

ILLUSTRATION BOOK DESIGN OF CENTRAL JAVANESE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR NGESTI RAHAYU UNGARAN PRESCHOOL

Zahra Aunurahma D. *, Mujiyono

Universitas Negeri Semarang

Jl. Taman Siswa, Sekaran, Kec. Gn. Pati, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229, Indonesia

Email: zahraaunurahma@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Traditional Javanese musical instruments such as gamelan are cultural heritage that has educational and aesthetic value. These instruments not only produce distinctive sounds, but also contain cultural meanings that are important to be introduced to children from an early age. However, nowadays children are more familiar with popular culture and the lack of visual learning media that introduces local culture in an interesting way causes a low interest in traditional musical instruments. The design of this illustration book aims to introduce traditional Central Javanese musical instruments to the children of preschool Ngesti Rahayu in Ungaran as a fun educational medium. This design uses a descriptive visual approach and an educational thematic. This book was developed through several stages of manual sketching, digitization, and layout. The work is in the form of a book measuring 20 x 20 cm with illustrations in the form of musical instruments in the form of saron, kenong, text, girls. The book consists of a front back cover, introduction, main content. All gamelan is presented objectively in a simplification style through red to yellow. This book not only introduces the form and way of playing the instrument, but also reinforces the values of the local culture.

Keywords: Illustration Book, Traditional Musical Instruments, Preschool

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has an extraordinary cultural richness, including traditional musical instruments spread across various regions (Sani & Ramadhani, 2020). Central Java, as part of the island of Java, is rich in traditional musical instruments such as gamelan, which have high artistic value and play an important role in the socio-cultural life of the Javanese people (Setiawan & Setyoko, 2022). Gamelan, which was recognized by UNESCO as the World Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2021, further emphasizes the importance of this musical instrument as part of Indonesia's cultural identity (UNESCO, 2021).

However, children today are more familiar with modern music. The rapid development of technology and digital media provides easy access to various genres of modern music, such as pop, K-pop, and Electronic Dance Music (EDM), through television, YouTube, and music apps (Szabó et al., 2024). As a result, traditional music tends to be marginalized because it is rarely introduced in the home or school environment.

Furthermore, children's books circulating in the market have more global and modern themes. The book often features popular characters such as Disney characters and superheroes (Hidayatullah, 2021). Nielsen BookScan, as a monitor of print book sales, states that children's books are more in demand in the market. For example, in a session at the Nielsen Children's Book Summit 2015–2016, it was recorded that the market share of printed children's books reached around 34% globally. Brands such as Frozen, Minecraft, and Wimpy Kid dominate sales due to their association with major media licenses, such as well-known movies or television series. This reflects the dominance of international narratives in children's literature, while local cultural content receives less attention (Kurniawan, 2020).

The lack of introduction to traditional music causes early childhood to lack emotional closeness and knowledge of this cultural heritage. In fact, traditional music has noble values and cultural significance that are important to be preserved from an early age. In the context of early childhood education (Preschool), traditional musical instruments such as gamelan and gong are not only entertainment, but also have educational value that can be used to teach cultural values and enrich learning experiences (Machfauzia & Zamil, 2023). An educational approach that emphasizes character development and emotional intelligence makes traditional musical instruments an effective medium for delivering subject matter in a fun way (Putri & Handayani, 2022).

Research shows that visual media is very effective in supporting the early childhood learning process. Given the popularity of modern-themed children's books, preschool Ngesti Rahayu has a great opportunity to introduce traditional Central Javanese musical instruments through an attractive visual approach (Rochmah et al., 2024). Unfortunately, educational media that are appropriate for children's development are still limited, thus widening the gap in cultural preservation (Triwardhani et al., 2023). Early childhood needs a communicative, concrete, and entertaining learning medium, so that picture storybooks are one of the right choices (Ngura et al., 2020).

In response to this, the author designed an illustration book with the theme of traditional Javanese musical instruments for the children of preschool Ngesti Rahayu in Ungaran and children aged two to six years. This book was designed with the characteristics of early childhood cognitive and affective development in mind (Ariska & Naimah, 2020). The use of bright illustrations, narratives, and children's characters that are close to their daily lives. The goal is to introduce traditional musical instruments in a fun way, strengthen character, and foster a love of local culture from an early age (Ariska & Naimah, 2020).

Some of the previous works, such as *An Illustration Book of Javanese Gamelan Musical Instruments* by (Paraslatin, P., 2023), *Stringing 3D Shapes* (Rustandy et al., 2017), and *Multimedia-Based Traditional Musical Instrument Introduction Media* (Ramadhan et al., 2022), have raised similar themes, but tends to use a three-dimensional informative or visual approach for elementary school-age children. Apart from that, this book focuses more on preschool children, using descriptive illustrations that are informative and touching on everyday life. The benefits of this design can be seen from educational and socio-cultural aspects. From the educational side, this book supports the formation of children's character through the introduction of traditional musical instruments that are full of cultural values (Prasetyaningsih et al., 2022). Children are expected to learn discipline, cooperation, and empathy through the

experience of reading and getting to know musical instruments (Ardipal, Machfauzia, A. N., and Zikri, 2021). From a socio-cultural perspective, this book acts as a medium for preserving local heritage, fostering collective awareness of the importance of maintaining cultural identity in the midst of modernization (Mahmudah & Pamungkas, 2023).

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The design of this traditional musical instrument introduction book uses a descriptive visual and thematic educational approach. A descriptive visual approach is used to convey information about traditional musical instruments through clear, detailed, and easy-to-understand images and text (Karin ariska & Naimah, 2020). Meanwhile, the thematic approach is to classify gamelan based on its types. Educational is chosen to introduce cognitive, language, and emotional material (Munajat et al., 2022). To support the application of this approach, it is necessary to select the right materials, tools, and devices so that the illustration design process can run effectively (Rusmiyati, 2021)

The materials used in designing the illustration of the Central Javanese traditional musical instrument book include HVS paper, stationery such as pencils and markers. The tools used in making the illustration include the Wacom CTL-472 tablet pen, universal pen, Samsung A54 smartphone, and MSI Modern 14 laptop. The software used is Adobe Illustrator and Ibis Paint X. This combination of hardware and software supports the process of digitizing sketches, coloring, and editing illustrations according to the needs of children's books. The flat illustration (digital) technique is used to keep the illustration simple and clear according to the learning objectives. The technique is used for the process of creating, coloring, or arranging images using software.

In this activity, there are stages of work which are divided into three phases, namely pre-production, production, and post-production. First, the pre-production stage, the activity begins with observations and interviews with teachers and preschool coordinators to understand the needs of learning media that are in accordance with early childhood development. The information obtained from this process becomes the basis for designing a narrative, which is the story that will be the core of the book. This narrative is then developed into visual design through the formulation of design concepts, such as the selection of visual styles, shape details, and colors. Furthermore, these visual ideas are embodied in the form of initial sketches as the basis for illustrations.

The second is the production stage, In the design of illustration books, sketches play an important role in creating characters and visual elements that are attractive and easy to understand (Rodiyah & Huda, 2023). The sketches that have been made manually are then digitized with the help of software. In this design, the application used is Adobe Illustrator. The digitization process includes the outline and coloring stages. Manual sketches are moved first into Adobe Illustrator worksheets as the basis for the digital design process. The main goal of the production stage is to produce illustrations that are not only aesthetically appealing, but also easy for children to understand and able to convey educational messages effectively.



Figure 1. Production Stage of Traditional Musical Instrument Design

Source: Designer Documentation

The third is the post-production stage, the finished illustrations are arranged into the layout of the book pages along with the selection of appropriate typefaces. The text and illustration arrangements are designed to be easy to read and engaging for early childhood. Layout is the process of arranging design elements in a medium so that it looks well-structured, neat, and attractive (Dina & Kartono, 2025). Meanwhile, font assignment refers to choosing the appropriate typeface to make it easier to read and give the right impression. Both support each other to create a design that is clear and easy for the audience to understand. The end result of this process is an illustrated book that is ready to be tested or published.



Figure 2. Layout of kenong musical instruments on pages 3 and 4

Source: Designer Documentation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Design and Narrative of Illustration Books

The illustration book "Let's Get to Know Central Java Traditional Musical Instruments!" is a work made by Zahra Aunurahma and is intended for early childhood. Designed with a size of 20 x 20 cm, this book is printed on child-friendly paper media, making it easier for them to read. Published in 2025, with the contents of a 13 page, 12 page book introducing various traditional musical instruments, such as gamelan, kenong, bonang, and others and 1 page of activities with interesting illustrations and an educational visual approach, this book introduces traditional music culture in a fun and easy-to-understand way.

Structurally, this book consists of, front cover, introduction, table of contents, main content, back cover. The front cover features the title of the book and the main illustrations that

catch the children's attention. Furthermore, the introduction page consists of two pages, where the left side contains questions and the right part contains information on the sound of musical instruments. The table of contents shows the order of the sections in the book in a brief manner, consisting of six chapters, each dealing with one musical instrument. The main part of the book presents illustrations and explanations of various traditional musical instruments. Each page features one musical instrument, complete with pictures, names, explanations, and how to play it. The back cover invites readers to further explore traditional musical instruments as an effort to preserve culture.

This book features a girl wearing traditional Javanese clothes. The stage setting and the puppet mountain, the narrative uses simple sentences. Each subsequent chapter discusses a musical instrument, starting with the saron, complete with illustrations and a brief explanation of how to play it. Next, the musical instrument is introduced gradually, accompanied by illustrations and simple explanations of how to play it. At the end, there is an interactive page that invites visual play to help characters achieve kenong.

This design concept uses a child-friendly visual style through simple, warm, and traditional colors, and is expressive. Each illustration is adapted to the characteristics of children, that is, with the use of simplified shapes, clear lines, and contrasting colors that attract attention. Illustrations not only show musical instruments in physical form, but also add context to their use, such as the position when playing or the atmosphere of the gamelan performance.

Table 1. Musical Instrument and Girls Design Concept

Yes	Concept	Daughter	Musical instrument
1	Shape Details	Simple yet culturally strong	The shape of the instrument is made simpler
2	Color	Warm and traditional shades of color	The color of the instrument is simplified but still close to the original color
3	Visual Style	Chibi, child-friendly	Simple Visual Style

Final Result of Illustration Book

The final result of this illustration book is presented through three stages of discussion, namely description, formal analysis, and meaning. The representation of the entire book is studied, namely the cover, introduction, and content of the book.

Front and back cover



Figure 3. Front cover

Source: Designer Documentation

Description of the Work

The cover is divided into 2 parts, the front cover features three Central Javanese musical instruments, such as gong, kenong, and saron, which are neatly arranged on the stage with a background of typical Javanese architectural silhouettes, gold batik ornaments, and red curtains. The title "Let's Get to Know Central Javanese Traditional Musical Instruments!" is ivory yellow, with curved capital letters. The back cover features an illustration of a girl dressed in traditional Javanese dress, a short text, and the author's name, with traditional ornaments as decorations.

Formal Analysis of the Work

Visually, the cover of the book "Let's Get to Know Central Java Traditional Musical Instruments!" is designed with design principles that blend harmoniously. Symmetrical balance. It is created through the placement of curtain elements on the left and right sides and the position of the title and musical instruments arranged centrally in the middle of the composition. Visual rhythm is present through the repetition of decorative elements, such as batik ornaments, curtain arches, and an orderly arrangement of musical instruments, creating a dynamic yet neat visual flow. Emphasis is shown through the use of large, bold, light-colored capital letters in the title, which directly grabs the reader's attention. The proportions and scale of the illustrative elements, especially the musical instruments and characters, are proportionally adjusted so that they still look realistic even when presented in an illustrative style, making them easily recognizable by children. Harmony is created from a combination of colors, shapes, and illustration styles that are in harmony, with a cartoonish approach that suits children's characters and still brings the nuances of Javanese culture. Unity is manifested through the harmony of drawing styles, colors, cultural themes, and typography that support each other.

Meaning of Work

Through its visuals, this cover conveys an important message about preserving traditional culture from an early age. The illustration of a cheerful traditional musical instrument symbolizes the richness of culture that needs to be introduced and preserved. Warm colors such as maroon, gold, and beige reflect the warmth of Javanese cultural values and give a familiar

impression to children. Batik curtains and ornaments depict openness and pride in local identity. Girls as the main focus symbolize the spirit of learning, curiosity, and emotional closeness of children to their culture. The cover is visually appealing and contains a deep educational message, relevant to fostering a child's love of culture from an early age.

2. Introduction



Figure 4. Introduction

Source: Designer Documentation

Description of the Work

The introduction page has two pages that present educational texts. On the left page, there is the question "Do You Know What Is a Central Javanese Traditional Musical Instrument?" written in striking yellow capital letters, accompanied by a brief explanation in a text box with a dark background. Underneath, an illustration of a traditional musical instrument in the shape of a slenthem is displayed. Meanwhile, the right page contains information about the various sounds of traditional musical instruments, such as gongs, kenongs, and drums, which are also presented in text box format. At the bottom right, there is an illustration of a child's character wearing traditional Javanese clothing, accompanied by the text of the invitation "Come on, get to know more".

Formal Analysis of the Work

Visually, this page is explained and designed by applying strong design principles to improve appeal and readability for children. The balance is seen from the placement of visual elements such as musical instrument illustrations, child characters, and text boxes that are arranged in a balanced manner on both pages. Visual rhythm is created from the repetition of ornamental shapes and curved lines on the background, which reinforces the impression of traditional culture and creates an orderly flow of view. Emphasis is displayed in the form of a major element in a larger size and a striking title at the top of the page, thus becoming the main focal point for the reader. In addition, there is a proportion and scale explained through the adjustment of the size between the child's character and the musical instrument that is proportionally depicted, while the supporting elements are made smaller so as not to distract attention. Harmony is created from a combination of colors, shapes, and illustration styles that are identical, creating a fun and easy-to-understand look for children. Finally, the principle of unity is realized through the consistency of the illustration style and the choice of matching colors, so that all visual elements come together in one complete harmony of the page.

Meaning of Work

This introductory page provides an introduction to traditional Javanese musical instruments with an informative yet light approach. The opening sentence, "Did you know?" is used to arouse the child's curiosity, followed by a brief explanation that is structured in a simple way to make it easy to understand. The presence of children's characters that invite readers to get to know more creates a fun learning atmosphere. In addition, the mention of various types of sounds of traditional musical instruments confirms that the diversity of sounds is one of the important characteristics in the rich culture of Javanese music.

3. Main Content of the Work



Figure 4. Contents of the page

Source: Designer Documentation

Description of the Work

This image is part of the content of a children's illustration book which consists of two pages next to each other. On the left page, an illustration of a child wearing traditional Javanese clothes is displayed playing the traditional kenong musical instrument on stage. The background depicts the silhouette of a typical Javanese building and batik ornaments that decorate the left side of the page. Meanwhile, the right page contains descriptive text explaining about kenong, complete with the title "What Is Kenong?" displayed in striking colors to attract attention. The visual composition on both pages shows consistent stage elements, curtains, and silhouetted backgrounds, creating a visual continuity that supports the complete and enjoyable delivery of information.

Formal Analysis of the Work

Visually, on this main content page, it shows the application of strong and functional design principles. Balance is created through the arrangement of visual elements on both sides of the page that complement each other. Visual rhythm is present through the repetition of building silhouettes, curved lines, and traditional ornaments that frame the courtyard, creating a dynamic yet orderly visual flow. The emphasis is shown through the placement of children's illustrations and kenong instruments in the central position, reinforced by the use of eye-catching bright colors. The proportions and scale are seen through the comparison of sizes between the child's characters and the musical instruments presented in a proportional manner that is easily recognizable by children but still maintains an illustrative style. Meanwhile, visual harmony is created from a combination of similar shapes, colors, and illustration styles, creating

an aesthetic appearance while supporting educational and cultural themes. The principle of unity is manifested through consistency in the illustration style and the choice of harmonious warm colors, so that all elements seem to blend together and support the visual narrative as a whole.

Meaning of Work

The meaning contained in this work emphasizes the importance of introducing traditional Central Javanese musical instruments to children from an early age as part of cultural preservation efforts. Childhood is an important period in cognitive and affective development, so it is the right moment to instill a sense of love and pride in the local culture. The main content of this book is an illustration of children's characters playing kenong, combined with a visual background with Javanese cultural elements and simple text adapted to early childhood language skills. The visual approach is designed to create a learning atmosphere that is fun, communicative, and easy to understand, so that it can build a child's emotional closeness to their cultural heritage. This illustrated book is expected to act as an effective educational medium in strengthening local cultural identity in the midst of the rapid influence of modernization and globalization.

CONCLUSION

This design has produced an illustration book "Let's Get to Know Central Java Traditional Musical Instruments" with a systematics of preparation that includes the front cover, introduction, table of contents, main contents, and back cover. This book uses light language with simple sentences, so that it is easy for early children to understand. Presenting an interactive narrative that describes the gradual introduction of musical instruments, starting from the introduction of the form and name of the musical instrument, an explanation of its function and how to play it, strengthening understanding through illustrations and interesting simple activities to the message of cultural preservation.

In closing, the book is expected to be an effective educational medium in conveying cultural information and the aesthetic value of traditional musical instruments to children, as well as fostering a sense of pride and love for local heritage from an early age. This book is also expected to be able to invite young readers to appreciate cultural diversity more and be motivated to help preserve traditional music.

REFERENCES

- Ariska, K., & Naimah, N. (2020). The use of traditional musical instruments as a medium for children's gross motor and cognitive development. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 4(2), 276–286. <https://doi.org/10.33222/pelitapaud.v4i2.1011>
- Ariska, K., & Naimah, N. (2020). Penggunaan Alat Musik Tradisional Sebagai Media Pengembangan Motorik Kasar Dan Kognitif Anak. *Jurnal Pelita Paud*, 4(2), 276–286. <https://doi.org/10.33222/pelitapaud.v4i2.1011>
- Dina, F., & Kartono, G. (2025). Tinjauan Penerapan Tata Letak (Layout) Pada Karya Poster Pross Desain Studio Tahun 2018-2019. *Visual Heritage: Jurnal Kreasi Seni Dan Budaya*, 07(02), 2025.
- Hidayatullah, R. R. (2021). *DASAR-DASAR MUSIK*. November.
- Karin ariska, & Naimah, N. (2020). Penggunaan Alat Musik Tradisional Sebagai Media Pengembangan Motorik Kasar dan Kognitif Anak. *Jurnal Pelita PAUD*, 4(2), 276–286. <https://doi.org/10.33222/pelitapaud.v4i2.1011>
- Kurniawan, H. (2020). Global materials versus local materials for students' reading comprehension: a library research. *JELTIM (Journal of English Language Teaching Innovation and Materials)*, 2(1), 49. <https://doi.org/10.26418/jeltim.v2i1.32831>
- Machfauzia, A. N., & Zamil, I. (2023). Pengaruh Permainan Alat Musik Tradisional terhadap Kecerdasan Emosi pada Anak Usia TK. 7(4), 4223–4231. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i4.5024>
- Mahmudah, S., & Pamungkas, J. (2023). Ketrampilan Seni Musik Anak Usia Dini Melalui Ekstrakurikuler Angklung. *Jurnal Obsesi Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(3), 2885–2894. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i3.3746>
- Munajat, Putri, A. G., Rahayu, Y. P., Dahliana, A. B., Sofyanty, D., Soni, A., Sri, K., Arfiani, S., Fiyul, Y., Sani, I. C., Retnaningdiah, D., Santoso, R., & Dewanto, I. J. (2022). *EKONOMI KREATIF PENERBIT Suatu Konsep Ekonomi Baru*.
- Prasetyaningsih, L. P., Hasil, M., Supami, C. N., Metode, P., & Untuk, P. (2022). *Journal of Primary and Children's Education*. 5.
- Putri, Y. A., & Handyaningrum, W. (2022). Pelaksanaan Ekstrakurikuler Seni Musik Sebagai Implementasi Konsep Merdeka Belajar. *JPS*, 9(1), 13–28. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jps.v9n1.p13-28>
- Rochmah, N. L., Martono, S., & Yuan Yurisma, D. (2024). Perancangan Media Interaktif Berbasis Augmented Reality Sejarah Trowulan Untuk Anak Sekolah. *CandraRupa : Journal of Art, Design, and Media*, 3(1), 47–56. <https://doi.org/10.37802/candrarupa.v3i1.664>
- Rodiyah, K., & Huda, W. S. (2023). Pengembangan Game Edukasi Alat Musik Tradisional Menggunakan Metode Iterative With Rapid Prototyping Menggunakan Unity. *Spirit*, 15(2), 24–37. <https://doi.org/10.53567/spirit.v15i2.311>
- Rusmiyati, R. (2021). Peningkatan Kemampuan Siswa Menggambar Ekspresif Melalui Pendekatan Direct Experience Berbantuan Media Komputer. *Jurnal Lingkar Mutu Pendidikan*, 18(2), 232–237. <https://doi.org/10.54124/jlmp.v18i2.5>
- Sani, M. B. Z., & Ramadhani, A. M. (2020). Pengembangan Alat Musik Panting Melalui Bentuk VSTi. *Pelataran Seni*, 4(1), 49. <https://doi.org/10.20527/jps.v4i2.8990>

- Setiawan, S., & Setyoko, A. (2022). Organologi dan Bunyi Kendang Jawa. *Jurnal Mebang: Kajian Budaya Musik Dan Pendidikan Musik*, 2(2), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.30872/mebang.v2i2.31>
- Szabó, N., Földi, F., Oo, T. Z., Csizmadia, G., & Józsa, K. (2024). Musical Preferences among Students Aged 9–19: A Study on Musical Genres and Styles. *Education Sciences*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14030290>
- Triwardhani, I. J., Mulyani, D., & Pratama, R. (2023). Literasi Budaya Lokal bagi Anak di Desa Jatisura. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(2), 1818–1827. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i2.3962>
- Wahyuni, S. (2023). *Getting to Know Gamelan, a Traditional Musical Instrument of Central Java*. School Indonesian lite