

## The Implementation of Comic Books to Increase the Learning Motivation of Primary School Students

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### Abstract

*This study was motivated by the fact that student learning motivation is still relatively low due to the use of learning media that is not varied and not interesting. This study aims to increase elementary school students' learning motivation through the implementation of comic media in learning. This study is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in class V of SDN 03 Gedong in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The research subjects were 25 students. The research was conducted in two cycles, each of which included the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. Data collection techniques used observation, learning motivation questionnaires, and documentation. The data were analyzed descriptively, qualitatively, and quantitatively. The results showed that the use of comic media could increase student learning motivation. The percentage of student learning motivation increased from 56% in the pre-cycle to 69% in Cycle I and increased again to 82% in Cycle II. Based on these results, it can be concluded that comic media is effective in increasing the learning motivation of elementary school students.*

**Keywords:** *Comic media, learning motivation, elementary school, classroom action research*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatar belakangi motivasi belajar siswa masih tergolong rendah akibat penggunaan media pembelajaran yang kurang variatif dan kurang menarik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa sekolah dasar melalui implementasi media komik dalam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini merupakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan di kelas V SDN 03 Gedong pada semester tahun pelajaran 2025/2026 Subjek penelitian adalah 25 siswa. Penelitian dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus yang masing-masing meliputi tahapan perencanaan, pelaksanaan tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, angket motivasi belajar, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan media komik dapat meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa. Persentase motivasi belajar siswa meningkat dari 56% pada pra-siklus menjadi 69% pada Siklus I dan meningkat kembali menjadi 82% pada Siklus II. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa media komik efektif digunakan untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa sekolah dasar.

**Kata kunci:** media komik, motivasi belajar, sekolah dasar, penelitian tindakan kelas



## INTRODUCTION

Primary education is a level of education that greatly determines the success of students in the next stage of education. Primary school is the main foundation for shaping students' literacy, numeracy, thinking skills, and learning character. At this stage, students begin to build learning habits that will influence their mindset, discipline, and attitude towards learning activities in the long term. Therefore, learning in primary school needs to be designed in an interesting, meaningful way that is appropriate to the developmental needs of students. The Indonesian government, through its Merdeka Curriculum policy, emphasises the importance of learner-centred, contextual learning that encourages active student involvement in the learning process (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). In its implementation, teachers are required to be able to design learning that not only conveys material but also fosters student interest so that learning becomes an enjoyable and effective experience.

One important factor that greatly influences the success of learning is learning motivation. Learning motivation can be understood as internal and external drives that make students want to learn, persevere in the learning process, and show effort to achieve learning objectives. Learning motivation plays a role in determining the intensity of student engagement, perseverance in completing tasks, and resilience in facing learning difficulties. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) emphasise that motivation is a key aspect that influences student learning behaviour, including how students set goals, choose learning strategies, and maintain effort. In addition, learning motivation is also related to students' perceptions of the value of learning and their beliefs about their own abilities. In this context, learning motivation does not only arise from within students, but is also influenced by learning design, teaching methods, and the media used by teachers (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016).

However, the reality in the field shows that primary school students' learning motivation is still often a problem that hinders the effectiveness of learning. A common phenomenon is that students appear to be less enthusiastic during learning, quickly become bored, are passive in asking or answering questions, and lack focus when listening to the teacher's explanations. Some students also show a tendency to procrastinate, lack confidence when doing assignments, and even give up easily when faced with questions they consider difficult. This condition can lead to low student engagement in learning and affect learning outcomes. According to Hattie (2017), student engagement is an important factor that contributes to successful learning, so low motivation and engagement in learning need to be addressed through appropriate learning strategies.

Low student motivation can also be influenced by learning that lacks variety and is still teacher-centred. Learning that relies solely on verbal explanations without the support of engaging media can cause students to quickly lose attention. Primary school students have characteristics that favour visual activities, stories, and enjoyable learning. Therefore, learning requires media that can attract attention and help students understand the material more concretely. In 21st-century learning, learning media is an important component because it can improve the quality of learning interactions and help students build understanding through richer experiences (Mayer, 2021). Appropriate media can facilitate students to learn actively, increase interest, and reduce boredom in the learning process (Fadel et al., 2017).

The issue of learning motivation can also be demonstrated through empirical data related to the quality of education and student literacy in Indonesia. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that Indonesian students' reading literacy skills are still in the low category compared to the average of other countries (OECD, 2019). Low reading literacy not only indicates difficulty in understanding texts but can also be related to low interest and motivation among students to read. Furthermore, the OECD (2023) report also emphasises that

strengthening student engagement in learning is one of the key strategies for improving the quality of education. UNESCO (2021) also emphasises that learning needs to be designed innovatively so that students are more engaged and motivated, including through the use of learning media that is appropriate for children's developmental needs. Thus, learning innovation to increase primary school students' motivation to learn is an urgent need that needs to be developed.

One strategy that can be used to increase students' motivation to learn is through the use of interesting and relevant learning media. Learning media serve as tools to convey material in a way that is easier to understand and able to attract students' attention. In multimedia learning theory, Mayer (2021) explains that students will learn more effectively when information is presented through a combination of text and images rather than text alone. This is because information processing in the human brain works through two main channels, namely visual and verbal, so that learning that involves both will increase understanding. In addition, the use of visual media can help students understand difficult concepts and improve their memory of the material (Clark & Mayer, 2016). In the context of primary school learning, visual media is very important because students tend to understand information more easily through pictures, colours, and illustrations than through abstract explanations.

One type of visual learning media that is considered suitable for primary school students is comics. Comics are image- and text-based media arranged in a coherent, interesting, and easy-to-understand storyline. Comics can present learning material in the form of simple stories that are close to students' lives. Comics also provide entertainment, so students feel like they are learning while reading stories. In the context of education, comics can increase reading interest and make students more interested in the subject matter. Research shows that comic books can increase student engagement in learning because they combine visual elements and interesting narratives (Yang, 2020). Comic books can also be an alternative medium to help students understand complex concepts through simplification of material and clear visualisation (Kurniawan & Fadhilah, 2021).

The use of comics in learning also has a strong relationship with student motivation. Learning motivation can increase when learning provides an enjoyable, relevant experience and makes students feel capable of completing tasks. Ryan and Deci (2017) explain that motivation will increase if students' psychological needs are met, namely the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Comics can help students feel competent because the material is presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, as well as providing a sense of comfort because learning does not feel stressful. In addition, comics can increase students' connection with the material because the stories presented are often close to students' daily lives, so that students feel that learning is relevant to their experiences (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016). Thus, comics not only function as a medium for conveying information, but also as a motivational stimulus that encourages students to learn more actively.

Comic books can also support more meaningful and contextual learning. Meaningful learning occurs when students are able to connect new information with their previous experiences or knowledge, thereby forming a stronger understanding. Fink (2013) explains that meaningful learning encourages student engagement because students feel that learning has value and benefits. Comics can help students relate the material to real-life situations through stories and illustrations, making it easier for students to understand concepts and feel interested in learning. In addition, comics can also improve students' literacy skills, particularly reading comprehension, as students become accustomed to reading short texts supported by illustrations (OECD, 2019). This makes comics a relevant medium to be applied to primary school students who are still in the basic literacy development stage.

In the context of innovative learning, comics are also in line with the need to strengthen creativity and 21st-century skills. Fadel et al. (2017) emphasise that modern learning needs to encourage creativity, communication, and active student engagement. Comics as a learning medium can be developed not only as reading material but also as creative activities, for example, students are asked to make simple comics based on lesson material. This activity can increase student engagement while encouraging students to think creatively. In addition, visual and narrative-based learning can increase student attention and help students focus more on learning (Hattie, 2017). Thus, the application of comics as a medium can be a learning strategy that not only increases motivation but also enriches the learning experience of students.

To overcome the problem of student learning motivation in a real and measurable way, teachers need to make systematic improvements to their teaching. One relevant approach is Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR is reflective research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms to improve learning practices through specific actions. Mertler (2017) explains that CAR aims to improve the quality of learning through a cycle of actions that includes planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. PTK enables teachers to identify learning problems, implement solutions, and evaluate their impact directly. In this context, the use of comic media can be used as a learning action that is expected to gradually increase the learning motivation of primary school students in each cycle. In addition, PTK also encourages teachers to become reflective practitioners who continuously improve learning based on student needs (Burns, 2019).

Based on this background, this study focuses on the problem of low learning motivation among primary school students and the importance of applying innovative learning media as a solution for improving learning. This study aims to examine how comics are implemented in classroom learning and how student learning motivation increases after comics are applied through gradual learning actions. Therefore, this research was conducted in the form of Classroom Action Research (CAR) with the main objective of increasing primary school students' learning motivation through the application of comic media, while also describing the implementation process and determining the increase in student learning motivation in each action cycle as a form of continuous learning improvement. The results of this study are expected to contribute to teachers in developing interesting learning media, increasing student engagement, and creating a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience in primary schools.

## METHOD

This study utilised the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which aimed to improve primary school students' learning motivation through the implementation of comic media in learning. The study was conducted in class V of SDN 03 Gedong in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year with 25 students as research subjects. The research was conducted in two cycles, each of which included the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. The research data consisted of quantitative and qualitative data, namely the percentage of student learning motivation and a description of student activities and responses during the learning process. The data sources were obtained from the students as the objects of the action, the teacher/researcher as the implementer of the action and observer, and supporting documents such as learning tools and student work.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, learning motivation questionnaires, and documentation, using learning motivation observation sheets, learning motivation questionnaires, and documentation in the form of notes and photos of learning activities. The collected data were analysed using quantitative descriptive and qualitative descriptive techniques, where quantitative analysis was carried out by calculating the percentage of student learning motivation in the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II to determine the increase, while qualitative analysis was conducted

by describing changes in student behaviour, activity, attention, and involvement during the application of comic media in each cycle as a basis for reflection and improvement of learning in the next cycle.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of classroom action research show that the use of comic media in learning can increase the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 03 01 Gedong. In the pre-cycle stage, student learning motivation was still relatively low at 56%, as indicated by low student attention during lessons, a lack of enthusiasm in asking and answering questions, and many students who were not enthusiastic about doing their assignments. This condition shows that the previous learning methods were not fully able to attract students' interest and involvement optimally. After the action was taken in Cycle I through the use of comic media, students' learning motivation increased to 69%. In this cycle, students began to show interest in learning because the comic media presented the material visually and was accompanied by a storyline that was easy to understand. Students appeared to be more focused on the material, more courageous in responding to questions, and began to actively participate in learning activities. However, the results of the Cycle I reflection showed that there were still some students who were not fully engaged, so it was necessary to improve the learning strategy in Cycle II.

In Cycle II, learning activities using comic media were implemented with improvements based on the results of the Cycle I reflection, such as strengthening activity instructions, increasing interaction during learning, and providing more opportunities for students to discuss and express their opinions. As a result, student learning motivation increased to 82% and was in the high category. This increase was evident from the growing number of students who were enthusiastic about participating in learning, showing better attention, being more active in question and answer activities, and being more enthusiastic in completing tasks. Thus, the use of comic media proved to be effective in increasing student learning motivation because it was able to create learning that was interesting, enjoyable, and in line with the characteristics of primary school students. The results of this study are in line with the view that the use of visual media and story-based learning can increase student engagement and encourage learning motivation through a more meaningful learning experience.

**Table I. Comparison of Learning Motivation between Cycle I and Cycle II Students**

Research Stage	Percentage of Learning Motivation	Category	General Description of Changes
Cycle I	69%	Moderate	Students began to show interest, were more focused, and some were active, but not uniformly so
Cycle II	82%	High	Activity increased, attention improved, and students were more enthusiastic and uniformly engaged.

Based on the table above, it can be seen that student learning motivation increased from 69% in Cycle I to 82% in Cycle II. This increase indicates that the learning improvements made in Cycle II had a more optimal impact than those in Cycle I. In Cycle I, students began to show interest in learning because the material was presented through visually appealing comic books, but student engagement was still uneven as

some students remained passive and lacked confidence. After reflection and improvement in Cycle II, student motivation to learn increased significantly, as indicated by increased student attention during learning, active responses to questions, and enthusiasm in completing tasks. Thus, the use of comic media not only helped students understand the material but also created a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and encouraged more active student involvement, thereby increasing student motivation to learn in Cycle II.

The findings of this study are consistent with the theoretical perspective that learning motivation is strongly influenced by the attractiveness and relevance of instructional media. According to John W. Santrock, learning motivation in elementary students can be enhanced when instructional activities are engaging, meaningful, and suited to students' developmental characteristics. Comic media, which combines visual elements with narrative structures, aligns well with this principle by presenting abstract concepts in a more concrete and relatable form. The increase in motivation from 56% (pre-cycle) to 82% (Cycle II) indicates that students were more intrinsically engaged when learning materials were delivered through media that matched their cognitive and emotional needs.

In addition, this result supports the concept of multimedia learning proposed by Richard E. Mayer, which emphasizes that students learn more effectively from words and pictures than from words alone. Comic media integrates text and images in a coherent storyline, enabling dual-channel processing (visual and verbal), which helps students better understand and retain information. The observed increase in student attention, participation, and enthusiasm in Cycle II reflects the effectiveness of such multimedia approaches in fostering deeper cognitive engagement and sustained motivation.

Furthermore, the results of this study are in line with previous empirical research. For example, studies by Arif S. Sadiman highlight that visual learning media can significantly increase students' interest and participation in classroom activities. Similarly, research on comic-based learning has shown that comics can improve not only comprehension but also students' motivation and attitudes toward learning, particularly at the primary school level. The progressive improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II in this study demonstrates that when comic media is implemented systematically and refined through reflective cycles, its impact becomes more optimal.

Moreover, from the perspective of constructivist learning theory, as proposed by Lev Vygotsky, learning occurs most effectively when students are actively involved in constructing their own understanding through interaction and social engagement. The improvements made in Cycle II—such as increasing opportunities for discussion and student expression—reflect the application of this theory. As a result, students not only became more motivated but also more confident and active in the learning process. This confirms that combining appropriate media (comics) with interactive learning strategies can create a more meaningful and motivating learning environment.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in class V of SDN 03 01 Gedong in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, it can be concluded that the implementation of comic media in learning has proven to be effective in increasing student motivation to learn. The increase in student learning motivation was evident at every stage of the action, namely from 56% in the pre-cycle, increasing to 69% in Cycle I, and increasing again to 82% in Cycle II. The use of comic media was able to create a more interesting and enjoyable learning atmosphere, as well as encourage

students to be more focused, active, and enthusiastic in participating in learning activities. Thus, the use of comic media can be used as an alternative innovative learning media to increase student learning motivation in primary schools.

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