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Si Ebon: A Cirebon Cultural Encyclopedia as a Medium for Local Culture Revitalization in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Local culture in Cirebon has begun to decline, marked by a decrease in interest and knowledge among the community, especially the younger generation, in preserving cultural values. Revitalization efforts form the basis of this research, so that cultural heritage can be preserved starting from early childhood education. This study aims to develop the "Si Ebon" digital encyclopedia as a medium for introducing local Cirebon culture to early childhood. The ADDIE development model was used, with development stages consisting of problem identification and analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The product was validated by media experts, subject matter experts, and cultural experts to assess the appropriateness of the content, appearance, and cultural relevance presented. Furthermore, to see the effectiveness of the product, it was tested in several early childhood education institutions in the Cirebon area, involving teachers and students as the main users. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires and observations, then analyzed quantitatively to determine the level of feasibility and effectiveness of the product. The results of the study show that the "Si Ebon" digital encyclopedia is considered very feasible and effective for use as a local culture-based learning medium. This product is able to increase early childhood knowledge about elements of Cirebon culture, such as history, art, traditions, special foods, and historical places in an interactive and interesting way. Future research may focus on the implementation of Cirebon-based learning in early childhood education as an effort to preserve local culture.

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Introduction

Indonesia is known as a culture-rich nation, from traditions, arts, customs, to folklore that is steeped in noble values. This cultural wealth is part of the nation's identity that must be preserved. However, today the process of cultural preservation faces major challenges, such as the rapid development of global technology that drives modernization in various aspects of life (Briliany et al., 2023; Matayev et al., 2024; Setyaningrum, 2017). This transformation has given rise to a dual perspective: on the one hand, it has opened up space for tolerance towards various cultures around the world, but on the other hand, it has resulted in a decline in the younger generation's connection to local culture. The younger generation, who should be the successors of cultural heritage, are more interested in global popular culture, which is more dominant in the digital space (Anggreni et al., 2025; Hidayat & Maesyaroh, 2020). If this continues, local culture will be further eroded, providing a great opportunity for foreign cultures to dominate the cultural space of local communities (Syahira Azima et al., 2021). This phenomenon is not only related to declining interest but also has the potential to eradicate philosophical values, traditions, and cultural practices that have been passed down from generation to generation, as well as erode nationalism and thinking about local culture (A. Siregar et al., 2024).

This is clearly evident in the Cirebon region, where several traditional arts such as Sintren, Rudat Dance, Jaran Lumping, Wayang Beber, and Sandiwara Rakyat are threatened with extinction. Various culinary specialties and cultural sites are also beginning to lose popularity (Ashri, 2023; Rosidin & Aah Syafa'ah, 2016). Nevertheless, preservation efforts continue to be made through collaboration between local governments, communities, and traditional leaders, such as through the holding of cultural rituals such as Sedekah Bumi, Nadran, and Mapag Sri. In the field of education, the introduction of local culture has also been strengthened through an independent curriculum, particularly in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) program (Sari & Malik, 2024). Through culture-based projects, students, especially at the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) level, are encouraged to understand, appreciate, and practice their regional culture as part of character building (Anhar et al., 2024). This shows that cultural preservation does not only rely on rituals and community activities, but must also be embedded in the formal education system to ensure its sustainability in the future.

Early childhood is a golden age for instilling cultural values and national identity (Rijkiyani et al., 2022). During this period, children undergo rapid cognitive, social-emotional, and moral development, so that all information they receive will shape the foundation of their future personality. Therefore, introducing local culture from an early age not only explores cultural symbols, values, and practices, but also fosters a sense of belonging and pride in local cultural identity (Hasanah et al., 2025). Based on preliminary studies conducted by researchers on 25 early childhood education teachers from 13 schools, it was found that although Cirebon culture had been introduced to children, the scope of the material was still limited.

Generally, teachers only introduced Cirebon dance, batik, traditional foods, regional languages, and tourist attractions. Meanwhile, material on historical sites, rituals, traditional arts, and local technology was rarely introduced. The frequency of cultural introduction is also relatively low, with the majority of teachers stating that they rarely provide cultural lessons. The main obstacles include limited media (72.7%), difficulties in managing the class, lack of interest from children, and a lack of knowledge among teachers (Purnamasari & Wahyudi, 2025).

This fact shows that an innovative strategy is needed so that early childhood can recognize, understand, and love local culture, especially the culture of Cirebon. Learning media plays a very important role in making it easier for children to access all cultural information in an interesting way that is appropriate for their development (Maula et al., 2021). In today's digital era, the use of local culture-based digital media has become an effective alternative, one of which is through digital encyclopedias. Encyclopedias are reference sources that present text and image-based information in print and digital formats (Safitri, 2019). The digital encyclopedia developed in this study is named "Si Ebon" as an effort to revitalize Cirebon culture, especially for early childhood. This is also in line with the policy of strengthening culture-based character education, as stipulated in Permendikbud Number 20 of 2018 (Muhammad Sulhan, 2018).

Through the "Si Ebon" Encyclopedia, children can learn about various aspects of Cirebon culture, ranging from the history of Cirebon, arts, handicrafts, traditions and customs, special foods, historical sites, and tourist attractions in Cirebon. The visualization of this digital encyclopedia is designed to be attractive, interactive, and in line with children's developmental characteristics. Thus, the development of this media is an effective step in providing innovative and interactive learning while supporting the preservation of local culture amid the rampant globalization. Based on this analysis of needs, the researcher compiled a study entitled "The 'Si Ebon' Encyclopedia as a Medium for Revitalizing Local Culture for Early Childhood."

Methods

This research is a type of research and development (R&D), using the ADDIE development model (analyze, design, development, implementation, and evaluation). Development research is an effort to develop and validate products that will be used in learning (Borg, W.R & Gall, 1983). Development research is research that aims to produce a specific product and test its effectiveness (Sugiyono, 2015). Development research aims to produce new products or improve the quality of existing products in an accountable manner. These products are not limited to physical forms (hardware) but can also be non-physical products or software (Rangkuti, 2016). The selection of the ADDIE model was based on the characteristics of the research, which aimed to produce an educational product in the form of the "Si Ebon" Digital Encyclopedia and to test its feasibility and effectiveness in teaching local culture to early childhood students. This research was conducted in two early childhood education institutions, namely TK Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon and TK Khalifah Al Qolam Cirebon. The main targets of this product development implementation are teachers and early childhood education students. The ADDIE model is considered a more comprehensive and logical approach, making it possible to apply it in various product development

processes, including learning strategy design, educational media development, and teaching material preparation (Dick, W., Carey, L. & Carey, 2021). The five stages of the ADDIE model, consisting of analyze, design, development, implementation, and evaluation, can be seen in the diagram below:



34
Figure 1. ADDIE Development Model Stages

Analysis

In this stage, researchers identify and collect the information needed as a basis for developing the “Si Ebon” digital encyclopedia product. This stage focuses on preparation before designing the product. The steps taken include distributing a needs analysis questionnaire to early childhood teachers to obtain relevant data.

Design

Based on the results of problem identification and needs analysis, this study focuses on the development of a Cirebon cultural encyclopedia that contains information about history, arts, handicrafts, traditions and customs, special foods, historical sites, and tourist attractions. The product is designed in digital form so that it can be accessed more easily and reach a wider audience.

Development

At this stage, researchers carried out the product validation process by involving experts in accordance with the validation requirements for the “Si Ebon” digital encyclopedia product. The validation stage involved subject matter experts, media experts, and cultural experts. After that, researchers made improvements to the product in accordance with the suggestions and recommendations provided by these experts.

Implementation

At this stage, researchers conducted a series of product trials that included effectiveness testing and user response assessment. The product trial process involved approximately 38 early childhood education students and 10 early childhood education teachers to obtain an overview of the usefulness of the developed product.

Evaluation

The evaluation stage was based on the feedback obtained during the product testing process, followed by dissemination activities. In addition to analyzing the validation and testing data, the researchers also considered the input that

emerged during the dissemination stage as a basis for refining the "Si Ebon" Digital Encyclopedia product.

The data obtained in this study is based on validation sheets intended for subject matter experts, media experts, and cultural experts, with the aim of reviewing the feasibility of the "Si Ebon" digital encyclopedia. The researchers then looked at the responses from users, namely early childhood teachers, through a questionnaire in the product trial.

Data Analysis Techniques

Product Feasibility Test

The product development process began with determining the level of product feasibility, which was then tested. The following are the formulas and feasibility criteria used in this study $P = f/n \times 100\%$

Explanation:

p = percentage of children with specific developmental criteria

f = frequency/number of children who meet specific developmental criteria

n = total number of children

Table 1. Feasibility Test Grid

Validator	Category
30 Subject Matter Expert	1. Content suitability 2. Accuracy and currency of material 3. Language 4. Presentation of material 5. Educational value and character
24 Media Expert	1. Design appearance 2. Typography and text 3. Media quality 4. Interactivity and child engagement 5. Content suitability for children's characteristics 6. Creativity and innovation
Cultural Expert	1. Cultural authenticity 2. Cultural relevance 3. Cultural richness and completeness 4. Presentation of material 5. Cultural educational value

Tabel 2. Kriteria Uji Kelayakan

Interval	8 Kategori
0 - 20	very unsuitable
21 - 40	unsuitable
41 - 60	less suitable
61 - 80	suitable
81 - 100	very suitable

From the table above, a product is considered acceptable if it falls within the minimum value category of **61-100%**.

Product Effectiveness Test

Once declared acceptable, a effectiveness test is conducted, in which the product is tested on children aged 4-6 years.

Table 3. Effectiveness Criteria

Criteria	Effectiveness Level	Percentage (%)
Does not appear	Ineffective	1-50
Appears	Effective	51-100

The effectiveness criteria are as follows: The product is declared effective if it is within the percentage range of **51-100%**.

Result

This study aims to develop a learning media product in the form of a digital encyclopedia of Cirebon culture, using the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) approach model. The results of the study are described as follows:

Analysis

A needs analysis was conducted as the first step for researchers to determine the extent of user needs in learning about Cirebon culture, as well as the obstacles and limitations faced by teachers in delivering it. This was done by distributing questionnaires using the Google Forms platform. The questionnaires were distributed in schools in the Cirebon area, and 24 respondents filled out the questionnaires. Based on the questionnaire results, all schools have implemented Cirebon cultural learning. The types of culture taught include:



Figure 1. Types of culture taught in schools

Figure 1 shows that most respondents have taught Cirebon culture to early childhood students, with the most frequently taught materials being Cirebon food (91.7%), Cirebon dance and language (58.2%), and Cirebon tourism (50%). Meanwhile, material related to Cirebon history is rarely taught, with a percentage of 16.7%. Furthermore, to explore information about the obstacles teachers face in introducing Cirebon culture, the researcher also conducted interviews. The obstacles faced by

teachers include the difficulty of controlling children, children who are not interested, and limited learning media. Teachers explained the need for learning media that can meet the needs of introducing Cirebon culture.

"There is a lack of media related to certain cultural elements such as history, so there is a need for media that can be used to make it easier for teachers and make children more interested in learning about Cirebon culture" (*Respondent 1*)

Based on the results of field research, there is a need for learning media that can be used to assist in the process of learning about Cirebon culture. The product developed in this study is a Digital Encyclopedia of Cirebon Culture entitled "Si Ebon".

Desain

The next stage is to plan the product creation, determine the outline by gathering information related to the cultural values to be included in the encyclopedia. The cultural values included are: history, dance, arts, traditional ceremonies, food, and historical sites.

In the next stage, researchers look for content in line with the cultural values that have been determined. In addition, at this stage, researchers also create character designs and a variety of illustrations that are in line with the content created and tailored to the characteristics of early childhood. The designs are created using various platforms such as Canva and Animaker.

Table 4. Draft of "Si Ebon"

Page	Image Description	Narrative
1	Image of ebon 	Pengenalan Tokoh Si Ebon Halo, teman-teman! Namaku Ebon, Aku adalah si udang kecil dari Cirebon. Senang sekali bisa bertemu denganmu! Namaku Si Ebon 🦞. Aku seekor udang kecil yang tinggal di laut Cirebon. Badanku mungil, tapi aku punya semangat besar untuk bercerita! Teman-teman mau tahu rahasia budaya Cirebon yang seru? 🤔 Ayo kita cari tahu bersama! Aku akan mengajakmu berkenalan dengan budaya Cirebon yang indah dan penuh warna. Di sini kita akan belajar tentang sejarah, tarian, musik, makanan, cerita rakyat, sampai tempat-tempat unik di Cirebon. Siapkah kalian ikut petualangan budaya bersama Si Ebon? 🦞 Kalau siap, katakan bersama-sama: "Ayo, Si Ebon!"

Development

Products that have passed the design stage are then compiled into an A4-sized digital encyclopedia using the Canva application. The following is an overview of the digital product:



Figure 2. Display of "Si Ebon"



Figure 3. Play Activities

The products created using the Canva application were then converted into flipbooks using the Hyzine Flipbook application. The following are the products in flipbook form:



Figure 4. Digital Encyclopedia

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/b9e03195e2.html>

The next step is feasibility testing, where the product is validated by media experts, subject matter experts, and cultural experts. The results of the validation test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 5. Validation Test Results

Validation	Mean	Persentase	Category
Media Expert			
Stage 1	3.87	77.5%	Suitable
Stage 2	4.75	95%	Very suitable
Content Expert			
Stage 1	3	60%	Fairly Adequate
Stage 2	4	91%	Very Adequate
Cultural Expert			
Stage 1	3,37	67%	Suitable
Stage 2	4,9	98%	Very suitable

Based on the feasibility test results by media experts in stage 1, a percentage of 77.5% was obtained with a category of feasible. Furthermore, the percentage value obtained from the material experts was 60% with a category of fairly feasible, and the cultural experts in stage 1 obtained a result of 67% with a category of feasible. The experts provided suggestions and input on the encyclopedia product, including the following:

Table 6. Expert input and suggestions

Expert	Input and Suggestions
Media Expert	¹⁹ - It is necessary to pay attention to the illustrations in the sections on the history and tourism of Cirebon so that they are suitable for young children. - Consider using activities in the form of digital games so that children can play them. - In the chapter on Cirebon dance, it would be better if the pictures and text explaining the topeng were larger. The names of the topeng are not legible even when zoomed in. - Each page of the book should not have too much text. For example, on page 1 about the history of Cirebon, one page could be dedicated to an image of Prince Cakrabuana with an explanation below. Thus, page 1 could be expanded to two pages. This would make the text more readable for children and more engaging with larger images.
Subject Matter Expert	- Add Cirebon specialties such as Docang and Nasi Lengko. - Arrange tourist attractions according to the historical order of their establishment. - Modify worksheets so they can be used in digital and printed formats.
Cultural Expert	- Photos and images should be more specific and reflect early childhood. - Add gamelan elements to Cirebon art. - History Culture adds other figures involved.

The product was then revised based on input from experts and underwent a second stage of feasibility testing. The results of the second stage of feasibility testing by media experts obtained a percentage of 95% with a category of very feasible, while material experts obtained a percentage of 91% with a category of very feasible, and cultural experts obtained a percentage of 98% with a category of very feasible.

Implementation

The product, which had obtained a highly feasible result, was then tested on users, namely 17 teachers, to see their response. The results of the teacher response test can be seen in the following table.

Tabel 7. Teacher Respons

Indicators	N	5	4	3	2	1
Appropriateness of material to media objectives (revitalization of local culture)	17	47,1	52,9	0		
Appropriateness of material to early childhood development competencies		41,2	52,9	0		
Accuracy of material content to Cirebon cultural values		47,1	52,9	5,8		
Completeness of information presented in the encyclopedia		58,8	41,2	0		
Accuracy of cultural facts and data presented		58,8	41,2	0		
Relevant and up-to-date material in line with current cultural conditions		41,2	58,8	0		
Simple, clear language appropriate for children		47,1	47,1	0		
Accurate and easy-to-understand use of cultural terms		70,6	29,4	5,8		
Material presented in a systematic and coherent manner		52,9	47,1	0		
Presentation is interesting and able to arouse children's curiosity		52,9	47,1	0		
Balance between text and illustrations in explaining the content		47,1	52,9	0		
Media can make it easier for teachers to convey material related to local culture		76,5	23,5	0		
The material presented can instill positive moral, social, and cultural values		70,6	29,4	0		
The material can encourage children's appreciation of local culture		52,9	47,1	0		
The material can develop children's insight into cultural diversity		47,1	52,9			
Average		54,1%	45,1%	0,7%	0%	0%

The data analysis presented uses a 1-5 Likert scale, namely 5) very feasible, 4) feasible, 3) quite feasible, 2) not feasible, 1) very not feasible. Based on the table above, it can be seen that the results of the teacher response test obtained 54.1% in the very feasible category, 41.1% feasible, and 0.7% quite feasible. These findings indicate that the "Si Ebon" digital encyclopedia is suitable for use as a medium for revitalizing Cirebon culture among early childhood.

After undergoing user response testing, the product's effectiveness was then tested on early childhood at two institutions, namely the Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon Kindergarten and the Khalifah Al Qolam Kindergarten, involving 38 children. The results of the trial can be seen in Table 4.5.

Table 8. Product Trial Results

No	INDICATOR	Before		After	
		A	NA	A	NA
1	Learn about the history of Cirebon	5	33	30	8
2	Learn about Cirebon Topeng Dance	13	25	35	3
3	Learn about Cirebon Arts	24	14	29	9
4	Learn about Cirebon Batik	10	28	33	5
5	Learn about Cirebon Specialties	26	12	38	0
6	Learn about Cirebon Tourism	28	10	38	0
Average		17.66	20.33	33.83	4.16
Percentage		46.4%	53.5%	89.0%	10.9%

A trial was conducted on children aged 4-6 years using a pretest-posttest scheme to measure early childhood knowledge of Cirebon culture. The pretest results showed that the average score of children who were familiar with Cirebon culture was 17.66, with a percentage of 46% of children, while children who were not familiar with it had a higher average score of 20.33, with a percentage of 53.5%. This data shows that on average, children are not familiar with the culture. Based on the indicators tested, the lowest cultural scores were for Cirebon history with a score of 5, Cirebon batik with a score of 10, mask dance with a score of 13, and Cirebon arts with a score of 24. while the cultural aspects that many children knew included Cirebon arts with a score of 24 and Cirebon tourism with a score of 28.

Next, the researcher conducted treatment by providing material through cultural introduction with the Si Ebon Encyclopedia. The material was provided gradually and consistently for one month. Next, the researcher conducted a post-test related to the children's ability to recognize Cirebon culture. Based on the post-test results, it can be seen that the children's average score increased to 33.8 with a percentage of 89%. Items such as history increased to 30, topeng dance to 35, arts to 29, batik to 33, special foods to 38, and Cirebon tourism to 38. In this case, it can be concluded that the Si Ebon Encyclopedia is effective for introducing the cultural diversity of Cirebon to children aged 4-6 years.

Evaluation

Some feedback from teachers was related to the use of language, which needs to be adjusted for early childhood. Sentences should not be too long, so that they are easy for young children to understand.

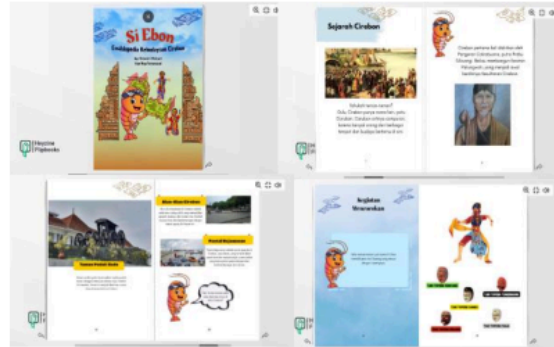


Figure 5. Final Product of the Si Ebon Encyclopedia

Based on the effectiveness test results, further improvements were made to the "Si Ebon" digital encyclopedia product. In terms of language, the researchers improved the sentences to make them easier for children to understand. Furthermore, in some parts of the images, the researchers made adjustments to suit the characteristics of early childhood. The final product can be seen in Figure 4.4 and the following link. <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/b9e03195e2.html>.

Discussion

As part of efforts to develop learning media based on local culture, this product is not only assessed from a technical and content perspective, but also examined from the point of view of its usefulness and **impact on the learning process** of early childhood. **The results of the study of the "Si Ebon" Digital Encyclopedia as a medium for introducing Cirebon culture not only show high feasibility, but also have a strong foundation in educational theory and previous research findings.** Expert validation with a highly feasible category indicates that this media has met the standards of content quality and learning design, which is important to ensure the suitability of the content, media display, and relevance to learning objective (Tracey, 2009).

From the perspective of early childhood learning, the effectiveness test results reflect that the majority of children successfully understood the cultural content presented. Through Esiklopedia Si Ebon, the information presented is very interesting, where through a combination of text, visuals, and interactive elements, it is easier for children to understand and remember (Kustandi, 2021). These findings are also in line with Ausubel's Meaningful Learning theory, which asserts that children find it easier to internalize new concepts when they are linked to real contexts and cultural experiences around them.

Based on the results of teacher response tests with the category of very feasible, it shows that Si Ebon is not only effective for children but also easy to implement in learning practices, where in the principle of media creation, it is

necessary to pay attention to the elements of ease of use and perceived benefits, which have been fulfilled in this product (Sumiati & Tirtayani, 2021).

Several previous studies support these findings. A study by shows that local culture-based digital media can increase children's curiosity and strengthen regional cultural identity (Isnaini et al., 2018). Similarly, research by (Oktavianingsih et al., 2023) proves that digital encyclopedias as a medium for cultural literacy are effective in increasing children's understanding of local cultural heritage. In addition, research (L. H. Siregar et al., 2020) confirms that the use of interactive digital media in early childhood learning increases information retention by up to 80%, especially for culture-based material. Several previous studies show that the use of local culture-based digital media not only functions as a means of conveying information but also as a pedagogical tool capable of stimulating children's cognitive and affective engagement more deeply (Ivanka et al., 2025).

Based on all the data, supporting theories, and empirical evidence from previous studies, the Si Ebon Digital Encyclopedia can be categorized as an effective, appropriate, and relevant educational medium for introducing local culture to children. This product not only serves as a means of transferring cultural knowledge, but also as a strategic effort to preserve local identity through a digital literacy approach from an early age.

The "Si Ebon" Digital Encyclopedia product is still being developed on a limited scale, so it does not yet represent the diversity of cultural contexts and characteristics of educational institutions more broadly. This research was also constrained by the uneven distribution of technological facilities in schools, which could potentially affect the quality of digital media implementation. The relatively short duration of the study meant that the long-term impact of cultural revitalization through this media could not be comprehensively observed. In addition, the cultural content presented in the encyclopedia is still limited, so it does not reflect the full richness of local culture. Product validation involving a limited number of experts is another weakness, as it means that additional perspectives have not been accommodated in this study.

2 Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the development of the "Si Ebon" Digital Encyclopedia as a medium for revitalizing local culture for early childhood was successfully designed through systematic and measurable stages. The development process followed the principles of user-oriented learning design, in terms of content, appearance, and child-friendly interaction flow. This media was compiled by integrating visual elements, simple text, and interactive elements in accordance with the developmental characteristics of early childhood, making it attractive, easy to understand, and relevant to the context of culture-based learning.

Si Ebon Digital Encyclopedia is appropriate, relevant, and effective for use in early childhood learning, especially in the context of preserving local culture through an educational approach. This product can be used as an innovative alternative in integrating educational technology with local wisdom values, while also opening up

opportunities for further development and wider implementation in various educational environments.

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