

The Effect of the Storytelling Method Using Big Books on the Early Literacy Skills of Children Aged 4–5 Years

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effect of the storytelling method using Big Book media on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years. The study employed a quantitative approach with an experimental method using a one-group pretest–posttest design. The research participants consisted of 17 children from Class A at TK Plus Al-Maghfiroh, Purwakarta Regency, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using an expert-validated observation checklist for assessing early literacy skills. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics, including normality testing, homogeneity testing, the Paired Sample t-Test, and N-Gain analysis using SPSS. The findings indicated that the mean early literacy score increased from 11.88 in the pretest to 18.65 in the posttest. The Paired Sample t-Test yielded a significance value of < 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between children's early literacy skills before and after the intervention. In addition, the N-

Gain score of 0.60 fell within the moderate category. These findings demonstrate that the storytelling method using Big Book media has a significant and moderately effective impact on improving the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years. Therefore, this method can be considered an alternative instructional strategy for fostering early literacy development in early childhood education.

Introduction

In the contemporary era, literacy is no longer understood merely as the ability to read and write; rather, it also encompasses the capacity to comprehend information, interpret various phenomena, and apply knowledge to solve problems encountered in everyday life. In this context, individuals are expected to possess both conventional and new literacies. Conventional literacy primarily emphasizes basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, whereas new literacy extends to more complex competencies, including data literacy, technological literacy, and human literacy (Muliastri, 2020; Aswita et al., 2022; Sargiyo, 2024). Given the fundamental role of literacy in human life, its development should begin during the earliest stages of individual growth. Early childhood represents a critical developmental period, serving as the foundation for subsequent language, cognitive, and social development. Therefore, young children should receive high-quality educational services to support their optimal growth and development (Hasbullah et al., 2024; Susanti et al., 2025).

This perspective is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that language development occurs through social interactions with individuals in the child's surrounding environment. Language functions as the primary medium through which thinking and knowledge construction take place. Consequently, early literacy development should not be limited to the recognition of letters and words but should also encompass listening, speaking, comprehension, and the ability to use language meaningfully across various contexts (Asung, 2026). Efforts to strengthen literacy have become a national priority through educational initiatives, one of which is the School Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah/GLS*) established under the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 23 of 2015 concerning the Cultivation of Character Education (Mutoharoh & Rusmalina, 2024). Nevertheless, despite these initiatives, Indonesia's literacy level continues to require serious attention.

One indicator of the country's literacy challenges is the limited practice of shared reading within families. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) indicate that only 17.21% of young children are read storybooks or fairy tales by their parents or guardians, while merely 11.12% engage in reading or learning activities together with their parents or guardians. These findings suggest that opportunities for children to receive language and literacy stimulation remain limited. Consequently, it is essential to establish learning environments that effectively support literacy development, one of which is a literacy-rich

environment that provides children with easy access to a wide variety of printed texts (Wulandari et al., 2023).

A literacy-rich environment is not solely characterized by the availability of reading materials but also by instructional activities that actively engage children with both spoken and written language. This perspective is supported by Basyiroh (2017), who argues that early childhood literacy development should be fostered through environments abundant in language stimulation, including reading activities, storytelling, and meaningful verbal interactions in the classroom. One instructional strategy that can be implemented to achieve this objective is the storytelling method using Big Book media.

Asmara (2021) found that the use of Big Books significantly improved the receptive language abilities of children aged 4–5 years while also increasing their engagement, attention, and enthusiasm throughout the learning process. Similarly, Kusna and Puspitasari (2023) reported that the implementation of Big Book Storytelling effectively enhanced early childhood literacy through engaging and interactive storytelling activities. However, their study primarily focused on the overall effectiveness of Big Book media in promoting literacy without specifically examining the roles of scaffolding and repeated vocabulary exposure during instructional activities. Another study conducted by Niasari and Budiarti (2025) demonstrated that the use of Big Books combined with the See–Think–Wonder approach improved children's vocabulary mastery, story comprehension, and communication skills

among children aged 5–6 years. Nevertheless, that research emphasized media development and instructional approaches rather than the specific influence of storytelling methods.

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that numerous studies have investigated Big Book media, both in terms of instructional media development and its application for improving children's language and literacy skills. However, studies specifically examining the effect of the storytelling method using Big Book media on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years remain limited. Furthermore, research integrating the application of Big Book storytelling with the concepts of scaffolding derived from Vygotsky's theory and word immersion strategies is still scarce. Therefore, this study was conducted to address this research gap by investigating the effect of the storytelling method using Big Book media on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years.

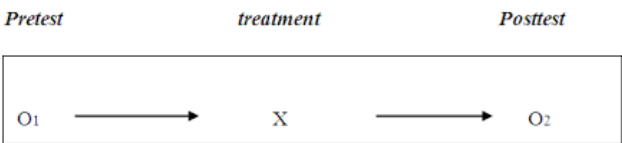
Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using an experimental research method. The experimental method was selected to examine the effect of the storytelling method using Big Book media on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years. A quantitative approach was adopted because the research data were expressed in numerical scores and analyzed using statistical techniques (Rukajat, 2018). The research design applied in this study was a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. This design involves a single group

of participants who are assessed before the intervention (pretest), receive the treatment, and are subsequently assessed after the intervention (posttest) (Abraham & Supriyati, 2022; Wajdi et al., 2024).

Using this research design, changes in children's early literacy skills were identified by comparing the pretest and posttest results following the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media.

Figure 1. Research Design



The study commenced with a pretest to assess the children's initial early literacy skills. Subsequently, the participants received the intervention in the form of the storytelling method using Big Book media. Following the intervention, a posttest was administered to determine changes in early literacy skills after the treatment. The pretest and posttest data were analyzed to examine the effect of the storytelling method using Big Book media on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years. The research hypothesis stated that the use of the storytelling method with Big Book media would have a significant effect on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years. The study was conducted at TK Plus Al-Maghfiroh, Purwakarta Regency, from February to August 2025. The research population consisted of all children enrolled in Class A at TK Plus Al-Maghfiroh, Purwakarta Regency. The study sample comprised 17 children, selected through

purposive sampling.

The research instrument consisted of an early literacy observation checklist developed based on indicators of early literacy appropriate to the developmental characteristics of young children. The instrument was administered during both the pretest and posttest to obtain data on children's early literacy skills before and after the intervention. In addition, the observation checklist was used to monitor the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media throughout the learning process. Prior to its use, the instrument underwent expert judgment validation by university lecturers and practitioners specializing in early childhood education.

The research data were collected through systematic observation, conducted during the pretest, treatment sessions, and posttest (Magdalena et al., 2021). The treatment consisted of storytelling activities using Big Book media implemented over several instructional sessions in accordance with the predetermined lesson plan. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to present the mean scores, highest scores, lowest scores, and the percentage of children's early literacy development. Inferential statistics were subsequently applied to evaluate the treatment effect through normality testing and hypothesis testing using the Paired Sample t-Test with the assistance of SPSS software. Statistical analyses were performed at a 0.05 significance level to determine whether significant differences existed in

children's early literacy skills before and after the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media.

Result and Discussions

The findings of this study are presented based on the analysis of the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years before and after the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media. The analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Descriptive analysis was employed to illustrate changes in the pretest and posttest scores, whereas inferential analysis included the normality test, homogeneity test, paired sample *t*-test, and N-Gain analysis to determine the effectiveness and impact of the intervention. Children's early literacy skills were measured through pretest and posttest activities. The descriptive analysis of the pretest and posttest data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Scores of the Pretest and Posttest

Test	Total Sample	Total Score	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Average
Pretest	17	202	6	18	11,88
Posttest	17	317	12	24	18,65

Based on Table 1, the mean score of children's early literacy skills increased from 11.88 during the pretest to 18.65 in the posttest. These findings indicate an improvement in children's early literacy skills following the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media.

Normality testing was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed before hypothesis testing was performed. According to Irfan (2018), if the significance value exceeds 0.05, the data are considered to be normally distributed; conversely, a significance value below 0.05 indicates a non-normal distribution. In this study, the Shapiro–Wilk test was employed to assess the normality of both the pretest and posttest data on children's early literacy skills.

Table 2. Results of the Normality Test

Kind of Test	Significant	a	Criteria	Notes
Pretest	0,384	0,05	H ₁ rejected and H ₀ accepted	Data has distributed normally
Posttest	0,089	0,05	H ₁ rejected and H ₀ accepted	Data has distributed normally

The results of the normality test showed significance values of 0.384 for the pretest and 0.089 for the posttest. Since both values exceeded 0.05, the pretest and posttest data were considered to be normally distributed. Therefore, the data met the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis using the paired sample *t*-test.

A homogeneity test was subsequently conducted to determine whether the variances of the research data were homogeneous prior to hypothesis testing. Data are regarded as homogeneous when the

significance value is greater than 0.05.

Table 3. Results of the Homogeneity Test

Test	Levene Statistic	Notes
Pretest	0,972	H ₀ accepted
Posttest	0,678	H ₀ accepted

The homogeneity test yielded significance values of 0.972 for the pretest and 0.678 for the posttest. Since both values were greater than 0.05, it was concluded that the data possessed homogeneous variances. Accordingly, the data fulfilled another assumption required for conducting parametric statistical analysis.

After confirming that the data were both normally distributed and homogeneous, the analysis proceeded using the paired sample *t*-test to determine differences in children's early literacy skills before and after the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media. According to Noviani and Putra (2025), the paired sample *t*-test is used to compare two sets of data obtained from the same group before and after an intervention. The analysis produced a *t*-value of 11.443 with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of < 0.001. Since this significance value was lower than 0.05, a statistically significant difference existed between the pretest and posttest scores. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, whereas the null hypothesis (H₀) was rejected.

To determine the effectiveness of the storytelling method using Big

Book media in improving children's early literacy skills, an N-Gain analysis was conducted. According to Noviani and Putra (2025), the N-Gain test is used to measure the magnitude of learning improvement after an intervention. The calculation of the N-Gain score followed the formula proposed by Agustini et al. (2024).

Table 4. Results of the N-Gain Analysis

Data	Total Data	Minimum Score N-Gain	Maximum Score N-Gain	Average N-Gain	Interpretation/ Category
N-Gain	17	0,20	1,00	0,60	Sedang

The N-Gain analysis revealed a mean N-Gain score of 0.60, which falls within the moderate category. Additionally, the minimum N-Gain score was 0.20, while the maximum score reached 1.00. These findings indicate that all participating children experienced improvements in their early literacy skills after engaging in storytelling activities using Big Book media.

The findings demonstrate that the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years improved following the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book media. The average score increased from 11.88 during the pretest to 18.65 in the posttest. This improvement was further supported by the results of the paired sample *t*-test, which yielded a significance value of < 0.001 , and the N-Gain score of 0.60, categorized as moderate. These findings indicate that the storytelling

method using Big Book media not only had a statistically significant effect but was also moderately effective in enhancing children's early literacy skills. The observed improvement suggests that presenting stories through oversized books effectively captures children's attention, facilitates their understanding of story content, supports letter recognition, enriches vocabulary acquisition, and encourages more active communication throughout the learning process.

The results of this study are consistent with those reported by Asmara (2021), who found that the use of Big Book media improved the receptive language abilities of children aged 4–5 years through engaging reading and storytelling activities. Likewise, the findings reinforce those of Kusna and Puspitasari (2023), who concluded that the Big Book Storytelling strategy effectively enhances early childhood literacy by providing interactive, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Furthermore, the present findings align with the study conducted by Niasari and Budiarti (2025), which demonstrated that Big Book media improved children's vocabulary mastery, story comprehension, and communication skills through structured instructional activities. The consistency across these studies indicates that Big Book media has a sustained positive influence on early childhood literacy development. However, the present study contributes more specific quantitative evidence regarding improvements in early literacy skills through the application of the paired sample *t*-test and N-Gain analysis.

The findings can also be interpreted through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which proposes that children's language development and cognitive growth occur through interactions with more knowledgeable individuals. During storytelling activities using Big Book media, the teacher functions as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) by providing scaffolding through questioning, introducing new vocabulary, repeating stories, modeling correct pronunciation, and guiding children as they retell story content. Such instructional support enables children to reach their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), allowing them to accomplish tasks that would otherwise be beyond their independent capabilities. Consequently, the improvements in early literacy observed in this study were influenced not only by the use of Big Book media itself but also by the quality of teacher–child interactions throughout the instructional process.

The effectiveness of the storytelling method using Big Book media can further be explained by the characteristics of the medium, which presents large-sized text and illustrations that are easily visible to all children simultaneously. This creates a more active learning environment by encouraging children to observe illustrations, listen attentively to stories, predict storylines, answer questions, and repeatedly practice newly introduced vocabulary throughout the learning process. Repeated vocabulary exposure (word immersion) enables children to gradually construct word meanings while strengthening the connections among letter symbols, language sounds,

and semantic understanding. Consequently, literacy instruction becomes more meaningful than merely introducing letters mechanically, allowing early literacy skills to develop naturally through authentic and contextual language experiences.

Compared with previous studies, this research offers a novel contribution. Whereas earlier investigations primarily emphasized either the effectiveness of Big Book media or the development of instructional media, the present study demonstrates that improvements in early literacy skills are influenced not only by the availability of instructional media but also by the integration of the storytelling method, scaffolding grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and repeated vocabulary exposure throughout learning activities. Accordingly, this study provides the conceptual contribution that the effectiveness of Big Book media lies in the quality of teacher-child interactions that create a literacy-rich learning environment. From a practical perspective, these findings provide valuable guidance for early childhood educators to optimize the use of Big Book media not merely as a visual instructional resource but also as a means of fostering meaningful two-way communication that more effectively supports children's early literacy development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, there was a significant difference in the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years before and after the implementation of the storytelling method using Big Book

media. This difference was evidenced by an increase in the mean score from 11.88 in the pretest to 18.65 in the posttest. The results of the Paired Sample t-Test yielded a significance value of < 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the storytelling method using Big Book media had a statistically significant effect on the early literacy skills of children aged 4–5 years. Improvements in early literacy were reflected in the children's ability to answer simple questions, retell story content, and recognize and identify letter symbols. Furthermore, the storytelling method using Big Book media proved to be moderately effective in enhancing children's early literacy skills, as indicated by an N-Gain score of 0.60, which falls within the moderate category. These findings demonstrate that the use of Big Book media creates a more engaging, interactive, and developmentally appropriate learning experience, thereby optimally supporting the development of early literacy skills in young children.

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