

Focusky Application-Based Learning Media in the “Merdeka” Curriculum in Elementary Schools

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Keywords:	Abstract
<p>Focusky; ADDIE development; “Merdeka” Curriculum; elementary schools</p>	<p><i>Curriculum changes in schools necessitate prompt responses, as they significantly impact the learning process. Within the framework of the “Merdeka” Curriculum, teachers must adopt a more creative approach to instruction. The development of Focusky-assisted learning media presents a viable alternative for implementing the “Merdeka” Curriculum in schools. This research employs a developmental methodology using the ADDIE model, with data collection techniques that include observation, interviews, and paired sample t-test analysis. The findings indicate that Focusky-based learning media was validated by subject matter experts and media specialists, achieving approval ratings of 95% and 88.9%, respectively. Additionally, the results from field testing demonstrated high practicality, with a rating of 81.8%. Furthermore, the average difference test, conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of student learning outcomes before and after the implementation of Focusky media, yielded a significance value of 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. These results conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of Focusky-based learning media in enhancing student learning outcomes within the “Merdeka” Curriculum. The implications of this research underscore the potential of Focusky-assisted learning media to support teachers in delivering creative and innovative instruction. For students, this media is expected to facilitate more effective learning experiences.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The curriculum is the cornerstone of education, necessitating ongoing, dynamic, and innovative evaluation to remain aligned with advancements in science and technology (Suryaman, 2020). In

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Indonesia, the primary goal of curriculum reform is to enhance human resources (HR) and significantly elevate the quality of education (Vhalery et al., 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum emerges as a strategic response to the educational challenges of the digital age (Srilakshmi & Sarkar, 2024). While a well-crafted curriculum is vital for national educational progress, it is equally important to continuously develop human resources as a fundamental component of the classroom learning process (Alvunger, 2018).

The implementation of the “Merdeka” Curriculum is centered on enhancing student competencies and optimizing all supporting systems to cultivate high-quality graduates (Cholilah et al., 2023). “Freedom to learn” is interpreted as the freedom to think, work, learn, and adapt to changing circumstances (Nasution, 2021). In this curriculum, learning is not confined to the classroom; it can take place anywhere and at any time, with a strong emphasis on character development rather than solely on academic performance (Marisa, 2021). When implemented effectively and in alignment with its guiding principles, the “Merdeka” Curriculum has the potential to nurture students who are not only of noble character but also independent, participatory, innovative, and unique (Suryani et al., 2023).

To create an active learning environment in line with the objectives of the “Merdeka” Curriculum, teachers must effectively manage their classrooms and maximize the use of available learning resources, including learning media (Novita et al., 2024). Learning media play a crucial role in the educational process by aiding in the delivery of instruction, clarifying students' understanding of the material, and enhancing their engagement, thereby ensuring a smooth and effective learning experience (Nurfadhillah et al., 2021). Media are not merely tools in the teaching and learning process; they also serve as essential conduits for conveying information to students.

Under the “Merdeka” Curriculum, teachers have the autonomy to select instructional tools that align with students' needs and interests, facilitating the development of their abilities (Aliyyah et al., 2023). The curriculum aims to foster a creative learning process tailored to students' requirements (Manik, 2022). The use of engaging and innovative learning media is particularly effective in increasing student interest and promoting creative learning.

The integration of learning media into the instructional process benefits both teachers and students: it simplifies the explanation of teaching materials for teachers and makes the content more accessible to students. Media are integral to the teaching and learning process, playing a vital role in achieving educational goals (Yunita et al., 2019). There are three primary reasons for utilizing media in elementary classrooms: first, elementary students tend to think concretely, so abstract concepts must be visualized to make them more tangible. Second, media can stimulate students' interest and motivation to learn. Third, it provides students with meaningful, enriching experiences (Supriyono, 2018).

In addition to traditional methods, alternative approaches are necessary to boost students' learning motivation. One such approach is the use of technology as a medium in the learning process (Puspitarini & Hanif, 2019). However, the information technology (IT) skills of many senior elementary school teachers are often insufficient for creating media within the “Merdeka” Curriculum. Therefore, support and training, particularly from younger teachers, are crucial to enhancing these skills (Dinh & Sannino, 2024). Developing learning media to assist teachers in their classroom instruction is essential, especially in the context of the “Merdeka” Curriculum. Elementary school teachers must possess a foundational knowledge base that they can utilize when teaching basic subjects (Ikhlas & Quicho, 2021). Teachers play a pivotal role in implementing the “Merdeka” Curriculum, as they are intimately familiar with the needs of their students and the dynamics of their school environments.

Problem of The Study

Based on the background outlined above, there is a clear need to develop learning media tailored for elementary school students under the “Merdeka” Curriculum. This study aims to develop

learning media using the Focusky application. Research has shown that Focusky-assisted learning media can positively impact the learning process by making it easier for students to understand the material presented by teachers (Net, 2023). Additionally, Focusky-based learning media have been successfully developed as thematic instructional tools and have been categorized as feasible for educational use (Komalasari et al., 2021). The suitability of Focusky learning media for developing student character has also been confirmed through media feasibility tests (Yunita et al., 2019).

Attention to elementary education is critical, as the development of education and human resources is closely tied to the quality of learning at this foundational level. The "Merdeka" Curriculum emphasizes differentiated learning and the integration of technology into the educational process. However, observations indicate that many teachers still rely on conventional teaching methods. This reliance is not due to a lack of interest in differentiated learning or technology integration, but rather due to limitations in technology use, particularly among older teachers (Srilakshmi & Sarkar, 2024).

Interviews with several elementary school teachers revealed a strong desire for engaging and innovative technology-based learning media that are easy to create (Rosnelli & Ristiana, 2023). Teachers expressed a preference for ready-made learning media that can be directly implemented in the classroom, given their limited technological capabilities (Rohmah et al., 2024). One viable alternative is the development of Focusky application-based learning media, which is user-friendly and capable of producing engaging instructional materials. The development of this learning media is expected to assist teachers in enhancing the educational experience and, ultimately, improve student outcomes (Aliyyah et al., 2023).

To ensure the effective implementation of Focusky application-based learning media, this study aims to evaluate its validity, practicality, and effectiveness in supporting the "Merdeka" Curriculum in elementary schools. The development of Focusky-based learning media is considered an ideal alternative for enhancing the learning experience within the "Merdeka" Curriculum framework.

Research's State of the Art

The development of interactive learning media has been shown to improve student learning outcomes, with students achieving average scores above the minimum proficiency criteria (Adhiana et al., 2022). The state of the art in this research lies in the creation of engaging and innovative learning materials using the Focusky application, which offers comprehensive features for presenting content and preparing assessments (Amir et al., 2020; Boateng et al., 2024). The novelty of this approach is the production of a Focusky-based learning media that is both user-friendly for teachers and easily understandable for students, featuring an attractive and interactive presentation.

Focusky software stands out as an effective interactive media tool. It provides easy access, is free to use, and does not require additional devices. The advantages of using Focusky in education include its ability to capture attention, stimulate curiosity, motivate learning, and encourage students to think critically by engaging with embedded learning content (Putri & Aznam, 2019). The application allows for the creation of teaching materials with stunning visual effects and a wide range of features (Chen et al., 2023). It can be used both online and offline (Rahmawati & Muliadi, 2020) and supports various file formats, including video, exe, html, zip, pdf, and mfs (Dinh & Sannino, 2024).

Given these capabilities, the Focusky application presents a valuable opportunity for teachers to enhance their creativity and motivate students within the context of the "Merdeka" Curriculum.

Gap Study & Objective

Based on the challenges identified above, this research aims to develop technology-based learning media using the Focusky application. This tool is intended to assist teachers in presenting learning materials more effectively while also enhancing students' interest and comprehension of the subject matter (Shahzad et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2018). The development of this media is expected

to enable teachers to deliver creative and innovative instruction. The “Merdeka” Curriculum emphasizes diverse intracurricular learning, allowing for more optimal content delivery and providing students with ample time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers are granted the flexibility to select various teaching tools to align instruction with students’ learning needs and interests (Dinh & Sannino, 2024). The “Merdeka” Curriculum thus empowers educators to create high-quality learning experiences tailored to the needs and learning environments of their students (Carleton-Boylan et al., 2024). The Focusky application represents a compelling alternative for teachers seeking to develop engaging and easy-to-create instructional materials within the framework of the “Merdeka” Curriculum.

Although many learning media have been developed using the Focusky application, it remains underutilized in education, particularly at the elementary level. While Focusky-based learning media have been widely adopted at the junior and senior high school levels, their use in elementary schools is still limited. This research, therefore, seeks to develop Focusky-based learning media to support teachers in implementing effective instruction in elementary schools as part of the “Merdeka” Curriculum.

METHOD

Type and Design

This study employs a research and development (R&D) method. According to Creswell (2014), R&D methods are used to produce new product designs, test the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of existing products, as well as develop and create new ones. This research focuses on developing Focusky application-based learning media for the “Merdeka” Curriculum in Grade IV at Sukamulya Garawangi Kuningan State Elementary School. The development model applied in this research is the ADDIE model, as proposed by Robert Maribe. The ADDIE model consists of five stages: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (Branch, 2009).

Data and Data Sources

Data were collected from pre-research observations at the school, as well as from interviews with teachers and students during these observations. Interviews were conducted with five students and two class teachers to gather initial data for the needs analysis. Additional data were obtained from material and media experts during the validity testing phase, and from student learning outcome tests, including both pretest and posttest results. The population for this study includes all elementary schools in Kuningan Regency, with the sample consisting of students from one school in Kuningan Regency, West Java. A total of 22 students were selected as the sample for this study.

Data Collection Technique

In this development research, data were collected using both test and non-test techniques. The test technique involved administering test questions, while the non-test technique consisted of a student response questionnaire regarding the Focusky learning media. To assess the validity of the media, data were gathered from validity tests conducted by media and material experts. To evaluate the practicality of the media, data were collected from student and teacher response questionnaires administered after the media was used in the classroom. Finally, to determine the effectiveness of the developed media, a test instrument was used to collect relevant data.

Data Analysis

The primary data analysis technique employed in this study is descriptive statistical testing. Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate both the validity and practicality of the media. The validity

test was conducted by expert validators specializing in media and materials. For the practicality test, descriptive data analysis was performed using the results from student response questionnaires regarding the developed media. The criteria for assessing validity and practicality are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity and Practicality Criteria

Score Interval (%)	Category
85 – 100	Very Valid/ Practical
84 – 70	Valid/ Practical
0 -69	Less Valid/ Practical

While the data analysis technique used to test the effectiveness of the media that has been developed uses parametric statistical tests if the data is normally distributed, the parametric statistical test used is the paired sample t test, this analysis test is to find the difference in the average from the same sample or group. For the decision-making criteria, if the sig. value < 0.05 then the media is effective to use and if the sig. value > 0.05 then the media is not effective to use or implement.

RESULTS

The development of Focusky application-based learning media was integrated with a direct learning model during the implementation process. The steps of the direct learning model include: 1) conveying objectives and preparing students; 2) demonstrating knowledge or skills; 3) guiding practice; 4) checking understanding and providing feedback; and 5) offering opportunities for further learning and application. The Focusky application developed in this study has several advantages, including the availability of numerous and engaging templates, ease of use, and an attractive and unique interface that captivates students. However, there are some drawbacks, such as the presence of paid features and the need for patience in designing visually appealing content. Overall, the application is highly engaging and is well-suited for implementation in elementary schools.

The research and development of Focusky application-based learning media are described below, following the stages of the ADDIE model:

Analyze

The analysis phase involved several key steps:

a) Conducting a needs analysis, b) Determining the scope of teaching material within the “Merdeka” Curriculum to be developed, c) Identifying student characteristics (e.g., recognizing that Focusky-based learning media is necessary for students based on their characteristics and the learning resources available at the school), d) Gathering sources, preparing plans, and analyzing basic competencies and indicators using the Focusky application.

The results of the needs analysis indicated that students often experience boredom in the classroom and require more engaging and innovative learning experiences. Additionally, the student population at the school is heterogeneous, with varying levels of learning motivation. One proposed solution is the creation of engaging learning media that can alleviate student boredom. The material selected for development is natural science content for Grade IV, based on the class teacher's request. The researcher subsequently devised a plan for the material to be developed using Focusky.

Design

The following design activities were undertaken: a) Preparation of Focusky-based learning media materials, aligned with the books in the “Merdeka” Curriculum. b) Development of a storyboard for the learning media, which serves as a visual planning tool to illustrate the appearance and functionality

of the final product. c) Selection of images, audio, and animations, tailored to the specific needs of the Focusky-based learning media creation process.

After compiling the necessary materials for the Focusky-based learning media, the researcher proceeded to develop the media itself. The initial design of the media is illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3 below.



Figure 1. Display of Focusky-based learning media



Figure 2. Example of display of Focusky-based learning media material

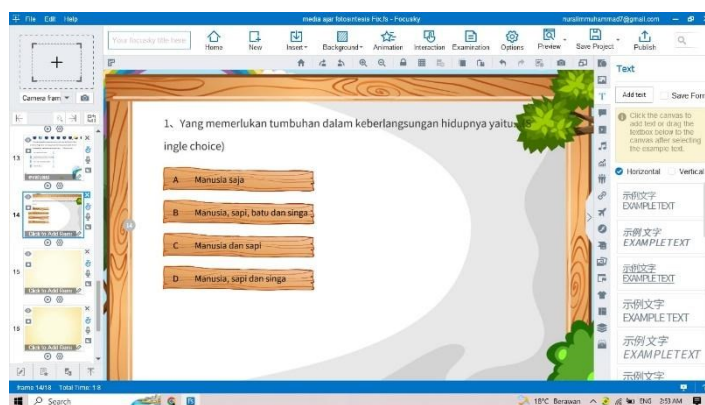


Figure 3. Evaluation Display of Focusky-Based Learning Media

Development

This development phase focuses on creating learning media using Focusky. After gathering all the necessary resources, these will be developed into multimedia learning tools. The objective is to evaluate the outcomes of Focusky-based learning media within the "Merdeka" Curriculum for fourth-

grade students at Sukamulya Garawangi State Elementary School. Once the media development is complete, it must undergo validation by both subject matter experts and media specialists before implementation. The validity assessment of the Focusky-based learning media is detailed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Assessment of the validity of focusky-based learning media by material experts

Name	Aspect															
	Content Suitability					Language					Implementability					
Statement Items	1	2	3	4	6	10	11	5	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	
Data	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
F	10	10	10	10	10	80	100	80	100	80	100	100	100	80	100	100
Average	100%					90%					95%					
Category	Very Valid					Very Valid					Very Valid					
Total	95%															
Interpretation Criteria	Very Valid															

Based on the material expert's assessment, the Focusky-based learning media has achieved a 95% development level, placing it within the "very valid" interpretation criteria.

Table 3. Assessment of the Validity of Focusky-Based Learning Media by Media Experts

Name	Aspect														
	Ease of Media Use					Audio and Visual Communication					Aesthetic or beauty				
Statement Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Data	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	5
F	100	80	100	80	80	80	80	100	80	100	100	80	80	80	100
Average	93,33%					86,66%					86,66%				
Category	Very Valid					Very Valid					Very Valid				
Total	88,9%														
Interpretation Criteria	Very Valid														

The media expert's assessment confirms that the Focusky-based learning media has achieved an overall validity score of 88.9%, also classifying it as "very valid." While the results are promising, both material and media experts provided several recommendations for further refinement of the learning media under development.

Implementation

Following the development and expert validation of the Focusky-based learning media, the next phase involved its implementation with a cohort of 22 fourth-grade students at Sukamulya Garawangi State Elementary School. This implementation was designed to evaluate student responses and determine the effectiveness of the developed product. Before introducing the media in the classroom, a pretest was administered to assess students' learning outcomes prior to the intervention. The

Focusky-based learning media was then integrated into the classroom instruction over the course of four sessions, facilitated by the teacher and observed by the researcher. After these sessions, a posttest was conducted to measure the students' learning outcomes following their exposure to the media. Additionally, at the conclusion of the final session, students completed a questionnaire designed to capture their responses to the media. This questionnaire served to assess the practicality of the Focusky-based learning media from the students' perspective. The results of the student responses, detailed in Table 4, are organized across three primary aspects: audio and visual communication, aesthetic appeal, and educational effectiveness. The table presents the data collected from 15 specific statement items related to these aspects.

Table 4. Practicality test results data

Name	Aspect														
	Audio and Visual Communication				Aesthetic or beauty					Learning					
statement items	4	5	7	14	1	12	13	2	3	6	8	9	10	11	15
data	85	87	84	85	84	85	91	86	84	82	90	85	82	83	96
f	81	82	80	81	80	81	87	82	80	78	86	81	78	79	91
average	81,19%				82,53%					81,90%					
category	very good				very good					very good					
total	81,8%														
interpretation criteria	very good														

Based on the data presented in Table 4, it is evident that the 15 statement items, which evaluate aspects of audio and visual communication, aesthetic appeal, and educational effectiveness, achieved an overall average score of 81.84%. This places the Focusky-based learning media within the "Very Good" category according to the interpretation criteria, indicating a highly favorable student response and confirming the media's practicality and effectiveness in the classroom setting.

Evaluation

At this stage, the evaluation of the Focusky-based learning media's implementation was conducted to refine the product based on feedback from both experts and students, with the objective of enhancing its overall quality. To assess the effectiveness of the Focusky-based learning media on student learning outcomes, pretest and posttest results were analyzed using a paired sample t-test. Before conducting the paired sample t-test, a normality test was performed as a prerequisite. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
pretest	.192	21	.042	.937	21	.191
posttest	.138	21	.200	.945	21	.276

As shown in Table 5, the significance value for the pretest data is 0.191, which is greater than 0.05, and for the posttest data, it is 0.276, also greater than 0.05. According to the decision-making criteria for the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, these results indicate that the data is normally distributed.

Given that the data meets the normality assumption, the t-test was subsequently conducted, with the results displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Paired Samples Test Results

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest-posttest	5.04762	1.43095	.31226	-5.69898	-4.39626	-16.165	20	.000

As shown in Table 6, the significance value is 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H₀) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest learning outcomes. These findings indicate that the Focusky-based learning media effectively enhances student learning outcomes, confirming its efficacy in the classroom setting at Sidamulya Kuningan Elementary School.

DISCUSSIONS

The research findings indicate that the development of Focusky-based learning media was deemed highly valid by both material experts, who rated it at 95%, and media experts, who rated it at 88.9%. Additionally, field test results demonstrated that the media is highly practical, with a practicality score of 81.8%. The effectiveness of the Focusky-based learning media in improving student learning outcomes was further validated through a paired sample t-test, which revealed a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that the Focusky-based learning media is effective in enhancing the learning outcomes of students who have adopted the “Merdeka” Curriculum.

The development of this media is expected to significantly aid teachers in delivering creative and innovative instruction. For students, it is anticipated that this media will enhance their learning experience. The success of the Focusky-based learning model in improving student outcomes underscores its potential as a versatile and effective teaching tool that educators can further develop and utilize in the classroom. This is well-aligned with the objectives of the “Merdeka” Curriculum, which seeks to create a more flexible and student-centered learning environment, enabling teachers to better address the needs, interests, talents, and abilities of each student (Shabur & Siddiki, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2022).

These findings are consistent with prior research. Komalasari et al. (2021) concluded that learning video media supported by the Focusky application is valid, effective, and suitable for enhancing the teaching and learning process in elementary schools. Additionally, Bakari et al. (2023) found that Focusky-based learning media received positive feedback from students, indicating its potential as a valuable educational tool. Yunita et al. (2019) also observed that the development of Focusky-assisted learning media can positively influence classroom learning.

In conclusion, the Focusky-based learning media not only supports the goals of the “Merdeka” Curriculum but also provides a practical and effective means of improving student learning outcomes, making it a valuable resource for both teachers and students in the educational process.

CONCLUSION

Previous research on learning media applications has predominantly focused on junior high and high schools, with limited attention given to elementary education, particularly regarding the use of the Focusky application. This research and development project has successfully produced a Focusky application-based learning media specifically tailored for elementary schools. The results of this research are of considerable importance to teachers, schools, and the broader field of elementary education. The development of this media is expected to support teachers in delivering creative and innovative instruction, while also enhancing students' learning experiences. However, several limitations were identified during the course of this research. Firstly, not all elementary school teachers have access to laptops, which are essential for creating learning media using Focusky. Secondly, there is a lack of human resources within schools who possess the necessary skills to develop Focusky-based learning media. The implications and recommendations of this study are as follows: It is crucial that all elementary school teachers are equipped with the skills to create Focusky-based learning media, as this will have a positive impact on the learning process. Moreover, it is imperative to focus on the development of human resources within schools to ensure they can keep pace with technological advancements, such as the use of the Focusky application. This will help maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the educational process in meeting modern demands.

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