
Designing an Educational Comic on Nationalism Based on the Historical Events of Sanga Sanga in East Kalimantan

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Abstract

The design of this comic, set against the backdrop of the historic Sanga Sanga struggle in East Kalimantan, is part of a strategic effort to provide contextual and engaging educational media for the younger generation. This comic is designed to enhance students' understanding of local history while instilling nationalistic values through a communicative visual and narrative approach. The design process employed a descriptive qualitative method with a practice-based model. Research. The design stage begins with identifying the objectives and target audience, followed by field observations, collecting historical data and location documentation, and conducting literature studies related to the Palagan Sanga Sanga incident. January 27, 1947. The results of this research were then transformed into a story script and dialogue relevant to young readers, followed by the development of representative character designs and visual styles. The next process included storyboarding, panel layouts, illustrations and coloring, as well as graphic elements such as typography and narrative text. The final stage, a limited trial with students and teachers, was conducted to obtain feedback on readability, visual appeal, and the effectiveness of the message conveyed. Through this approach, comics not only become a means of preserving local history, but also a learning medium capable of connecting the younger generation with the values of struggle, patriotism, and love of the homeland in a more relevant and meaningful way.

INTRODUCTION

History of struggle of the Indonesian nation is an important part in the formation of national identity. Through history, young generations can understand the mark of struggle, patriotism, and national passion inherited from predecessors (Bastari, 2018). However, in current developments, the introduction of history to young generations needs to be delivered through more interesting, communicative, and easily understood media so it is not merely seen as material for formal memorization.

One of the local histories that has an important mark in the struggle of the Indonesian nation is the struggle in Sanga Sanga, Regency of Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan. Sanga Sanga has a historical role through the Red and White Sanga Sanga struggle incident on January 27, 1947. According to Jubaidi et al. (2026), Sanga Sanga was one of the areas that showed the spirit of patriotism among East Kalimantan society in maintaining Indonesian independence.

The event demonstrated the courage and awareness of the local public in fighting to maintain national identity and sovereignty.

According to Finandar et al. (1991), besides having an important mark of struggle, Sanga Sanga is also known as a region with a long history during the colonial period, especially because of its rich oil resources which drew the attention of the Dutch colonial government and Allied military. These conditions made Sanga Sanga one of the strategic areas associated with various incidents of public struggle against colonizers (Susanto dan Wasita 2026). According to Fadillah (2018), during the colonial period, Sanga Sanga witnessed various events involving local public resistance. Understanding local history is important for growing historical awareness, regional pride, and nationalism among young generations (Mbura dan Wiyanarti 2024; Mursidi dan Alit 2025; Pernantah 2025).

Although it has an important historical mark, local history like the struggle in Sanga Sanga is not yet fully known by young generations (Yefterson 2020; Dari *et al.* 2022). According to Saputra (2017), this condition can be caused by a lack of interesting historical learning media that are relevant to the lives of young generations and capable of presenting historical incidents visually. As a result, history is often viewed as monotonous and merely memorization of characters, places, and dates of incidents.

One of the media that can be used to introduce history to young generations is comics, which have the visual and narrative power to convey information in an interesting, simple, and easily understood way. According to Hasan (2019), comics are a popular form of reading among young generations and have the potential to convey historical themes in a more appealing manner. In line with that, McCloud (2006) explains that comics are a medium that combines images and text in a continuous narrative structure, capable of conveying messages visually, contextually, and emotionally.

In the context of learning, comics do not only function as entertainment but also as an educational medium. Comics can present learning experiences in a more imaginative and fun way because they closely blend story, characters, and visualization with students' daily life (Bastari, 2018). The use of comics in learning has also been proven to significantly increase students' study motivation (Rosalinda, Susanti, & Nuriyanti, 2019). In addition, comics can simplify complex narratives into forms that are easier to understand through illustrations and structured story plots.

Visual media based on narratives has potential as an educational medium because it can blend visual and story elements to convey information to society (Pernyata et al., 2026). This aligns with the design of history comics as an educational medium to introduce the struggle incident in Sanga Sanga to young generations. By combining visual elements, story flow, characters, dialogue, and local context, comics can help readers understand historical incidents in a more interesting way and build an emotional connection with the mark of struggle conveyed (Kuttner *et al.* 2017; McFarlane 2019; Nedzinskaitė-Mitkė 2026).

The novelty of this study is fivefold. First, it documents and transforms the previously undocumented Sanga Sanga historical event (January 27, 1947) into an educational comic, preserving local history for future generations. Second, it applies a practice-based research model to visual communication design, where the comic creation process serves as a reflective and systematic scientific exploration. Third, it integrates multiple validation sources (history teachers, cultural figures, local historians, and student readers) to ensure historical accuracy,

cultural authenticity, visual appeal, and educational effectiveness. Fourth, it produces both physical and digital formats of the comic, expanding accessibility beyond classroom settings. Fifth, it provides a replicable design framework for transforming other local historical events across Indonesia into educational comic media.

Based on the background above, this research discusses the design of educational comics based on the historical struggle incident in Sanga Sanga. This research focuses on how comics can be used as an educational medium to introduce local history while fostering a sense of nationalism among young generations. The study covers main elements in comic design, such as story channels, characters, illustrations, dialogue, and the delivery of historical messages.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of more interesting, communicative, and appropriate historical learning media for young generations. In addition, the planned comic is expected to encourage young generations to learn more about the history of the Indonesian nation's struggle, particularly the incidents that took place in Sanga Sanga, East Kalimantan.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with a practice-based research model in the field of visual communication design. This model is chosen because it places creative practice at the core of knowledge creation, where the design process functions as a reflective and systematic scientific exploration (Hendriyana & Ds, 2022).

The design of educational comics themed on the historical struggle in Sanga Sanga is positioned as an effort to transform local historical narratives into visual-narrative media that are communicative, contextual, and relevant for young generations. The research is conducted through four stages, namely data collection, concept development, comic design, and work validation.

Data Collection

Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through observation at the Sanga Sanga Struggle Museum and related historical locations, interviews with history teachers, cultural figures, and community leaders, as well as visual documentation in the form of photos and videos. This data served to obtain information on historical events, environmental atmosphere, artifacts, cultural values, and the meaning of the struggle as the foundation for comic design.

Secondary data were obtained through library studies in the form of scientific journals, books, articles, historical documents, and relevant visual sources. All data were analyzed qualitatively through processes of reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify historical marks and nationalism, which became the basis for developing the synopsis, story plot, characters, and visual concepts.



Figure 1. Field documentation at the Sanga Sanga Struggle Museum

Source: personal documentation (2024)

Development Draft

The development draft was carried out by formulating the main elements of the comic, namely story channels, characters, illustrations, dialogue, and local context. The narrative flow was arranged with clear conflict and resolution to ensure the historical message could be easily understood and remembered by readers. Characters were designed with clear background and motivations to increase reader involvement in the story (Levitz, 2015).

Illustrations, visual style, color, composition, and background details were customized according to the theme of the historical struggle to make it appealing for young generations (Jati & Nugraha, 2017). Dialogue was arranged using simple, communicative language and included relevant local terms to strengthen authenticity. Involvement of historical figures, historians, cultural leaders, and local artists was conducted to maintain accuracy and contextual relevance of Sanga Sanga history (Saputro, 2016).

Comic Design

Comic design was carried out based on the results of data analysis and the formulated concepts. This process covered the compilation of the synopsis, development of story channels, character design, storyboard creation, dialogue composition, sketching, coloring, panel arrangement, and final illustration finishing.

Every visual and narrative element was designed with consideration of historical accuracy, narrative strength, visual appeal, and educational function so that the comic could serve as a learning medium on local history and nationalism for young generations.

Validation

Validation was conducted through limited trials involving representatives of teachers, students, cultural observers, and local history activists. Validators were selected to provide input from educational perspectives, target readers, local culture, and historical expertise. Feedback focused on the accuracy of historical content, effectiveness of visual and narrative elements, visual appeal, and legibility of the comic as an educational medium.

The input was used as the basis for revising content, story flow, dialogue, characters, and visuals, ensuring the resulting comic was historically accurate, visually engaging, easy for young readers to understand, and effective as a medium for teaching nationalism based on local history.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Design process comic done through a number of stages, namely compilation synopsis and characters, storyboard creation and panel layout, illustrations, coloring, composition text narrative, until finalization in form comic physical and digital. Stages This done in a way sequentially so that the design process own channel clear and productive work informative, interesting, and funny comics in accordance with objective educational.

Stage beginning design done through studies literature and studies field about incident history Sanga Sanga's struggle. This study aims for understand context history, background behind events, as well as mark the underlying struggle narrative comics. Based on historical data, Sanga Sanga is an area that has role strategic in history struggle Indonesian independence, in particular in face colonialism and aggression Dutch military dynamics social and political in the region the influenced by various factors, including power colonial, conditions public local, as well as people's movement in maintain independence. Understanding to aspect the become base important in build narrative comics that are accurate, contextual, and engaging for readers.

Study results literature and studies field Then used as base in development characters and plot story. Information history obtained translated to in characters, conflict, setting and atmosphere relevant stories with context struggle Sanga Sanga community. At stage these are the characters in comic designed to have more characters live, while conflict story arranged for represent mark struggle, courage, and nationalism. With Thus, the design process comic No only functioning as creation of entertainment media, but also as effort preservation history struggle nation through visual-narrative media.

Stage next is compile stories and narratives about the Sanga Sanga struggle, then translate it to inform sketch illustration. Sketch functioning as design beginning for determine composition scene, expression characters, setting place, and visual flow in each panel. Through this process, the narrative history start visualized become series images that can understood in a way more concrete by the reader.



Figure 2. Sanga Sanga sketching process in manufacturing comic
Source: documentation personal (2025)

After stage sketch, the process continues with production of comic pages, which includes making outlines, coloring, and adding text and narrative. Outlines are used to clarify visual structure, form characters, and background details. Coloring functions to build atmosphere, strengthen character emotions, and increase visual appeal. Meanwhile, text and narrative are used to clarify the context of events, character actions, and the historical message intended in each panel.



Figure 3. The coloring and application process of comic text
Source: personal documentation (2025)

At the production stage, comic quality is heavily influenced by the cohesion between visual and narrative elements. The combination of illustrations, colors, panels, text, and story flow must be arranged harmoniously so that readers can follow the story easily. Every detail, from color selection, character expressions, panel layout, to word choice, plays a role in strengthening visual communication and educational messages. Therefore, attention to every aspect of production is important to produce comics that are not only informative but also visually interesting and thought-provoking for readers.



Figure 4. The final page ready for printing
Source: personal documentation (2025)

The next stage is compiling the entire manuscript, illustrations, and comic pages into a unified, complete book. This process includes editing the script, adjusting story channels, checking visual continuity, and setting page layouts. Compilation is done to ensure the comic has consistent flow, neat appearance, and conveys the message clearly.



Figure 5. Display of the comic book after printing
Source: personal documentation (2025)

After the final script and visuals are compiled, the comic is produced in physical form. The production process includes selecting materials, adjusting print quality, and completing the final book format. Besides the physical form, comics are also prepared in digital format to reach a wider audience. Thus, the work produced is not only visually interesting but also capable of conveying historical messages clearly, communicatively, and in an easily accessible way.

Implementation of Comic as an Educational Medium

After the comic design is finished, the next stage is the implementation of the comic as an educational medium. In the educational context, comics can be used as a tool to help young generations learn history. Comics can be integrated into school history learning, both as supporting reading material and as a medium for class discussions. Through discussions about comic elements, such as characters, plot, setting, conflict, and historical context, students can be encouraged to understand historical incidents more critically and interactively.

Besides classroom learning, comics can also be utilized in extracurricular activities, such as reading clubs, literacy activities, or comic drawing competitions. These activities encourage students to actively learn history while developing creativity. Rosalinda et al. (2019) showed that learning activities involving art elements can increase students' motivation, social skills, and communication abilities.

Comics that have been designed can also be distributed to the wider public through both physical and digital media. The use of social media and websites allows comics to reach many readers, including young generations outside school environments. With a wider reach, comics have the potential to become an educational medium that is not only informative but also easily accessible.

Implementation of comics as an educational medium is expected not only to provide information about the history of the Sanga Sanga struggle but also to foster a sense of nationalism among young generations. By understanding the struggles of the local community

in maintaining independence, young generations are expected to value independence more and contribute to safeguarding sovereignty and nation-building.



Figure 6. Implementation of comics as an educational medium on local history during the Discussion of Regional History and Traditions activity

Source: personal documentation (2025)

CONCLUSION

The design of an educational comic set during the historical struggle of the Sanga Sanga people in East Kalimantan has proven to be an effective medium for introducing local history to the younger generation while fostering nationalist values. The comic design process, which included data collection, concept development, visual-narrative design, production, and validation, resulted in a communicative, contextual, and visually engaging medium. This comic not only conveys historical information accurately but also builds an emotional connection with the values of struggle, courage, and patriotism among the local community. The implementation of comics in educational contexts, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, can enhance students' understanding of historical events, encourage critical interaction, and foster creativity and motivation to learn. The distribution of comics in both physical and digital formats expands the readership, making comics an informative, accessible, and relevant educational medium for the younger generation. Thus, this comic serves a dual role as a means of historical preservation and as a learning tool that supports the development of historical awareness and a sense of nationalism among the younger generation.

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