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**Reorienting Children's Interests in Fiction:
A Comparative Study of Social-Emotional Values
in Indonesian Folktales and Digital Anomalous
Stories**

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:
Certia Anomali;
Cerita Rakyat
Indonesia;
Nilai Sosial
Emosional;
Pendidikan
Karakter;
Pengembang
an Moral.

Pertumbuhan pesat media digital telah menggeser preferensi naratif anak-anak dari cerita rakyat tradisional menuju cerita digital yang lebih dinamis secara emosional dan berfokus pada pengembangan karakter. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implikasi pergeseran tersebut terhadap tujuan pendidikan, khususnya dalam pembentukan karakter dan penguatan kompetensi sosial-emosional. Analisis komparatif kualitatif dilakukan terhadap enam teks naratif, yang terdiri atas tiga cerita rakyat Indonesia dengan struktur konvensional serta nilai moral yang eksplisit, dan tiga cerita digital bertema anomali yang dipilih dari akun TikTok populer (@cerita_anomali_lucu, @pylan.page, dan @piq.man6) yang masing-masing memiliki jutaan penonton. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan perangkat lunak NVivo 15 dengan fokus pada tiga domain pendidikan karakter (empati, integritas, dan akuntabilitas) serta dua aspek pembelajaran sosial-emosional (manajemen emosi dan keterampilan relasional). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa cerita rakyat secara konsisten memperkuat nilai moral dan kecerdasan emosional anak melalui oposisi tokoh yang jelas dan pesan etis yang eksplisit. Sebaliknya, narasi digital anomali cenderung menampilkan alur yang terfragmentasi dan tokoh dengan instabilitas emosional, sehingga memberikan peluang terbatas untuk penanaman nilai moral. Meskipun daya tarik media digital terletak pada formatnya yang menarik dan intensitas emosinya, ketiadaan penguatan etis yang eksplisit dapat melemahkan kontribusinya bagi pendidikan karakter. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan pendekatan pedagogis yang mengintegrasikan kekuatan moral dari cerita rakyat tradisional dengan daya tarik cerita digital untuk lebih mendukung pembentukan karakter anak di era digital.

Abstract

Keywords:
Anomalous Story;
Character
Education;
Indonesian
Folktales;
Moral Development;
Socio-emotional
Value.

The rapid growth of digital media has shifted children's narrative preferences from traditional folklore toward emotionally dynamic and character-driven digital stories. This study aims to examine the implications of this shift for educational objectives, particularly in shaping character and strengthening socio-emotional competencies. A qualitative comparative analysis was conducted on six narrative texts, consisting of three Indonesian folktales with conventional structures and explicit moral values, and three digital anomaly stories selected from popular TikTok accounts (@cerita_anomali_lucu,

@pylan.page, and @piq.man6) that have attracted millions of viewers. The analysis was carried out using NVivo 15, focusing on three domains of character education (empathy, integrity, and accountability) and two aspects of socio-emotional learning (emotion management and relational skills). The findings show that Indonesian folktales consistently reinforce children's moral values and emotional intelligence through clear character oppositions and explicit ethical messages. In contrast, digital anomaly narratives often display fragmented plots and emotionally unstable characters, providing limited opportunities for moral guidance. While the appeal of digital media lies in its engaging format and emotional intensity, its lack of explicit ethical reinforcement may weaken its contribution to character education. Therefore, the study concludes by recommending a pedagogical approach that integrates the moral strength of traditional folktales with the engaging features of digital storytelling to better support children's character formation in the digital age.

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INTRODUCTION

Augmenting socio-emotional values in primary education is essential for cultivating character and communication abilities. Empirical research demonstrates that mastery of social-emotional skills correlates favorably with superior academic achievement, greater mental health, and reduced aggression (Butvilas dkk., 2022). In this context, educators must formulate and implement instructional strategies to improve social and emotional competencies, allowing pupils to respond more adeptly to social demands in their surroundings. The phenomenon known as *Digital Anomaly Stories* currently dominates children's preferences alongside this need. This term denotes absurd characters in digital media, especially on social media platforms and short films. These figures exceed the boundaries of conventional reality and often do not provide constructive instruction (Retnowati dkk., 2018). Researchers are concerned that excessive exposure to such content may affect children's internalized socio-emotional values and alter their view of acts consistent with broader social standards, despite the term's numerous interpretations. The stories experienced by children nowadays are closely connected to cultural changes and the rapid progress of digital media.

Indonesia's elementary school curriculum has traditionally utilized narratives such as *Jaka Tarub* and *Malin Kundang* to convey moral virtues, including honesty, accountability, and compassion (Haring, 2023). These narratives exhibit a linear framework highlighting a clear moral distinction between persons considered good and those viewed as malicious, resulting in informative rewards or penalties. Historically, narrative formulas have shaped children's character development by embedding socially ideal norms into their psychological framework (Sharma & Dwivedi, 2023). Based on

survey data involving students, preliminary findings indicate a shift in children's narrative exposure patterns. Of the total respondents, only 160 students answered questions related to Indonesian folklore characters they had heard or read, such as *Malin Kundang*, *Timun Mas*, and the *Danau Toba* folktale.

Meanwhile, 235 students responded to questions about anomalous fictional characters they had seen or heard about in digital media, such as *Tung Tung Tung Sahur*, *Bombardilo Crocodillo*, *Tralalelo Tralala*, and *Ballerina Capuchina*. This disparity indicates that children are more familiar with and exposed to characters from digital spaces than folklore characters. In other words, there is a trend toward a decline in collective memory for traditional narratives, while simultaneously increasing engagement with contemporary digital stories that are anomalous, absurd, or do not follow conventional narrative conventions. In the context of comparing the socio-emotional values of Indonesian folktales and digitally anomalous fiction, this trend deserves further examination, considering that folktales serve not only as entertainment but also as vehicles for character formation and the transmission of cultural values. Therefore, this reorientation of interests can influence children's perceptions of story structure, moral character, and the social values contained in the narratives they consume (Hikmah dkk., 2024; Liao dkk., 2024).

This transition represents a shift in aesthetic preferences and examines the effects and potential disruptions caused by new narrative frameworks on social-emotional education. A review of recent literature indicates consensus that both digital and traditional fiction effectively facilitate social-emotional learning, especially in fostering empathy and emotional intelligence (Maranatha dkk., 2024; Zarifsanaiey dkk., 2022). Digital storytelling that incorporates multimedia and provides interactivity has been shown to improve student engagement and enhance communication skills, collaboration, and emotional regulation (Chen & Chen, 2024; Schlauch dkk., 2022). Nevertheless, numerous research findings reveal disparities, especially regarding the comparative efficacy of the two forms when considering age, gender, and cultural context. A recent study indicates that oral storytelling approaches, which generally depend on a direct connection between the storyteller and the audience, and engagement in social and physical surroundings, have a more favorable effect on girls' social and emotional development. Conversely, digital storytelling tools that integrate visual and auditory components influence boys more, notably augmenting their empathy and social awareness (Kim & Lee, 2023). The inconsistencies in the study's conclusions can be ascribed to the varying methodologies, designs, and platforms utilized.

Furthermore, the type of engagement, whether passive reading or participation in interactive narrative experiences, as well as the duration of exposure and participants' digital literacy, is a crucial moderator (Shirazi dkk., 2021; M. D. Wulandari, 2023). Digital storytelling can express intricate emotional tensions and moral ambiguity in some contexts, promoting critical thinking and societal introspection. However, lacking these attributes in specific domains may result in misunderstanding or normalizing aberrant behavior if not integrated into deliberate instructional initiatives.

The emergence of digital anomaly tales, characterized by unusual characters and scenarios shared through social media and video platforms, is generating a new viral craze among primary school children. Although not entirely hazardous, these characters often blur clear moral boundaries, in contrast to the structure of Indonesian folktales that emphasize unequivocal moral teachings through virtuous protagonists. This study examines socio-emotional values in two disparate storytelling forms: Indonesian folktales, which exemplify traditional narratives, and the anomalous story, which represents current digital narratives. This study investigates how various narrative forms might cultivate empathy, integrity, accountability, and other social competencies, while also utilizing these insights to build more contextual character education strategies for modern elementary school students (Gkoutsioukosta & Apostolidou, 2023; Palaigeorgiou dkk., 2019; Sulistianingsih dkk., 2018). The strategy focuses on enhancing autonomy, creativity, and emotional regulation abilities, consistent with the Emotion Regulation Theory (Umucu & Lee, 2024) and intrinsic motivation frameworks. From 2020 to 2024, gamified and interactive digital storytelling was utilized to develop socio-emotional competencies, focusing on empathy, collaboration, and social resilience. This research phase emphasizes the role of teachers in ethically and constructively facilitating digital narratives (Fenanlampir, 2024; Kumalasari dkk., 2024; Munir dkk., 2023).

The findings demonstrate that folklore serves a purpose beyond entertainment; it acts as an educational instrument that conveys norms and morals crucial for the character development of youth (Sugiarti dkk., 2022). Consequently, incorporating folklore in education remains a pressing concern, particularly when characters encounter diverse content in the digital domain. Nevertheless, research regarding the influence of Indonesian folklore and its operation when dissociated from information labeled as *Digital Anomaly Stories* remains relatively scarce. Scholars typically emphasize the ethical principles inherent in folklore, whereas the influence of modern digital media remains inadequately examined (Suryani dkk., 2020). This scenario establishes a void in the literature that investigates the impact of both narrative types on children's socio-emotional

development, along with the interactive processes that collectively influence children's narrative preferences in the context of ongoing digital acceleration (Schjelde & Lie, 2021; D. Wulandari dkk., 2019).

In line with this gap, the present study has three objectives. First, to compare the socio-emotional values embedded in Indonesian folktales and digital anomaly stories. Second, to analyze how these narratives influence children's empathy, integrity, accountability, and relational skills. Third, to provide practical insights for teachers, parents, and policymakers in developing curriculum strategies that balance traditional moral values with the appeal of digital storytelling. Theoretically, this study enriches comparative narrative studies by connecting cultural value transmission theories with socio-emotional learning frameworks. Practically, the study offers actionable recommendations for educators to adapt folklore and digital stories in a complementary way, enabling children to navigate complex media landscapes while internalizing positive character traits. This originality positions the research as a significant contribution to current debates on the future of character education in the digital era.

METODE

This study employed a qualitative design with a comparative content analysis approach, as it enabled a systematic exploration of socio-emotional values represented in two contrasting categories of children's literature, namely Indonesian folktales and digital anomalous stories. This design was chosen based on its capacity to reveal narrative significances and value constructions across genres, particularly in relation to the cultural transformation of children's reading preferences in the digital era (Qomariyah dkk., 2018).

The primary data consisted of six narratives collected through purposive sampling. Three narratives were drawn from the book *100 Cerita Rakyat Nusantara* by Dian K., published by Bhuana Ilmu Populer, which was selected because it provides a wide range of Indonesian folktales adapted from oral traditions while preserving their moral and cultural essence. The other three narratives were selected from TikTok accounts, which are widely consumed by children and pre-teens and regularly disseminate digital anomalous stories. The selected accounts included @cerita_anomali_lucu, which has 19,000 followers and more than five million views; @pylan.page, with 203,100 followers and over ten million cumulative views; and @piq.man6, which has nearly ten million views and 2.3 million likes. A preliminary survey was conducted with 113 children aged 8 to 12

from different elementary schools in Indonesia to complement the textual analysis. The survey assessed their exposure to digital anomalous stories, familiarity with the characters, and perceptions of emotional and moral significance. The closed-ended responses from this survey were analyzed descriptively and served to contextualize the narrative data.

The narratives were collected through documentation of printed folktales and digital archive retrieval of online stories. All texts were then transcribed for systematic analysis. A coding sheet was prepared based on character education theory and the framework developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (Saunders & Sanders, 2025). The coding categories included five dimensions of character education: empathy, integrity, responsibility, and five socio-emotional competencies: self-awareness, emotional regulation, social awareness, relational skills, and responsible decision making. Data analysis followed a three-stage thematic procedure using NVivo 15. First, thematic codes were identified from the narratives. Second, the codes were categorized into socio-emotional value groups derived from the theoretical framework. Third, patterns were interpreted and compared across the two narrative genres. The results were presented in a thematic matrix containing references to codes and nodes to show the frequency, intensity, and interconnections of values across folktales and anomalous stories.

Several strategies were employed to ensure validity and reliability. Peer debriefing sessions were conducted with fellow researchers to refine coding schemes and interpretations, while inter-coder reliability checks were conducted to confirm consistency in coding. Triangulation was applied by combining the narrative analysis with survey findings, and thick description was provided to enhance transparency and transferability. These procedures ensured the findings were credible and trustworthy while maintaining methodological rigor. The research was conducted in three phases: (1) identification of thematic codes from the narrative, (2) categorization of these codes into socio-emotional value groups, and (3) interpretation of patterns and comparison across different genres of fiction. This approach's outcomes are depicted via a thematic matrix and code and node references to demonstrate the frequency and interrelations of values across two narrative categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study's analysis was performed systematically with NVivo 15 software. Thematic mapping of story patterns is executed via a data-driven coding methodology.

The examined narratives comprise three Indonesian folktales and three digital anomalous tales. The data is subsequently extracted in textual form and categorized into six primary categories (parent nodes) defined by the theoretical framework. The analytical framework amalgamates (Propp, 2009)'s theory of narrative motifs (1895-1970, n.d.), aesthetic theory (Jafari dkk., 2023), and the socio-emotional framework developed by (Kazanjan, 2023) for the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. The six primary nodes are: (1) Narrative Structure, (2) Genre, (3) Language Style, (4) Characters, (5) Emotional Objectives, and (6) CASEL Dimensions.

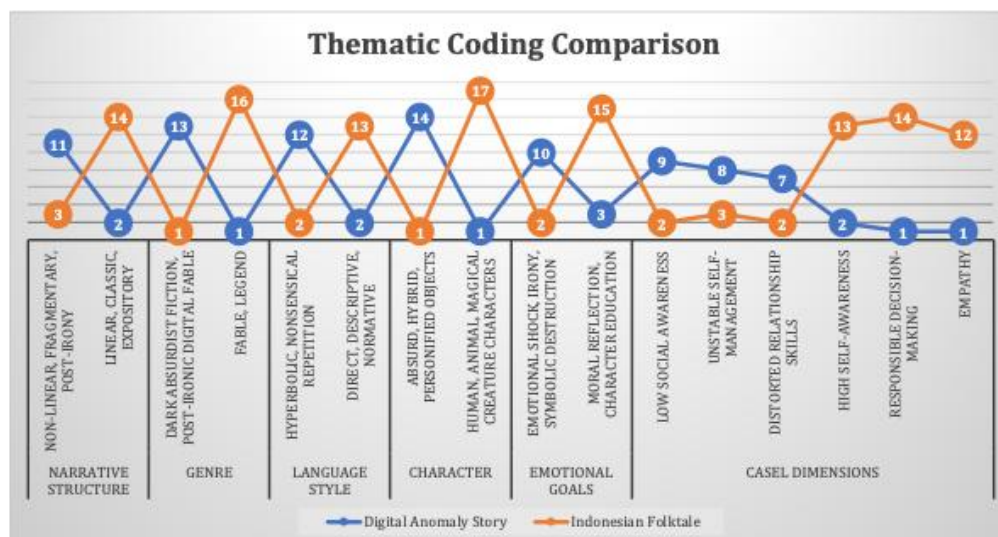


Figure 1: Thematic Coding Comparison

Each successive parent node is partitioned into several child nodes that signify distinct thematic qualities. Two primary branches are identified within the Narrative Structure node: non-linear, fragmented, post-irony, and linear, classic, explanatory. The Genre category includes dark absurdist fiction, post-ironic digital fable, fable, and legend. In Language Style, nodes such as hyperbole, meaningless repetition, and direct, descriptive, normative forms are established. The Character Category encompasses two primary forms: bizarre, hybrid, personified objects and characters that are human, animal, or supernatural creatures. The primary divide in emotional objectives is between narratives that seek emotional shock, irony, and symbolic devastation, and those that foster moral contemplation and character development. Finally, within the CASEL Dimension category, the coding method aims to discover six fundamental competencies: limited social awareness, unstable self-management, impaired relationship skills, strong self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and empathy.

This phenomenon contrasts with and intersects the language of posthumanism (Franco, 2025; Juez, 2025), which posits that identity is no longer exclusively based on humans but dispersed throughout a network of interrelated objects, technology, and

affect. From the standpoint of emotional objectives, folktales are crafted for instructional reasons. The investigation gathered 15 references about moral reflection and character education nodes, demonstrating that these narratives cultivate emotions to reinforce moral principles. Anomalous narratives utilize storytelling as emotive stimuli that are both disruptive and subversive. Up to 10 recognized references elucidate the emotional effects generated, encompassing surprise, irony, and symbolic annihilation. Within this approach, emotions do not strengthen identity but facilitate its disintegration.

The coding procedure is executed concurrently and is closed, utilizing node occurrence frequencies as indicators of the thematic strength of each tale. The outcomes of the NVivo tabulation and visualization served as a foundation for constructing a comparative narrative between the two categories of stories examined, with the first grounded in collective ideals and the second arising from an ambivalent and experimental digital environment. The distinctions in narrative structure are inherently linked to the selection of genre. The narratives classified as anomalous typically embrace the structure of black absurdist fiction and post-ironic digital fairytale (13 citations), genres that intentionally subvert reader expectations, employ irony as the primary tactic, and affirm absurdity as a narrative reality. Only one folktale addresses that aspect, whilst the remaining sixteen quotations are firmly situated within the domain of fables and legends, which moral and collective cultural values have traditionally underpinned. This condition signifies a transition from mimetic aesthetics to anti-representationalism, shifting the narrative from a pedagogical function to one of disruption.

The style of language emerges as the subsequent arena of conflict. The narrative of anomaly employs exaggerated language, repetition, and phonetic manipulation that frequently lacks literal significance (12 references), constructing a realm characterized by chaos and linguistic astonishment. In this context, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a tool of alienation that perpetually alters meaning. Conversely, using 13 quotations that highlight descriptive and normative language, the folklore story functions to construct order. Within this concept, language protects societal ideals, wherein sentences reference reality and direct acts and conduct. This distinction is also evident in the formation of characters or subjects. Folktales, featuring 17 references to human individuals, animals, and mythical beings, conform to an anthropomorphic framework that facilitates reader identification. Conversely, anomaly narratives depict psychologically challenging phenomena: animate objects, hybrid forms, and ambiguous beings who defy traditional story logic (14 references).

The concluding aspect analyzed is social-emotional competency. Folktales demonstrate significant and consistent efficacy: strong self-awareness noted in 13 instances, responsible decision-making in 14 instances, and empathy in 12. These results suggest that these narratives communicate stories and influence tangible social consciousness. Conversely, the anomaly narratives reveal a disjointed aspect: 9 allusions to diminished social awareness, 8 to erratic self-management, and 7 to impaired relational skills. The findings indicate that the anomalous digital narratives lack a coherent relational paradigm, instead reflecting a sensation of alienation that resonates with the emotive aspects of digital existence.

Shifting Narrative Structures in Children's Literary Preferences

The analytic results, facilitated by NVivo software, reveal a notable change in the narrative preferences of elementary school kids. Digital anomaly narratives, which have garnered considerable popularity on TikTok, have a pronounced inclination towards non-linear, fragmented structures, expressly eschewing traditional formats (Novianti, 2022). The narrative does not adhere to the exposition–conflict–resolution structure but incorporates deliberate chronological shifts and causal links. The structure corresponds with the concept of anachrony, as defined by Bastos and Tuters (2023), which denotes a temporal deviation in the story that transcends chronological logic, with the technique of narrative defamiliarization. This form creates a reading experience that is alienating, ambiguous, and perpetually unexpected. The narrative structure in those stories intentionally removes linearity and frequently diverges from the traditional conventions of factual storytelling. The narrative advances rapidly and frequently shifts across temporal and causal levels.

"Indeed, death is never eternal, not if one knows how to manipulate it... I am the one controlling the game." Data 1, TikTok account @pylan.page

The extract delineates the narrator's role as a mechanism that not only conveys the narrative but also orchestrates and dictates the characters' existence inside the plot (Wan-Lau, 2020). Absurd repetition and phonetic manipulation emerge as significant characteristics, as demonstrated in the subsequent excerpt:

"Tra-la-lero is merely another pawn that I can maneuver." (Data 2, TikTok account @pylan.page).

These narratives transcend conventional logic and repudiate widely accepted moral standards. The characters are defined by phonetics and ridiculousness, featuring names such as "Tung Tung Sahur," "Ballerina Cappucina," and "Bombardiro Krokodilo."

"Bombardiro Krokodilo bombarded the children for their refusal to consume spinach pasta, resulting in a cataclysmic explosion of spaghetti." (Data 3, TikTok account piq.man6)

The prevailing theme in this collection of narratives is chaos, disintegration, and emotionally intense retribution. The conclusion of each struggle occurs destructively and rapidly, resulting in an imaginative explosion that occasionally guides the reader into nihilism. Indonesian folk tales exemplify a genre characterized by the stability and clarity of formal structure. Works like "Malin Kundang," "Timun Mas," and "Danau Toba" demonstrate a synthesis of moral stories and fables, structured within a narrative framework comprising exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution (Thompson, 1955). Moral lessons and societal conventions are conveyed explicitly by humans and magical phenomena. In "Malin Kundang," the linear narrative is distinctly articulated, with the climax underscored by the subsequent dialogue:

"Greetings, elderly woman, on what grounds do you presume to address me as your offspring?" (Data 4, K, Dian, p. 40)

The comment acts as a pivotal moment that directs the story towards what appears to be a punitive measure in the guise of stone, signifying an inherently healing conclusion. Simultaneously, Timun Mas experiences a slow and evident escape, as this account illustrates:

"Timun Mas discarded the contents of the second package, which consisted of needles, resulting in the transformation into towering bamboo trees." (Data 5, K. Dian, p. 140)

The figure surmounts threats by strategic acumen rather than sheer annihilation. In all narratives, the storytelling technique conveys societal norms: filial piety, responsibility, and kindness as safeguards for existence. The dispute settlement is thus transformative, emerging from a curse grounded in transgression (as exemplified in "Malin Kundang"). The linear syntax of this structure is redundant, enhancing the clarity of the conclusion and the standard. Conflict emerges from the violation of commitments that result in change:

Upon the husband's arrival, the wife declared, "You have violated your promise; thus, my child and I shall return to my domain." They exited, paused in the field, and lightning hit intensely as the rain descended softly, and both vanished. Following the cessation of rain, a spring of water erupted from the location they vacated, perpetually flowing until it coalesced into a lake that broadened into an expansive mirror. (Data 6, K. Dian, p. 27)

The conflict presented in this folktale steadily develops and ultimately resolves via behaviors that reinforce accountability and fidelity. The linear plot has an instructional purpose. The story in this data arranges occurrences and establishes a steadfast moral foundation. While digital media narratives often depend on confusion, surprise, and cognitive reversals, the narratives of the Indonesian populace uphold continuity, moral

clarity, and the reinforcement of community ideals. This distinction pertains to form and function, inevitably affecting primary school learners. During the concrete-operational period (López-Ornelas & Abascal-Mena, 2018) that elementary school children are presently experiencing, a linear progression establishes a more robust cognitive and ethical basis. Conversely, digital storytelling diminishes the essential value aspects, favoring viral figures as focal points to enhance audience engagement with the tale (Green, 2024). The incessant and excessive appeal jeopardizes the children's reception of the entertainment. Without sufficient control, this inclination may affect the value orientation that ought to be internalized (Chee, 2024).

Linguistic Strategies and Emotional Resonance

The disparity in linguistic style between folk tales and digital oddity narratives is evident in structure, emotional resonance, and narrative vigor. Traditional tales amalgamate intricate, descriptive, and precise vocabulary, frequently interlaced in a coherent sequence that underscores education. In this framework, language is a conduit for transmitting norms and ethics. In contrast, the narrative of the digital oddity utilizes hyperbole and excessive repetition, occasionally to an irrational extent, as a strategy. Consequently, a phenomenon termed 'linguistic estrangement' arises: language is intentionally employed to elicit feelings of alienation, perplexity, or cognitive dissonance (Ghosh, 2024).

Observations of TikTok accounts such as @pylan.page and @piq.man6 reveal a repetitive and ludicrous linguistic pattern, characteristic of digital anomaly narratives. The initial data features a narrative characterized by the repetitive use of vowels and syllables articulated at a rapid pace, exemplified by phrases like "da da da da da da sahur" and "tra-la-la, tra-la-lero," rendering the sounds devoid of substantive meaning. These statements do not aim to communicate factual information; instead, they create a nebulous cognitive environment that evokes emotional resonance.

"My name is Da da da da da da da da da da da Sahur."

"Tra-la-lero is merely another piece that I can maneuver." Data 1, TikTok account @pylan.page

This approach engenders linguistic estrangement (Kalach, 2022), wherein language separates consumers from literal meanings and steers them towards absurdity and emotional irregularities. This approach dismisses traditional informational and moralistic tales, substituting them with sharp semantic distortions. In these poems, discomfort, humor, and tension are elicited by a mundane interplay of sounds. This

scenario is substantiated by the second and third data, which present nonsensical characters, Bombardiro Crokodilo, Tung Tung Sahur, Ilira Lira, and Tralalelo Tralala, who emerge devoid of aphorisms, history, and a cohesive narrative framework. The previously referenced TikTok narrative provides a storytelling experience characterized by auditory elements and pace. The names provided, such as Bombardiro Krokodilo and Tralalelo Tralala, serve primarily as auditory stimuli rather than character representations. The sentence form adheres to a strict pattern: the subject, complement, and consequence are presented without any elaboration of meaning. Statements such as "...and a desire for vengeance engulfed him," "...then he proceeded directly to Bombardiro's residence...", and "subsequently..." occur in rapid succession, generating an illusion of a narrative that is simultaneously superficial and dynamic. The auditory effect and swift progression evoke an emotional response without offering profundity.

Conversely, Data 4 to 6 featured in Indonesian folklore exhibit descriptive and normative linguistic selections. The passage concerning Malin Kundang is constructed through direct interaction and emotional intensity:

"Hey, old woman, who will you presume to call me your son?" Malin swiftly extricated himself from his mother's hug. (Data 4, K, Dian, p. 40).

The sentences are organized chronologically, providing clarity that directs the reader toward the emotional and moral dimensions of the narrative. The presentation of actions and consequences remains consistent, fostering an understanding that each choice results in quantifiable outcomes (Saleha dkk., 2022). In Timun Mas, the chronological structure continually underscores the steadfastness of values at each stage undertaken. The initial statement delineates the process of change engendered by language, wherein each action appears to transgress physical and social confines. The cucumber, initially restricted by its packaging to the definition of a vegetable, unexpectedly broadens its significance into an unlimited realm. The slender, slender needle cast by Timun Mas transcends the supremacy of size and demonstrates an unforeseen degree of bravery. Through those transformational images, language functions as both a conduit and a vessel of meaning, embodying virtuous traits that the readers will subsequently assimilate. Conversely, within Danau Toba, a narrative imbued with emotion emerges, blurring the distinction between the narrator and the reader. Descriptions and dialogues illustrate and penetrate deeper dimensions, the glistening lake water, the wailing wind, and the emotions concealed inside the voice, immersing the readers. Consequently, the disposition of empathy, sometimes erroneously perceived as a passive response, is manifested as a shared experience. In both works, language

transcends its role as a mere tool, acting instead as a transforming force that invigorates activities and evokes emotions.

Speech is a conduit for transforming emotions: from discord to tranquil enlightenment. Research indicates that the abnormality of digital narratives examines words as a manipulation of shapes and resonances, rather than as vessels of immutable edicts. Genuine repetition, muted chimes, and ringing resonance envelop the narrative in an aura of astonishment and internal ambiguity. Conversely, Indonesian hikayat use language to convey ideals, evoke emotions, and instill moral thoughts in youngsters (Sugiarti, Andalas, & Bhakti, 2022). The hikayat style offers young readers a structured environment for assimilating values. Conversely, the linguistic anomaly technique directs the audience towards phonemic comprehension (Masykuroh & Fatimah, 2019), eliciting a profound emotional response that frequently diverges from educational discourse. At this juncture, it is imperative to reassess how language, beyond mere content, influences children's socio-emotional development. The preceding explanation is encapsulated in the subsequent table.

Aspect	Digital Anomaly Story	Indonesian Folktales
Example of Dominant Diction	Tung, Sahur, Tra-la, Bombardiro, Tralala, ugly, dead, return	Mother, child, giant, tree, water, lost, deny
Function of Diction	Phonetic sound, absurdity, sound play, irony	Character representation, causal events, moral description
Generan Sentence Structure	Fragmented, repetitive, full of pauses and narrative jumps	Chronological, coherent narrative, explaining cause and effect
Plot Trigger	Absurd repetition and emotional outburst	Logical conflict and cultural values
Plot Development	Unstable, following the internal logic of a mad character or narrator	Gradual and stable, following the classic structure: beginning-middle-end
Affective Function of Diction	Eliciting alienation, strangeness, surprise, even fear	Eliciting empathy, guilt, moral reflection
Narrative Goal	Deconstructive, shock value	Educational, restorative, value reinforcement

Table 2 Comparative Lexical Functions in Narrative Structure

Considerations of pedagogy and ethics in digital literary Presentation

This discovery highlights the necessity for a novel paradigm in children's education in the digital age. Educators must engage in critical thinking to meet the shift in children's story preferences, ensuring the continued conveyance of moral lessons. Folktales that embody principles validated through generations reinforce morals, cultivate empathy, and refine ethical decision-making. Conversely, digital anomalous narratives, while artistically and cognitively engaging, frequently lack a definitive ethical basis. Fragmented information elicits intense emotional responses; nevertheless, without a moral compass,

the value framework may seem unclear or inconsistent with anticipated values. Under these circumstances, educators and guardians encounter significant obstacles in children's literacy development. (Poskakalova, 2023) Her study on digital storytelling and developing spiritual-ethical values in teenagers demonstrates that classical narratives offer an unmistakable moral framework that must be acknowledged. To ensure digital narratives fulfill an educational function, their methodology must aim to recontextualize values without obliterating them within a novel aesthetic. Anomalous narratives may serve to explore ambiguity; nonetheless, they ought not to be the exclusive reference in a child's character development.

This finding corroborates the results of (Manganello & Baldacci, 2024), indicating that in multicultural educational settings, implementing digital storytelling can enhance inclusion and empathy, contingent upon teachers' active mediation of the narrative content. The research underscores that educators' roles extend beyond simple content curation; they must also be facilitators promoting discussion about values. Narratives that depict anomalies, events that disturb the status quo, can incite critical discourse on intricate issues such as absurdity, mortality, justice, and power, provided a narrative intervention acknowledges the context and respects the audience's sensitivity. Conversely, the longitudinal study by Vettori dkk. (2022) demonstrated that children's capacity to articulate their internal states through narratives and imagery exhibits significant progress when they connect stories to personal emotional experiences. The influence of narrative incoherence, emotional tension, and the absence of a systematic reflection process might impair children's emotional processing, particularly when their metacognitive abilities are insufficient. (Freeland dkk., 2022) Social-emotional literacy interventions in Brazil highlight the importance of clear, structured, and supportive digital mediation for at-risk children. These findings suggest that children do not consistently participate equally in interpreting the values embedded in ambiguous or ironic narratives, particularly within the rapid, image-saturated digital environment that frequently features black humor. In these circumstances, folk tales featuring linear narratives and clear morals remain pertinent, acting as ethical foundations in character development. (Craig dkk., 2016) contend that the enhancement of socio-emotional functions can be efficiently accomplished using game-based digital tales, contingent upon the continual emphasis on their prosocial values throughout the story experience. Narratives of oddity that solely depict symbolic violence, irrational revenge, or extensive damage without addressing ethical implications will fail to achieve their objective unless they are integrated into a structured instructional framework.

CONCLUSION

The alteration in children's narrative inclinations, today defined by fragmented, addictive, and readily accessible stories via digital media, necessitates establishing a new framework for creating and structuring instructional resources. The comparison of traditional folk tales with unconventional fiction in digital formats indicates a change in children's understanding, creation, and interpretation of narratives, including emotional and cognitive dimensions. Education should not be limited to a binary framework that classifies experiences as "good" or "bad." Conversely, education is crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of the interactions among various narrative forms and their effects on children's cognitive and emotional development in diverse contexts. It is essential to emphasize that efforts to modernize education do not aim to eliminate heritage values or unreservedly succumb to digital distractions.

In contrast, essential educational strategies should emphasize careful observation of these phenomena and adaptive, selective responses. Character, social, and emotional education should be integrated to facilitate students' engagement with emotional complexity via various, complementary literacies. The design of educational resources should achieve two primary objectives: preserving cultural heritage and promoting students' active construction of meaning from their narrative experiences in the digital realm. The shift in children's story preferences should be regarded not as a threat, but as an opportunity for innovative integration into a more adaptive educational framework. Folk tales that reflect established values should be preserved to counter denationalization; however, their presentation must be adapted to meet the aesthetic and cognitive preferences of the modern generation, taking into account style, media, and narrative structure. This method ensures that learning tools and curriculum design are focused, aligning with students' growth and effectively engaging with the narrative realities they encounter daily. This study advances contemporary narrative literacy theory by conceptualizing narrative as a cultural artifact and an integrated emotional interface, facilitating children's navigation of experiences through critical thinking and deep emotional engagement. Education is perceived as a transformative environment that values diverse narratives, utilizing them as foundational for developing adaptive and inclusive social-emotional skills and reasoning. Valuing multiple narratives enables children to develop a broader understanding of themselves and others, positioning literacy as both a technical skill and a learning process rooted in inter-identity dialogue.

This study focuses on a comparative analysis of social-emotional learning (SEL) values embedded in Indonesian folktales and digital anomalous stories. However, a significant limitation must be acknowledged. The research does not examine the direct impact of children's consumption of these stories on their social-emotional development. As such, the findings are limited to textual and narrative analysis, assessing the representation of SEL values within the stories themselves, without measuring their influence on children's behaviors, emotional regulation, or interpersonal skills. Future research incorporating psychological or longitudinal approaches is needed to evaluate the real effects of prolonged exposure to traditional and digital narrative forms on children's social-emotional growth.

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