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Research Article

Multicultural Literacy Learning Model Based on Indonesian Folktales in Elementary School Indonesian Language Learning

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Abstract

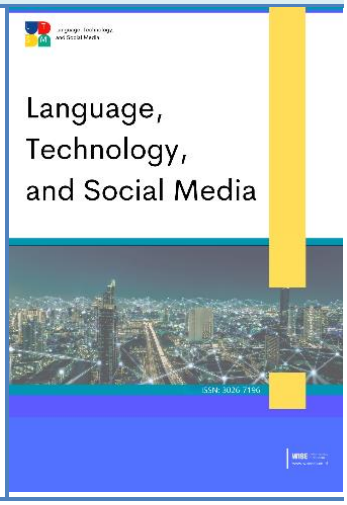
This study developed and evaluated a multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales for elementary school Indonesian language learning. The study addressed the limited use of folktales as cultural texts for strengthening students' literacy skills and multicultural awareness. A Research and Development approach was employed using the ADDIE model, consisting of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation stages. The empirical testing used a one-group pretest–posttest design involving 60 fifth-grade students from two public elementary schools in Palu, Central Sulawesi, along with two classroom teachers and three expert validators. Data were collected through validation sheets, teacher practicality questionnaires, literacy tests, multicultural attitude scales, classroom observations, student reflections, and documentation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired-sample t-tests, and effect size analysis, while qualitative data were examined thematically. The results showed that the developed model was very valid (93%) and very practical (89%). Students' literacy scores increased from 68.45 to 82.73, and their multicultural attitude scores improved from 3.12 to 4.21. The improvements were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) with large effect sizes. Qualitative findings also indicated stronger cultural identity, cross-cultural empathy, reflective dialogue, and inclusive classroom interaction. This study contributes a structured folktale-based multicultural literacy model that integrates cultural narratives, critical literacy practices, and multicultural attitude development in elementary Indonesian language learning.

Keywords: Multicultural Literacy; Indonesian Folktales; Elementary Education; Critical Literacy; Culture-Based Learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Language learning in the twenty-first century is no longer limited to the mastery of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. It increasingly requires learners to develop critical literacy, intercultural competence, and social awareness as essential capacities for participating in diverse social and educational contexts [1], [2]. In elementary education, Indonesian language learning occupies a strategic position because it not only supports students' linguistic and cognitive development but also contributes to the formation of cultural identity, moral reasoning, and social sensitivity [3], [4]. However, classroom practices in Indonesian language learning are still frequently dominated by text-oriented instruction that emphasizes literal comprehension, grammatical accuracy, and the identification of narrative elements. Such practices provide limited opportunities for students to critically interpret texts, examine cultural meanings, and reflect on social values embedded in language and literature [5]. Consequently, students' literacy development often remains insufficiently connected to broader issues of diversity, empathy, inclusion, and multicultural understanding [6], [7].

Multicultural literacy has emerged as a relevant pedagogical response to this limitation because it integrates literacy skills with cultural awareness, perspective-taking, and critical thinking [8]. In this context, cultural texts such as Indonesian folktales have considerable educational potential. Folktales contain local wisdom, moral values, symbolic meanings, and representations of social life that can be used to support students' reading comprehension, motivation, empathy, and cultural understanding [9], [10]. Previous classroom practices involving regional folktales such as Malin Kundang, Timun Mas, and other local narratives have shown that folklore can help students understand narrative structures and moral messages. Nevertheless, folklore is still often used primarily as reading material for identifying intrinsic elements such as plot, character, setting, and theme. Its function as a medium for critical dialogue about cultural perspectives, social relations, diversity, and values has not been fully optimized in classroom instruction [11], [12]. This condition reveals a pedagogical gap between the cultural richness of Indonesian folktales and their instructional use in fostering multicultural literacy.

Several instructional approaches have been introduced to strengthen literacy and culture-based learning, including multiliteracies pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and literature-based instruction [13], [14]. These approaches emphasize the importance of connecting learning with students' social, linguistic, and cultural contexts. However, existing models do not always provide a systematic instructional syntax that explicitly combines literacy competence and multicultural attitude development within a single classroom framework, especially in the context of Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level [15], [16]. In addition, previous studies have tended to examine literacy achievement and cultural awareness as separate outcomes rather than as interconnected dimensions of learning [17]. Therefore, a structured, context-sensitive, and empirically tested learning model is needed to bridge literacy development and multicultural education through meaningful engagement with Indonesian cultural narratives.

This study is grounded in an integrated theoretical framework that combines multiliteracies theory, sociocultural learning theory, and multicultural education theory [18]. Multiliteracies theory emphasizes meaning-making across diverse cultural, linguistic, and social contexts, making it relevant for literacy learning that involves culturally embedded texts. Sociocultural learning theory further explains that students construct meaning through social interaction, dialogue, and cultural mediation [19]. In this study, Indonesian folktales are positioned as cultural artifacts that mediate

students' engagement with language, values, identity, and social diversity. Meanwhile, multicultural education theory highlights the importance of equity, respect for diversity, perspective transformation, and inclusive classroom practices [20]. The integration of these theoretical perspectives provides a strong foundation for designing a learning model that simultaneously develops students' literacy skills and multicultural awareness.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to develop and evaluate a multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales for elementary school Indonesian language learning. The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects. First, it integrates literacy competencies and multicultural attitudes within a structured pedagogical syntax. Second, it positions Indonesian folktales not merely as narrative reading materials but as cultural texts for critical literacy practices, reflective dialogue, and perspective-taking. Third, it empirically examines the model in a real elementary classroom context by considering both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. Through this approach, the study contributes to the development of culture-based literacy learning by offering a theoretically grounded and practically applicable model for strengthening contextual, reflective, and inclusive Indonesian language instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multicultural Literacy in Elementary Language Learning

Literacy learning in contemporary education has expanded beyond the technical ability to decode, comprehend, and produce texts. It now involves the capacity to interpret meanings critically, understand diverse social realities, and participate responsibly in multicultural communities [1], [2]. In elementary education, this broader conception of literacy is particularly important because early language learning contributes to the formation of students' cognitive, affective, and social foundations. Indonesian language learning, therefore, should not be limited to grammatical accuracy or literal text comprehension, but should also enable students to engage with values, identities, and social differences represented through language and literature [3], [4].

Multicultural literacy refers to the ability to read, interpret, and respond to texts through an awareness of cultural diversity, social inclusion, and multiple perspectives [6], [8]. It encourages students to understand that texts are not culturally neutral; rather, they carry values, assumptions, identities, and social meanings. In classroom practice, multicultural literacy can help students recognize differences in ethnicity, language, tradition, religion, and social background while developing empathy and respect for others [6], [7]. This is highly relevant in Indonesia, where students live within diverse cultural environments and need learning experiences that strengthen both national identity and intercultural sensitivity.

However, the implementation of multicultural literacy in elementary classrooms remains challenging. Language learning is often still dominated by text-based exercises that focus on identifying main ideas, answering literal questions, and recognizing structural elements of narrative texts [5]. Such practices may improve basic reading competence, but they do not sufficiently train students to question cultural meanings, compare perspectives, or reflect on social values embedded in texts. Therefore, literacy instruction requires a more reflective and culturally responsive model that connects reading activities with students' lived experiences and multicultural realities [13], [14].

Indonesian Folktales as Cultural Texts for Literacy Development

Indonesian folktales represent an important source of culture-based literacy learning because they contain local wisdom, moral values, symbolic meanings, and representations of social life. Folktales are not merely traditional stories; they are cultural texts that preserve collective memory, transmit values across generations, and provide meaningful contexts for students to understand human behavior, social relationships, and cultural identity [9], [10]. In elementary language learning, folktales can create a familiar and engaging reading experience because students are introduced to narratives that are close to their cultural environment.

Previous studies have indicated that the use of folktales in language learning can improve students' reading comprehension, vocabulary development, narrative understanding, and learning motivation [9], [12]. Folktales also provide opportunities for students to identify moral messages, analyze character actions, and relate story events to everyday life. In this sense, folktales can function as a bridge between textual comprehension and character education. They allow students to learn language while simultaneously encountering cultural values such as responsibility, respect, cooperation, honesty, and empathy [11], [15].

Despite this potential, folktales are frequently used in a limited way in classroom instruction. Many learning activities still position folktales only as reading materials for identifying intrinsic elements such as plot, character, setting, theme, and moral message [11], [12]. This approach does not fully utilize folktales as resources for critical discussion about cultural diversity, social conflict, prejudice, justice, and inclusion. As a result, the multicultural dimension of folktales remains underdeveloped. To maximize their pedagogical value, folktales need to be integrated into a learning model that guides students not only to understand the story, but also to interpret cultural meanings, compare perspectives, reconstruct narratives, and reflect on their relevance to contemporary social life [32], [34].

Theoretical Foundations of Folktale-Based Multicultural Literacy Learning

The development of a multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales can be grounded in multiliteracies theory, sociocultural learning theory, and multicultural education theory. Multiliteracies theory emphasizes that literacy is shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, and multimodal contexts [18], [19]. From this perspective, students need to engage with texts not only as linguistic products but also as cultural and social representations. Indonesian folktales are therefore appropriate for multiliteracies-based instruction because they provide culturally meaningful narratives through which students can interpret values, identities, and social relations.

Sociocultural learning theory further explains that learning occurs through interaction, dialogue, and cultural mediation [19]. In the classroom, students construct meaning by discussing texts, negotiating interpretations, and relating story content to their own cultural experiences. Folktales can serve as mediating tools that connect students' prior knowledge with new understandings of diversity and social values. Through collaborative reading, reflective dialogue, and narrative reconstruction, students are encouraged to move from literal comprehension toward deeper interpretation and critical reflection.

Multicultural education theory provides the normative foundation for developing students' respect for diversity, equity, empathy, and inclusive attitudes [20]. In multicultural literacy learning, students are invited to examine how cultural differences are represented in texts and how these differences can be understood from multiple perspectives. This process supports the development

of tolerance and cross-cultural empathy because students learn to see diversity as a source of understanding rather than as a source of separation [35], [36]. Therefore, the integration of multiliteracies, sociocultural learning, and multicultural education offers a strong theoretical basis for designing a structured learning model that simultaneously improves literacy competence and multicultural awareness in elementary Indonesian language learning.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach to develop, validate, and evaluate a multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales for elementary school Indonesian language learning. The development process followed the ADDIE instructional design model, which consists of five stages: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation [21]. This model was selected because it provides a systematic framework for designing instructional innovation, validating its feasibility, implementing it in classroom practice, and evaluating its effectiveness.

The empirical testing of the developed model used a one-group pretest–posttest design. This design was used to examine changes in students' literacy skills and multicultural attitudes before and after the implementation of the folktale-based multicultural literacy learning model. Although this design does not include a control group, it was considered appropriate for the preliminary evaluation of a newly developed instructional model in a real classroom context. Therefore, the results of the effectiveness test were interpreted as evidence of preliminary impact rather than definitive causal proof.

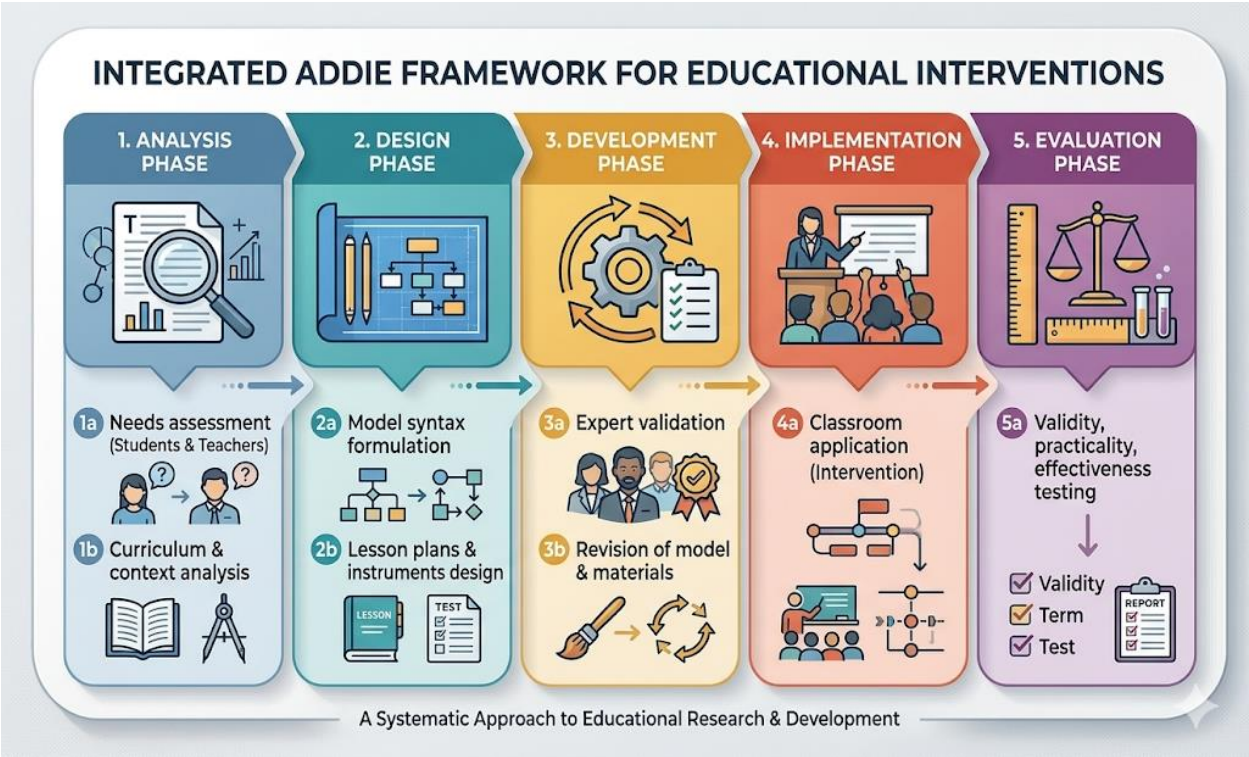


Figure 1. Flow Chart of the ADDIE-Based Development Procedure

The population of this study consisted of fifth-grade students in public elementary schools in Palu City, Central Sulawesi. The research sample involved 60 fifth-grade students from two public elementary schools. The schools were selected using purposive sampling based on three criteria: multicultural student composition, willingness to implement instructional innovation, and comparable academic performance levels. Purposive sampling was used because the study required school contexts that were relevant to the development of multicultural literacy learning [22].

In addition to students, this study involved two classroom teachers and three expert validators. The teachers participated in the practicality evaluation and supported the classroom implementation of the model. The expert validators consisted of specialists in language education, elementary education, and cultural literacy. Their role was to evaluate the theoretical relevance, pedagogical structure, cultural integration, and instructional feasibility of the developed model before classroom implementation [23].

Table 1. Research Participants

Participant Group	Number	Role in the Study	Selection Basis
Fifth-grade students	60	Participants in pretest, intervention, posttest, attitude scale, and classroom observation	Students from selected multicultural elementary school contexts
Classroom teachers	2	Practicality evaluators and classroom implementation partners	Teachers responsible for Indonesian language learning
Expert validators	3	Validators of the model, learning materials, and instruments	Expertise in language education, elementary education, and cultural literacy

Research Instruments

Several instruments were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The instruments consisted of a model validation sheet, teacher practicality questionnaire, literacy skills test, multicultural attitude scale, observation sheet, and documentation protocol. The use of multiple instruments was intended to support data triangulation and provide a comprehensive evaluation of the developed learning model.

The model validation sheet was used to assess the feasibility of the learning model in terms of theoretical relevance, syntax clarity, multicultural integration, and instructional feasibility. The teacher practicality questionnaire was used to examine the ease of implementation, clarity of instructions, time efficiency, and perceived usefulness of the model. The literacy skills test measured students' ability to identify narrative elements, interpret cultural meanings, analyze multicultural perspectives, and produce reflective texts. The multicultural attitude scale measured tolerance, cross-cultural empathy, respect for diversity, and inclusivity. The observation sheet was used to document student engagement, participation in reflective dialogue, and intercultural behavior during classroom learning.

Table 2. Research Instruments

Instrument	Data Type	Measured Aspect	Respondent/Source	Analysis
Model validation sheet	Quantitative and qualitative	Theoretical relevance, syntax clarity, multicultural integration, instructional feasibility	Expert validators	Descriptive percentage and expert comments
Teacher practicality questionnaire	Quantitative and qualitative	Ease of use, clarity of instructions, time efficiency, perceived benefits	Classroom teachers	Descriptive percentage and teacher feedback
Literacy skills test	Quantitative	Narrative comprehension, cultural interpretation, multicultural perspective analysis, reflective writing	Students	Descriptive statistics, paired-sample t-test, and effect size
Multicultural attitude scale	Quantitative	Tolerance, empathy, respect for diversity, inclusivity	Students	Descriptive statistics, paired-sample t-test, and effect size
Observation sheet	Qualitative	Student engagement, participation, reflective dialogue, intercultural behavior	Classroom activities	Thematic analysis
Documentation	Qualitative	Learning process, student work, and implementation evidence	Classroom documents	Descriptive and thematic interpretation

The content validity of the instruments was evaluated by three experts. The validation results showed that the instruments were appropriate for measuring the intended constructs, with the Content Validity Index exceeding the minimum acceptable criterion [24]. Reliability testing also indicated acceptable internal consistency. The literacy skills test obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.87, while the multicultural attitude scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.89. These results indicate that both instruments were reliable for use in classroom-based educational research [25].

Development and Data Collection Procedure

The research was conducted over three months and followed the ADDIE stages. In the Analysis stage, the researchers conducted needs assessment, classroom observation, teacher interviews, and curriculum analysis to identify instructional problems and learning needs related to literacy and multicultural understanding. The analysis focused on students' literacy practices, teachers' instructional strategies, and the multicultural characteristics of the classroom context.

In the Design stage, the researchers formulated the learning syntax, lesson plans, learning materials, and research instruments. The learning syntax was designed to integrate Indonesian folktales with critical literacy and multicultural reflection. In the Development stage, the model, learning materials, and instruments were validated by expert validators. Feedback from validators was used to revise the model before classroom implementation.

In the Implementation stage, the developed model was applied in Indonesian language learning sessions. Before the intervention, students completed a literacy skills pretest and a multicultural attitude scale. During the intervention, students participated in folktale-based learning activities consisting of cultural orientation, guided reading and narrative analysis, multicultural reflective dialogue, story reconstruction, and social presentation-reflection. After the intervention, students completed the posttest and multicultural attitude scale. Classroom observations, student reflections, teacher responses, and documentation were also collected to support the interpretation of the quantitative results [26].

Table 3. ADDIE Stages and Research Activities

ADDIE Stage	Main Activity	Output
Analysis	Needs assessment, curriculum review, classroom observation, and identification of multicultural learning context	Initial needs profile and instructional problem mapping
Design	Formulation of model syntax, lesson plans, learning materials, and assessment instruments	Prototype of the multicultural literacy learning model
Development	Expert validation and revision of model components	Validated model, revised learning materials, and validated instruments
Implementation	Classroom application, pretest, intervention, posttest, attitude scale, and observation	Empirical data on implementation and student outcomes
Evaluation	Validity, practicality, effectiveness, and qualitative interpretation	Final model evaluation and research findings

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative analysis was conducted to determine the validity, practicality, and preliminary effectiveness of the developed model. Validity scores from expert validators and practicality scores from teachers were analyzed descriptively and categorized based on predetermined feasibility criteria. The model was considered very valid or very practical when the percentage score reached 85–100%, valid or practical when the score reached 70–84%, sufficiently valid or practical when the score reached 55–69%, and invalid or impractical when the score was below 55% [27].

The effectiveness of the model was analyzed by comparing students' pretest and posttest scores on literacy skills and multicultural attitudes. Prior to inferential testing, the normality of the data was examined to ensure that the assumptions for parametric analysis were met. A paired-sample t-test was then used to determine whether there were significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores. The strength of the intervention effect was examined using effect size interpretation, with small, medium, and large effect categories used to determine the practical magnitude of the model's impact [28].

Qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations, field notes, student reflective responses, teacher feedback, and documentation. These data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to student engagement, reflective dialogue, cultural understanding, and multicultural awareness [29]. The analysis involved open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding was used to identify meaningful units of data, such as expressions of empathy, cultural comparison, active participation, and inclusive behavior. Axial coding was used to group related codes into broader categories, such as cultural understanding, reflective thinking, and social interaction. Selective coding was then used to develop core themes representing the main patterns found in the data [30].

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, two independent coders analyzed the data. Inter-rater reliability was examined using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, which showed strong agreement between coders. Differences in coding were discussed and resolved through consensus. The credibility of the qualitative data was further supported through data triangulation, method triangulation, member checking with participating teachers, and the use of an audit trail documenting coding decisions and interpretation processes.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the developed learning model. Quantitative results from the literacy skills test and multicultural attitude scale were interpreted together with qualitative evidence from classroom observations, student reflections, teacher feedback, and documentation. This integration allowed the researchers to examine not only whether students' literacy skills and multicultural attitudes improved after the intervention, but also how the learning process encouraged student engagement, reflective thinking, intercultural sensitivity, and inclusive classroom interaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Model Validity and Practicality

The developed multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales was evaluated through expert validation and teacher practicality assessment before classroom implementation. The expert validation results showed that the model achieved a validity score of 93%, indicating that the model was categorized as very valid. This result demonstrates that the model had strong theoretical relevance, clear instructional syntax, adequate multicultural integration, and feasible classroom applicability.

The practicality assessment conducted by classroom teachers showed a practicality score of 89%, which was categorized as very practical. This finding indicates that the model was considered easy to implement, clearly structured, compatible with classroom time allocation, and useful for

supporting Indonesian language learning in multicultural elementary school contexts. The validation and practicality results confirmed that the developed model was suitable for empirical testing in classroom instruction.

Table 4. Summary of Model Validity and Practicality Results

Assessment Aspect	Evaluator	Score	Category
Model validity	Expert validators	93%	Very valid
Model practicality	Classroom teachers	89%	Very practical

Students' Literacy Skills Before and After the Intervention

The descriptive analysis showed an increase in students' literacy skills after the implementation of the multicultural literacy learning model. The mean pretest score was 68.45 with a standard deviation of 8.21, while the mean posttest score increased to 82.73 with a standard deviation of 7.54. This indicates a mean gain of 14.28 points after the intervention.

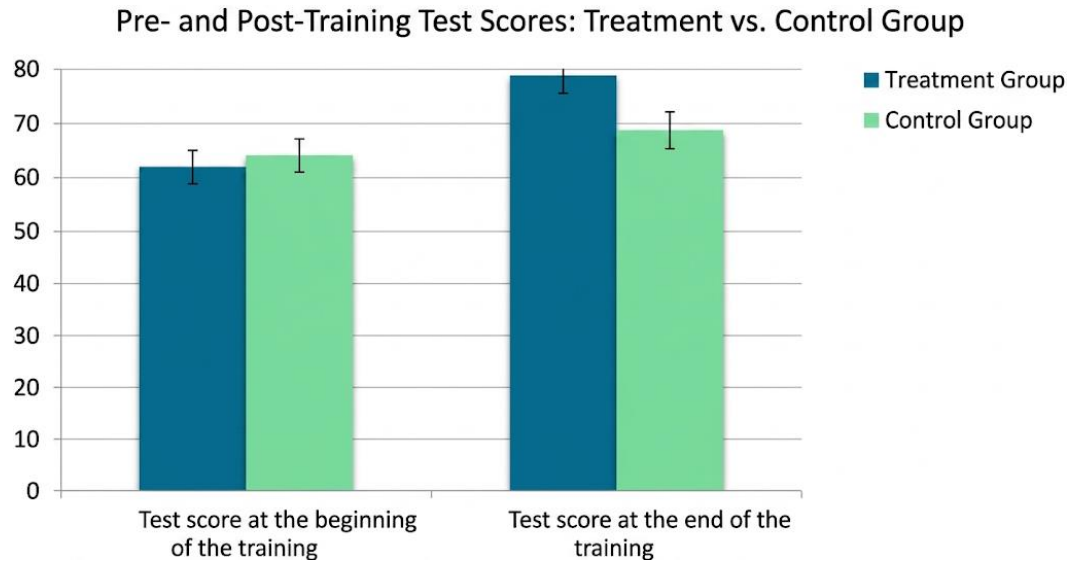


Figure 2. Description of Literacy Score Data at the Beginning and End of the Study

Before inferential analysis was conducted, the normality assumption was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results indicated that the data were normally distributed, as shown by a significance value above 0.05. Therefore, the paired-sample t-test was considered appropriate for analyzing the difference between pretest and posttest scores.

The paired-sample t-test revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' literacy skills after the intervention, $t(59) = 9.84$, $p < 0.001$, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 11.37 to 17.19. The effect size was also large, with Cohen's $d = 1.81$ and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.42 to 2.20. These results indicate that the implementation of the multicultural literacy learning model was associated with a substantial improvement in students' literacy performance.

Table 5. Students' Literacy Skills Before and After the Intervention

Measure	Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	Mean Gain	t(df)	p-value	Effect Size
Literacy skills	68.45 (8.21)	82.73 (7.54)	14.28	9.84 (59)	< 0.001	1.81

Subgroup Analysis Based on Initial Literacy Levels

A subgroup analysis was conducted to examine whether the intervention produced different levels of improvement among students with different initial literacy abilities. Students were grouped into low, medium, and high initial literacy levels based on their pretest performance. The results showed that students in the low-achievement group obtained the highest improvement, with a mean gain of 18.6 points. Students in the medium-achievement group showed a mean gain of 13.9 points, while students in the high-achievement group showed a mean gain of 9.4 points.

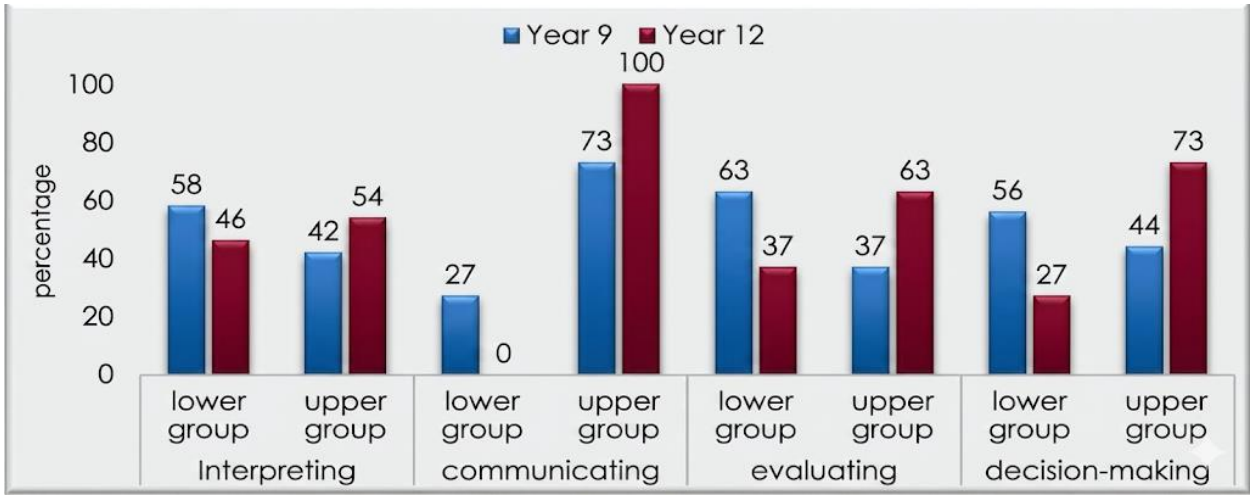


Figure 3. Results of Improving Students' Initial Literacy Skills

These results suggest that the model provided the greatest benefit for students with lower initial literacy skills. However, students in the medium and high groups also demonstrated meaningful improvement. This pattern indicates that the model was able to support learners with different levels of literacy readiness, while providing particularly strong support for students who required more intensive literacy scaffolding.

Table 6. Literacy Improvement Based on Initial Literacy Levels

Initial Literacy Level	Mean Gain
Low	18.6
Medium	13.9
High	9.4

Students' Multicultural Attitudes Before and After the Intervention

The analysis of students' multicultural attitudes also showed a substantial increase after the implementation of the learning model. The mean score increased from 3.12 with a standard deviation of 0.45 in the pretest to 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.39 in the posttest. This result

indicates that students demonstrated stronger multicultural attitudes after participating in the folktale-based multicultural literacy learning activities.

The paired-sample t-test confirmed a statistically significant improvement in students' multicultural attitudes, $t(59) = 11.27$, $p < 0.001$, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.92 to 1.26. The effect size was very large, with Cohen's $d = 2.59$ and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 2.05 to 3.13. These findings indicate that the intervention was associated with a strong improvement in students' tolerance, cross-cultural empathy, respect for diversity, and inclusivity.

Table 7. Students' Multicultural Attitudes Before and After the Intervention

Measure	Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	t(df)	p-value	Effect Size
Multicultural attitudes	3.12 (0.45)	4.21 (0.39)	11.27 (59)	< 0.001	2.59

Improvement in Literacy Indicators

Further analysis was conducted to examine improvement across specific literacy indicators. The results showed that all indicators increased after the intervention. The indicator of identifying narrative elements increased by 12%, interpretation of cultural values increased by 22%, analysis of multicultural perspectives increased by 31%, and reflective text production increased by 28%.

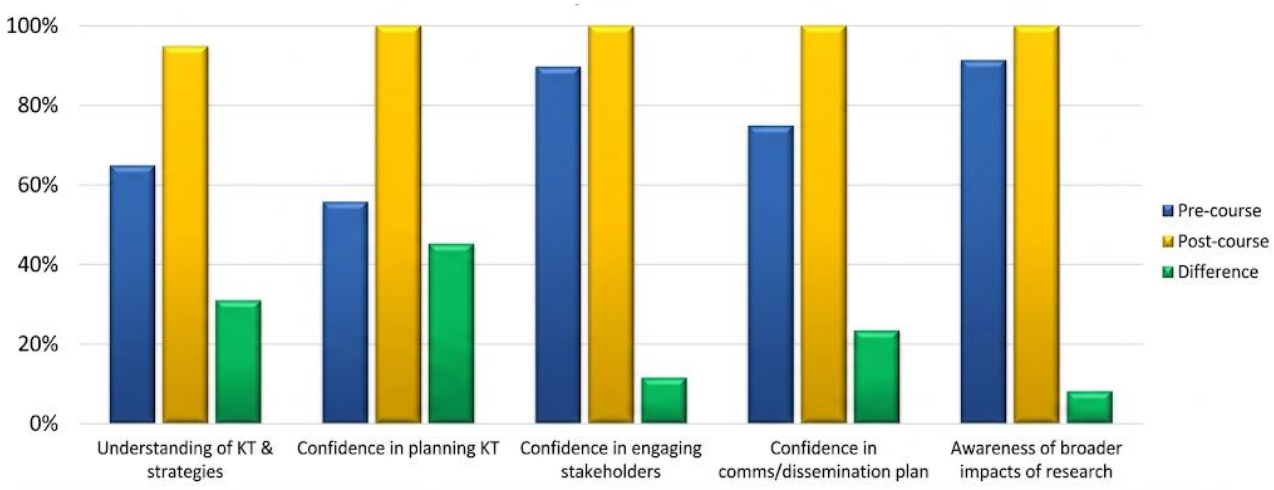


Figure 4. Improvement in Student Literacy Indicator Scores

The highest improvement was found in the analysis of multicultural perspectives, followed by reflective text production. This result indicates that the model did not only improve students' basic comprehension of narrative texts, but also supported higher-order literacy skills related to interpretation, reflection, and perspective-taking.

Table 8. Improvement in Literacy Indicators

Literacy Indicator	Improvement
Identification of narrative elements	12%
Interpretation of cultural values	22%
Analysis of multicultural perspectives	31%

Literacy Indicator	Improvement
Reflective text production	28%

Classroom Observation Results

Classroom observations were conducted to examine students' learning engagement and multicultural interaction during the implementation of the model. The observation results showed that 87% of students actively participated in reflective discussions, 83% were able to connect folktale content with real-life social contexts, and 90% demonstrated respectful behavior during intercultural interactions. In addition, implementation fidelity reached 95%, indicating that the learning activities were conducted consistently with the designed instructional syntax.

The observed classroom behaviors showed that students became more active in expressing opinions, comparing cultural values, and collaborating with peers to interpret the meaning of folktales. Students also demonstrated more inclusive interaction patterns during group activities, particularly when discussing differences in cultural background, social values, and character perspectives in the stories.

Table 9. Classroom Observation Results

Observed Aspect	Percentage
Active participation in reflective discussion	87%
Ability to connect folktales with real-life social contexts	83%
Respectful behavior during intercultural interaction	90%
Implementation fidelity	95%

Qualitative Findings from Student Reflections

The thematic analysis of student reflections generated three main themes: strengthening local cultural identity, development of cross-cultural empathy, and transformation of perspective. The first theme showed that students expressed pride in their own cultural heritage after engaging with Indonesian folktales. One student stated, "I feel proud of my culture because the story shows good values that we still use today."

The second theme reflected the development of cross-cultural empathy. Students showed an increasing ability to understand characters, events, and values from different cultural perspectives. One student stated, "Even though the characters come from different backgrounds, I understand why they act that way." This indicates that students began to interpret cultural differences more reflectively rather than judging them superficially.

The third theme was perspective transformation. Students demonstrated changes in how they viewed social and cultural differences. One student stated, "Before, I thought differences could cause conflict, but now I think they can help us learn from each other." This theme indicates that the learning process encouraged students to see diversity as a meaningful resource for social learning.

Table 10. Themes from Student Reflections

Theme	Evidence from Student Reflection	Meaning
Strengthening local cultural identity	"I feel proud of my culture because the story shows good values that we still use today."	Students developed pride in cultural heritage and local values.
Development of cross-cultural empathy	"Even though the characters come from different backgrounds, I understand why they act that way."	Students learned to understand perspectives different from their own.
Perspective transformation	"Before, I thought differences could cause conflict, but now I think they can help us learn from each other."	Students began to view diversity as a source of learning and mutual understanding.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales has strong potential to support both literacy development and multicultural attitude formation in elementary Indonesian language learning. The validation and practicality results indicate that the model is theoretically sound and pedagogically feasible for classroom implementation. This finding is important because culture-based literacy learning requires not only relevant teaching materials but also a clear instructional structure that can guide teachers in transforming cultural texts into meaningful literacy experiences. The five-stage learning syntax developed in this study—cultural orientation, guided reading and narrative analysis, multicultural reflective dialogue, story reconstruction, and social presentation-reflection—extends the use of folktales beyond conventional narrative comprehension. This aligns with previous research showing that folktales can strengthen cross-cultural understanding when they are designed as comparative and reflective learning materials rather than merely treated as traditional reading texts [32].

The high validity score suggests that the model has adequate construct alignment between its theoretical foundation, instructional activities, multicultural content, and assessment orientation. This is consistent with the view that effective instructional innovation must be supported by coherence between learning objectives, classroom activities, and expected outcomes. The practicality result also indicates that teachers perceived the model as usable and relevant to classroom needs. This finding is in line with research emphasizing that teachers' professional learning and acceptance of instructional innovation are crucial factors influencing the success of classroom implementation and student learning outcomes [33]. Therefore, the model's practicality should not be understood only as technical ease of use, but also as evidence that the model can be meaningfully integrated into existing Indonesian language learning practices without creating excessive instructional complexity.

The significant improvement in students' literacy skills indicates that Indonesian folktales can function as effective cultural texts for developing higher-order literacy competencies. Students did not only improve in identifying narrative elements but also showed stronger performance in interpreting cultural values, analyzing multicultural perspectives, and producing reflective texts. This finding strengthens previous studies showing that readers' cultural values influence how they interpret Indonesian and English folktales [34]. In this study, students' engagement with folktales

allowed them to connect textual meaning with cultural experience, social values, and real-life diversity. Thus, literacy development occurred not merely through textual decoding but through the interaction between narrative content, cultural interpretation, and reflective meaning-making.

The greatest improvement was found in the analysis of multicultural perspectives and reflective text production. This suggests that the dialogic and reflective components of the model played an important role in moving students from literal comprehension to critical interpretation. This result is consistent with literature-based learning research showing that reading activities become more meaningful when students are actively involved in discussion, interpretation, and collaborative response to texts [35]. In this study, reflective dialogue encouraged students to compare cultural values, examine character perspectives, and relate story conflicts to social diversity in their own environment. Such activities appear to provide meaningful scaffolding for students to develop analytical and reflective literacy skills.

The improvement in students' multicultural attitudes also shows that folktale-based literacy learning can contribute to affective and social learning outcomes. Students demonstrated stronger tolerance, cross-cultural empathy, respect for diversity, and inclusivity after participating in the intervention. This finding supports previous research indicating that multicultural literature can help students understand cultural differences and develop more inclusive perspectives in classroom learning [36]. The qualitative findings further show that students began to express pride in their own cultural heritage while also developing greater openness toward other cultural backgrounds. This dual process is important because multicultural education should not weaken local identity; rather, it should strengthen students' ability to appreciate their own culture while respecting the cultures of others.

The qualitative findings provide deeper insight into how the model influenced students' learning experiences. The emergence of themes such as strengthening local cultural identity, development of cross-cultural empathy, and transformation of perspective indicates that students were not passive recipients of cultural messages. Instead, they actively interpreted, negotiated, and reconstructed meanings from the folktales they studied. This finding reinforces the argument that folktales can become powerful pedagogical tools when they are used to stimulate dialogue about cultural values and social relationships. In this sense, the model contributes to a more transformative form of Indonesian language learning, where literacy instruction becomes a space for developing social awareness and intercultural sensitivity.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness findings should be interpreted with caution because the empirical testing used a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group. Although the statistical results showed significant improvements with large effect sizes, the absence of a comparison group limits the strength of causal claims. The observed improvements may be associated with the implementation of the model, but further experimental studies are needed to confirm whether the model produces stronger outcomes than conventional Indonesian language instruction. Therefore, the findings should be positioned as preliminary empirical evidence of the model's potential rather than definitive proof of comparative effectiveness.

This study contributes to the development of culture-based literacy learning by offering a structured model that integrates Indonesian folktales, critical literacy practices, and multicultural attitude development. Its main contribution lies in repositioning folktales from supplementary reading materials into central pedagogical resources for developing literacy competence and multicultural awareness. Practically, the model provides teachers with a clear instructional pathway

for using local narratives to promote reading comprehension, reflective thinking, empathy, and inclusive classroom interaction. Theoretically, the study strengthens the argument that literacy in elementary education should be understood as a sociocultural and transformative practice, particularly in multicultural learning contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study developed and evaluated a multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folktales for elementary school Indonesian language learning. The findings indicate that the model is valid, practical, and effective in supporting students' literacy skills and multicultural attitudes. The model's structured syntax, consisting of cultural orientation, guided reading and narrative analysis, multicultural reflective dialogue, story reconstruction, and social presentation-reflection, provides a meaningful instructional pathway for integrating cultural narratives with critical literacy practices. Empirical results showed significant improvements in students' literacy performance, particularly in interpreting cultural values, analyzing multicultural perspectives, and producing reflective texts. The model also strengthened students' tolerance, cross-cultural empathy, respect for diversity, and inclusive attitudes. These findings suggest that Indonesian folktales can function not only as narrative reading materials but also as cultural texts that promote reflective thinking, social awareness, and multicultural understanding. Therefore, this study contributes to the development of culture-based literacy learning by offering a theoretically grounded and classroom-applicable model for elementary Indonesian language education. However, because the empirical testing used a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group, future studies should employ more rigorous experimental designs, involve broader school contexts, and examine the long-term sustainability of the model's impact on students' literacy and multicultural development.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the empirical testing used a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group, which limits the ability to establish strong causal claims regarding the effectiveness of the multicultural literacy learning model compared with conventional Indonesian language instruction. Second, the study involved only 60 fifth-grade students from two elementary schools in Palu, Central Sulawesi; therefore, the findings may not fully represent the diversity of elementary school contexts in other regions of Indonesia. Third, the implementation period was relatively short, so the study could not examine the long-term sustainability of students' literacy development and multicultural attitude formation after the intervention. Fourth, although qualitative data from observations and student reflections enriched the interpretation of the results, the findings may still be influenced by classroom context, teacher facilitation, and students' prior cultural experiences. Future research should employ a more rigorous experimental design involving control groups, larger and more diverse samples, broader regional contexts, and longitudinal follow-up to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness and scalability of the developed model.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

N.A. conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, and led the development of the multicultural literacy learning model based on Indonesian folklore. N. contributed to the research design, coordinated the data collection process in elementary schools, and participated in the analysis and interpretation of the data. P.S.R conducted statistical analysis, supported the validation and evaluation stages of the ADDIE model, and contributed to the writing and revision of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The authors used ChatGPT and Grammarly during the preparation of this manuscript to assist with language editing and clarity of expression. All generated content was carefully reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final published content.

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