

Meaning of storytelling in volunteers' experiences at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park

Rully Khairul Anwar^{1*}, Evi Nursanti Rukmana², Ute Lies Siti Khadijah³, Encang
Saepudin⁴, Ratnamala Vanamamalai⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Library and Information Science Study Program, Universitas Padjadjaran
Jl. Raya Bandung-Sumedang Km. 21, Jatinangor, Sumedang, Jawa Barat, 45363

⁵Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University
Tanhriil, Aizawl Mizoram, India, 796004

*) Corresponding Author, Email: rully.khairul@unpad.ac.id

Received: September 2023; Accepted: December 2023; Published: December 2023

Abstract

The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park is a library that has storytelling services to enhance children's literacy and cultural knowledge. Volunteers assisted the Community Reading Park to develop children's creativity and imagination with stories. This research aimed to determine the meaning of storytelling among volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park by analyzing the experience and meaning of storytelling. The research method used qualitative with a phenomenology approach. The study result showed that the experience of storytelling for volunteers consisted of expanding children's story reading, interaction with readers, language development, cultivating imagination, creativity, entertainment, and sharing knowledge. The meaning of storytelling in the volunteers consisted of volunteers' motivation, the impact of storytelling on volunteers, the impact of storytelling on the relationship with readers, contributions of storytelling to volunteers' personal development, and the involvement of volunteers in the development of the Community Reading Park. It also included challenges and obstacles faced by volunteers in storytelling, volunteers' perception of the impact of storytelling on children's education and literacy, meaningful storytelling, teaching without preaching and preserving cultural stories. In conclusion, volunteers have assisted Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park with storytelling services for children. Children have imagination and creativity, and their language development improves. Volunteers provide fun learning experiences for children through storytelling, including practicing reading and writing literacy programs for children.

Keywords: Meaning; Storytelling; Volunteers' experiences; Community reading park

Makna mendongeng dalam pengalaman relawan di Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Pabukon Ngadongeng

Abstrak

Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Pabukon Ngadongeng adalah perpustakaan yang memiliki pelayanan bercerita (storytelling) pada anak-anak untuk meningkatkan literasi dan pengetahuan budaya. Relawan membantu taman bacaan masyarakat dalam menumbuhkan, mengembangkan kreativitas, dan imajinasi anak-anak melalui cerita. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui makna mendongeng bagi relawan di Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Pabukon Ngadongeng melalui analisis pengalaman dan makna mendongeng. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui fenomenologi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman bercerita bagi relawan, antara lain bercerita mampu meluaskan bacaan cerita anak, berinteraksi dengan pembaca, mengembangkan kemampuan bahasa, menumbuhkan imajinasi, kreativitas, hiburan, dan berbagi ilmu. Makna mendongeng bagi relawan, antara lain motivasi relawan, dampak mendongeng pada relawan, dampak mendongeng terhadap hubungan dengan pembaca, kontribusi mendongeng untuk pengembangan pribadi relawan, keterlibatan relawan dalam pengembangan taman bacaan masyarakat, tantangan dan kendala yang dihadapi relawan dalam mendongeng, persepsi relawan tentang dampak mendongeng terhadap pendidikan dan literasi anak, bercerita penuh makna, mengajar tanpa menggurui, dan melestarikan cerita budaya. Simpulan penelitian yakni relawan telah membantu Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Pabukon Ngadongeng dalam melayani anak-anak melalui bercerita. Anak-anak yang menerima layanan bercerita dapat berimajinasi, kreatif, dan meningkatkan perkembangan bahasanya. Relawan melalui bercerita telah memberikan pengalaman belajar yang menyenangkan bagi anak-anak dan relawan pun telah menerapkan kegiatan literasi membaca dan menulis pada anak-anak.

Kata Kunci: Makna; Dongeng; Pengalaman relawan; Taman bacaan masyarakat

INTRODUCTION

The Pabukon Ngadongeng is a Community Reading Park or *Taman Bacaan Masyarakat* (TBM) located in Dusun Manglayang, Mekarsari, Sukasari, Sumedang. It provides reading materials and serves as a learning facility in the local community, especially for children. It reintroduces the uniqueness of Sundanese culture through reading materials because nowadays, the Sundanese language and cultural activities are becoming less common. The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park has a library collection of 211 titles and 514 copies, including fiction and non-fiction in Indonesian and Sundanese languages. Fiction includes picture books, novels, short stories, and comics. Non-fiction consists of comics and short stories.

The efforts made by the Community Reading Park to reintroduce Sundanese literature and culture involve storytelling. It strives to emphasize and utilize storytelling as a crucial tool for educating and entertaining children, fostering children's narratives, creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills (Addone, Palmieri, & Pellegrino, 2021). It serves as a storytelling center that revives the tradition of storytelling within the community. Despite rapid technological advancements and modern lifestyles, storytelling is crucial to educating and entertaining children and the surrounding community. The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park is the focus of this study because this TBM has a role in preserving and reviving the storytelling tradition amidst changing times.

On the enchanting grounds of the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, storytelling becomes a transformative experience where stories

come alive and hold deep meaning for all who participate. In this compelling place, storytelling transcends routine events and is a powerful tool for preserving a rich literary culture (Cremin, Flewitt, Mardell, & Swann, 2016). As the art of storytelling unfolds in community reading centers, volunteers and experienced storytellers embark on a journey that goes beyond storytelling. They provide compelling and immersive experiences that captivate the attention and hearts of their listeners. These shared storytelling experiences deepen the connection between storytellers and their responsive listeners of all ages and promote a strong sense of community. The community reading centers transform into a haven where tales weave a web of connection between the storyteller and the listener, bringing traditions to life and igniting the imagination. It is evidence of the effectiveness of storytelling in promoting neighborhood harmony and protecting cultural assets.

The Pabukon Ngadongeng community Reading Park is a library for people of various ages and backgrounds. Here, the world of imagination expands for children, while adults find comfort in fond memories of youth. Whereas using storytelling, this harmonious space fosters an environment where young children's educational journey is supported (Jovchelovitch, Priego-Hernández, & Glăveanu, 2017; Amanna, 2019). Interpersonal connections bring diverse individuals closer together through the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. As the modern world shifts, the storytelling habit remains preserved in its precious sanctuary. This sanctuary highlights the preservation of the storytelling's artistic value and reminds us

of its enduring appeal. It sustains imagination, cultural heritage, and social ties while reminding them of their significance. Community Reading Parks are precious as a crossroads of tradition and modernity.

The existing Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park deserves to be examined in more detail. In its community, the library acts as a center for storytelling, plays an essential role in shaping local identity, and contributes positively to the quality of life. Thorough investigation and analysis are necessary to fully understand the significance of the community reading center's storytelling projects.

Storytelling throughout the centuries has facilitated human culture's development (Sell, 2017). The appeal of stories and narratives continues even in the face of technological innovation. In both forms of entertainment and education, storytelling plays a critical role. The significance of recognizing storytelling as a preservation tool in this transformative era cannot be overstated. Storytelling also has an emotional impact in addition to its instructional value. Research has shown that intentional emotional contagion can occur through individuals' autobiographical memory, leading to sharing emotions with others (Wei et al., 2023). Introducing future generations to their cultural past is essential, especially in a world where globalization influences cultural norms. At the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, the existence of a storytelling center has the potential to safeguard cultural norms (Han et al., 2021). Preserving local culture is at the heart of the storytelling significance; by comprehending this, we can better appreciate its value in society.

In its storytelling pursuits, the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park relies on the support of a large number of volunteers who serve as narrators. Volunteers dedicate their time, energy and passion to sustain these activities. Understanding why these volunteers volunteer their time to storytelling is paramount. Values hinder our ability to glimpse the full impact of a story's influence on them until we comprehend why they value it so much.

Volunteers at the Community Reading Park serve as sources of inspiration for the younger generation. They exemplify that storytelling is a meaningful way to contribute to the community and preserve a living tradition. Children who witness their efforts are inspired to engage in positive and meaningful activities within their community. According to Hedemark (2017), educators play a vital role in promoting child literacy. The more children are exposed to stories in books, the better their reading abilities become.

As individuals directly involved in storytelling activities, volunteers have profound experiences with this process. They are the custodians of oral tradition and the storytelling culture within their community. Therefore, understanding the meaning of storytelling to these volunteers is like opening a door into the world of narratives and how these stories shape their perspectives on life and their cherished values. Furthermore, understanding this meaning also helps explain why volunteers willingly invest their time and energy. It is not merely a duty or job but a strong calling of the heart. By understanding the meaning of storytelling to volunteers, we can appreciate their dedication and respect the

pivotal role they play in preserving and revitalizing the storytelling tradition.

Through storytelling activities at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, volunteers not only make a tangible contribution to enhancing the quality of life in the local community but also create an empowering and enjoyable environment, especially for children. The presence of Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park as a storytelling hub in the community offers more than just entertainment and ordinary stories; it enriches local culture and strengthens community bonds in the pursuit of preserving and developing local identity. Volunteers explore traditional stories and cultural values in their narratives, which in turn strengthens the connection between the younger generation and their rich cultural heritage. This forms the crucial basis for maintaining the sustainability and diversity of the valuable local culture.

Another alternative instructional technique is storytelling at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. Volunteers share their experiences and provide insights into various aspects of life, history, and important ideals. It offers a broader education and stimulates critical thinking in listeners, which they may not receive through a regular school curriculum. It is achieved through integration with the digital platform "ngadongeng.com." The website is specifically designed for stories in the Sundanese language, blending technology with local storytelling traditions. The use of digital media successfully piques children's interest in reading illustrated storybooks with a Sundanese touch. This aligns with findings indicating that such approaches can motivate children to read

picture books relevant to their local culture (Ismail, & Yusof, 2018).

Thus, storytelling activities conducted by volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park play a highly significant role in enhancing child literacy in the surrounding TBM area. The experiences of these volunteers in storytelling at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park represent a tangible contribution to shaping a sustainable literary culture within the community. Therefore, the meaning of storytelling for volunteers is not just a routine; it is also a vital catalyst in maintaining and fostering the sustainability of the reading park.

Previous studies about the meaning of storytelling for volunteers in libraries or community reading parks have been researched. Olsson, Therkelsen, and Mossberg (2016) discussed the strategic objectives of storytelling activities. This research highlights the importance of volunteers' strategic goals when storytelling, as they must collaborate and contribute effectively to community development.

In another study, Peng and Chuang (2020) focused on the competency model for volunteer storytellers in public libraries. This research emphasizes that in managing Human Resources (HR) for volunteer storytellers, libraries need to consider planning, recruitment, education, management, and job evaluation. A competency model for volunteer storytellers in public libraries is based on this.

The study by Anders, Graves, and German (2016) highlighted that volunteers helped libraries create tales in the third section of their research. This research discovered that library users are more

engaged when student volunteers share tales. Students are more likely to feel like they belong at the library when they read and write and draw significant links between the services offered there and college life.

The study by Yan et al., (2021) discussed digital storytelling from volunteers in Uganda. Digital Storytelling (DST) is used for education, research, advocacy, and therapeutic purposes in public health. In East Africa, there currently needs to be more in-country DST facilitation capacity, which restricts the scope of use. Through a Ugandan-Canadian partnership, six Ugandan faculty and staff from Mbarara University of Science and Technology participated in a pilot.

Based on the findings of these four previous studies, volunteers play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of libraries or community reading centers through storytelling activities. Therefore, volunteers in libraries or community reading parks need to consider storytelling strategies that can be tailored to the needs of patrons from various segments of society. These findings have significant implications for the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. *First*, it can understand the invaluable role of volunteer storytellers and can motivate them to contribute wholeheartedly. *Second*, it can harness the power of storytelling as an alternative educational tool capable of positively impacting the local community. *Third*, it can continue to develop storytelling programs that focus on preserving local culture and building intergenerational relationships.

Volunteers as literacy activists have supported the running of cultural and civic literacy programs through the

storytelling of Sundanese folktales. It becomes interesting when volunteers wholeheartedly tell stories to children in community reading centers. The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park explores Sundanese folktales and conveys them to children through storytelling.

As such, the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park can remain a highly effective storytelling center with a substantial impact on community life. This research aimed to understand better how storytelling shapes meaning for volunteers, communities, and local cultures. From a deeper perspective, storytelling activities at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park are not just about conveying stories; they are a living cultural heritage. Volunteers who, with unwavering dedication, spread joy, knowledge, and wisdom through their narratives are heroes who create positive change in society. The meaning of storytelling for them reflects how this simple activity can have an extraordinary impact on human life and culture. Thus, this research explores how to meaning of storytelling in volunteers' experiences at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park by analyzing experience and the meaning of storytelling.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research method. Phenomenology is a research method that focuses on understanding individuals' life experiences and extracting meaning from those experiences (Hayes & Graham, 2021). Individual experiences and perspectives were central to this research. In this study, volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park

were the subjects investigated to explore their experiences and the meanings gained from storytelling.

A phenomenology research method is an approach to finding meaning from the experiences of informants or research subjects. Researchers should not have preconceived notions or opinions about the experiences of the informants. They should allow and understand data from the informants' perspectives. Greening (2019) stated that researchers should identify the phenomenon in the informants and then extract meaning from the informants' experiences.

The research was conducted from June to August 2023 at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. The research subjects were three volunteers selected through purposive sampling. The informants were those who met the criteria of being active volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. The criteria for determining informants included being a volunteer at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park for at least one year and actively engaging in storytelling in the library. Limiting informant selection criteria was critical to the effectiveness of informant selection.

The data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and a literature review. Phenomenologically, interviews are considered by Cypress (2018) as non-formal interactive communication processes to explore the informants' experiences. Therefore, the researcher used unstructured interviews to delve deeper into the meaning of storytelling for the volunteers. The researcher asked five open and flexible questions, allowing informants to speak freely and follow the flow of the

conversation, occasionally asking additional questions for clarification or further explanation, aiming to understand the informants' subjective experiences in depth. Informants were Kiki Hamdani, Eli Apriani, and Rosa Nurazizah. The researcher obtained consent from the informants to mention their names in interviews. The questions focused on 1) Personal experience with storytelling, exploring the volunteers' journeys and encounters with storytelling at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park; 2) Meaning and impact, delving into what storytelling signifies to the volunteers and its perceived effects on the audience, particularly children; 3) Challenges and learnings, inquiring about the difficulties faced during storytelling and the lessons learned from these experiences; 4) Story selection process, understanding how stories are chosen for narration and the factors influencing these choices; and 5) Perception of role and value, examining the volunteers' views on the role of storytelling in the community and its value in cultural preservation and literacy enhancement.

Observations were conducted at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, observing volunteers as they engaged with readers. Additionally, the literature review involved references related to the research on the meaning of storytelling for volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, sourced from e-journals, books, and websites.

Data analysis techniques involved phenomenological data analysis methods, including creating and organizing files, reading through texts, describing personal experiences, describing the meaning of the phenomenon, developing significant

statements, grouping statements into meaning units, developing a textural description, developing a structural description, and developing the 'essence' (Cypress, 2018). The researcher organized and managed the data from interview transcripts, reviewed the interview data, described the experiences and meanings of storytelling from the interview data, developed each quotation into research questions, and analyzed them using relevant theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park is an initiative that has been established since December 2019. In its early days, this Community Reading Park was relatively unknown to the local community. It was managed independently by the owner, operating without the assistance of volunteers. However, as time went by and through its active participation in Community Reading Parks from the West Java Province and Sumedang Regency Forum, community awareness of the TBM's existence began to increase.

One of the activities carried out by volunteers at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park was storytelling. Storytelling is a means to disseminate the collection of books available there. Most of the collections consist of illustrated storybooks that children highly favor. The stories contained in these books are brought to life through storytelling activities carried out by the owner and volunteers of the Community Reading Park.

The role of volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park

was crucial. They assisted in managing activities and motivated the Community Reading Park owner and other members to serve the readers better. They willingly helped convey stories from the Community Reading Park collections to readers, especially children, because the collection at the Community Reading Park mostly features children's stories. Hence, storytelling activities serve as an innovation to further introduce reading to children.

In this situation, the participation of volunteer storytellers was crucial for stimulating children's interest in reading. They assisted the owner of Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park in bringing children's stories to life in an engaging, interactive, and entertaining manner. The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park is committed to making reading an enjoyable and helpful activity for children in the area.

Talent and training are sources of improvement in the art of storytelling. The volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park had never engaged in storytelling before; they were more accustomed to reading aloud. However, they taught themselves the art of storytelling. When children visited the Community Reading Park, they could choose the stories to be read by the volunteer storyteller.

This study analyzed two research questions, namely, the experience of storytelling and the meaning of storytelling for volunteers at the Community Reading Park. Table 1 presents the summary of the volunteers' storytelling experiences, which provides an overview of three sources' accounts of their own experiences with storytelling.

Table 1

Research findings on storytelling experience

Respondent	Storytelling experience
Kiki Hamdani	Expanding children's story reading, interaction with readers, language development.
Eli Apriani	Cultivating imagination, creativity.
Rosa Nurazizah	Entertainment, sharing knowledge.

Source: Result of research, 2023

It is possible to think about storytelling as either an inherent gift or a learned skill. The Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park volunteers had only read books; they had yet to gain prior experience in storytelling. The volunteers acquired their storytelling skills via independent study. Children were encouraged to discover books they liked or choose the tales they wished to hear when they visited the Community Reading Park.

Kiki Hamdani as an informant, have several significant points. First, there is a love of children's literature that fosters communication with readers. Reading children's books requires much inventiveness, which makes it an enjoyable activity. Second, reading to kids fosters a tight bond between readers—like parents, teachers, and children—and introduces them to the world of language. The experience of reading for children offers a variety of benefits, including the development of language skills, knowledge, and emotional aspects. Through various types of stories narrated by volunteers, children can understand the concept of storytelling, the characters, and the values embedded within them. This significantly contributes to the holistic development of children. The role of volunteer storytellers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park extended beyond just being storytellers; they also acted as facilitators who introduced children to meaningful and profound reading experiences that helped

their overall development. Through these storytelling activities, the volunteers played a crucial role in enhancing children's literacy within the community.

“Before, I had never told stories. In the Community Reading Park, I learned that through reading, we can encourage children to become better without having to preach.” (K. Hamdani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

“Once, when two children were arguing, I told them a story about friendship, and they eventually made up. So, the children learn from real-life examples.” (K. Hamdani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

Children can learn about the value of friendship from animal stories or everyday life stories. Stories are a method of conveying messages that children easily understand. Reading books has become a crucial form of recreation. Therefore, a storyteller must have a deep understanding of the text he/she reads and the ability to communicate it to children effectively. During storytelling sessions, children are often inspired to re-read stories from narrated books (Merga, 2015).

Moreover, children's stories often contain valuable moral messages for their development. These messages are conveyed within the context of the story's plot and do not feel like boring moral lessons. It makes these messages easier for children to accept and apply. Kiki

Hamdani stated, "Yes, indeed, children follow the message the story conveys" (K. Hamdani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023). The power of storytellers in conveying moral messages contributes significantly to shaping children's character. Kiki Hamdani learned how to understand stories and conveyed them effectively to children.

Storytelling activities also create opportunities for interaction with readers, especially children. Storytellers can observe the characteristics and responses of children to stories. As mentioned, "Storytelling can also persuade and spur action through creating a connection between storyteller and listener, which makes information more compelling" (Damodaran, 2017). Children often feel motivated to communicate with the storyteller when listening to the story.

In storytelling sessions, children often ask questions about the stories being narrated. It provided an opportunity for volunteers to understand children's interests and desires regarding specific reading or information. Furthermore, through storytelling, Kiki Hamdani also emphasized that children could develop their language skills. They would understand and internalize the language structure they heard during storytelling. In addition, the words and phrases they acquired from stories enriched their vocabulary.

Hence, through storytelling, children can grow into more enthusiastic readers, have a better understanding of language, improve their reading abilities, and stimulate their creativity and imagination. "Storytelling improved their comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Thus, it can be said that storytelling could improve

students' speaking skills" (Zuhriyah, 2017). Proficiency in storytelling can offer broad benefits to a child's language development, including fluency in speaking, expanding vocabulary, and improving grammar and pronunciation.

Eli Apriani revealed that the experience of storytelling had the benefit of training imagination and stimulating creativity. When volunteers engaged in storytelling, they could transform fictional stories into real experiences in the minds of the listeners. This activity helped shape ideas, situations, objects, or events that were impossible in the real world. The imagination involved in storytelling allowed volunteers to transcend the limitations of the real world and create something unique and creative, enriching the listeners' experiences.

"Storytelling derived from stories. When storytelling, children are encouraged to imagine the stories being told. This thinking process develops imagination and fosters children's creativity." (E. Apriani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

This thinking process develops imagination and fosters children's creativity. Furthermore, storytelling activities also have a positive impact on the development of children's creativity by exposing them to various types of stories and concepts. Through storytelling, children can be exposed to a variety of themes, characters, and backgrounds in stories (Hidayati, 2019). It can stimulate their thinking about different situations and experiences, helping them understand differences and enrich their insight into the world (Nuraini, 2020). By engaging in various stories, children can hone their creativity in creating their own stories, combining elements they have learned

from various sources. Thus, storytelling activities not only enrich children's imagination but also broaden their understanding of the complexity of the world around them, shaping valuable creative thinking for their future development.

“Every child is a unique individual with special abilities, especially in the development of imagination. Imagination developed through storytelling can help children involved in listening or reading stories develop their ability to solve problems creatively. This happens because storytelling stimulates imagination and creativity, which, in the end, can help children face and solve problems in real life. Through storytelling, students will find solutions that they can develop and help them in various ways in solving problems and making the best decisions because, in stories, students are encouraged to analyze an event first.” (E. Apriani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

Storytelling activities have a significant positive impact on children's development, especially in enhancing their imagination and creativity. Each child has a unique imagination, and through storytelling, they can creatively develop it. This activity also helps children build confidence in finding creative solutions to problems they encounter.

In addition to these personal benefits, storytelling also has implications in the educational context. Researchers like Hà and Bellot (2020) have argued that storytelling can help students form some specific habits in using a foreign language better than other activities aiming at providing students with written input,

such as games or exercises. Students should understand foreign language to help in speaking or grammar. So, students that learn through storytelling can get skill in language and become creative. As an example, Eli Apriani continues to refine their storytelling skills with creative touches. They use imagination and unique ideas to create unconventional narratives that captivate the listeners. When volunteers tell stories with creativity, they play with language, plot, and other elements, creating unforgettable experiences for the children listening.

Rosa Nurazizah presented another approach to storytelling. She considered this activity as entertainment and knowledge sharing. Storytelling became a fun and engaging moment for the children listening, given the various aspects of the story, such as illustrations, emotions, plot, character dialogues, and intonation. Storytellers must bring the story to life by portraying various characters in the story using different intonations according to each character. This aligns with the view of D’Cruz, Douglas, and Serry (2020) that storytelling can connect to social life and contribute positively to society. Children become more attuned to the social realities around them.

Apart from entertainment, storytellers could also share knowledge with children. They used stories to convey listeners' information, knowledge, or lessons by incorporating educational or informative elements into the story's plot to provide insights to the children. These volunteers played the role of knowledge-sharing facilitators without being didactic. “Children who listen to stories tend to be more curious. They become excited and start asking more questions,” as expressed by Rosa Nurazizah. As a result, children's

interest in the story's themes and characters increases, making it easier to communicate the moral of the story to them (R. Nurazizah, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

The more children ask questions and show curiosity, the more influential the process of conveying information from the narrated books becomes. Children's imaginations and creativity are stimulated through storytelling activities, promoting information sharing, group learning, and reflection (Gucciardi et al., 2021). It encourages children to become more active in seeking knowledge and understanding, inspiring their interest in reading and further learning.

Discovering the actual benefit of this exercise for volunteers requires understanding the narrative. Volunteers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park who participate in storytelling have a thorough comprehension of the procedure. For them, storytelling serves as more than simply a method of passing the time or providing pleasure; it also serves as a tool to broaden their social networks, develop their talents, and expose kids to the storytelling tradition (Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2018; Dunn & Cherup, 2023;

Medlicott, 2019). Volunteers wholeheartedly dedicate their time, energy, and enthusiasm to be storytellers, upholding the community's oral tradition and storytelling culture. Therefore, volunteers' understanding of the meaning of storytelling is not just a job but a deep calling.

For Kiki Hamdani, a student actively engaged in social activities in Tanjungsari, storytelling at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park holds a deeper meaning, serving as a form of learning through knowledge sharing within the community. "Storytelling is about learning to tell stories" (K. Hamdani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023). Storytelling serves as a means for individuals to gain a profound understanding of a narrative and then convey it effectively to children. Through stories, children can learn to understand situations and conditions in their environment. Volunteers, through their storytelling experiences, learn to be sensitive to the conditions of the children.

Secondly, the meaning of storytelling is outlined in table 2 regarding the significance of storytelling for volunteers at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park.

Table 2
Research findings on the meaning of storytelling

Respondent	The meaning of storytelling
Kiki Hamdani	Volunteers' motivation, impact of storytelling on volunteers, impact of storytelling on the relationship with readers, contributions of storytelling to volunteers' personal development, involvement of volunteers in the development of the community reading park, challenges and obstacles faced by volunteers in storytelling.
Eli Apriani	Volunteers' perception of the impact of storytelling on children's education and literacy, meaningful storytelling, and teaching without preaching.
Rosa Nurazizah	Preserving cultural stories

Source: Result of research, 2023

Kiki Hamdani understood storytelling as a technique of narrating without reading a text. Volunteers were motivated to convey stories to children. This had a positive impact on volunteers, encouraging them to hone their speaking styles and imagination. Additionally, through storytelling, volunteers assisted the Community Reading Park in implementing literacy programs.

The volunteers' comprehension of the value of storytelling at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park indicated their awareness of the critical role that storytelling played in children's development. Volunteers understood that storytelling was more than just reading aloud; it was a participatory process where children actively listened and created stories in their minds. This understanding motivated volunteers to deliver stories with passion and creativity, stimulating children's imaginations and conveying moral messages naturally. Peng and Chuang (2020) state that storytelling can increase children's interest and ability in reading. Therefore, volunteers are responsible for building and maintaining strong connections with the community reading center patrons, the children.

Moreover, volunteers also possess in-depth knowledge of effective storytelling techniques and strategies. They know how to choose age-appropriate and interesting stories for children, use proper intonation, and create engaging storytelling experiences. Volunteers who comprehend the content and can evaluate stories enable them to convey stories with depth and stimulate children's growth. While engaged in storytelling activities, volunteers continuously refine their storytelling understanding, improve storytelling techniques, and become more

responsive to interactions with children. This allowed volunteers to become more effective and influential storytellers at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park through their positive contributions to children's development and the community as a whole.

Kiki Hamdani actively engaged children in listening to stories through traditional games that supported the storytelling process. In these activities, they used traditional tools like traditional games to bring story characters to life. This approach encouraged children to visualize real objects related to the story easily. By incorporating traditional games, Kiki Hamdani felt that they could deepen the storytelling experience and stimulate children's imaginations.

Cragoe (2016) states that storytelling using traditional games has become a means to pass on culture, understand the environment, and create a sense of community and identity. Traditional games from folklore and mythology help narrators connect listeners with their local ancestors. Volunteers use traditional tools with various methods to make stories come to life and become more interactive for children. Children can better follow the story's plot. At the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, children were not just passive listeners but actively participated in a creative and immersive storytelling experience.

Storytelling volunteers have gained confidence in performing in public. They have developed communication skills and improved their abilities in reading children's literature. Storytelling has enhanced volunteers' abilities (Peng & Chuang, 2020), including public speaking, language skills, reading literature, stage

presence, and an understanding of the children's world.

Storytelling volunteers have contributed to the sustainability of the Community Reading Park program, increased engagement between schools and the local community, and encouraged school students to use the Community Reading Park services (Leelanayagi, Juwaidah, Zainal, & Mohamed, 2018). Volunteers served as drivers of the Community Reading Park sustainability, especially at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. Volunteers helped implement the Community Reading Park programs.

However, storytelling volunteers faced some challenges, such as mastering stories from several children's books, which they performed through reading activities. Sometimes, reading children's stories was only done during activities at the Community Reading Park and had yet to be a routine activity. Hence, reading is one of the keys to creating or retelling stories for children (Rukiyah, 2018). Storytelling becomes challenging when volunteers do not read because they need to master or be familiar with the story related to the one they are telling.

In addition, storytelling activities carried out by volunteers have contributed to the field of children's education and literacy by enhancing language and literacy learning and contributing to an inclusive classroom culture (Cremin et al., 2016). Stories containing lessons make children learn to understand characters and story content, encouraging children to learn to play drama and understand classroom learning.

Eli Apriani, who teaches at an Elementary school, brings a different perspective when participating in

storytelling activities at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park. For her, storytelling at the Community Reading Park is not just a hobby or recreational activity but part of the Elementary school literacy program where she teaches. In this context, the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park serves as a valuable additional reading source for the Elementary school that still needs a library. Through the collaboration between the Community Reading Park and the Elementary school, this literacy program provides access to books for children. During break time, children can visit the Community Reading Park and access the various books available. Eli Apriani sees this opportunity as a good moment to tell stories to the Elementary School children.

The collaboration between the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park and the Elementary School is a concrete example of collaborative efforts to improve literacy among children. The goal of this collaboration is to enhance children's reading and writing abilities. Storytelling can improve the literacy of skill the students with the selection of story and quality of book by librarian (Satriani, 2019).

According to Eli Apriani, Elementary School children apply what they hear through storytelling by decorating pictures on the school bulletin board. "For children who attend school, they apply the content of the story by decorating pictures on the bulletin board" (E. Apriani, Interviewed, February 23, 2023). They use illustrations from the stories they hear at the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park to adorn the school's notice board. Thus, children not only become passive listeners of the story but are also actively involved

in applying the story visually, which, in turn, can enhance their understanding and interest in reading and writing.

Meanwhile, Rosa Nurazizah, a high school graduate who studies while working to manage the Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park, has a relaxed approach toward children and enjoys the world of children. This makes children feel comfortable visiting the Community Reading Park. Initially, children were too shy to come to the Community Reading Park. However, through Rosa Nurazizah's approach, children began to feel at ease visiting the Community Reading Park.

"They become more sociable and open to talking, for example, telling stories from the stories told" (R. Nurazizah, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

"We can teach good qualities or show bad qualities through stories. From good qualities, children become good. If it is from bad qualities, children learn not to do them". (R. Nurazizah, Interviewed, February 23, 2023).

Storytelling becomes a tool to connect with children. Initially, shy children become more open to talking after being told stories. Rosa Nurazizah learned to communicate with children and immersed herself in the world of children. Rosa Nurazizah also learned that to communicate with children, adults must get closer to children's interests or what they like. Through storytelling, adults and children become equals without age restrictions, coming together in a story.

This aligns with Liu, Pan, and Han (2023) statement that storytelling is a method for preserving and disseminating cultural stories in the preservation of

cultural heritage. The aim is for cultural spaces to increase the value of heritage development, and storytelling serves as an aid in spreading knowledge. Thus, storytelling can be a way to bring regional culture closer to children and rebuild a sense of cultural ownership.

CONCLUSION

The meaning of storytelling in volunteers' experiences at Pabukon Ngadongeng Community Reading Park are imagination, creativity, and community service. Through stories, children are trained to imagine and understand the stories conveyed. In addition, storytelling activities also create interactions between volunteers and children, where children become more open and actively communicate. Storytelling is also beneficial for developing children's language skills. The meanings of storytelling for volunteers include: 1) as a form of learning and sharing knowledge in the community; 2) having a positive impact on volunteers' speaking abilities and imagination; 3) supporting literacy programs in elementary schools; 4) becoming a means of getting closer to the world of children; 5) teaching moral values through stories; and 6) preserving local cultural stories. Volunteers are aware of the critical role of storytelling in stimulating children's imagination and creativity. They understand that storytelling is not just reading stories but a participatory process where children actively listen and imagine the story. This understanding motivates volunteers to tell stories passionately and creatively to stimulate children's imaginations. Through collaboration between the Community Reading Park and elementary schools, storytelling

activities have become part of literacy programs to improve children's reading and writing abilities. Children apply the messages and values from the stories they hear daily. Storytelling also serves as a means for volunteers to get closer to the world of children and teach moral values in a fun way. The next research, researcher will research practice storytelling to children's through quantitative research method.

REFERENCES

- Addone, A., Palmieri, G., & Pellegrino, M. A. (2021). Engaging children in digital storytelling. *Methodologies and Intelligent Systems for Technology Enhanced Learning, 11th International Conference*, 261–270. Spain: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86618-1_26
- Amanna, S. (2019). Storytelling for children: How stories are negotiated through language. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(6), 178–181. Retrieved from <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETI RCX06035.pdf>
- Anders, K. C., Graves, S. J., & German, E. (2016). Using student volunteers in library orientations. *Practical Academic Librarianship: The International Journal of the SLA Academic Division*, 6(2), 17–30. Retrieved from <https://pal-ojs-tamu.tdl.org/pal/issue/view/367>
- Cekaite, A., & Björk-Willén, P. (2018). Enchantment in storytelling: Co-operation and participation in children's aesthetic experience. *Linguistics and Education*, 48(1), 52–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2018.08.005>
- Cragoe, N. G. (2016). RPG mythos. *Games and Culture*, 11(6), 583–607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412015574195>
- Cremin, T., Flewitt, R., Mardell, B., & Swann, J. (2016). *Storytelling in early childhood: Enriching language, literacy, and classroom culture*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679426>
- Cypress, B. (2018). Qualitative research methods: A phenomenological focus. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 37(6), 302–309. <https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000322>
- D’Cruz, K., Douglas, J., & Serry, T. (2020). Sharing stories of lived experience: A qualitative analysis of the intersection of experiences between storytellers with acquired brain injury and storytelling facilitators. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 83(9), 576–584. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022619898085>
- Damodaran, A. (2017). *Narrative and numbers: The value of stories in business*. New York: Columbia Business School Publishing.
- Dunn, T. M., & Cherup, S. (2023). Storytelling and success: How storytelling can be used to promote diversity, cross-cultural understanding, and confidence in the classroom. *Journal of Education*, 203(3), 690–699. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574211032309>
- Greening, N. (2019). Phenomenological research mMethodology. *Scientific Research Journal (SCIRJ)*, 7(5), 88–92. <https://doi.org/10.31364/SCIRJ/v7.i5.2019.P0519656>

- Gucciardi, E., Reynolds, E., Karam, G., Beanlands, H., Sidani, S., & Espin, S. (2021). Group-based storytelling in disease self-management among people with diabetes. *Chronic Illness*, 17(3), 306-320. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742395319859395>
- Hà, T.A., & Bellot, A. R. (2020). Assessing storytelling as a tool for improving reading comprehension in the EFL primary classroom. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 19(2), 169-196. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-11-2018-0096>
- Han, H.-R., Byiringiro, S., Lacanieta, C., Weston, C., Terkowitz, M., Reese, M., ... Fakunle, D. (2021). Storytelling training to promote stakeholder engagement in research dissemination. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 6(1), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2021.830>
- Hayes, C., & Graham, Y. N. H. (2021). Phenomenology: Conceptually framing phenomenological research design and methodology. In *Phenomenology: Conceptually Framing Phenomenological Research Design and Methodology* (p. 28). USA: IGI Global. Retrieved from <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/phenomenology/292613>
- Hedemark, Å. (2017). Telling tales: An observational study of storytelling for children in Swedish Public Libraries. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 23(2), 106-125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614541.2017.1367574>
- Hidayati, N. N. (2019). Storytelling: One package learning in improving language skill and implanting character education on children. *EDUKASI: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(2), 192-211. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.staim-tulungagung.ac.id/index.php/edukasi/article/view/239/222>
- Ismail, A., & Yusof, N. (2018). Malaysian children storybooks as ESL reading materials. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 6(3), 68-75. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.6n.3p.68>
- Jovchelovitch, S., Priego-Hernández, J., & Glăveanu, V. P. (2017). 6 imagination in children entering culture. In *Handbook of Imagination and Culture* (pp. 111-136). USA: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190468712.003.0006>
- Leelanayagi, R., Juwaidah, S., Zainal, A., & Mohamed, F. A. (2018). Community garden programme: The volunteers' satisfaction. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(5), 433-439. Retrieved from <http://hrmars.com/index.php/journals/papers/IJARBSS/v8-i5/4115>
- Liu, X., Pan, Y., & Han, Y. (2023). Constructing cultural space and telling cultural stories: A case study of regional cultural heritage preservation in Shichahai, Beijing. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 75(1), 2. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-05-2022-0256>
- Medlicott, M. (2019, January). All about... storytelling. *Nursery World*, 17-21. Retrieved from <https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/full/10.12968/nuwa.2019.1.17>

- Merga, M. K. (2015). "She knows what I like": Student-generated best practice statements for encouraging recreational book reading in adolescents. *Australian Journal of Education*, 59(1), 35-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944114565115>
- Nuraini, K. (2020). Early reading through storytelling activities. *ADJES (Ahmad Dahlan Journal of English Studies)*, 7(1), 7-17. Retrieved from http://journal.uad.ac.id/index.php/ADJES/article/view/14508/pdf_27
- Olsson, A. K., Therkelsen, A., & Mossberg, L. (2016). Making an effort for free volunteers' roles in destination-based storytelling. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(7), 659-679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.784242>
- Peng, Y-P., & Chuang, P. H. (2020). A competency model for volunteer storytellers in public libraries. *LIBRI*, 70(1), 49-64. <https://doi.org/10.1515/libri-2019-0009>
- Rukiyah. (2018). Dongeng, mendongeng, dan manfaatnya. *Anuva: Jurnal Kajian Budaya, Perpustakaan, Dan Informasi*, 2(1), 99-106. <https://doi.org/10.14710/anuva.2.1.99-106>
- Satriani, I. (2019). Storytelling in teaching literacy: Benefits and challenges. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 8(1), 113-120. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v8i1.1924>
- Sell, J. (2017). Storytelling for intercultural understanding and intercultural sensitivity development. In *Beyond Storytelling* (pp. 223-249). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Gabler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-54157-9_12
- Wei, Y., Zhang, L., Lian, T., Chen, Y., Liao, S., Guo, Q., & Hu, P. (2023). Happy storytelling promotes emotional contagion and interpersonal closeness. *Current Psychology*, 42(8), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04544-x>
- Yan, T., Lang, M., Kyomuhangi, T., Naggayi, B., Kabakyenga, J., William, W., ... , Brenner, J. L. (2021). Let all know: Insights from a digital storytelling facilitator training in Uganda. *Global Health Action*, 14(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2021.1933786>
- Zuhriyah, M. (2017). Storytelling to Improve students' speaking skill. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, 10(1), 119-134. Retrieved from <http://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/ENGEDU/article/view/879/753>

