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Journal Name:	Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies
Manuscript Number:	Ms_AJESS_108887
Title of the Manuscript:	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING FANTASY STORIES: Case Study in the Merdeka Curriculum
Type of the Article	Original Research Article

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PART 1: Review Comments

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
<p>Compulsory REVISION comments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the manuscript important for scientific community? (Please write few sentences on this manuscript) 2. Is the title of the article suitable? (If not please suggest an alternative title) 3. Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? 4. Are subsections and structure of the manuscript appropriate? 5. Do you think the manuscript is scientifically correct? 6. Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestion of additional references, please mention in the review form. <p><u>(Apart from above mentioned 6 points, reviewers are free to provide additional suggestions/comments)</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The study addressed students' perceptions, which can be crucial when developing or revising curricula. Educators can create more effective teaching methods and materials by understanding how students perceive specific topics or subjects. Also, the discovery that students have no interest in studying fantasy stories but prefer contextual learning based on Jambi regional folklore is a significant one. This finding highlights the importance of context and cultural relevance in curriculum design. Again, the study could have direct implications for the Merdeka curriculum and potentially for other curricula in Indonesia or regions with similar cultural contexts. Including regional folklore might be a more effective way to engage students and promote learning. Thus, the manuscript seems relevant, especially for educators and policymakers in the region or those interested in curriculum design and cultural context in education. However, its broader applicability might be limited due to its specific focus on one city in Jambi. Nevertheless, it serves as a starting point for more extensive research on the topic and offers a valuable perspective on students' preferences in curriculum content. 2. The title "STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING FANTASY STORIES: Case Study in the Merdeka Curriculum" is suitable as it aptly communicates the main focus of the study, which is to understand students' perceptions regarding learning fantasy stories under the Merdeka curriculum. However, to better reflect the nuances of the study, especially the significant finding that students prefer learning based on Jambi regional folklore, you might consider revising or extending the title to emphasize this point. A suggestion might be: 'Bridging Imagination and Education: How Students Perceive Fantasy Stories within the Merdeka Curriculum' 3. Abstract The abstract provides a clear overview of the research's objectives, methodology, data sources, and key findings. Specifically, it outlines: The aim of the research: describing students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories in the Merdeka curriculum, the research methodology, data collection methods: questionnaires, observations, and student interviews, the study population which is class VII students in a city of Jambi., data validation technique, data analysis technique: descriptive analysis and key findings: students' lack of interest in studying fantasy stories and their preference for learning based on Jambi regional folklore. Considering these details, the abstract does seem comprehensive for the specified topic. It summarizes the main aspects of the research and provides insights into the conclusions drawn from the study. If a reader is specifically interested in understanding students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories in the Merdeka curriculum, this abstract gives them a good initial understanding. 4. Yes 5. Yes, the study fills a crucial gap in understanding students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. This is relevant for educators and policymakers in refining the curriculum further. Also, the manuscript references a substantial number of previous works, providing depth and grounding to its statements. While the content is well-articulated, some minor linguistic errors and phrasings could be improved for clarity and cohesion. Some tables might be enhanced with additional data or a more streamlined presentation. For instance, combining the 	

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	<p>data from Tables 2 and 3 could offer a clearer picture of how students' perceptions align with their reasons and learning characteristics.</p> <p>6. Yes</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>The introduction offers extensive background on the curriculum and the context of fantasy story texts in the Indonesian language learning context. However, some issues need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The introduction contains extensive information on the curriculum changes, the essence of text-based learning, and the attributes of the Merdeka Curriculum. However, it takes quite a while before fantasy stories, the core subject of the topic, are mentioned. Given the main subject is 'students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories', this should be central to the introduction.ii. The introduction references numerous studies, authors, and dates. While citing relevant literature is essential, the sheer volume of references detracts from the main topic, making it challenging to discern the primary focus and potentially overwhelming the reader.iii. The introduction tends to be repetitive, particularly when discussing curriculum changes and their importance. For instance, the point about curriculum changes in Indonesia being made to keep up with developments and evaluate the previous curriculum is made multiple times. Streamlining these points would make the introduction more concise and focused.iv. Towards the end, the introduction mentions problems, like students needing help understanding fantasy story texts. However, the exact problem or challenge of students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum is not clearly and succinctly articulated. A clear problem statement would help anchor the reader and set expectations for the subsequent research sections. <p>To improve the introduction, it would be beneficial to streamline the content, focus more on students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories, articulate a clear problem statement early on, and judiciously use references to maintain the reader's attention on the main topic.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The study focused only on junior high school students in Jambi. This can lead to regional bias, potentially overlooking students' perceptions from other regions, urban versus rural areas, or other educational levels, which may have different perspectives on fantasy story learning.ii. Both questionnaires and interviews rely on students' self-reported perceptions, which can be influenced by social desirability or recall bias. There is also a risk of students not being completely honest or misinterpreting their feelings.iii. The methodology does not mention the use of a control group. Without comparing the perceptions of students exposed to the Merdeka Curriculum's fantasy story learning to those who are not, it is challenging to ascertain the specific influence of the curriculum on their perceptions.iv. The methodology mentions observations but does not specify how these observations will be conducted and by whom. Without a standardized observation protocol, there is a risk of observer bias, where the observer's	
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	<p>preconceptions influence data recording.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">v. The second stage mentions that researchers will "reduce the data needed in this research." However, there is a lack of clarity on how this data reduction will occur, which criteria will be used, and how potential biases in this process will be mitigated.vi. While the methodology mentions data triangulation for validity, it does not specify how it was implemented. Triangulation is a complex process, and without proper execution, it is challenging to ensure that the findings are robust and reliable. <p>These weaknesses could affect the study's findings' reliability, validity, or generalizability. Addressing these weaknesses would help strengthen the methodology and, subsequently, the research results.</p> <p>Results and Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The study is based on responses from only 32 students from a single junior high school in Jambi City. This small sample size from one school might not provide a comprehensive understanding of the broader student population's perceptions.ii. While quotes are provided from student interviews, there is no in-depth qualitative data analysis. Understanding why students feel a certain way would provide richer insights.iii. The Results section discusses students' perceptions of fantasy stories, but there is a mention of "studying persuasive text material", which seems out of context.iv. The study compares the current findings to past studies but does not delve deeply into why the results differ or align. Comparative data would have strengthened the analysis.v. Although frequency and percentages give an overview of the student's perceptions, they do not provide depth or reasons behind these perceptions.vi. While the discussion identifies potential problems and relates to other research, it does not offer clear solutions or strategies that educators could use to address the identified challenges.vii. The end of the discussion touches on the potential of using regional folklore as a learning tool, but there is no deep exploration of how integrating cultural stories might improve student interest or understanding. <p>To strengthen this research, a more diverse sample, including in-depth qualitative interviews, more explicit categorization of data, and a detailed exploration of potential solutions, would be beneficial.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The conclusion does not adequately summarize the main findings regarding students' perceptions of learning fantasy stories, which is the core topic of the research.ii. Phrases like "teaching materials outside students' wishes" are vague. What aspects of the teaching materials do not align with students' preferences?iii. The conclusion states that "students prefer independent learning activities while playing," but it does not provide specific data or evidence to support this statement.	
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	<p>iv. While the conclusion emphasizes the importance of contextual learning, it does not clarify how this was determined to be crucial based on student perceptions, nor does it explain why culturally based stories like folk tales are the suggested solution.</p> <p>v. The relationship between integrating culturally based stories (folk tales) and the perception of learning fantasy stories is not clearly established. Are students more receptive to folk tales than other forms of fantasy? Why are these the best alternatives?</p> <p>vi. The conclusion could benefit from elaborating on the characteristics or elements of the Merdeka Curriculum that either facilitate or hinder the effective teaching of fantasy story texts.</p> <p>vii. The statement, "This research will likely be used to evaluate learning activities..." is speculative and does not firmly assert the potential implications or applications of the research findings.</p> <p>viii. The emphasis on Indonesian language books in the independent learning curriculum limits the broader applicability of the conclusion. A more comprehensive conclusion would discuss the potential for similar findings in other subjects or curricula.</p> <p>In general, the conclusion could benefit from being more detailed, specific, and directly tied to the primary research question regarding students' perceptions.</p>	
<p><u>Minor</u> REVISION comments</p> <p>1. Is language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?</p>	<p>For scholarly communication, especially in English-speaking context, the article could be improved in several areas:</p> <p>i. Some sentences are overly long and could be broken down for clarity. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The research results based on these two data show that students are not interested in learning fantasy story texts in Indonesian textbooks." This could be simplified as: • "The data suggests that students are generally uninterested in the fantasy stories within Indonesian language textbooks." <p>ii. Some points are repeatedly mentioned, like the notion that students are not interested in fantasy stories. This could be streamlined.</p> <p>iii. Ensure that tables are formatted consistently and clearly. For instance, in "Table 1", the terms "very interested" and "very disinterested" could potentially be confusing. Using phrases like "highly interested" and "not at all interested" might be more explicit.</p>	
<p><u>Optional/General</u> comments</p>		

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PART 2:

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment <i>(if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)</i>
Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?	<i>(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)</i>	

Reviewer Details:

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