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The Effect of Big Book Media on Beginning Reading Skills in 1st-Grade Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how Big Book media affects 1st-grade students' learning capacities. The method used is the Pretest-Posttest design for one experiment group, with one group serving as a sample for the study. An early reading skills test is provided before the need to use Big Book media to gather data. Analytical results indicate that there is a significant increase in reading comprehension after using the Big Book. Before the study, there were 3% of students who had not yet learned about huruf, 9% of students who had a specific need, and 16% of students who had learned about letters but had not yet been able to finish them. The average score for the pretest was 66.47, but the posttest score after using Big Book increased to 80.22, with a 6.5% increase. All of this indicates that Big Book media is an effective substitute for increasing students' reading comprehension and making a positive contribution to the learning process in elementary school. The implications of this study are the necessity of developing and implementing other educational media to increase students' understanding of the fundamentals of elementary school.

Keywords
Big Book Media
Elementary School
Early Reading
Literacy Instruction
Reading Skills

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Introduction

The reality in the field shows that a low level of all students can have good initial reading skills. Based on research conducted in the 1st grade at one of the schools in East Jakarta. The study's findings demonstrated that several students had difficulty reading due to several factors, such as not all students attending kindergarten, and the lack of guidance and stimulation from parents contributed to the low motivation of students to learn to read. This can be seen in the learning carried out in their respective homes. This must be in line with the implementation of learning in schools because parental support is needed in learning at home, and cooperation between parents and teachers is needed for initial reading skills. One thing that teachers can try is to prepare learning media that can help the learning process of students to read early, for example, using the Big Book media. In 2024, the national Community Literacy Development Index (CLDI) recorded an extraordinary achievement with a score of 73.52, exceeding the target of 71.4 and the previous year's score of 69.42 [1].

In learning Indonesian, teachers tend to focus on verbal approaches with lectures without using media to convey lesson materials. As a result, the learning process of students becomes boring and monotonous. If we look at the average age of elementary school children ranging from 6 to 13 years old which is connected to Piaget's theory, elementary school children are included in the concrete operational phase (level), which means that in this phase the child or participant is really in a very real or concrete period, and cannot yet understand abstract things. According to Reikerås and Dahle [2] The general development of a child is significantly influenced by language, especially in the development of social skills in children over the age of three and toddlers. Language should be taught from an early age, which means making every effort to maximize language learning, especially in elementary school [3]. Indonesian language learning is a process of interaction between students, teachers, and learning resources in a learning environment to help students learn Indonesian effectively.

Reading is very important to get information and give readers new insights. One of the language skills that everyone must have, especially students, is reading, which consists of four skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Reading a lot increases vocabulary, expands knowledge, improves speaking skills, improves reasoning skills, and enables able to respond to what is read. Reading is the heart of education, which means reading is the heart of education. Reading helps someone learn more, get information, and deepen their knowledge. Reading also helps shape the understanding of what they read [4]. The main focus is on writing and reading at the initial stage of entering first grade, because these skills are the main requirements for gaining knowledge in other scientific fields in elementary school [5].

Learning to read is a cognitive process that enables pupils to comprehend all of the written content. The introduction of written language, letter mastery, and basic spelling is the first step in learning to read. Students are also exposed to the letter forms from A/a to Z/z, which are spoken by their sounds, and they participate in activities that include vocalizing the symbols of language sounds. Students are then instructed to read words, spell syllables, and read brief phrases [6]. Doing reading activities regularly increases vocabulary, additional knowledge, speaking skills, reasoning power, and the ability to respond to the material read. Reading is very important to get information and give readers new insights. According to Alpian and Yatri [7], reading aims to find information in the reading text, both explicit (facts) and implicit (inference). The National Education System states that everyone must learn to read. In short, everyone must have the ability to read because by reading, they can gain the knowledge and information they need to live well.

Mulatu and Regassa [8] said the cognitive processes that readers employ to comprehend texts are known as reading abilities. Beginning reading is a process of skill and cognition. Recognition and mastery of phoneme symbols are part of the skill process, and use is part of the cognitive process. Phoneme symbols are known to help understand words or sentences. Beginning reading is taught in stages, consisting of pre-reading and reading. In the pre-reading stage, students are taught the following: sitting properly when reading; putting books on the table; holding books; opening and turning pages of books; and paying attention to what is written. Beginning reading instruction focuses on technical elements such as fluency and clarity of voice and accuracy of reading, writing, pronunciation, and natural intonation. One of the important findings of this study is that providing students with instruction that focuses on important skills such as letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension can prevent and improve their beginning reading difficulties [9]. Thus, students acquire basic reading skills through various lessons and training gradually. This is done to achieve the learning objectives that have been set [10].

Learning media is defined as anything that can be used to convey messages or lesson content, stimulate the thoughts, feelings, attention, and abilities of students, so that it can encourage the teaching and learning process. The word "media" comes from the Latin word medius, which literally means "middle", "intermediary", or "introduction" [11]. Media is anything that is around students that can be used to help in the learning process. Students need to gain a better understanding of the topic, and teachers need to understand the importance of learning media [12]. Meanwhile, according to Hunze [13] Media in education is a curriculum-driven experience designed to prepare or enhance students' school-related activities. The use of media is also important because it can shorten the time. That is, the use of media in learning

can make things easier, especially in conveying things that are new and foreign to students. Educators must create interesting learning experiences for students so that they can improve their critical thinking skills. One way to achieve this is by providing interesting learning media and actively involving students [14]. From all the things mentioned above, it can be concluded that learning media is very important to increase the interest of elementary school students in learning [15]. According to Halimatussakdiah et al. [16] To overcome the problem of students who are not proficient in reading and are not motivated to learn, interactive reading learning resources are needed. This should be a relaxed, comfortable, and enjoyable activity, not a formal activity that often makes students bored. The correct selection of learning material is necessary to support students' learning. Using imaginative, inventive, and engaging educational materials is one method to do this [17].

There are many types of educational media that can be used by educators to facilitate the learning process. Big Book is one type of learning media that can be used as a development of learning media to create an innovative learning atmosphere. According to Prawiyogi et al. [18] Big Book is a picture book that is selected to be read and has special qualities, namely, it can quickly involve the child's interest because of its large pictures, contains a rhythm that is interesting to the child, has repeated writing, planned and partly repeated vocabulary, and a simple storyline. According to Pajar et al. [19], Big Book media, or in Indonesian "buku besar", is a large reading book with large writing, pictures, and sizes. The sizes of Big Book books vary, such as A3, A4, and A5 books. Big Book media functions as an intermediary to convey material to students and attract children's interest quickly because of its interesting pictures. In other words, the Big Book is an educational tool that is different from other educational tools. Big Book has advantages and disadvantages, as stated by Ninawati [20]. Big Book has several shortcomings, namely: big books only display the perception of the sense of sight, big books can only be seen by a group of students, and images are interpreted individually.

In addition, high-quality books can serve as examples for beginners in reading and writing. According to Ritonga and Rambe [21] shows that the Big Book can encourage students to start reading, it is feasible and useful to be used in lower grades. According to the research, the success of the Big Book as a learning tool is strengthened. According to Roifah et al. [22] Shows that the Big Book can be useful for learning in mainstream classes; it may work well with Big Book stories, and learners may enjoy using it. Thus, the reading topics are increasingly developed according to the experiences and imaginations of learners. It is very important to pay special attention to the use of the Big Book. In addition to making it take a lot of time and energy. The Big Book also requires deep thinking for early reading learning to be effective.

Lower-grade students usually do not have the same characteristics as upper-grade students. According to Piaget, a child's cognitive development is divided into four stages:

- The sensory-motor stage, which occurs between the ages of 0-1.5 years.
- The concrete operational stage which occurs between the ages of 6 and 12 years.
- The formal operational stage, which occurs after the age of 12 years [21].

Piaget emphasized in the developmental theory that children will be more successful if learning is adjusted to their cognitive developmental stage. Lower grade students are considered mature enough to use logic or operations at the concrete operational stage, which is between 6-12, but only for real objects. In addition, lower-grade students have short-term memory, which means they need tools and media as support to help lower grade students understand the lessons taught [21].

However, the reality in the field shows that not all students are able to have good beginning reading skills. Based on research conducted in grade 1 in one of the schools in East Jakarta. The research found that there were several students who had difficulty reading due to several factors, such as: not all students had attended kindergarten, and the lack of guidance and stimulation from parents contributed to the low motivation of students to learn to read. This can be seen in the learning that is done at home. This must be in line with the implementation of learning at school because parental support is needed in learning at home, and cooperation between parents and teachers is needed for early reading skills. Creating educational materials that support kids' early reading development is one strategy instructors might attempt. One such resource is Big Book Media.

The four key components of the ARCS model (attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction) are strengthened when the Big Book is used in the classroom. Interesting stories and visuals draw students in, content that is relevant to their lives increases their attention, easy access to reading boosts their confidence, and success and pleasurable learning experiences provide them with satisfaction. Big Book also promotes critical thinking, creativity, and conversation, all of which help children become more cognitively engaged. As a result, Big Book not only boosts students' desire and enthusiasm for learning but also enhances their level of activity, self-assurance, and cognitive engagement.

The Big Book is one of the many media that can be used to improve reading skills. Big books can serve as a learning tool for grades 1, 2, and 3 [21]. Because lower-grade students are more likely to learning media that have large writing and images and attractive colors, Big Books are very useful tools in early education, especially for students with special needs. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) states that Big Books are large-

sized literature with colorful illustrations and large print. These books, which are available in A3, A4, and A5 sizes, are intended to attract students' attention and enhance their learning experience. Big Books are very effective for beginning readers because of their visual appeal and supporting images [23]. The Big Book is generally used in modeling reading activities, guided reading, and shared reading. The Big Book allows students to learn to read through memorizing and repeating readings. The use of this media not only improves reading skills but also creates a more interesting and enjoyable learning experience for students. The use of Big Book media in early reading learning shows a significant positive impact. With an attractive design, Big Book media is able to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment for students. This is important because students at an early age tend to be more responsive to learning media that involve visualization and direct interaction.

The percentage of initial reading skills of 1st-grade students in Odd Semester 2024 shows that: Not yet familiar with letters (3%), and students with special needs (9%). Familiar with letters but not yet fluent in reading (16%). Familiar with letters and fluent in reading (72%). The total number of students is 32. Basic reading skills are very important for students in elementary school, especially in 1st-grade, before they can continue to a higher reading level. This study aims to comprehensively examine the impact of Big Book media on enhancing the learning capacities of 1st-grade students, focusing on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and classroom engagement.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research methodology using a pre-experimental design of the one-group pretest–posttest type. In this design, a single experimental group is observed without the inclusion of a control or comparison group. Before the main analysis, prerequisite tests for data normality and homogeneity were conducted. The normality of the data was assessed using the Lilliefors test, while homogeneity was tested using the Fisher formula, both facilitated through SPSS version 22 for Windows. The overall research design is summarized in Table I.

Table 1. Research Design [24]

Groups	Pre-Test (O1)	Treatment (X)	Post-Test (O2)
Experimental	O1	X	O2

Remarks:
O1 = Pre-test (initial measurement)
X = Treatment (Big Book media intervention)
O2 = Post-test (final measurement)

The study was conducted during the even semester of the 2024–2025 academic year at a public elementary school in East Jakarta, involving 32 first-grade students as participants

in the experimental class. Early reading skills were assessed using five indicators: (1) letter recognition accuracy, (2) word formation accuracy, (3) sentence construction accuracy, (4) reading fluency, and (5) reading volume. Data collection utilized a performance rubric sheet, and the primary data analyzed were the gain scores (i.e., the difference between post-test and pre-test results). Descriptive statistics, along with tests for normality and homogeneity, were performed to fulfill the analytical prerequisites. The paired sample t-test was subsequently employed to test the research hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

This study employed a pre-experimental design using a one-group pretest–posttest format. The research design comprised three key stages: (1) administering a pretest to assess the initial reading abilities of first-grade students, (2) providing a treatment intervention using Big Book media, and (3) conducting a posttest to evaluate any changes in reading performance following the intervention. The pretest was conducted on April 23, 2025, followed by the treatment and posttest on April 24, 2025, within the experimental group. The posttest data were analyzed to determine the effect of the Big Book media on students' early reading skills. Descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Pretest and Posttest Scores on Early Reading Ability

Statistic	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Score	32	21	85	66.47	21.106
Posttest Score	32	21	100	80.22	20.285

As shown in Table 2, the average score of the pretest was 66.47, with a range from 21 to 85. After the treatment, the posttest average increased to 80.22, with scores ranging from 21 to 100. To determine the distribution characteristics of the data, a normality test was conducted using the Lilliefors formula. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

Data	N	L-count	L-table	Criteria	Conclusion
Pretest	32	0.101	0.157	L-count < L-table	Normal
Posttest	32	0.108	0.157	L-count < L-table	Normal

The normality test results indicated that both pretest and posttest scores were normally distributed, as the L-count values were lower than the L-table values. Therefore, the analysis proceeded with the homogeneity test, which revealed that the variance of the two datasets was equivalent, indicating homogeneity.

Subsequently, hypothesis testing was conducted using the paired sample t-test. The results indicated that the use of Big Book media significantly improved early reading skills. The

calculated t-value (t-count) was 3.968, exceeding the critical t-value (t-table) of 2.040 at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ with degrees of freedom (df) = 31. Since t-count > t-table (3.968 > 2.040), the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. The findings of this study confirm that the implementation of Big Book media significantly enhances the early reading skills of first-grade students in the selected elementary school in East Jakarta.

Fig. 1 shows the illustration of the Big Book media used to support the development of beginning reading skills in early elementary students, emphasizing visual and textual engagement. Fig. 2 shows a depiction of the implementation of Big Book media with the experimental group, highlighting its targeted use to enhance early reading skills through interactive and structured learning sessions.



Fig. 1. Big Book Media on Beginning Reading Skills



Fig. 2. Special Treatment of Big Book Media on Early Reading Skills

The findings of this study underscore the significant effectiveness of Big Book media in enhancing both student engagement and early reading proficiency. The use of Big Book media encourages active student participation, particularly through reading aloud and peer interaction within a safe and supportive classroom environment. The enlarged and visually enriched format, which combines text with vivid illustrations, facilitates shared reading experiences that are both captivating and pedagogically sound [25]. This is supported by the

findings of Rohmah and Hidayat [4], who emphasized that Big Book media positively influences learning outcomes in Indonesian language instruction among elementary school students.

The specific Big Book used in this study, titled *"Getting to Know the Prefix Words Ma, Mi, Mu, Me, Mo"*, was thoughtfully designed with 11 large-format pages (40 x 60 cm). The book employs a Picture Window layout that integrates simple, relatable language with vivid illustrations of familiar objects and activities. This design helps students connect the content to their daily experiences, thereby enhancing comprehension and memory retention [5]. These findings are in line with Prawiyogi et al. [18], who reported that the inclusion of real-world contexts in Big Book media significantly boosts students' motivation and reading interest.

Qualitative feedback from both teachers and students further confirms the positive impact of the Big Book. Teachers observed that its large size and appealing visuals effectively captured students' attention and sustained their interest during reading sessions. One teacher remarked, "The Big Book really helps me attract students' attention because of its large size and interesting illustrations." Similarly, students expressed enthusiasm for the Big Book, with one noting, "I like the Big Book because the pictures are big and the content is easy to understand." These observations are consistent with those of Rahmah and Amaliya [24], who highlighted the Big Book's role in making reading activities more enjoyable and accessible for young learners.

However, some areas for improvement were identified. One student commented, "I sometimes feel that the explanation is too long and it is difficult to remember everything," suggesting the need for content refinement to better align with young learners' cognitive capacities. This concern is echoed by Windiarum et al. [23], who recommend that literacy materials for early education be concise, well-structured, and developmentally appropriate.

Quantitative data also validate the effectiveness of the Big Book intervention. Students' early reading abilities showed substantial improvement, with the average score increasing from 66.47 in the pretest to 80.22 in the posttest, indicating a gain of approximately 6.5 percent. This improvement was also evident among students with special educational needs, who demonstrated progress in letter recognition and reading fluency. These findings support the results of Ailah et al. [5], who found that Big Book interventions are effective in promoting literacy among both general education and special needs students.

In conclusion, Big Book media not only supports the development of foundational reading skills but also fosters student engagement and offers inclusive learning opportunities. When implemented thoughtfully, it serves as a powerful tool for improving early literacy, particularly within primary education settings.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of Big Book media in improving early reading proficiency among first-grade students. The engaging visual design and interactive format of the Big Book enhance students' letter recognition, word decoding, and reading comprehension, while also increasing motivation and classroom participation. Statistical analysis confirms a significant improvement in reading scores following the intervention. The study addresses a gap in early literacy education by offering an innovative, age-appropriate learning medium tailored to young learners. It provides empirical support for the Big Book as a practical alternative in lower-grade classrooms. However, the research is limited to a single school context and does not assess the long-term or broader literacy impacts of the intervention. Unexpectedly, beyond literacy gains, the Big Book fostered greater student enthusiasm and active engagement. Future studies should involve more diverse samples and explore its effects on advanced literacy skills. Additional research could also examine how integrating Big Books with digital tools might enhance their educational impact.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research focused exclusively on first-grade elementary students, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other grade levels or educational contexts. Second, the Big Book media utilized in this study covered only specific content and design elements, leaving unexplored the potential effectiveness of other formats or materials. Third, the short duration of the study did not allow for an assessment of the long-term impact of Big Book media on early reading development.

To obtain a more comprehensive understanding, future research should broaden the scope to include students from different grades or educational stages. Additionally, the development and evaluation of more diverse, innovative, and interactive Big Book formats could further enhance student engagement and literacy outcomes. Longitudinal studies with extended implementation periods and periodic assessments are also recommended to examine sustained effects over time.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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