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Audio Visual Comics as Resilience for Child and Adolescent Protection from Cyberbullying in the Digital Era

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop audio-visual comic media to reduce cyberbullying behavior among students. The research design was Research and Development (R&D). Audio-visual comic media met technical needs and built an anti-cyberbullying attitude through stories supported by audio-visual elements. Field tests showed that this media effectively increased students' understanding of cyberbullying protection efforts. Based on the results of the one-sample t-test, the media performance exceeded the minimum eligibility standards, with participant scores significantly higher than the reference value. This audio-visual comic media is an effective and interesting educational tool for protecting against school cyberbullying. The researcher believes that if audio-visual comic media is produced sustainably as an educational tool for cyberbullying protection in schools, especially in Central Java, it is not impossible that cyberbullying cases will continue to decline. Students who have been victims of cyberbullying will gain an understanding to heal their trauma, and the potential to become cyberbullying perpetrators in the future can be minimized. Meanwhile, students who generally can only be 'spectators' of cyberbullying are expected to become agents of change and peer counselors to help recover victims who experience trauma after cyberbullying at school.

Keywords: Learning Media, Audio Visual Comics, Cyberbullying Resilience, Adolescent Protection, Digital Era

Introduction

The digital era has significantly changed human communication patterns, but this change also brings new challenges, especially for children and adolescents. Based on research by the Center for Digital Society in 2021, out of 3,077 junior and senior high school students, 45.35% have been victims, and 38.41% have been perpetrators of cyberbullying. In addition, UNICEF data in 2022 showed that 45% of 2,777 children in Indonesia reported having experienced cyberbullying (Muhtar, 2023.). Similar trends are seen in the United States, where 37% of middle and high school students have experienced online harassment, with 90% of teens agreeing that cyberbullying has a negative impact on their peers and 63% considering it a big problem (Anderson, 2018).

In this era of communication abundance, digital technology has fundamentally changed the human mindset. While information flows continuously without spatial and temporal boundaries, this accessibility does not necessarily improve the quality of life. An unintended consequence of the increasing digitization and permeation of digital communication in public, private, and professional activities is the feeling of communication overload and the overuse of information and communication technology (ICT) (Gui & Büchi, 2021). The ease of accessing information

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and commenting in virtual spaces has led to an increase in cases of verbal harassment and intimidation, which is categorized as cyberbullying (Subyantoro, 2023).

Cyberbullying has become an increasing concern in the digital age of education, involving the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to intimidate, harass, or humiliate. This phenomenon occurs due to a lack of social competence and maturity in social media interactions (Subyantoro et al., 2023). Frequent experiences of cyberbullying among students are related to poor social competence, increased psychological stress, negative feelings (e.g., sadness, fear), and mental disorders (Aparisi et al., 2024).

Various motives drive cyberbullying, including “the vengeful angel” syndrome, motivated perpetrator behavior, desire for respect, gender-based bullying, and intentional bullying (Wulan et al., 2022). Education can serve as a preventive and solution-oriented approach to address these issues. The use of technology-based learning media, such as digital media, can be key to increasing student interest (Legay & Burton, 2023). Audio-visual comics are an innovative educational medium that effectively conveys educational messages engagingly. This digital evolution of traditional comics incorporates sound elements, making the story more immersive and engaging for both children and adults (Tsene, 2022; Wusylko et al., 2024). The presence of multisensory comics is considered suitable for the development of education (Arief et al., 2022). This makes audio-visual comics an efficient media literacy tool (Pujiono, 2021). Although audio-visual comics are not new, their application in cyberbullying prevention, especially in Indonesian education, is poorly understood.

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing cases of cyberbullying among children and adolescents, which requires an effective prevention approach that is relevant to the characteristics of the digital generation. Although there are several studies on the use of media in anti-bullying education, the novelty aspect of this research lies in the development of audio-visual comics specifically designed to build the resilience of children and adolescents facing cyberbullying in Indonesia. Audio-visual comics that integrate visual and audio elements have greater potential to attract attention and increase children's and adolescents' understanding of cyberbullying than conventional media.

This research aims to answer three main questions: (1) the characteristics needed to develop audio-visual comics to protect children and adolescents' resilience from cyberbullying; (2) the development of a prototype of such comics; and (3) their effectiveness in protecting children and adolescents from cyberbullying in the digital era. By developing audio-visual comic media that suits the needs and characteristics of children and adolescents in Indonesia, it is hoped that it can make a real contribution to efforts to prevent cyberbullying and increase the resilience of the younger generation in the digital era.

Literature Review

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying in education is an increasingly troubling phenomenon in the digital age, involving the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to intimidate, harass, or humiliate individuals. This phenomenon occurs due to a lack of social competence and maturity in social media interaction (Subyantoro, 2023; Subyantoro et al., 2023).

Frequent experiences of cyberbullying among students are associated with low social competence, increased psychological stress, and negative feelings such as sadness and fear

(Aparisi et al., 2024). Several motives for cyberbullying, including “the vengeful angel” (revenge), motivated offender (pranks), desire for respect, mean girls (gender bullying), and inadvertent cyberbullying (intentional bullying) (Wulan et al., 2022).

Audio-visual comics have proven effective as an interesting and easy-to-understand learning media. Audio dramatization effects make comic media more alive (Wusylko et al., 2024). This format appeals to a wide range of age groups. Multisensory comics are suitable for educational development and their role as an efficient media literacy tool.

Digital Comics

Digital comics are an innovative medium that utilizes visual storytelling to increase engagement and educational effectiveness. Numerous studies documented its application in pedagogy, demonstrating its ability to increase student motivation and interest in math, science, and social studies. For example, digital comics have been shown to increase student activity through learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) (Afriliani et al., 2022; Puriasih & Trisna, 2022), that emphasizes engaging visuals and dynamic narratives that resonate with students.

Moreover, when integrated into various educational frameworks, digital comics support critical thinking and creativity, as they facilitate an interactive learning environment. Students show greater enthusiasm when using comics, as this format makes learning more comprehensible and fun, turning abstract concepts into easy-to-understand narratives (Putri et al., 2023). Moreover, the flexibility of digital comics allows for easy updating and accessibility through various digital platforms, making them a practical option in today's increasingly digitalized educational landscape (Castillo-Cuesta & Quinonez-Beltran, 2022; Dewahrani et al., 2023).

Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence, as conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu, refers to non-physical forms of violence that emerge through cultural norms and social structures, which influence perceptions and behaviors in society. This violence operates subtly, often unnoticed by both the oppressed and the oppressor, thus perpetuating injustice and domination in various social contexts, such as education and gender relations (Budiwati et al., 2023; Hourani et al., 2021; Moretti-Pires et al., 2022). For example, in educational settings, curricula can reinforce heteronormative values to the detriment of LGBTQ+ students through hidden curricula that enforce conformity to traditional norms (McDonough & Abrica, 2023). Similarly, in media representations, women and minority groups can experience symbolic violence through stereotyping and internalization of negative cultural narratives, leading to marginalization (Siddiqua et al., 2023).

Further exploration reveals that symbolic violence can exacerbate systemic problems, such as gender-based violence, where cultural expectations and societal norms dictate behavior, resulting in a hostile environment for women (Duncan-Shepherd & Hamilton, 2022; Habibi et al., 2023). This reflects broader patterns of oppression that intersect with structural violence, revealing the complexity of power dynamics in contemporary society (Hourani et al., 2022).

Research Methods

Research Question

The three research questions in focus are:

1. What are the characteristics of the need for developing audio-visual comic media as

resilience to protect children and adolescents from cyberbullying in the digital era?

2. What is the prototype of audio-visual comic media as a resilience to protect children and adolescents from cyberbullying in the digital era?
3. How is the effectiveness of audio-visual comic media as a resilience to protect children and adolescents from cyberbullying in the digital era?

Research Design

This research aims to develop audio-visual comic media as a form of resilience to protect children and adolescents from cyberbullying in the digital era. The Research and Development (R&D) approach was chosen to achieve this goal by adapting the Borg and Gall development model modified to the seventh stage, including (a) research and information collecting, (b) planning, (c) developing a preliminary form of product, (d) preliminary field testing, (e) main product revision, (f) main field testing, and (g) operational product revision.

Population and Sample

The study population included students and educators from junior and senior high schools in Central Java. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique from three regions representing different geographical characteristics in Central Java: the Negarigung, coastal, and Banyumasan regions. From each school (junior and senior high school) in the region, 30 students and two educators were taken as the research sample. These three different geographical areas were selected to obtain representative data diversity.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

The data collection technique uses two main methods: listening and speaking. In the listening method, the researcher listened to the language use and behavior of the respondents regarding their understanding of cyberbullying. On the other hand, the speaking method involves a conversation between the researcher and the respondent. Both methods are applied with basic and advanced techniques to obtain comprehensive data. The data collection instrument is a questionnaire with a Likert scale containing 30 questions with a score range of 1-4, covering aspects of the respondent's understanding, attitude, and experience related to cyberbullying.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study used the contextual analysis method, considering the physical and social contexts. The data were analyzed based on five main aspects: (1) the content/material aspect, which includes the relevance and accuracy of information about cyberbullying; (2) the presentation aspect, which relates to the way information is conveyed in the audio-visual comic media; (3) the linguistic aspect, which focuses on the use of language by the characteristics of the target users; (4) the graphical and media design aspects, which include the visual and audio quality of the comics; and (5) the cyberbullying value aspect, which relates to the moral and educational messages about cyberbullying prevention contained in the media.

Results

Needs Analysis

In the initial stage, researchers collected data about the need for audio-visual comic media to protect against school cyberbullying. The need for audio-visual comic media with anti-cyberbullying content for cyberbullying protection consists of 5 aspects, namely (1) content or

material aspects, (2) presentation aspects, (3) linguistic aspects, (4) graphical aspects and media design, and (5) aspects of cyberbullying values. The needs analysis data from students and educators were obtained from three Semarang district/city schools. The number of subjects was 106 students and three educators. The needs analysis results generally refer to edutainment materials and content tailored to the school environment. Then, respondents wanted the material to be presented with case examples. Meanwhile, the language used uses semiformal language, words of greeting, and words that are popular among students. In addition, the desired audio-visual comic media design is full color with the characteristics of anime characters. Finally, the content contains elements of cyberbullying protection.

Expert Test

While making audio-visual comic media with anti-cyberbullying content, several improvements have been made to improve the effectiveness and quality of the media. The following is a description of the improvements made.

Stage 1 Revision (Page Arrangement and Media Transition)

Before the improvement, the audio-visual comic media page was at the bottom right. The arrangement of the page is considered not to have a clear arrangement or follow a standard format that is less effective. This makes readers feel possibly confused or undirected when following the story in the comic. Therefore, the developer made improvements. The page arrangement is moved to the top right. This change provides clearer guidance to the reader, allowing them to more easily follow the storyline. The placement on the top right also optimizes visual space, providing a neater and more structured appearance.



Figure 1 Revised Layout Page Number

In the early stages of prototype development, the transition used in audio-visual comic media is 'up and down.' The transition may feel monotonous or not give the dynamic impression expected in audio-visual comic media. This transition is felt to be less supportive of the storyline, thus reducing visual appeal. Therefore, the developer made improvements by changing the transition. The 'behind the scenes' transition replaces the 'up and down' transition. The 'behind the scenes' transition offers a more interesting and dynamic visual effect, which can increase audience engagement. It also gives a sense of professionalism and enhances the overall quality of the production. In addition, this transition will show a true sense of comics.

Stage 2 Revision (Visual and Content Quality Improvement)

The initial stage of audio-visual comic design does not yet have an adequate cover. The media cover is still designed to be simple or less attractive, so it is not enough to attract the audience from the start. After the revision process, the comic media cover was redesigned with visual elements that were stronger, more attractive, and relevant to the anti-cyberbullying theme. A visually appealing cover can provoke the audience's interest in watching and understanding the contents of the comic media.



Figure 2 Cover Revision

Dialogue Adjustment with Voice-Over

Before the revision, there was a mismatch between the comic's written dialog and the voice-over's intonation, tempo, or speaking style. This could confuse or reduce the natural feel of the narrative. After the revision, the dialog is more in sync with the voice-over. These improvements enhance the quality of the narrative and ensure that the message is clearer and well-received by the audience. After that, the developer/comics also edited the typo dialog so that it would not cause multiple interpretations.



Figure 3 Dialogue Revision

Addition of Measures Related to the Elements of Cyberbullying Protection

At the initial stage of making audio-visual comic media, it did not explicitly provide explanations or captions regarding the elements of protection from cyberbullying, such as promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative actions. After the revision process, captions were added to the media to explain these elements in more detail. This addition is important to give the audience a better understanding of the stages in protection against cyberbullying.

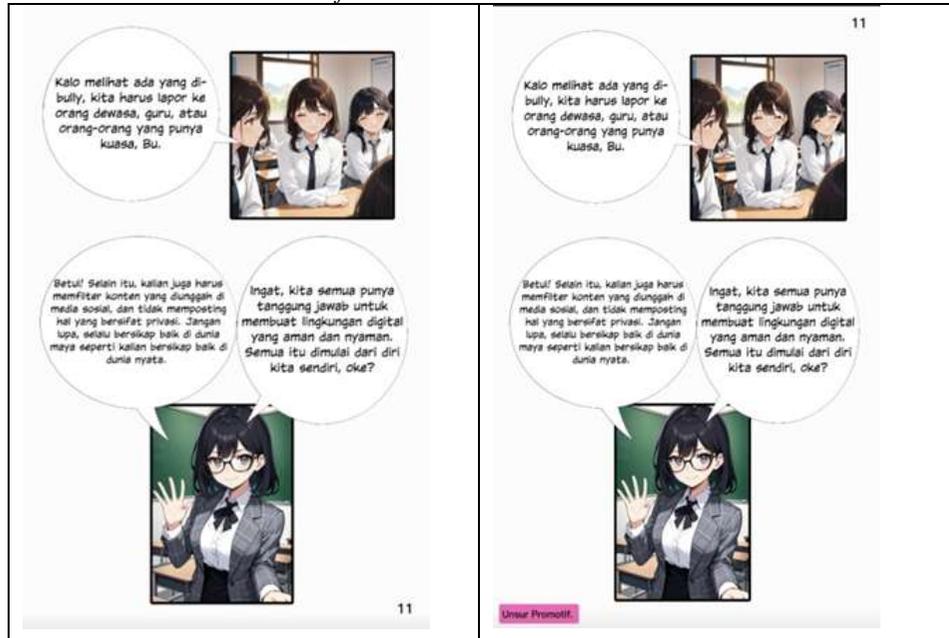


Figure 4 Caption Addition

Introduction of Comic Characters at the Beginning of Media Display

Before the improvement, there was no clear introduction of the characters in the comic, so the audience may have difficulty understanding the roles and relationships between the characters. Therefore, the developer made improvements by adding comic characters at the beginning of the media display. This provided the necessary context for the audience to better follow the story and understand the dynamics between characters.

Adding a Movie Credit at the End of Audio Visual Comic Media (Closing Credit)

Before revision, the initial prototype did not have closing credits listing the names of people involved in the production, such as animators, scriptwriters, and voice actors. After the editing process, movie credits were added at the end. This aims to give appreciation to the creative team who have worked hard to produce this audio-visual comic media and provide additional information to the audience about who was involved in its production.



Figure 5 Revised Inclusion of Names Involved in Production

Field Test

Initial Stage (Apperception Activity)

At this stage, apperception activities are carried out by providing students with case studies related to cyberbullying. This stage aims to explore learners' prior knowledge about cyberbullying and invite them to think critically about the problem. The case study is given in the form of a real example or scenario that illustrates the situation of cyberbullying, both among teenagers and in the school environment. After understanding the case study, students are invited to equalize their perceptions and discuss their views on the forms of protection that can be given to victims of cyberbullying. This discussion aims to build mutual awareness and understanding of the importance of protecting themselves and others from the threat of cyberbullying.



Figure 6 Apperception Activity

Phase Two (Core Activities)

In the core stage, students can listen to the material through audio-visual comic media. This medium was chosen because it can present information interestingly and interactively and is easier for students to understand. Audio-visual comics present stories relevant to cyberbullying,

describing the circumstances of the victim and perpetrator, the impact caused, and the moral message to be conveyed. This medium can stimulate students' emotions and empathy while providing a deeper understanding of the negative impact of cyberbullying and the importance of protection efforts.



Figure 7 Core Activities

Last Stage (Closing)

In the closing stage, students are asked to fill out a questionnaire that has been designed previously. This questionnaire serves as an evaluation tool to measure students' understanding, attitudes, and perceptions of the material that has been learned. The data obtained from this questionnaire is very important to determine how learning can affect students' understanding and awareness of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of using audio-visual comic media in the learning process.

After the research process, researchers obtained questionnaire data from 107 students spread across three districts/cities in Central Java. Based on the data, students' understanding, attitudes, and perceptions of cyberbullying protection are very good after observing audio-visual comic media. 102 respondents fell into the very good category, five respondents fell into the good enough category, and one respondent fell into the less good category.

Table 1. Product Trial Results

No.	Category	Value Range	Frequency	Total score	Percent (%)	Average score
1.	Very good	99-120	58	6267	60,54	10351/107= 96,74
2.	Good	76-98	41	3632	35,09	
3.	Simply	53-75	5	344	3,32	
4.	Less	30-52	3	108	1,04	
Total			107	10351	100%	Good

Discussion

Digital comics become a means for disseminating learning materials in the form of critical

dialog, not just narrative (Abd el-Gawad & Stevenson, 2021). The use of comics for academic purposes is associated with a cognitivist approach that allows learners to have a strong recall of learning content (Fischbacher-Smith, 2023). In line with the research (Saifudin et al., 2024). Digital-based comics can contribute to the fulfillment of learning needs by technological developments. The results of the needs analysis show that respondents want edutainment material with content that is tailored to the school environment. According to (Aeni & Yusupa, 2018) The ideal audio-visual comic media has high-quality story development, attractive media design, and entertaining educational content. Tavares et al (2023) Good digital comics also improve cognitive intelligence, increase social awareness, and change behavior.

Literacy skills are more effective when using comics (Belda-Medina, 2024) Stories in audio-visual comics enriched with sound and music elements make the media more lively and interactive (Legay & Burton, 2023). Interactive digital comics make it easier for students to understand learning materials and develop critical thinking skills (Mamolo & Wang, 2019). The presence of comics can help children explain their feelings and thoughts (Kovshoff et al., 2024). Comics can be used as a stimulus to trigger curiosity and positive reactions (Kitta et al., 2025) .

The presence of cartoons in comics becomes a practical tool for internalizing values and forming problem-solving skills (Suprpto et al., 2024). Digital comics help learners develop mental intelligence and channel emotional dimensions through visuals (Aladsani, 2024). Digital comics have become a medium to raise awareness of mental health and reduce the stigma of violence (Logie et al., 2023). In line with this, Ravunnikutty et al (2023) highlights the role of comics in creating early awareness of anxiety and other mental health disorders that often arise from cyberbullying. Comics serve as mediators of interpretive prompts that invite learners to explore their experiences in a socio-spatial context (Davis et al., 2024). This allows learners to use the comic as a reflection material to increase anti-cyberbullying awareness.

Based on the field test results, audio-visual comic media can provide understanding to students. Audio-visual comics as learning media are present to educate promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative elements to protect students from cyberbullying at school. This can be seen from the analysis of the field test of audio-visual comic media conducted in three districts/cities in Central Java, namely SMAN 3 Semarang City, SMAN 4 Surakarta, and SMAN 1 Purwokerto.

Conclusion

The audio-visual comic media fulfills technical needs and succeeds in building anti-cyberbullying attitudes through stories supported by audio-visual elements. Field tests show that this media effectively increases students' understanding of cyberbullying protection efforts. Based on the results of the one-sample t-test, the media performance exceeded the minimum standard of eligibility, with participants' scores significantly higher than the reference value. This audio-visual comic media is an effective and interesting educational tool for protecting against school cyberbullying. Researchers believe cyberbullying cases may decrease if audio-visual comic media is produced sustainably as an educational tool for cyberbullying protection in schools, especially in Central Java. Students who have been victims of cyberbullying will get an understanding of how to heal their trauma, and the potential to turn into cyberbullying perpetrators in the future can be minimized. Meanwhile, students who generally can only be 'spectators' of cyberbullying actions are expected to become agents of change and peer counselors in order to help the recovery of victims who experience post-cyberbullying trauma at school.

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