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The Development of a Busy Book *"Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama"* to Improve Understanding of Gender Identity in Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop the Busy Book Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama as an interactive learning medium to improve children's understanding of gender identity, evaluate its feasibility, and examine its effectiveness. The study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using Thiagarajan's 4D model: define, design, develop, and disseminate. A One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design was applied to assess the media's effectiveness. Participants included two guidance and counseling teachers in the small-scale trial and 47 first-grade students at SD Joannes Bosco Yogyakarta. Data were collected through expert validation sheets, user testing questionnaires, and pre-test and post-test assessments. The Paired Sample t-Test was used to analyze effectiveness. The results showed that the Busy Book was highly feasible based on evaluations from media and material experts, as well as user testing by guidance and counseling teachers. Students' mean scores increased from 77.043 on the pre-test to 86.085 on the post-test, indicating a significant improvement in their understanding of gender identity. These findings demonstrate that the Busy Book is a feasible and effective learning medium for first-grade elementary students.

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding gender identity is an important aspect of child development during the early years of elementary school. At the age of 6–7 years, children begin to recognize themselves as boys or girls, understand the characteristics associated with their gender, and develop perceptions of themselves and others. Gender identity is not only determined by biological sex but is also shaped through social and cultural interactions that influence how children understand themselves and others (Palulungan & Kordi, 2020). According to Kohlberg (Ayriza, 2021), children at this age have entered the stage of gender identity development, characterized by the ability to understand gender identity, gender stability, and gender constancy. Likewise, Lestari and Zulaikha (2022) explain that between the ages of 5 and 7 years, children's understanding of gender becomes more stable while remaining responsive to social influences, making this period important for providing appropriate gender-related learning experiences. A proper understanding of gender identity is essential for helping children develop a positive self-concept, respect themselves and others, and reduce the tendency to adopt gender stereotypes in everyday life.

Gender identity development is influenced by biological, social, and cognitive factors (Minandar et al., 2021). In addition, gender identity includes children's understanding of gender roles, expectations, and social norms that shape how they perceive themselves and interact with others (Pirdaus, 2022). Gender identity is therefore understood as a dynamic construct resulting

from the interaction of biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors (Sembiring et al., 2024). Therefore, children need learning experiences that help them understand these aspects appropriately according to their developmental stage. However, teaching gender identity concepts to elementary school children remains challenging. The material is often delivered verbally, which may not align with children's developmental characteristics, as they tend to learn more effectively through concrete experiences, visual representations, and direct activities. This situation highlights the need for learning media that can present gender identity concepts in an engaging manner that is appropriate for children's developmental needs.

One potential medium is the Busy Book. Selian et al. (2021) describe the Busy Book as an interactive learning medium designed with various educational activities to support children's development. Several studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in elementary education. Sitanaya et al. (2024) found that the Busy Book improved oral health knowledge among children aged 6–7 years. Mushliha (2021) reported that the Busy Book was feasible for improving beginning reading skills among first-grade students. Similarly, Maulani and Supriadi (2021) showed that the Busy Book was highly feasible as a medium for teaching the alphabet. In addition, Rahayu et al. (2024) found that the Busy Book increased students' learning interest and motivation, while Suhaida et al. (2020) demonstrated its validity for developing elementary students' speaking skills.

Although previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of the Busy Book as a learning medium, most have focused on developing academic abilities and basic skills, such as reading, speaking, alphabet recognition, and health education. Research on the development of Busy Books as a learning medium for gender identity among elementary school children remains limited. This is noteworthy because gender identity is a crucial aspect of child development that should be understood from an early age. The lack of learning media specifically designed to help children understand gender identity indicates a research gap that deserves further attention.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of the Busy Book *Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama*, which is specifically designed to improve first-grade students' understanding of gender identity. Unlike previous Busy Book studies that primarily focused on academic competencies and health education, this study integrates biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity into a single interactive learning medium tailored to the developmental characteristics of children aged 6–7 years. Furthermore, this study not only develops the learning media but also provides empirical evidence of its feasibility and effectiveness, thereby extending the application of Busy Books to the field of guidance and counseling in elementary education.

To address this gap, the present study developed the Busy Book *"Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama"* (*Know Yourself, Respect Others*) as a gender identity learning medium for first-grade elementary school students. The media was designed based on the developmental characteristics of children aged 6–7 years and incorporates gender identity content covering biological, social, and cognitive aspects. Furthermore, the Busy Book includes various interactive activities that enable children to learn through concrete and enjoyable experiences appropriate to their developmental stage. This development is expected to extend the application of Busy Books beyond academic learning and contribute to the field of guidance and counseling, particularly in enhancing children's understanding of gender identity.

This study aims to develop the Busy Book *"Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama"*, determine its feasibility through expert validation and user testing, and examine its effectiveness in improving first-grade students' understanding of gender identity. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of innovative learning media and provide an alternative resource for teachers and school counselors in delivering developmentally appropriate educational services for elementary school students.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method aimed at developing a product and examining its effectiveness (Sugiyono, 2012). The development process followed the 4D model proposed by Thiagarajan et al. (1974), which consists of four stages: define, design, develop, and disseminate. During the define stage, a needs analysis was conducted through literature review, observation, and interviews with guidance and counseling teachers. The design stage involved developing research instruments, designing the media, and preparing a user guide. The development stage included media expert validation, material expert validation, and user testing. Finally, the dissemination stage was carried out on a limited scale through the implementation of the media in the research setting. The effectiveness of the developed media was evaluated using a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design.

Participant and Procedure

The study was conducted at SD Joannes Bosco Yogyakarta from February to March 2026. The participants comprised 47 first-grade students, including 23 from Class I Kinesthetic and 24 from Class I Linguistic. In addition, two guidance and counseling teachers participated as users during the product testing stage.

The research procedure began with a needs analysis through literature review, observation, and interviews with guidance and counseling teachers. Based on the findings, the researcher developed the "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" Busy Book and its accompanying user guide. The developed product was then validated by media and materials experts and revised in response to their feedback.

During the implementation stage, students were first given a pre-test to assess their initial understanding of gender identity. The guidance and counseling teacher then conducted a classroom guidance session using the "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" Busy Book following the prepared user guide. Students participated in a series of interactive activities designed based on the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity development. After completing the learning activities, students were administered a post-test to measure changes in their understanding of gender identity. The pre-test and post-test results were subsequently used to evaluate the Busy Book's effectiveness.

Research Instruments

The research instruments included media expert validation sheets, material expert validation sheets, user assessment questionnaires, and pre- and post-tests to measure students' understanding of gender identity. The pre-test and post-test instruments were developed based on the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity. They were presented as illustrated statements appropriate for first-grade elementary school students. Meanwhile, the validation sheets and user questionnaires were used to evaluate the media's feasibility in terms of content, presentation, usefulness, and ease of use.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from media expert validation, material expert validation, and user assessments were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the feasibility of the developed media. The total scores from each assessment were converted into feasibility categories using score-conversion criteria adapted from Sukardi (2003). The developed media was classified into four categories: very feasible, feasible, not feasible, and very unfeasible. The feasibility criteria used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Feasibility Assessment Criteria for Media Validation and User Testing

Score	Assessment Quality Criteria	
	Assessment Category	Score Interval
4	Very Feasible	(Smin + 3P) ≤ S ≤ Smaks
3	Feasible	(Smin + 2P) ≤ S ≤ (Smin + 3P -1)
2	Not Feasible	(Smin + P) ≤ S ≤ (Smin + 2P -1)
1	Very Unfeasible	Smin ≤ S ≤ (Smin + P -1)

Note. S = obtained score; Smin = minimum score; Smaks = maximum score; P = interval width.

The effectiveness of the "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" Busy Book was analyzed using students' pre-test and post-test scores. Before hypothesis testing, a normality test was conducted to assess the data distribution. Since the data were normally distributed, a Paired Sample t-Test was performed in JASP to determine whether there was a significant difference in students' understanding of gender identity before and after the implementation of the Busy Book.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aimed to develop a Busy Book entitled *"Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama"* (Know Yourself, Respect Others) designed to improve children's understanding of gender identity. The development process employed the 4D (Four-D) Model, which consists of four main stages: define, design, develop, and disseminate. The following section describes each stage in the development of the *"Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama"* Busy Book.

Define

At the definition stage, a needs analysis was conducted through a literature review, case studies, and interviews with guidance and counseling teachers. The findings highlighted the importance of providing gender identity education to elementary school students, particularly regarding self-awareness, personal body boundaries, and mutual respect. In addition, interview results indicated that lower-grade elementary students are more interested in visual and interactive learning media. Therefore, first-grade students were selected as the target users of the developed media. Based on the developmental characteristics of children aged 6–7 years, the "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" Busy Book was designed to address the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity through various interactive activities. The product was also accompanied by a teacher guide to assist guidance and counseling teachers in implementing the media during classroom guidance sessions. The objective of the media development was to help students develop a positive understanding of gender identity, recognize and appreciate individual differences, and foster mutual respect within an inclusive environment.

Design

At the design stage, the initial prototype of the *"Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama"* Busy Book was developed based on the results of the needs analysis. The media was designed using Canva and adapted to the characteristics of first-grade elementary school students through attractive illustrations, simple instructions, and interactive learning activities. The Busy Book measures 25 × 25 cm and contains learning activities based on the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity development. The activities include picture-matching tasks, object-placement exercises, statement-sorting activities, and interactive songs designed to enhance students' engagement and understanding.

Figure 1. Sample Pages of the "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" Busy Book

In addition to the Busy Book, a user guide was developed for guidance and counseling teachers. The guide contains the learning objectives, service materials, implementation procedures, classroom guidance lesson plans, interactive songs, and reflection activities. The Busy Book and the user guide were designed as an integrated product to assist guidance and counseling teachers in implementing classroom guidance services systematically and in accordance with students' developmental characteristics.

Figure 2. Sample Pages from the "*Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama*" Busy Book User Guide

Development

At the mentdevelopment stage, the prototype of the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book, and the accompanying guidance and counseling teacher manual underwent validation by media and materials experts to assess the product's feasibility prior to implementation. The validation process assessed several aspects, including visual appearance, presentation, content quality, ease of use, and alignment with the objectives of guidance and counseling services.

Table 2. Results of Media and Material Expert Validation

Validator	Score	Category
Media Expert	125	Very Feasible
Material Expert	140	Very Feasible

As shown in Table 2, the media expert assigned a score of 125, while the material expert assigned a score of 140. Both scores were categorized as very feasible, indicating that the Kenali

Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book and its accompanying teacher guide met the required standards for classroom guidance services. In addition to providing feasibility ratings, the experts suggested several revisions to improve the product's quality. These revisions included improving the visual design of the Busy Book and teacher guide covers, adding distinguishing attributes to gender-identity activities, modifying several occupations to reflect first-grade students' experiences better, improving the layout and organization of the teacher guide, and adding materials related to different types of emotions. Furthermore, the relationship between Bandura's social learning theory and the use of the Busy Book was clarified in the teacher guide to strengthen the product's theoretical foundation. These revisions were made to enhance the visual quality, content clarity, and usability of the media. Following the revision process, the product was evaluated by two guidance and counseling teachers as prospective users. The user testing aimed to assess the acceptability and ease of use of the Busy Book in classroom guidance services.

Table 3. User Testing Results

User	Score	Category
Guidance and Counseling Teacher 1	130	Very Feasible
Guidance and Counseling Teacher 2	126	Very Feasible

The evaluation results indicated that both guidance and counseling teachers categorized the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book as very feasible. The teachers reported that the media was visually appealing, easy to use, appropriate for the developmental characteristics of elementary school students, and supportive of classroom guidance activities related to understanding gender identity. Therefore, the product was considered suitable for implementation in the dissemination stage.

Disseminate

At the dissemination stage, the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book, which had undergone validation and revision, was implemented on a limited scale with 47 first-grade students at SD Joannes Bosco Yogyakarta, comprising 23 students from Class I Kinesthetic and 2s from Class I Linguistic. The implementation was conducted through classroom guidance services facilitated by guidance and counseling teachers using the developed teacher guide. The activities were carried out in three sessions covering the biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity. Before implementation, the gender identity understanding instrument underwent a validity test. The validity test was conducted on 32 items using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique with 47 students. The results showed that 24 items had correlation coefficients greater than the critical value in the r table (0.288) at the 5% significance level and were therefore considered valid. The remaining eight items had correlation coefficients below the r-table value and were excluded from the study.

Table 4. Item Validity Test Results

Item	R Value	R table	Result
Item 1	0,277	0,288	Invalid
Item 2	0,439	0,288	Valid
Item 3	0,223	0,288	Invalid
Item 4	0,040	0,288	Invalid
Item 5	0,457	0,288	Valid
Item 6	0,489	0,288	Valid
Item 7	0,154	0,288	Invalid
Item 8	0,561	0,288	Valid
Item 9	0,448	0,288	Valid
Item 10	0,597	0,288	Valid
Item	R Value	R table	Result
Item 11	0,448	0,288	Valid
Item 12	0,508	0,288	Valid
Item 13	0,332	0,288	Valid
Item 14	0,297	0,288	Valid
Item 15	0,673	0,288	Valid
Item 16	0,396	0,288	Valid
Item 17	0,493	0,288	Valid
Item 18	0,307	0,288	Valid
Item 19	0,291	0,288	Valid
Item 20	0,567	0,288	Valid
Item 21	0,025	0,288	Invalid
Item 22	0,384	0,288	Valid
Item 23	0,403	0,288	Valid
Item 24	0,527	0,288	Valid
Item 25	0,184	0,288	Invalid
Item 26	0,324	0,288	Valid
Item 27	0,229	0,288	Valid
Item 28	0,425	0,288	Valid
Item 29	0,311	0,288	Valid
Item 30	0,466	0,288	Valid
Item 31	0,277	0,288	Invalid
Item 32	0,445	0,288	Valid

After identifying the valid items, the reliability of the instrument was examined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.833. Since this value exceeded the minimum reliability threshold of 0.70, the instrument was considered highly reliable and suitable for measuring students' understanding of gender identity.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.833

After the instrument was confirmed to be valid and reliable, students were administered a pre-test to measure their initial understanding of gender identity before participating in the guidance sessions. Subsequently, the guidance and counseling teacher conducted classroom guidance activities using the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book based on the developed teacher guide. Upon completion of all activities, a post-test was administered to assess changes in students' understanding of gender identity following the use of the media.

Before hypothesis testing, the data were examined for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results indicated a W value of 0.959 and a significance value of 0.098 ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that the data were normally distributed.

Table 6. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Assumption Checks ▼

Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk) ▼

			W	p
PRE-TEST	-	POST-TEST	0.959	0.098

Note. Significant results suggest a deviation from normality.

Since the data met the assumption of normality, a Paired Sample t-Test was conducted to examine the difference between students' scores before and after the implementation of the media. The results revealed a t-value of -5.695 (df = 46) and a p-value < 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 7. Paired Sample t-Test Results

Paired Samples T-Test ▼

Paired Samples T-Test

Measure 1		Measure 2	t	df	p
PRE-TEST	-	POST-TEST	−5.695	46	< .001

Note. Student's t-test.

The results indicated a significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test scores after participating in classroom guidance activities using the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book. This finding suggests that the media contributed to improving students' understanding of gender identity. The improvement was also reflected in the increase in students' mean scores.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for the Paired Sample t-Test

Descriptives

Descriptives

	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation
PRE-TEST	47	77.043	11.907	1.737	0.155
POST-TEST	47	86.085	7.141	1.042	0.083

Based on Table 8, the mean score for students' understanding of gender identity increased from 77.043 on the pre-test to 86.085 on the post-test, representing an improvement of 9.042 points. This finding indicates that the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book was effective in enhancing elementary school students' understanding of gender identity.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book is feasible and effective in improving understanding of gender identity among first-grade elementary school students. The positive validation results from media experts, material experts, and guidance and counseling teachers suggest that the developed media is appropriate for classroom guidance services and aligns with the developmental characteristics of children aged 6–7 years. The effectiveness of the Busy Book may be explained by its use of visual and interactive activities that enable children to learn through concrete experiences. This is consistent with the developmental characteristics of children at the preoperational stage, who tend to learn more effectively through observation, object manipulation, and direct participation in activities. Through activities related to biological,

social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity, students were encouraged to actively engage in the learning process and construct their understanding of themselves and others.

These findings are closely related to the theoretical foundation underlying the development of the Busy Book. During the define stage, the needs analysis revealed that lower-grade elementary school students tend to become easily bored with conventional learning methods and show greater interest in visual and interactive learning media. In addition, the analysis indicated that students still require guidance in understanding gender identity, personal body boundaries, and respectful social behavior. Therefore, the Busy Book was intentionally designed based on three dimensions of gender identity development, namely the biological, social, and cognitive aspects, so that students could develop a more comprehensive understanding of gender identity through concrete learning experiences.

This finding is consistent with Kohlberg's theory of gender identity development (Ayriza, 2021), which states that children aged 2–7 years have entered the stages of gender identity, gender stability, and gender constancy. At this developmental period, children begin to recognize themselves as boys or girls and gradually develop an understanding of gender-related characteristics. Therefore, providing learning experiences appropriate to their developmental stage is essential for helping children develop a positive understanding of their own identity while respecting individual differences.

From a cognitive perspective, the findings are also supported by Piaget's theory (Suparno, 2001), which explains that children aged 6–7 years are in the preoperational stage and learn more effectively through observation, imitation, visual representations, and concrete activities than through abstract verbal explanations. Moreover, Piaget argues that children at this age are in the stage of heteronomous morality, during which they tend to regard rules as absolute and imitate behaviors demonstrated by authority figures. Consequently, the Busy Book was intentionally designed with illustrations, puzzles, picture-matching activities, object manipulation, and interactive songs to facilitate meaningful learning experiences aligned with children's cognitive and moral development.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the Busy Book also supports Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Ansani & Samsir, 2022), which emphasizes that learning occurs through four processes: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. During the learning activities, students first focused their attention on the illustrations, stories, and interactive tasks presented in the Busy Book (attention). They then retained information related to gender identity and respectful behavior (retention), practiced the expected behaviors through classroom activities and daily interactions (reproduction), and received reinforcement from the guidance and counseling teacher, which encouraged them to continue applying these behaviors (motivation). Thus, the Busy Book served not only as an instructional medium but also as a modeling tool, facilitating children's understanding of gender identity through observation and imitation. This finding supports the study's conceptual framework, which assumes that learning media developed in line with children's developmental characteristics and that incorporate biological, social, and cognitive dimensions can more effectively improve understanding of gender identity than conventional verbal instruction alone.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of Busy Books as learning media. Sitanaya et al. (2024) found that Busy Books improved health knowledge among children aged 6–7 years, while Rahayu et al. (2024) reported increased learning interest and motivation through Busy Book-based activities. Similarly, Mushliha (2021) found that Busy Books were feasible for supporting beginning reading and alphabet recognition skills. These findings suggest that Busy Books can facilitate learning across various developmental domains by providing engaging and age-appropriate learning experiences.

However, unlike previous studies that primarily focused on academic skills and health education, the present study specifically developed a Busy Book to enhance children's understanding of gender identity. The inclusion of biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity, as well as a teacher guide for guidance and counseling services, represents an important contribution of this study. Therefore, the Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama Busy Book not only extends the application of Busy Books beyond academic learning but also provides an alternative medium for guidance and counseling services in elementary schools.

Implication

This study implies that the Busy Book "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" can serve as an effective supporting medium for guidance and counseling services in elementary schools to enhance students' understanding of gender identity. Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of interactive learning media appropriate to the developmental characteristics of children aged 6–7 years and may serve as a reference for future guidance and counseling media development on similar topics.

Limitation

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research was conducted within a limited timeframe, which restricted the opportunity to collect data more extensively and longitudinally. Second, the study's implementation was influenced by the school's academic schedule, including holidays, midterm and final examinations, and various school events. These circumstances required adjustments to the research timeline and affected the continuity of the intervention process. Third, the participants were drawn from only one elementary school, namely SD Joannes Bosco Yogyakarta, resulting in a relatively limited sample size and restricting the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to involve a larger, more diverse sample from multiple schools and to implement the intervention over a longer period to obtain more comprehensive evidence on the Busy Book's effectiveness in improving children's understanding of gender identity.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed the Busy Book "Kenali Diri, Hargai Sesama" as an interactive learning medium to improve first-grade elementary school students' understanding of gender identity at SD Joannes Bosco Yogyakarta. Developed using the 4D Research and Development model, the media was designed with children's developmental characteristics in mind and integrated biological, social, and cognitive aspects of gender identity into engaging learning activities. The results demonstrated that the Busy Book met the feasibility requirements for educational use, as evidenced by positive evaluations from media experts, material experts, and guidance and counseling teachers, who categorized the product as feasible to highly feasible.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Busy Book effectively improved students' understanding of gender identity, as indicated by the increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores. These findings suggest that interactive and developmentally appropriate learning media can support children's understanding of self-identity while fostering respect for others. The novelty of this study lies in the development of a Busy Book specifically designed for gender identity education in elementary school guidance and counseling services. This area has received limited attention in previous studies. By combining gender identity material with hands-on activities and a structured guidance framework, this study contributes to the development of educational psychology and school counseling practices by providing an innovative learning medium that supports children's cognitive, social, and personal development.

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Authors' Contribution

Cristina Reza Arista Susena conceived and designed the study, developed the research instruments, conducted the data collection, analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Antonius Ian Bayu Setiawan contributed to the research design, development of the learning media, interpretation of the findings, and manuscript revision. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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