

Morality Values in The Modified Mother Character in Malin Kundang Folktale Book in Digital Illustrated Form

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Abstract

This research aims to discuss a representation of the mother figure in the folktale of Malin Kundang from Minangkabau, West Sumatra through a happy ending in the form of a picture storybook. The design process uses the General Visual Communication Design 2 method, which consists of research, analysis, synthesis, themes, communication strategies, added value, media selection, visualization, and production. In this modified story, the mother is presented as a forgiving figure compared to the original version of the story through the storyline, camera angles, player interactions, gestures, typography, and story visuals. This book, which was designed to target children aged 7 years old, received a positive response from respondents who received the message about a forgiving mother figure.

Keywords: Digital, Folktale, Indonesia, Mother, Storybook

Introduction

Folktale is a form of culture that originates and develops in a society and often becomes a characteristic of an area. Folktale can be a form of communication that conveys moral messages from generation to generation from ancestors to successors. There are at least more than 365 folk tales spread across various regions in Indonesia. Even the Directorate General of Culture of the Ministry of Education and Culture stated that there are around 945 folk tales spread across 34 provinces in Indonesia, consisting of 465 fairy tales, 385 legends, and 95 myths (Ihsan, 2022). One of the folk tales highlighted in this research is the legend of Malin Kundang originated from Padang, West Sumatra. The main character, Malin Kundang, experiences a drastic change in character because he disobeys his mother and is ultimately cursed to become a stone. To preserve folktale, various efforts are made. Various forms of media are designed in such a way in order to present folktale in an attractive way. Picture storybooks are a form of media that is often used. A research on Malin Kundang folk tale in an interactive storybook aimed at children aged 5 - 7 years old is conducted by Lomempow & Vdaya (2022). Malin Kundang has also been presented in a storybook entitled 3D Archipelago Fairy Tale Series: Malin Kundang, published in 2017 (Putri, 2021). The picture storybook itself is a book that combines stories with pictures, aiming to encourage appreciation and love of books and better children's interest in reading. This book is chosen by many adults to read with children. The use of picture storybooks has several attractions, such as processing meaningful language and themes, helping to develop children's imagination, and conveying certain information and messages. In several studies it was found that storybook media could improve reading comprehension abilities and also student learning outcomes (Zubaidah, 2021) (Apriatin, Ermiana, & Setiawan, 2021) (Juwita, Amanda, & Utami, 2024) (Ryzka & Solihati, 2023) (Kurnia, Ummah, & Puspitasari, 2023). Storybook media can also influence a person's character.

In Harmita & Zulminiati's (2023) research, they found that storybooks had influenced the discipline character of kindergarten students. In line with this research, Salis et al also found that storybooks had a significant effect on elementary school students' attitudes towards preventing the transmission of Covid 19 (Salis, Pratama, & Anam, 2023). Storybooks can also motivate students as found in research by Rukmana et al (2023). The various advantages of storybook media have led researchers to choose this media as the medium for introducing Malin Kundang's story. What is different in this research is that there is a modification in Malin Kundang's storyline, which is presented with an alternative good ending, where Malin Kundang's curse can be solved after he apologizes to his mother. This is in line with the values of forgiveness, which is important in building harmonious relationships between people, as taught in Islamic teachings and practiced in everyday life.

The characters, storyline, and background in a story contain important values that represent certain ideology. It is not uncommon for the values embedded in a story to carry certain moral values that are deliberately conveyed to the readers, either implicitly or explicitly. In this positive ending version of Malin Kundang's story, the character of Malin Kundang's mother is reinterpreted and modified from the original version. In this version, different moral values are conveyed through the character of the positive version of Malin Kundang's mother. This storybook is aimed at children aged 7 years old across Indonesia, who are interested in reading and looking at pictures and are intelligent and active. Stories are packaged in digital storybook media to support current information technology developments and can be accessed anytime and anywhere via gadget or desktop.

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach in describing and analysing the moral values in the positive ending version of Malin Kundang story. Meanwhile, in designing digital folktale books, the research method used is the General Visual Communication Design 2 (Safanayong, 2006), which consists of nine stages as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Visual Communication Design Method 2 (Safanayong, 2006)

Discussion

a. Design Process

At the research stage, researchers collected data that supported the design of Malin Kundang's digital storybook, which consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews regarding folktales. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from literature, both in research and relevant data.

Before designing the digital picture storybook Malin Kundang with the character of a forgiving mother, researchers surveyed to ensure that the specifications that would be presented were in line with the audience's needs. In this survey, researchers have collected several questions that are summarized in an online questionnaire via Google Form. The results of the survey can be a helpful guide in determining the specifications to be used. There are 10 questions including, 1) the name of the respondent's child; 2) The child's elementary school class range; 3) Questions about how the Malin Kundang folktale can be more interesting; 4) Questions about the mother character in the Malin Kundang folktale; 5) Questions regarding the importance of the moral message of mutual forgiveness; 6) Consent questions regarding the choice of story media; and 7) Questions regarding research into the Malin Kundang folktale. In this research, 31 respondents were involved according to the target audience. Based on the results of a survey involving 31 respondents, it was discovered that 96.8% of respondents chose to give a moral message of forgiveness in the Malin Kundang folktale. Primary data was then collected through interviews with parents and children at SDN Sumorame Sidoarjo. Interviews were conducted to look for information about folktale culture that was needed to adapt the specifications of this research. This information will become a reference for the main work in the form of Malin Kundang's digital picture storybook with the mother as a forgiving figure.

Next, from the collected data, the researcher carries out an analysis. The analysis stage served as a strategy used to find out and recognize in greater detail the digital picture storybook of the Malin Kundang folktale, the great character of the forgiving mother. The analysis used for this design uses 5W+1H to determine the theme and content to be created. The design of the digital picture storybook about the Malin Kundang folktale started with searching for potential and problems. Quoted from the website bogorkab.go.id, 5W+1H are questions used to find the main points of news and develop news or a story. Data collection was conducted using 5W+1H questions to find the main points that the researcher raised, namely the design of a digital picture storybook of Malin Kundang folktale with the character of a forgiving mother. The researcher then synthesized the results of the analysis to design the concept of this folktale book. The results of the synthesis can be used as a visual reference in creating a design for Malin Kundang's digital picture storybook. The synthesis will be used to decide on the concept of dramatic plot, the concept of depiction style, and targets. After completing the synthesis, the next stage is finding the theme. Researchers then designed the theme of this digital picture storybook. The theme is about the mother figure that is modified to that of forgiving mother, which shows the opposition of the author the mother figure in the folktale. This modified folktale of Malin Kundang tries to have a forgiving mother figure.

At the stage of finding communication strategy, the researcher wants to reach the communication comprehension stage of the digital picture storybook a forgiving mother figure. The communication purpose in designing this digital picture storybook of Malin Kundang is to find one positive figure of a forgiving mother. So that this theme will allow students to learn, enjoy, and understand the moral messages given in the content of the story as well as to introduce Indonesian folktale so that it would not disappear. Apart from that, using rational approach to convey the message, the book is design with a layout like the following, a digital picture storybook that has less narrative text and more pictures in it. This is to make it easier for children to explore images. Meanwhile, for the emotional message approach, namely the direct approach taken by the bookmaker, is to stimulate the sense of sight. The added value of this design is that it has an alternative story idea that is different from the Malin Kundang legend in general. Apart from that, the presentation emphasizes the visualization of images in a semi-cartoonish and digital style so that they are easy to access via any platform. Using an attractive, semi-cartoonish style is expected to attract children's interest in reading.

The main work in this research is a digital picture storybook titled "The Malin Stone and the Miracle of Forgiveness", using A4 size with dimensions of 210 mm x 297 mm. This digital picture storybook is designed with a portrait canvas orientation, thus providing a wider space to present stories and pictures in good detail. At the visualization stage, the principle of layout arrangement will be applied by highlighting the portion of the illustration in its presentation compared to the text portion of the story on each page. By highlighting parts of the images hopefully it will increase children's interest in reading. The principles above are more applied in determining the right colour, composition, shape, and typography selection. The production of this digital picture storybook uses digital illustration drawing techniques using the SAI Paintool application. In this digital picture storybook, the depiction style that is used is a semi-realist cartoon style. Concerning the colouring of the story books, pastel colours are used that will create a good mood so that the eyes can enjoy comfortably, especially children. The character references taken are traditional cartoonist-style characters typical of Padang, West Sumatra, which have characteristics that reflect the local culture and heritage of the area. Traditional characters in Padang cartoon style create a unique impression and depict the richness of local culture and heritage that should be preserved and appreciated.



Figure 2. Reference to Traditional Padang Clothing Source Wikiwand.com

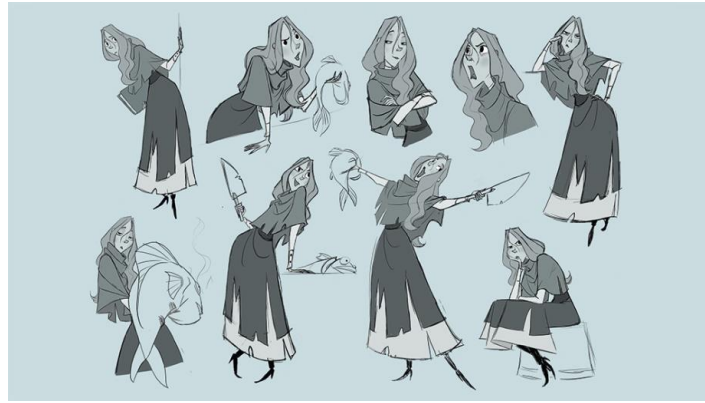


Figure 3. Character design reference from the cartoon film Klaus Source variety.com

The production process of this digital picture storybook uses digital illustration drawing techniques using the Easy SAI Paint Tool application, which is a computer device application that provides various drawing features. Making use of this application, the pictures for storybooks will be created digitally.

In the cartoonist-style digital sketching process, the researcher creates a new layer and starts a rough sketch using a thin brush. Then, researchers decide on the shape of the face and main elements such as eyes, nose, and mouth, and add details to the character's face, body, and clothing. At the lining stage, the sketch is smoothed and given sharper contours. The line thickness is adjusted as needed to emphasize important parts of the image. After the lining stage is complete, continue colouring the image. The colour palette is chosen according to the character and atmosphere you want to present. Using digital pencil or brush tools, the drawing area is filled with the right colour depth, and dimension for each element. During the colouring process, colour value adjustments, gradation improvements, or small details are added that can increase the life of the image. After colouring the image, the overall composition of the image, correct proportions and perspective, as well as any details that may have been missed are checked again. After the colouring stage, shadow and lighting effects are applied to the illustration. This aims to give a three-dimensional impression and a dramatic feel to the illustration. Shading techniques or dark colour gradations in certain areas are applied to create a shadow effect.

At this stage of the effect, highlights with a lighter colour are applied to create a real lighting effect. This process can involve the usage of blending or smudging techniques to gently blend the colours. By providing appropriate shadow and lighting effects on images, illustrations experience an increase in dimensional depth. The result is that the illustrations appear semi-realistic.

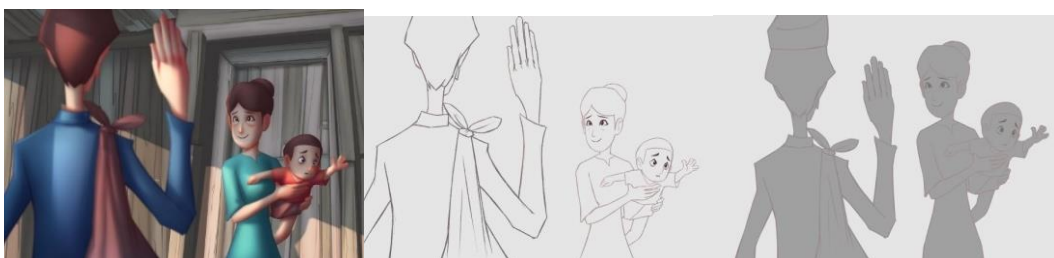




Figure 4. Sketch stage, pre-colouring, shading, and lighting

Figure 5. Colour palette for characters

After the lighting stage, the layout of the text is done by carefully selecting the typeface that matches the character of the story and the atmosphere of the picture. This layout stage is very important because it plays a significant role in creating an attractive and aesthetic layout, which ultimately provides a pleasant reading experience and makes it easier for the audience to understand the story. With a careful and creative layout stage, the overall composition of the digital picture storybook is arranged effectively. The result is a storybook that is visually attractive, easy to read, and able to strengthen the narrative that you want to convey to the audience. Furthermore, after the illustration work is completed, the illustration will be published as a printed or digital landscape A4-size digital picture storybook.



Figure 6. Layout stage page 30

b. Moral Values in the Positive Version of Mother Character in Malin Kundang Digital Illustrated Folktale Book

The main story of this digital picture storybook use the plot of the story of Malin Kundang, which is the story of a mother named Mande Rubayah and her child, Malin Kundang. The story consists of several story structure parts, including character introduction, problem emergence, and problem resolution. In the meantime, the main story is like the following. In Pantai Air Manis Village, Mande Rubayah lived with her husband and their son, Malin Kundang. Her husband had to go abroad, and when their village was hit by an epidemic, Malin Kundang fell ill. His mother prayed with all her heart and Malin Kundang recovered. Several years later, Malin Kundang was determined to become a rich merchant and he decided to go abroad. With hard work, he achieved success. However, when his mother missed him, he didn't recognize her and threw her out. Malin Kundang's mother cursed him, and his ship was destroyed in a storm. Malin Kundang turned into stone. After the mother forgave him, the stone's curse was broken. Malin Kundang regretted and apologized. They then lived happily ever after as a complete family.



Figure 7. Malin Kundang character design

In cartoon style the Malin Kundang character is a man with a slender posture. He wears bright red clothes, which create a cheerful and enthusiastic impression. On top of his head, there is a red hat that adds charm to his appearance. Apart from that, Malin Kundang's character also wears a brown sarong, which gives a traditional feel of local culture. The brown colour of the sarong gives a distinctive touch to her appearance. With a combination of red clothes, a red hat, and a brown sarong, the character Malin Kundang seems to steal the attention with his unique appearance and is easily recognized in the world of cartoons.



Figure 8. Mande Rubayah character design (Malin Kundang's mother)

Mande Rubayah's character design takes a cartoonist style, depicting a woman with a slender body. She wears a striking green shirt that looks simple, with a cut that fit Mande Rubayah's slender body shape. Her hair is tied neatly in a simple way. The Mande Rubayah skirt is of dark brown fabric that circles perfectly around her waist, giving a traditional and classic impression. Despite her thin body, Mande Rubayah still looks graceful and full of gentleness. Her facial expression shows kindness and wisdom, reflecting the nature of a loving and wise mother.



Figure 9. Character design for Malin Kundang's wife

Malin Kundang's wife, in cartoonist style, is depicted as a woman who has an elegant and graceful appearance. She wears traditional Minangkabau clothing with a striking and attractive red colour. Her clothes fit her body perfectly, showing off her grace and perfect figure. On her head area, she wears fabric matching the colour of her clothes, adding a harmonious touch to her appearance. The cloth can be a scarf or hair ornament that matches the outfit. Around her neck, she wears a beautiful and sparkling gold necklace. She wears light make up that enhances her beauty, showing an expression of elegance and gentleness. Malin Kundang's wife appears as a woman who is elegant, classy, and full of typical Minangkabau charm.



Figure 10. Page Layout 12 – 13

In the layout design, the typeface is chosen according to the character in the story and the atmosphere of the image. The text is placed thoughtfully to maintain balance in the composition and ensure the message is read clearly. The size, colour, and style of the letters are set according to the illustration style being used. Layout is important because it creates an attractive and aesthetic look, ensuring a pleasant reading experience and making understanding easier for the audience. With a careful and creative layout, digital picture storybooks can be arranged effectively. The result is a storybook that is visually appealing, easy to read, and strengthens the narrative for the audience. The digital picture storybook "Batu Malin and the Miracle of Forgiveness" is the main work in this final project. This book is A4 size with dimensions of 210 mm x 97 mm. In its design, this digital picture storybook adopts a portrait canvas orientation, which means the book pages are positioned vertically. This digital picture storybook is intended for children aged 7 years old to read independently and that is the reason it is designed with simple text and more illustrations than text. In this book, the plot and characters are kept simple so that children aged 7 years old can easily identify them. The colour of the text and illustrations support each other, helping the children to read and comprehend the story and the message in it. Apart from that, this book has short sentences and moral messages that are conveyed to children.





Figure 11. Cover page and appearance of the digital storybook

In this research, Malin Kundang's mother, Mande Rubayah, forgive her son who has disobeyed her. This then gives a different ending to the ending of the original story. In the original story, Mande Rubayah doesn't forgive Malin Kundang and curses Malin Kundang turning into stone. Meanwhile, in this research version, Mande Rubayah forgives Malin Kundang, so that Malin Kundang, who was previously a stone, turns back into a human. This research examines the message of moral values contained in this latest version of the story with a focus on the Mande Rubayah character. From the 39 pages designed, the moral values of Malin Kundang's mother's character are depicted when interacting with other figures such as Malin Kundang's father, Malin Kundang, and Malin Kundang's wife. Malin Kundang's mother is shown as a forgiving, patient, and loyal character.

Moral values are beliefs that are usually used to determine what is right or wrong in living life for a person or group of people. Many factors influence the moral values that a person believes in, for example how children are raised, the education they receive, their religious and cultural beliefs, and the social environment in which a person lives. The implication is that moral values vary from one individual to another, and can also differ between one group or society and another group or society.

Researchers categorized the data of 10 moral values in this story into three categories, which are:

- a. The moral values contained in the relationship between humans and God include: The moral values of surrender is found on pages 8 and 9 when Malin Kundang's mother laments her fate and that of Malin Kundang who was left behind by his father. Furthermore, the moral values of surrender also appears on pages 32 and 33 where Malin Kundang's mother cries heartbrokenly praying to God. However, at the same time, the moral values of revenge also appears when Malin Kundang's mother curses her son turning into a stone. The moral values of patience and sincerity are found on pages 26 and 27 when Malin Kundang's mother surrenders to God regarding the news that Malin Kundang has not come home.



Figure 12. Moral values of patience and sincerity on pages 26 and 27

- b. The moral values contained in the relationship between humans and themselves include: the moral values of loyalty is found on pages 6 and 7 when Malin Kundang's loyal mother waits for her father to return home to wander. This appears again on pages 28 and 29 when Malin Kundang's mother waits faithfully for Malin Kundang to return from overseas.

The moral value of courage is found on pages 20 and 21 when Malin Kundang's mother bravely let her beloved child Malin Kundang to leave the village overseas. The moral values of never giving up and being independent are found on pages 14 and 15 when Malin Kundang's mother works alone to support herself and her child Malin Kundang.



Figure 13. The moral value of loyalty on pages 6 and 7

- c. The moral values in human relationships with fellow humans include: The moral value of responsibility is found on pages 8 to 13, which show how Malin Kundang's mother raised Malin Kundang from childhood to adulthood alone without the help of her husband.

The moral value of compassion is found on every page of Malin Kundang's

mother. When Malin Kundang interacted with Malin Kundang's father and Malin Kundang himself. The moral value of forgiveness is found on pages 38 and 39 when Malin Kundang's mother forgives Malin Kundang.



Figure 14. The moral value of forgiveness on pages 38 and 29

Conclusion

This research presents the design of a good mother character in the Malin Kundang folktale by utilizing a fan fiction approach. The Malin Kundang folk tale as an original work was chosen to be developed. The focus of the story is directed at the characters Malin Kundang and his mother, Mande Rubayah, who will be given different characteristics from the original story. The backgrounds and character traits are developed strongly and deeply. The story was changed to a good ending by adding new elements, this story ends with Malin's mother forgiving Malin Kundang. Then his mother's tears broke Malin Kundang's stone curse. Malin Kundang regretted and apologized sincerely. They live happily as a complete family, leading the story to a good ending. Based on the results of data collection, it was found that the moral values that were most often found were surrender, loyalty, compassion, and responsibility in the character of Malin Kundang's mother. Apart from that, other moral values are also noticeable, although not as much as before, such as patience, sincerity, courage, independence, and forgiveness.

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