustrations in the fiction book will create aspects of the existence of the Montessori Method and Mental Health Perspective. To arrange story chapters or story titles, a Mental Health perspective is used. To find out children's responses, Montessori Method or Paradigm is used. This study has a perspective of Muslim family activities. Thus, there are several activities in which there are activities such as prayer and ablution. The procedure for ablution shown in this story refers to the information listed on the website of the Ministry of Religion

of the Republic of Indonesia.³⁹

Preparing Product Prototypes. After the manual sketching process and coloring, below are several examples of storyboards that have been combined with illustrations.

Fourth, during the expert validation stage, the following data were obtained: Validator 1 evaluated aspects such as the alignment of the story with the research variables, the accuracy and appropriateness of the content for the child's age, the ease of understanding the narrative, the relevance of language to the research theme, the developmental appropriateness of the vocabulary, and the coherence of the storyline. Each of these aspects received a minimum rating of "good." Similarly, Validator 2 assessed the design, visual quality, content-to-illustration alignment, and the organization and readability of the language, all of which also achieved a minimum score of "good."

Fifth, during the product revision stage, the researchers revised the product based on feedback from the content and media validators. This phase progressed more swiftly than initially planned, allowing the researchers to save two days for subsequent steps in the research timeline, such as contacting research subjects. Despite minor challenges, the revision process proceeded smoothly.

Sixth, during the early testing stage, several findings were obtained as follows:

The results of the limited trial with 20 subjects, regarding the content and media presentation of the storybook, are as follows: 1) Relevance of the Story to the Research Theme: Most subjects felt that the story was aligned with the research theme, particularly in its focus on children's mental health. The portrayal of an active child with imperfections (e.g., whiny and spoiled) was seen as appropriate, though some disagreed, noting that the story did not address mental health. 2) Accuracy of Content: All subjects agreed that the content accurately depicted typical children's behavior. The main character was not perfect, which made the story more relatable. 3) Suitability for Children's Age: Parents acknowledged that although the children were 5 to 7 years old, the story was appropriate, and the children seemed engaged with the illustrations, which added comfort and joy. 4) Ease of Understanding: Parents felt that the story was easy to follow, with the main character's actions being easy to imagine, especially with the help of illustrations. Feedback from children confirmed that the narrative flowed well and did not jump around. 5) Relevance of Sentences to the Research Theme: Parents initially felt that the sentences did not directly relate to the research theme. However, upon further clarification, they understood that the story addressed mental health issues, linking to the research topic. 6) Age-appropriate Vocabulary: All parents agreed that the language used was familiar and appropriate for everyday use by children. 7) Story Coherence: Parents confirmed that the story's sequence was logical, and children understood the plot. This suggests the content was appropriate and digestible for the target age group. 8) Illustrations Consistency with Text: Parents acknowledged that the illustrations matched the story text and were an integral part of the narrative. The design was appealing, though some suggested the illustrations could be more vibrant to stand out more.

³⁹ Ditjen Bimas Islam Tim Layanan Syariah, "Cara Wudhu Lengkap dengan Niat, Doa, dan Sunahnya," Portal Informasi, 2023, https://kemenag.go.id/islam/cara-wudhu-lengkap-dengan-niat-doa-dan-sunahnya-tY9ZR.

This is one of the storybook titles out of the 10 stories that have been developed:











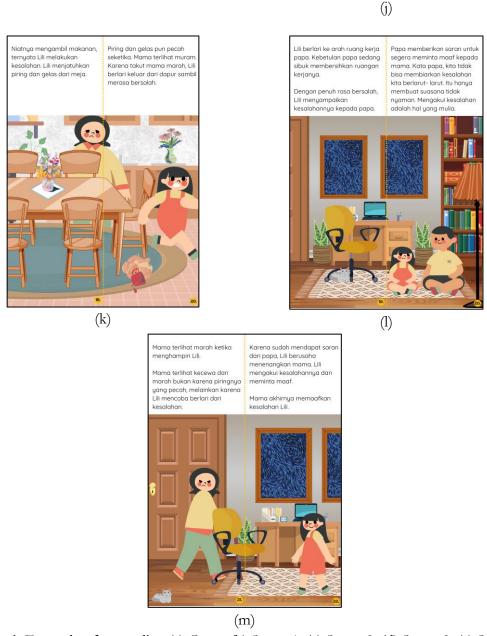


Figure 1. Example of a storyline (a) Cover (b) Scene 1; (c) Scene 2; (d) Scene 3; (e) Scene 4; (f) Scene 5; (g) Scene 6; (h) Scene 7; (h) Scene 8; (i) Scene 9; (j) Scene 10; (k) Scene 11; (l) Scene 12; (m) Scene 13

CONCLUSION

During the pre-product development phase, several key findings emerged. Among them is the representation of diverse parenting styles, which were processed into stories relevant for children, supporting their cognitive and emotional development. Next, the product development process, which involved content and media validators, was deemed appropriate for children aged 5–7 years. Following this, positive responses were observed during a limited trial by distributing several story titles and their contents to children. Additionally, the development of this storybook successfully integrated research objectives

into the stories, making the book not only entertaining but also educational. Furthermore, the collaboration between researchers and illustrators resulted in visually appealing designs. Finally, the development of this storybook demonstrated significant potential to transform qualitative research findings into practical products.

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