Peran Storyteller Dalam Komik "Sehat Ceria di masa Pandemi" Kepada Siswa SDN Gudang 1 Sumedang

# Storyteller's Role In "Sehat Ceria di masa Pandemi" Comics To Students Of Gudang 1 Sumedang Public Elementary School

# Peran Storyteller Dalam Komik "Sehat Ceria di masa Pandemi" Kepada Siswa SDN Gudang 1 Sumedang

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#### Abstract

Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19), one of the most dangerous viruses spread to cause outbreaks in almost all countries, including Indonesia. Based on the latest data on October 19, 2022, the number of positive Covid-19 patients in Indonesia is 6,450,248. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted daily life because almost all countries in the world are working hard to find preventive measures so that the spread of Covid-19 does not continue to increase. For example, large-scale social restrictions, physical distancing rules, and carrying out regional quarantine with two events, full and limited. Apart from that, in the field of education, the government issued a distance education regulation Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 Concerning Implementation of Education Policies in an Emergency Period of the Spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). The method used in this study is qualitative method with a case study approach. This study interpreted the case of the storyteller's unique role, which was a strategy to understand the essence of the story in comics to an audience of elementary school children. The results found that the storyteller was the main factor in persuading children. In persuading children of elementary school, a storyteller should have a strategy in storytelling and pay the most attention to children's concentration time.

Keywords: children, Covid-19, persuasive, storyteller

#### Abstrak

Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19), merupakan salah satu virus paling berbahaya menyebar hingga menimbulkan wabah di hampir semua negara, termasuk Indonesia. Berdasarkan data terakhir pada 19 Oktober 2022, jumlah pasien positif covid 19 di Indonesia sejumlah 6.450.248. Terjadi pandemi Covid-19 memberikan dampak yang sangat besar terhadap kehidupan sehari-hari, karena hampir seluruh negara di dunia bekerja keras untuk mencari tindakan preventif agar jumlah penyebaran covid-19 tidak terus bertambah. Misalnya, pembatasan sosial berskala besar, aturan terhadap jarak fisik, dan melakukan karantina wilayah dengan dua acara yakni secara penuh dan terbatas. Selain itu, di bidang pendidikan pemerintah mengeluarkan aturan untuk pendidikan jarak jauh dalam Surat Edaran Nomor 4 Tahun 2020 Tentang Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Pendidikan Dalam Masa Darurat Penyebaran Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Pada penelitian ini yang dimaknai sebagai kasus adalah keunikan peran story teller yang menjadi strategi dalam memahamkan esensi cerita dalam komik kepada audiens anak-anak usia sekolah dasar. Hasil yang ditemukan bahwa storyteller menjadi faktor utama yang mampu mempersuasi anak-anak. Dalam mempersuasi anak-anak usia sekolah dasar, seorang storyteller harus memiliki strategi dalam storytelling dan yang paling memperhatikan waktu konsentrasi anak-anak.

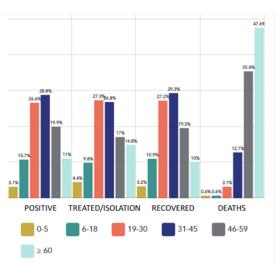
Kata Kunci: anak-anak, Covid-19, persuasif, storyteller

#### Introduction

At the end of December 2019, Corona Virus Disease 2019, or Covid-19 was first discovered in China, in Wuhan City. In a short time, the virus spread to cause outbreaks in almost all countries, including Indonesia. At the beginning of the emergence of this virus, several observers called Covid-19 one of the most dangerous viruses (Kresna & Ahyar, 2020). On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, coordinating global efforts to manage the impact. The magnitude of the impact is unprecedented, and research suggests that global, social, and economic recovery may take more than a decade. As a result, it significantly complicates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) (Djalante et al., 2020).

Based on the latest data on October 19, 2022, the number of positive Covid-19 patients in Indonesia is 6,450,248 (SATGAS, 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on daily life because almost all countries in the world are working hard to find preventive measures so that the spread of Covid-19 does not continue to increase. One of them is Indonesia the government is trying to enforce regulations to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus. For example, large-scale social restrictions, rules on physical distancing, and carrying out regional quarantine with two events: full and limited (Kresna & Ahyar, 2020). Furthermore, in education, the government issued rules for distance education (Surat Edaran Nomor 4 Tahun 2020 Tentang Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Pendidikan Dalam Masa Darurat Penyebaran Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19), 2020). Even though society has experienced economic, social, and educational crises for approximately two years, they still have to deal with unexpected things due to Covid-19.

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Source: SATGAS, 2022 Figure 1: Graph of Distribution Of Age Groups Positive For Covid 19, Monday, October 19, 2022

The Covid-19 Handling Task Force released data on the distribution of the age group 6-18 years who were confirmed positive for Covid 19; as many as 10.7% of people were positive, and 9.8% of them were undergoing treatment or self-isolation. As many as 10.9% of people were cured, while 0.6% were declared dead due to Covid-19. In this regard, it is critical to implement appropriate communication strategies for specific target groups, particularly elementary schoolage children. Characteristics of elementary school children include a desire to play, a desire to move, a desire to work in groups, and a desire to feel and do something directly (Alim, 2009). According to one study, the effectiveness of storytelling as a communication tool has been demonstrated in a variety of disciplines, including nursing, social sciences, and psychology (Brindle et al., 2002). Health socialization using the storytelling method through picture books has been carried out at *the Pediatric Emergency Medicine* from *the Canadian Institute of Health Research* (Hartling et al., 2010).

Popular comics are stories, narratives. The study of stories and story structures, as well as how they affect our perception, thought, and emotion, is known as narratology. Our daily interactions with one another result in the creation of narrative reconstructions of our experiences, which later serve as the building blocks of our remembered lives. Additionally, the majority of the works in many of our arts—theatre, literature, and film—as well as frequently poetry, painting, dance, and even music—contain carefully crafted storylines (Cutting, 2016).

A narrative is a semiotic representation of a series of temporally and causally related events. Films, plays, comic strips, novels, newsreels, chronicles, and treatises on the history of geology are all narratives in the broadest sense. Therefore, narratives can be built using various semiotic media: written or spoken language, pictures, gestures, and acting (Landa, 2005). Stories and storytelling assist us in making sense of our thoughts and experiences, as well as our interactions with the environment and with one another, and in developing our beliefs, identities,

and values (McCall et al., 2019). Storytelling is a common method for forming the main topic (Bruner, 2002). Even how people communicate with one another and understand history is influenced by the story told by the narrator (Schell, 2004). Some writers even claim that all knowledge comes in the form of stories (Green, 2004). Another study backs up the notion that when people hear or read stories, they form their own identities and compare their ideas to those of others (Zacher, 2008).

The success of the storytelling method in forming self-concept and identity is used in the field of health promotion. The world of health has begun to use narratives, stories, and storytelling as diagnostic tools (Sacks, 1993), therapeutics (Chelf et al., 2005), and in the education of patients, students, and practitioners (Bergman, 1999). Another study has discovered that storytelling is used to communicate health information (Hartling et al., 2010). Because clinical reality is characterized by complexity and uncertainty, storytelling provides the added benefit of being able to describe the human experience of previously unknown diseases (Hartling et al., 2010).

In this study, the researcher used storytelling as a method of persuasive communication through visual narrative media, commonly referred to as comics. Persuasiveness is creating, strengthening, or changing beliefs, attitudes, or behavior. Persuasiveness is believed to be the primary motivation underlying human communication and a source of communication studies (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Comics, in this study, carry messages that aim to strengthen beliefs and change the readers' attitudes and behavior. Attitude is the overall evaluation learned from an object (people, places, issues) that influences human thinking and actions (Perloff, 2017).

The message in the form of recommendations for maintaining health is depicted in the daily stories of an elementary school boy named Jojo, who lives in Sumedang Regency. Jojo is a picture of a child living in the era of the Covid-19 virus pandemic. Elementary education is the first stage in formal education. It is free and compulsory, comprising 6 years (grades 1–6) for children aged 6–11 (Valenzuela, 2010). Three big encouragements mark elementary school-age children; first, the courage of children to leave the house and join their peer group. Second, the courage of children to enter the world of games and activities that require physical skills; and third, mental confidence to enter the conceptual, logical, and symbolic worlds and adult communication (Alim, 2009).

It should be realized that children are the future assets of the nation, parents, and society. During the Covid-19 pandemic, which required children and parents to be at home, it was important for parents to create a safe, comfortable, harmonious, and love-full environment. However, a study shows that during the Covid-19 pandemic, there are parents who make gadgets become their children's friends when they are bored (Rohayani, 2020). The lack of parental intervention in the world of children, parental problems in dealing with children, and the saturation of parents and children during this pandemic were factors for children's increasing use of gadgets.

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The children's boredom makes some parents allow their children to do activities and play in the surrounding environment. New problems arise when children are not used to health protocols during a pandemic. Providing advice, maintaining health, and adapting behavior to elementary school-age children requires appropriate strategies and media. If the goal is to change behavior, then complex health appeals for children need to be presented in the form of illustrations, not instructions. Visual narratives, like in comics, can bridge information and entertainment (McNicol, 2017).

In this study, the researcher used Narrative Theory. Narrative theory starts from the assumption that narrative is a fundamental human strategy for accepting the fundamental elements of our experience, such as time, process, and change, and proceeds from this assumption to study the nature of narrative and its various structures, uses of elements, and effects (Ashwal & Thomas, 2018). In narrative theory, the key is whether the narrative is a way of thinking about or explaining human experience, in contrast to modes of scientific explanation that characterize phenomena as general examples, including laws. In brief, narrative theorists study how stories help people understand the world while also studying how people understand stories (What Is Narrative Theory?, 2022). According to Zebregs et al (2015), narratives might positively affect people's intentions to alter their conduct when necessary to respond to exceptional circumstances. The use of narrative evidence, which places the facts in the context of a particular time and location during an outbreak or pandemic, aids people in processing new or complex information. Additionally, tales can be utilized to connect the information to the readers' or listeners' experiences (Edelsburg, 2021).

This research aimed to determine effective communication strategies for getting children to live healthy lives during the pandemic, because most of the socialization of health protocols is with an adult approach. Health protocols socialization are needed to start face-to-face school preparations, so that new transmission clusters do not occur in schools. Especially the situation related to this research is that covid-19 is not over yet. The storytelling technique through the "*Sehat Ceria di masa Pandemi*" (Healthy and Cheerful during the Pandemic) comic was expected to be the right solution to provide understanding to children regarding healthy lifestyles and to accustom children to healthy lives. The study used qualitative methods and expected that the results could explain the role of storytellers in conveying health information and being a prototype model in educating appropriate health protocols to specific target groups.

# Methods

Qualitative research is a research activity that places researchers or observers in the world under study. This type of research is in the form of practice to make a theoretical view of the world. Researchers or observers in qualitative research obtain information or data through notes in the field, conducting interviews, discussions/focus group discussions, and documentation in the form of photos, recordings, or small notes, to expand on the results obtained (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The approaches used in qualitative research include narrative approaches, case studies, ethnography, and phenomenology. In this research, we used a case study approach. The case study approach is a form of the approach researchers take to explore realities in life, modern limited systems, or limited systems from time to time. The way case studies work is by collecting detailed and in-depth data.

Writing descriptive reports about the cases and themes of the cases studied. One or more cases can be analyzed with a case study approach. Case studies are extensive and complete explanations regarding the various points of view from each individual, group, or organization (community), program, and social situation. Robert K. Yin argues that case studies are preferable for researching contemporary events by not manipulating any related behavior. A researcher in a case study will try to learn as much information or data as possible related to the subject being studied (Mulyana, 2018).

The meaning referred to by the word 'case' can be different in each study or topic. It depends on the way the researcher interprets it in the research he is doing. In this study, the uniqueness of the storyteller's role was interpreted as a case, which was a strategy for providing an understanding of the essence of comic stories to elementary school-aged audiences. The storytellers evaluate step by step the process of going into the field, focusing on developing storytelling techniques adapted to the characteristics of the audience at hand.

### **Results And Discussion**

*Storytelling* is a relevant effort to develop competencies to attribute meaning, communicate, and share personal experiences. It is a socio-cognitive ability that enables individuals to express themselves and share representations, memories, and experiences with the interlocutor in a conversation (Alonso-Campuzano et al., 2021). This is in line with what was found in the field. The interactions between the storyteller and the children created meaning and experience for both. In line with what was conveyed by RE, the facilitator who participated as a storyteller, it was essential to understand the relationship between storytellers and children, especially elementary school students. According to him, to build closeness, he tried to be a big brother so that children who listened to him felt more comfortable and were not reluctant to express themselves when storytelling took place; telling comics directly made children more enthusiastic.

Previous studies stated that storytelling has a central role in the transmission of memory and various elements of culture between individuals. The narrative conveyed is a complex cognitive process that allows for information relevant to survival and consistency across cultures. As a result, in the context of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, which was conveyed through the media, authorities, and interpersonal conversations, storytelling was crucial. Storytelling aids people's adaptation to extraordinary situations by condensing their meaning and sharing feelings, both of which contribute to collective trauma recovery (Mclaughlin et al., 2022).

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It is known that kids enjoy reading, writing, and listening to stories; from these stories, they can understand more about society and life. According to Vivian Paley, telling and dramatizing stories is a fairly extensive addition to the preschool curriculum, as exposure to such practices affects children's social and cognitive development (Rahiem, 2021). Storytelling is a vehicle for supporting children's development in early childhood (for example, in kindergarten or at home) by assisting them in expressing and giving meaning to the world. Furthermore, to improve their communication, recognition, and memory skills, as well as to strengthen their relationships with peers and adults. Students in primary and secondary schools are encouraged to participate in storytelling activities to improve their linguistic and literacy skills as well as their interpretation, analysis, and synthesis abilities (Garzotto et al., 2010).

The storyteller is the main factor that can persuade children. RE argues that in dealing directly with the audience, the storyteller must understand the audience's condition. Some children can read; however, they need help understanding the content and meaning of Jojo's comics. Thus, as a storyteller, one must be able to explain something complicated to be simple and easy to understand so that children can easily analyze the message. On the other hand, according to AE, the storyteller's ability to interact more closely with children could build their confidence to express their opinions during the storytelling process. It was not only that; another thing found in the field was that the storytelling process, which involved children, improved their speaking skills in public. Some children were not confident, even though they had mastered the discussed topic.

Other studies argue that coaching and training are needed and provide opportunities for students to speak publicly on topics they are interested in and have mastered. They explain that activities such as telling stories, giving opinions, asking questions, refuting other people's opinions, and others, require practice (Azmi, 2019). In storytelling, there is a regulated interaction between the storyteller and the listener, where the key dynamic is the call-response contingency of the speaker's cue and the listener's response. Listeners convey concern, engagement, and understanding through listener feedback, also called feedback loops. The storyteller uses speaker cues, or backchannel invite cues, to elicit these responses (Lee et al., 2019).

Recent meta-analyses have concluded that narrative messages reduce resistance significantly more than non-narrative ones and that narratives conveyed via video or audio are typically more persuasive than written narratives. However, there is a lack of literature on the effect of similarity between storytellers and listeners on persuasion, including matched sex and age effects (Henry et al., 2021). Walt Disney once said that storytellers instill hope over and over. Storytellers instill hope in us, and hope is a universal desire. Recognizing and utilizing the power of stories has the potential to transform health promotion efforts. According to research, a story can improve positive human behavior, such as altruism or kindness, as well as student grades. According to one study, storytelling can be effective in changing health behaviors. Stories allow storytellers to share insights and observations, allowing listeners to become immersed in the story and think about and discuss real-life issues without feeling insulted or defensive. Smart storytellers use their ability to string words together to draw people into a story. Next, discuss the story's meaning or moral, and then wait for the moment when the listener realizes they are one of the characters in the story, denoted by the utterance of "AHA" (Putnam, 1957).

According to the mainstream, western science is founded on logical deductive reasoning. As a result, the health messages communicated are a list of risk factors, recommendations, preventive measures, symptoms, and treatment options. Non-Western societies, on the other hand, rely heavily on oral traditions, narratives, and storytelling to help people understand and make sense of their health and illness experiences. Furthermore, they must change their knowledge, attitudes, and health behaviors. Concepts, characters, themes, structures, and sounds are all conveyed through oral media, pictures, writing, or films.

# **Storyteller Strategy in Storytelling**

There are various strategies carried out by storytellers in the storytelling process, including: a) The audience's readiness relates to paying attention to the students' condition when they start telling stories. Not just their presence, but the storyteller must create an exciting atmosphere so that the students feel enthusiastic and ready to listen to what the storyteller will tell. For example, by breaking the ice for 3-5 minutes, synchronizing, or conversations that make students feel their presence is appreciated and closer to the storyteller. b) The readiness of storytellers, not only the audience but also the storyteller, must prepare themselves so that the storytelling runs smoothly, is interesting, and the message he/she wants to convey is acceptable to students. For example, they should prepare simple games, master humor, and understand regional terms/language to understand them easily.

In order for the storytelling process to be more attractive, acceptable, and noticed and the message conveyed to the audience, the storyteller must master the following: Pronunciation; in conveying messages or telling stories, a storyteller requires clear, precise, and correct articulation. Storytellers must have a vocabulary to interpret something complicated for students to make it easier to analyze and understand (Nurdiarti & Prabowo, 2021). The presence of meaning comes from the special relationship between words (as symbols of verbal communication) and humans. Words are not attached to meaning, but words make meaning in people's minds (Mulyana, 2008). Therefore, it is essential to understand verbal communication in the storytelling process. a). Paralanguage relates to voice intonation, speed of speech, and voice based on the conditions in Jojo's comics. For example, the sound of screaming, laughing, murmuring, and others. It aims to convey emotions and thoughts not only based on comics but more visible because of the involvement of the storyteller as a messenger to students. b). Body language includes hand signals, for example, exemplifying the process of good hand washing and head movements and body postures that support the character's presence through the storyteller. Facial expressions are the most supportive part of giving an accurate impression and making the storytelling process not flat and look lively and exciting. Moreover, eye contact/eye contact is essential to understand the condition

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of the listener, whether they are still listening to the story or starting to feel bored. Eye contact has two functions: regulatory and expressive functions (Mulyana, 2008). The regulatory function shows likes or dislikes in a particular situation to interact, while the expressive function shows the emotions/feelings of both the storyteller and the students.



Figure 2: Storyteller Performance in Front Of The Elementary School's Student

On the other hand, the storyteller must consider that time is an essential factor in storytelling. Children have a focused time listening to stories from storytellers. From the storyteller's field observations, according to KA, the estimated ideal time duration to keep the listener's concentration was in the first 20-25 minutes when the story began. When it was over 25 minutes, most listeners lost focus and ignored the story. When the condition of the students began to be less conducive to continuing the story, the strategy adopted was to start involving them in telling the story besides providing statements and questions that would make them refocus and be able to accept the story told by the storyteller.

Great storytelling requires a storyteller to connect with the audience. There are many ways to captivate the audience, depending on the storytelling model used. If the storyteller reads a short story to an audience, the storyteller may want to look away from the page as often as possible to make eye contact with the audience. If the storyteller is recording a narrative podcast, it depends on voice expression and the storyteller's ability to convey emotion with tone. Whichever way the storyteller chooses to tell his story, consider the audience (Brown, 2021).

# Conclusion

The storyteller's role in the comic storytelling process "Sehat Ceria di Masa *Pandemi*" is to convey health protocol information during the pandemic. It is also known that the storyteller has an essential role in elementary school student's understanding of health information. Research findings show storytellers do not just tell stories but have strategies to persuade students to increase awareness of health protocols during the Covid-19 period by simulation how to avoid Covid-19 by following the stages of the health protocol contained in the comic. The storyteller's role is to reinforce the information conveyed. Storytelling is essential for students to combine the visuals in comics with the direct use of sentences by the storyteller. Storytelling is a form of communication to achieve a common meaning for both the storyteller and the audience (elementary school students). Strategies for audience readiness and storyteller readiness are abilities that storytellers need to have. Proficiency in pronunciation, paralanguage, and body language are supporting factors that can influence messages to reach students. In addition, the use of time in telling stories is essential for the storyteller to master. It aims to discover the steps that need to be taken to succeed in persuasion. In particular, stories related to health protocols in Jojo's comics can be conveyed well to listeners. The limitation of this research is that the effectiveness of the storyteller is only conveyed to children who are present when the comic is told and the simulation is carried out. So the appeal of storytellers in health protocols through comics will be very important. For this reason, a method of conveying health protocol stories should be needed through audio-visual techniques through the YouTube platform. The implication as a storyteller can be carried out by teachers, parents, older siblings, cadres, health workers and other related people.

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