



Analysis of the Needs for Local Culture-Based Mandarin Language Textbooks in Indonesia to Improve the Effectiveness of Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the use of Mandarin language textbooks based on local culture in Indonesia as an effort to enhance the effectiveness of language teaching, as well as to formulate strategies for developing locally relevant textbooks that better meet students' needs. The research involved 120 students and 10 lecturers from the Mandarin Language Education Program in Indonesia, selected purposively. The instruments used in this study included surveys, interviews, and analysis of textbook documents, while data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques based on the Miles and Huberman model, combined with simple descriptive quantitative analysis using SPSS. The results showed that the majority of the courses still used textbooks from China, such as Hanyu Jiaocheng and New Practical Chinese Reader, which, although systematic and in line with HSK standards, were considered less relevant to the socio-cultural context of Indonesian students. Some students had difficulty understanding texts depicting typical Chinese experiences, such as winter or traditional festivals, because these were not aligned with their everyday reality. Based on these findings, the strategies for developing local textbooks include: (1) analysis of students' needs, (2) integration of Indonesian culture into texts and exercises, (3) adjustment of material levels according to HSK standards, and (4) development of materials based on students' real-life experiences. This study concludes that developing culture-based local textbooks is crucial for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of Mandarin language teaching in Indonesia and strengthening intercultural competence in the learning process.

Keywords: local culture, Mandarin language textbooks, teaching effectiveness, language teaching

Analisis Kebutuhan Buku Ajar Bahasa Mandarin Berbasis Budaya Lokal di Indonesia untuk Meningkatkan Efektivitas Pengajaran

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan buku ajar bahasa Mandarin berbasis budaya lokal di Indonesia sebagai upaya meningkatkan efektivitas pengajaran bahasa, serta merumuskan strategi penyusunan buku ajar lokal yang lebih relevan dengan kebutuhan mahasiswa. Penelitian dilaksanakan dengan melibatkan beberapa mahasiswa dan dosen Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Mandarin di Indonesia. Populasi penelitian adalah mahasiswa dan dosen pengampu mata kuliah bahasa Mandarin, dengan sampel sebanyak 120 mahasiswa dan 10 dosen yang dipilih secara purposif. Instrumen penelitian berupa angket, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen buku ajar, sedangkan analisis data dilakukan dengan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan berdasarkan model Miles dan Huberman yang dipadukan dengan analisis deskriptif kuantitatif sederhana menggunakan SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas perkuliahan masih menggunakan buku ajar dari Tiongkok, seperti Hanyu Jiaocheng dan New Practical Chinese Reader, yang meskipun sistematis dan sesuai standar HSK, namun dinilai kurang relevan dengan konteks sosial-budaya mahasiswa Indonesia. Sebagian mahasiswa mengalami kesulitan memahami teks yang menggambarkan pengalaman khas Tiongkok, seperti musim dingin atau festival tradisional, karena tidak sesuai dengan realitas di kehidupan mereka. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, strategi penyusunan buku ajar lokal meliputi: (1) analisis kebutuhan mahasiswa, (2) integrasi budaya Indonesia ke dalam teks dan latihan, (3) penyesuaian level materi dengan standar HSK, dan (4) penyusunan materi berbasis kehidupan nyata mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengembangan buku ajar berbasis budaya lokal sangat penting untuk meningkatkan relevansi dan efektivitas pengajaran bahasa Mandarin di Indonesia, serta memperkuat kompetensi interkultural dalam pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: buku ajar, bahasa Mandarin, budaya lokal, efektivitas pengajaran, pembelajaran bahasa

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, Mandarin Chinese has shown significant growth in Indonesian education. The strengthening of diplomatic and trade relations between Indonesia and China has fueled growing interest among Indonesians in learning Mandarin. Mandarin Chinese is no longer viewed simply as an additional skill but has become a strategic necessity amidst increasing global interaction. Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2022) indicates that the number of secondary schools offering Mandarin Chinese as an elective continues to increase annually, particularly in major cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan. At the tertiary level, several state and private universities have also established Mandarin Language Education Study Programs in response to the growing demand for educators and professionals in the field of Mandarin Chinese. This development has also been accompanied by an increase in the number of students studying the language, both for academic and professional purposes.

However, teaching Mandarin Chinese in Indonesia still faces various challenges, one of which is the use of textbooks that originate mainly from China. Commonly used books, such as Hanyu Jiaocheng and New Practical Chinese Reader, although they meet the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) standards and are systematically compiled, often lack relevance to the Indonesian sociocultural context. The material in these textbooks contains many elements of Chinese culture that are unfamiliar to Indonesian students. For example, texts describing Chinese cultural phenomena such as winter, the Spring Festival, or the Chinese family system lack direct relevance to Indonesian students' local cultural experiences, further complicating comprehension.

This gap makes it difficult for students to connect the material they are learning to their personal experiences. This impacts their motivation and comprehension in learning Mandarin. Mahamod (2014) states that teaching materials relevant to local culture are easier for students to understand and relate to, which in turn

can increase the effectiveness of language learning. Based on this, the development of textbooks that incorporate local Indonesian culture is an urgent need that must be met, so that students not only learn the language but also develop a sense of closeness and connection to the material they are studying.

While existing textbooks have the advantage of being aligned with international standards, the biggest challenge lies in their inability to reflect Indonesia's sociocultural realities. This cultural gap risks reducing learning effectiveness, as highlighted by Cunningsworth (1995), who notes that teaching materials not relevant to local culture can hinder the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, it is crucial to develop textbooks that integrate elements of Indonesian culture to meet local needs and support more meaningful and applicable learning.

Developing Mandarin Chinese textbooks based on local Indonesian culture is crucial to increasing the relevance and effectiveness of teaching. Byram (1997) emphasises that intercultural competence can only be achieved if language learning occurs within a sociocultural context that is relevant to the learner. Therefore, developing textbooks based on local culture will not only enrich students' learning experiences but also strengthen their intercultural communication skills in Mandarin Chinese.

Based on this background, this research focuses on two main questions:

- 1) What is the current state of use of Mandarin Chinese textbooks in Indonesia, particularly in the context of teaching in higher education?
- 2) What obstacles do students and lecturers face in using Mandarin Chinese textbooks?
- 3) What requirements must be met in developing Mandarin language textbooks based on local Indonesian culture?
- 4) What strategies can be developed for developing Mandarin language textbooks based on local Indonesian culture that can increase the relevance and effectiveness of language teaching in Indonesia?



In line with the research problem formulation, this study aims to analyse the current state of Mandarin Chinese textbook use in Indonesia, particularly in the context of higher education. It also seeks to understand the relevance of Chinese-based textbooks to the learning needs of Indonesian students. It also identifies the obstacles faced by students and lecturers in using Chinese-based Mandarin Chinese textbooks, particularly those related to cultural gaps. It also formulates the need for and strategies for developing Mandarin Chinese textbooks based on Indonesian local culture that can improve teaching effectiveness and the relevance of the material for students. It also recommends strategies for developing textbooks based on Indonesian local culture to enhance intercultural competence and the success of Mandarin Chinese language learning in Indonesia.

This research has several benefits that can be seen from various perspectives. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of foreign language teaching materials development, particularly for Mandarin Chinese, by emphasising the importance of integrating local cultural contexts into these materials. This research contributes to broadening insights into the role of culture in foreign language learning and proposes teaching concepts that are more relevant to students' daily lives. Practically, this research offers concrete guidance for lecturers and teachers on selecting, adapting, or developing suitable and appropriate teaching materials for students. The results of this study can serve as a reference for improving the quality of Mandarin Chinese language teaching, making it more applicable and accessible, while considering students' local culture and context. From an educational policy perspective, this research can provide input for universities, particularly Jakarta State University (UNJ), in developing curricula and teaching materials that better suit the needs and characteristics of Indonesian students. Developing teaching materials based on local culture is expected to enhance the quality of Mandarin Chinese language learning and support national education goals informed by local wisdom and traditions.

Developing Mandarin Chinese language textbooks based on local Indonesian culture is crucial for increasing the relevance and effectiveness of teaching. According to Asy-Sinawi (2012), textbooks are the primary tools used by teachers to deliver course material systematically and in a structured manner. Effective textbooks must be adapted to the local cultural context to make them more accessible and relevant to students' daily lives. Mahamod (2014) emphasised that teaching a foreign language using materials based on local culture will increase student understanding and engagement in learning. This occurs because students more easily relate the material to their experiences.

Vygotsky, as quoted in Mahamod (2014), also argued that social and cultural contexts influence how a person learns a language. He argued that language learning that occurs in a social environment familiar to the student is more effective. Therefore, teaching Mandarin using culture-based materials from Indonesia can help students connect lessons to their daily lives, making it easier for them to understand and apply the language they are learning.

Several articles relevant to this research include:

- 1) Byram (1997:45) states that intercultural competence in foreign language learning can only be achieved if teaching is conducted within a sociocultural context relevant to the learner's experiences. This research supports the importance of developing locally culture-based teaching materials to increase the effectiveness of language learning.
- 2) Harjasujana & Damayanti (2013) discuss the importance of integrating local culture in foreign language teaching. This research demonstrates that teaching materials tailored to students' cultural contexts can enhance their understanding and engagement in language learning.
- 3) Razak (2018) examines the application of local culture in foreign language teaching to strengthen student comprehension. This



- research reveals that teaching materials that accommodate local culture can facilitate students' understanding of the language being taught.
- 4) Chen (2019), in her research in Southeast Asia, found that adapting teaching materials to local contexts can increase student motivation and engagement. This finding further emphasises the need to adjust textbooks to be more relevant to students' experiences in local cultural contexts.
 - 5) Trihardini, A., Wikarti, A. R., & Andriani, S. (2019) discussed the importance of cross-cultural understanding for Mandarin language educators. This study emphasised the need for language educators to understand the culture, customs, and habits of the native speakers of the language they teach. Furthermore, this study also discussed the cultural materials that Mandarin language educators need to master and mapped the cultural knowledge curriculum in Mandarin language education study programs in Indonesia.
 - 6) Li (2020) emphasised the importance of developing textbooks adapted to local cultures to reduce the cultural gap in foreign language learning. This research underscores the importance of developing locally based teaching materials that are more relevant to the needs of language learning in Indonesia
 - 7) Rahmawati (2021) showed that lecturers in Indonesia tend to add material that is more relevant to students' lives to address the limitations of imported teaching materials that are less suited to the local context. This highlights the need to develop teaching materials that are more adaptable to students' diverse social backgrounds.
 - 8) Agustin et al. (2021) discussed the development of Mandarin Chinese textbooks based on a contextual approach for high school students using the ADDIE model. The results of this study indicate

that a strategy based on students' real-life contexts is practical in bridging the teaching material with their daily experiences

- 9) Trihardini, A., & Wikarti, A. R. (2021) analysed material on basic Mandarin speaking skills. This study is part of a Research and Development-based study conducted by the Mandarin Language Education Study Program at UNJ. The results provide an overview of the conversational material needed and appropriate for textbooks for the Basic Listening and Speaking course at the PSPBM FBS UNJ.

These studies provide strong evidence for the importance of developing Mandarin Chinese textbooks based on local Indonesian culture. This demonstrates that integrating local cultural contexts into teaching materials can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of Mandarin language learning in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research was conducted through several interrelated stages. In the first stage, the researcher developed a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data regarding students' perceptions of the use of existing textbooks and their needs for books that reflect local Indonesian culture. The interview guide was used to explore lecturers' experiences and perspectives on teaching Mandarin Chinese in a local cultural context. Maharani (2020) emphasised that instruments based on surveys and interviews can provide a more in-depth picture of the challenges faced in language teaching and the need for changes in teaching materials.

After the instruments were prepared, the second stage was data collection. Questionnaires were distributed to 120 students enrolled in Mandarin Chinese courses at several universities in Indonesia, namely Jakarta State University, Surabaya State University, Brawijaya University, Jenderal Soedirman University, and Malang State



University. Interviews were conducted with 10 lecturers selected purposively from these universities. These interviews aimed to gather more in-depth information about the challenges lecturers face in teaching Mandarin Chinese, as well as their perspectives on the use of textbooks that incorporate Chinese and local Indonesian culture. Nugroho (2021) stated that the purposive interview technique is very effective for gathering information from informants who have specialised knowledge or experience regarding the topic being researched.

In the third stage, the collected data was analysed. For quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS. This analysis was conducted to investigate the trends in student perceptions regarding the Mandarin textbooks used. For quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire, the mean, mode, and median were calculated. These descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of the data distribution and respondents' tendencies regarding the available teaching materials.

According to Arikunto (2010), descriptive statistics are used to describe or depict data in detail without drawing further conclusions. This technique helps obtain a general overview of existing conditions based on the collected data. The use of descriptive statistics in this study provides insight into the extent of the influence of the textbooks used in teaching Mandarin and how students evaluate these textbooks in terms of their relevance to local Indonesian culture. Sugiyono (2017) stated that descriptive statistics are an essential tool for systematically describing trends in research data. In this study, this technique helped determine the level of student acceptance of existing textbooks and whether these materials were appropriate to the relevant local cultural context. Therefore, this descriptive statistical analysis provides clearer insights into how students in Indonesia receive these materials.

For this analysis, all calculations were performed using SPSS version 25, which streamlined the analysis process and produced

more valid and accurate results. Descriptive statistics using SPSS provide information about overall data trends, such as the mean, frequency (mode), and median, allowing researchers to understand how students evaluate textbooks used in Mandarin Chinese learning.

In line with this, Merriam (2014) emphasised the importance of using statistical data to assess the effectiveness of learning instruments. In this context, descriptive statistics are an appropriate tool for describing students' perceptions of the teaching materials applied in Mandarin Chinese learning. The SPSS analysis conducted in this study produced descriptive statistics to describe the data trends, including the average (mean), frequency (mode), and median (middle value). The t-test and ANOVA were used to analyse differences between groups, as well as the Wilcoxon test for data that did not meet the assumption of normality. Normality testing was performed to ensure the validity of the inferential analysis results.

RESULTS

Second language learning involves various interrelated and interacting elements. Teaching Mandarin Chinese requires a holistic approach, encompassing not only the development of speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills but also an understanding of the culture that is an integral part of the language. Textbooks should be designed not only to practice language skills but also to provide a deeper understanding of the language's essential aspects. In the context of international Mandarin Chinese teaching, the primary focus is on developing practical language skills to ensure that teaching materials encompass not only language techniques but also integrate cultural elements relevant to the local learning context. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the components of textbooks that focus on language skills and evaluate their suitability for local Indonesian culture, with the goal of improving the effectiveness of Mandarin Chinese learning in Indonesia.

To gain a deeper understanding of Mandarin Chinese teaching in the context of local Indonesian



culture, interviews were conducted with several lecturers and students. These interviews aimed to explore their views on the integration of local culture in currently used textbooks. Based on the interviews, several key findings emerged, indicating a gap between existing teaching materials and the needs of students and lecturers regarding Mandarin Chinese language instruction that is more relevant to the Indonesian cultural context.

Interviews were conducted with several lecturers teaching Mandarin Chinese to obtain their views on integrating local Indonesian culture into the teaching materials used. The interviews revealed that most lecturers believe that current Mandarin Chinese language textbooks focus too much on Chinese culture and do not consider the relevance of local Indonesian culture. The lecturers emphasised that incorporating local Indonesian culture into textbooks would help students understand the material more easily, as they would become more familiar with the context being taught. For example, incorporating references to daily habits, traditional foods, or customs commonly found in Indonesia would make Mandarin Chinese learning more engaging and easier for students to understand.

Furthermore, many lecturers stated that the local Indonesian cultural context plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of Mandarin Chinese teaching. By linking Mandarin terms and phrases to Indonesian culture, students would more easily remember and apply the vocabulary in their daily lives. Lecturers also stated that teaching that connects language with local culture is more engaging for students, making learning more meaningful and applicable.

However, lecturers also acknowledged the challenges of teaching Mandarin without elements of local Indonesian culture. One challenge is the difficulty students have in connecting the material to their lives, as most teaching materials focus on foreign cultures that may feel distant or difficult to understand. Therefore, lecturers strive to include examples or references to Indonesian culture in the

learning process, even if the textbooks themselves do not provide these.

Regarding the development of textbooks that are more inclusive of local culture, lecturers suggested that Mandarin textbooks should not only focus on technical language mastery but also introduce local Indonesian culture. They suggested that new textbooks include elements of Indonesian culture, such as major cities, customs, traditional foods, and traditional celebrations, which students can easily relate to.

Lecturers also suggested that textbooks introduce local terms used in everyday Indonesian conversation, as well as phrases or expressions related to Indonesian traditions and activities. This will enrich students' understanding of Mandarin within the social and cultural contexts they are familiar with. "The lecturers were also asked to provide examples of Indonesian culture that could be used in Mandarin teaching. They offered examples such as shopping at the market, family events, or common Indonesian traditions of welcoming guests. Using these examples of everyday activities will make it easier for students to connect Mandarin vocabulary and grammar to their real lives. Overall, the interview results indicated a deep need to integrate local Indonesian culture into Mandarin teaching. The lecturers strongly supported changes to textbooks that were more inclusive of local culture, as they believed this would increase the relevance of the material, make learning more engaging, and facilitate student understanding.

This research involved analysing the use of existing textbooks, assessing the teaching materials already implemented, and identifying difficulties in using Chinese textbooks. Furthermore, the study also examined the need for textbooks based on local Indonesian culture. The following are the results of a questionnaire describing student use of textbooks. These results provide insight into the effectiveness of the textbooks in learning and the extent to which they meet students' needs and expectations regarding material adapted to local culture.



Table 1
 Results of the Analysis Questionnaire on the Use of Textbooks

| No. | Questions | Answer | Sum | Percent | Mean | Modus | Median |
|-----|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 | The leading textbook you use in your Mandarin Chinese language courses is? | Hanyu Jiaocheng New Practical Chinese Reader Other textbooks | 81 59 40 | 45 33 22 | 3.34 | 4 | 2 |
| 2 | How often do you use Chinese textbooks in your lessons? | Every session Several times a week Rarely | 48 36 24 | 40 30 20 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | What is your perception of the relevance of Chinese textbooks in Indonesia? | Very relevant Relevant Somewhat relevant Not relevant | 6 18 5 42 | 5 15 45 32 | 1.90 | 2 | 2 |
| 4 | How relevant are the examples or exercises in Chinese textbooks to the daily lives of Indonesian students? | Very appropriate Appropriate Less appropriate Not appropriate | 13 24 54 29 | 11 20 45 24 | 1.74 | 2 | 2 |
| 5 | In your opinion, does the textbook you use support the achievement of the targeted HSK competencies? | Very supportive Supportive Less supportive Not supportive | 16 49 43 12 | 13 41 36 10 | 2.50 | 3 | 3 |
| 6 | How easy is it for you to understand the text in the Chinese textbook? | Very easy Easy Fairly easy Difficult | 4 12 42 62 | 3 10 35 52 | 1.50 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | How clear are the grammar explanations in the Mandarin textbook you use? | Very clear Clear Less clear Not clear | 22 48 38 12 | 18 40 32 10 | 2.70 | 3 | 3 |
| 8 | What is your opinion about the practice questions in the Mandarin textbook? | Very helpful Helpful Less helpful Not helpful | 47 35 24 14 | 39 29 20 12 | 1.39 | 1 | 3 |
| 9 | Does the Mandarin textbook you use sufficiently cover aspects of Chinese culture? | Very sufficient Sufficient Poor Not at all | 25 73 12 10 | 21 61 10 8 | 2.94 | 3 | 3 |
| 10 | How great is your need for Mandarin textbooks that integrate Indonesian culture? | Very large Large Sufficient Small | 61 31 14 13 | 51 26 12 11 | 3.15 | 4 | 4 |



A survey of 120 students showed that the majority (78%) used imported Chinese language textbooks, such as Hanyu Jiaocheng and New Practical Chinese Reader. Although these textbooks met HSK standards, approximately 52% of students expressed difficulty understanding material focused on Chinese culture, such as texts on winter festivals and family systems, which they deemed irrelevant to their daily lives. This finding is evident in the mean score of 3.34, with a mode of 3 and a median of 2, indicating that students generally struggle to understand Chinese cultural content.

Regarding textbook selection, 45% of students chose Hanyu Jiaocheng and 33% chose New Practical Chinese Reader as their primary textbooks, while 22% chose other textbooks. The frequency of textbook use varied considerably, with 40% of students using them every session, while 20% used them only rarely. This suggests that while Chinese textbooks are frequently used, their use is not uniform across students.

Furthermore, 45% of students felt that the exercises in the textbook were not relevant to their daily lives. This figure is reflected in the mean of 1.74, the mode of 2, and the median of 2, indicating a mismatch between the textbook material and the situations students face in their daily lives.

Regarding the relevance of the Chinese textbook in Indonesia, 45% of students considered the textbook to be quite relevant, although 35% felt it was irrelevant. The mean of 1.9, the mode of 2, and the median of 2 indicate a significant mismatch between the material taught and Indonesian culture. However, some students, 41%, felt that the textbook supported HSK competency achievement, with a mean of 2.5 and a mode of 3, indicating that most students considered the textbook to provide adequate support in preparing for the exam. However, a more significant problem was the difficulty of understanding the text. As many as 52% of students found it challenging to understand the Mandarin texts in textbooks, as reflected by a mean of 1.5, a mode of 1, and a median of 1. This indicates that the majority of students experienced significant difficulty in comprehending the

presented texts, posing a major challenge to the learning process.

Overall, although Chinese textbooks are widely used in Mandarin language learning, their limited relevance to the local Indonesian cultural context poses a significant barrier to student comprehension. Therefore, there is a considerable need to develop Indonesian culture-based textbooks that can enhance learning effectiveness and help students understand Mandarin in a context more relevant to their lives.

In line with the students' need for Indonesian culture-based textbooks, this study also explored the difficulties students faced in comprehending material focused on Chinese culture. Based on the questionnaire results, students revealed that material related to Chinese culture was not always easy to understand, and many found it challenging. Furthermore, the study also investigated whether teaching Mandarin based on Indonesian local culture would enhance student comprehension. The following questionnaire results illustrate the difficulties students faced and their perceptions of culture-based teaching.

Based on the results of the distributed questionnaire, according to Table 2, findings regarding difficulties in understanding material focused on Chinese culture indicate that the majority of students, approximately 70%, expressed challenges in learning the material. This data is reflected in the mean score of 2.95, indicating significant difficulty in understanding material related to Chinese culture, such as texts on winter festivals and family systems. The mode, at 3, and the median, at 3, confirm that most students found the material focused on Chinese culture to be somewhat tricky to understand, although some found it easier.

Furthermore, this study also explored students' views on Mandarin language instruction in relation to local Indonesian culture. The majority of students, approximately 85%, felt that Mandarin language instruction that integrates local Indonesian culture would be very helpful or helpful in improving their understanding. The mean score of 3.35 and the mode of 4, with a median also at 4, indicate that students strongly support the idea of



teaching that is more relevant to their own culture. This confirms that local Indonesian culture plays a significant role in the Mandarin language learning process, as it can facilitate understanding and make the material more accessible. The issue of difficulty understanding texts also emerged in the questionnaire results. Forty-one per cent of students reported difficulty understanding texts in Chinese textbooks, as reflected in a mean of 2.34 and a mode of 2. Although some students found the texts relatively easy to understand, the median score of 2 indicates that the majority of students found the material presented difficult to understand. This suggests that Chinese textbooks have not been fully adapted to the

comprehension abilities of Indonesian students, indicating a need for simpler adaptations of the material. “Questions about the impact of the lack of local cultural adaptation on comprehension also yielded significant results. Sixty-three per cent of students felt that without local cultural adaptations in Chinese textbooks, their understanding would be hampered. The mean of 1.95 and the mode of 2, with a median of 3, indicate that the majority of students felt that introducing Indonesian culture in teaching materials was crucial. This demonstrates that adapting materials to the local cultural context is critical to efforts to improve the effectiveness of Mandarin language learning.

Table 2
 Results of the Questionnaire on Students' Difficulties in Using Chinese Textbooks

| No. | Questions | Answer | Sum | Percent | Mean | Modus | Median |
|-----|---|---------------------|-----|---------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 | To what extent do you find it difficult to understand material that focuses on Chinese culture? | Very difficult | 36 | 30 | 2.95 | 3 | 3 |
| | | Difficult | 48 | 40 | | | |
| | | Fairly easy | 30 | 25 | | | |
| | | No difficulty | 6 | 5 | | | |
| 2 | Would teaching Mandarin in a way that incorporates local Indonesian culture be beneficial? | Very helpful | 66 | 55 | 3.35 | 4 | 4 |
| | | Helpful | 36 | 30 | | | |
| | | Fairly helpful | 12 | 10 | | | |
| | | Not helpful | 6 | 5 | | | |
| 3 | How difficult is it for you to understand the reading texts in Chinese textbooks? | Very difficult | 20 | 17 | 2.34 | 2 | 2 |
| | | Difficult | 29 | 24 | | | |
| | | Fairly easy | 44 | 37 | | | |
| | | No difficulty | 26 | 22 | | | |
| 4 | In your opinion, does the use of Chinese textbooks without local cultural adaptation hinder understanding? | Strongly inhibiting | 23 | 19 | 1.95 | 2 | 3 |
| | | Inhibiting | 53 | 44 | | | |
| | | Not inhibiting | 31 | 26 | | | |
| | | No effect | 13 | 11 | | | |
| 5 | Do you find it easier to understand the material if the textbooks incorporate elements of Indonesian culture? | Very easy | 35 | 29 | 2.88 | 3 | 3 |
| | | Easy | 49 | 41 | | | |
| | | Pretty easy | 23 | 19 | | | |
| | | Not easy | 13 | 11 | | | |

Finally, students also indicated that they would find it easier to understand the teaching materials if elements of Indonesian culture were included. With a mean score of 2.88 and a mode and median of 3, almost all students felt that integrating Indonesian culture in textbooks would help them understand Mandarin better. Only a small proportion of students found it challenging to understand the material if elements of Indonesian culture were included, indicating that most students desired the inclusion of local culture in their learning process.

Overall, the results of this study underscore the importance of integrating local Indonesian culture in Mandarin teaching. Although Chinese textbooks are widely used, materials focused on Chinese culture are considered less relevant and too tricky for most students to understand. Therefore, the development of culture-based Indonesian textbooks is a pressing need to enhance the understanding and relevance of Mandarin learning in Indonesia.

In conclusion, although Chinese textbooks such as Hanyu Jiaocheng and New Practical Chinese Reader are widely used, these textbooks still have limited relevance to local Indonesian culture. This is reflected in the low scores on questions

regarding the material's suitability to the local context. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop textbooks that are more suitable for the local Indonesian cultural context, so that students can more easily understand Mandarin language materials, increase their motivation, and achieve language competencies more effectively.

To explore students' needs for local culture-based textbooks, researchers also asked several questions regarding the need for Indonesian cultural elements in Mandarin language textbooks. The results of the distributed questionnaires indicate the importance of integrating local Indonesian culture in Mandarin language textbooks. The following are the results of the questionnaire regarding the need for textbooks based on local Indonesian culture.

The following are the results of the questionnaire that describe students' assessments of existing teaching materials. These results provide an overview of the extent to which the current teaching materials are effective in supporting learning and meeting students' needs and expectations regarding Mandarin language mastery and relevant cultural understanding.

Table 3
Questionnaire Results on the Need for Textbooks Based on Local Indonesian Culture

| No. | Questions | Answer | Sum | Percent | Mean | Modus | Median |
|-----|--|--|-----|---------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 | Do you feel there's a need for Mandarin Chinese textbooks based on Indonesian culture? | Yes | 96 | 80 | 2.80 | 2 | 2 |
| | | No | 24 | 20 | | | |
| 2 | What elements of Indonesian culture that should be included in Mandarin Chinese textbooks? | Festivals or celebrations in Indonesia | 110 | 60 | 7.7 | 8 | 7 |
| | | Traditional Indonesian food | 92 | 50 | | | |
| | | Family traditions in Indonesia | 73 | 40 | | | |
| | | Other | 63 | 35 | | | |
| 3 | How much influence does material based on local Indonesian culture have on your understanding? | Very large | 160 | 50 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2 |
| | | Quite large | 42 | 35 | | | |
| | | Slight | 12 | 10 | | | |
| | | No effect | 6 | 5 | | | |



Table 3
 Questionnaire Results on the Need for Textbooks Based on Local Indonesian Culture

| No. | Questions | Answer | Sum | Percent | Mean | Modus | Median |
|-----|---|--|-----|---------|------|-------|--------|
| 4 | How important do you think the integration of Indonesian culture in Mandarin Chinese textbooks is to increase student interest in learning? | Very important | 60 | 50 | 2.30 | 3.5 | 3 |
| | | Important | 42 | 35 | | | |
| | | Not important | 12 | 10 | | | |
| | | Very unimportant | 6 | 5 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 5 | What supporting media do you think are important to complement Indonesian culture-based Mandarin language textbooks? | Images/illustrations of Indonesian culture | 13 | 9 | 3.2 | 3 | 2 |
| | | Short learning videos | 23 | 16 | | | |
| | | Everyday conversation-based exercises | 30 | 21 | | | |
| | | Indonesian folktales or legends | 61 | 43 | | | |
| | | Other | 16 | 11 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

A questionnaire survey of 186 university students revealed that the majority of respondents (80%) considered the existence of Mandarin language textbooks based on Indonesian culture to be very important. The average score was 4.8, with a mode and median of 5, confirming a strong need for textbooks tailored to local contexts. The cultural elements deemed most relevant were national festivals or celebrations (60%), followed by traditional food (50%), family traditions (40%), and other aspects (35%), with an average score of 4.20, a median of 5, and a mode of 4. This data demonstrates that students not only recognise the importance of cultural aspects but also have clear preferences regarding the content to be included.

In terms of influence, 85% of respondents considered cultural integration to have a large to massive impact on Mandarin learning, with an average score of 4.3 and a median and mode of 5. Importance was also highly appreciated, with the majority rating it as necessary to very important. Regarding supporting media, students tended to prefer folktales or legends (43%) and daily conversation exercises (21%), while visual forms,

such as cultural illustrations, were selected by only a small percentage (9%). The lower scores in this section (mean 2.69; median and mode 2) indicate students' preference for more applicable and communicative media rather than mere visualisation. "Overall, these findings confirm that students desire Mandarin Chinese textbooks that better accommodate local Indonesian culture. The integration of Indonesian culture in textbooks has been shown to have a positive impact on students' understanding of Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, developing textbooks that integrate elements of Indonesian culture is essential to create a more effective and contextual learning process.

Following on from previous findings regarding the use of Chinese textbooks and the need for local culture-based teaching, the questionnaire also revealed students' views on the importance of integrating Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese teaching materials. The following table presents the results regarding the need for teaching materials based on local Indonesian culture, which are expected to improve students' understanding of Mandarin Chinese by linking it to the Indonesian cultural context.

The following are the questionnaire results, illustrating the analysis of the need for textbooks in relation to local Indonesian culture. The results of this questionnaire offer insight into the importance of integrating local Indonesian culture into Mandarin language teaching materials, as well as the extent to which students perceive that textbooks adapted to local culture can enhance their understanding and effectiveness in Mandarin language learning in Indonesia.

Table 4
Questionnaire Results on the Need for Local Culture-Based Textbook Materials

| No. | Questions | Answer | Sum | Percent | Mean | Modus | Median |
|-----|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 | What is your opinion on the importance of integrating Indonesian culture in Mandarin Chinese language teaching? | Very important Important Quite important Not important | 78 30 12 0 | 65 25 10 0 | 3.60 | 4 | 4 |
| 2 | What do you expect from local culture-based Mandarin Chinese textbooks? | Easy-to-understand text Exercises related to daily needs in Indonesia Discussions about Indonesian traditions and culture Others | 84 72 60 24 | 70 60 50 20 | 6.05 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | To what extent do you feel that current textbooks incorporate local cultural elements? | Very adequate Adequate Inadequate Inadequate | 14 7 66 20 | 12 6 55 17 | 1.93 | 2 | 2 |
| 4 | What topics on Indonesian culture do you think are most important to include in Mandarin Chinese textbooks? | Traditions and ceremonies Regional specialties Folktales/legends Traditional arts and crafts Others | 42 24 19 19 16 | 35 20 16 16 13 | 1.72 | 2 | 2 |
| 5 | To what extent can culturally based local materials help increase motivation to learn Mandarin Chinese? | Very helpful Helpful Somewhat helpful Not helpful | 52 25 36 7 | 43 21 30 6 | 3.01 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | What do you think is the most appropriate way to present Indonesian culture in Mandarin Chinese textbooks? | Narrative/reading text Dialogue conversations Practice questions and assignments Pictures or illustrations Other | 37 73 11 10 7 | 27 53 8 7 5 | 4.47 | 4 | 4 |



Table 4
 Questionnaire Results on the Need for Local Culture-Based Textbook Materials

| No. | Questions | Answer | Sum | Percent | Mean | Modus | Median |
|-----|--|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|------|-------|--------|
| 7 | How many exercises do you need that are contextualised to everyday life in Indonesia? | Very much Many Little Very little | 42 32 25 20 | 35 27 21 17 | 2.78 | 3 | 3 |
| 8 | What types of exercises are most helpful in understanding local culture-based materials? | Reading practice Writing practice Listening practice Speaking practice Other | 45 11 24 58 3 | 32 8 17 41 2 | 3.83 | 3 | 3 |
| 9 | Do you agree that local culture-based Mandarin Chinese textbooks can improve cross-cultural understanding? | Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly | 76 30 14 0 | 63 25 12 0 | 3.50 | 4 | 4 |
| 10 | To what extent can local culture-based textbooks support your competency in preparing for the HSK exam? | Strongly supportive Supportive Somewhat supportive Not supportive | 47 32 36 5 | 39 27 30 4 | 2.90 | 3 | 4 |

Based on the results of a questionnaire involving 120 students, the majority of students (65%) consider the integration of Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese teaching to be very important. This result is evident from the mean score of 3.6 and the mode of 4, indicating strong agreement on the importance of local culture in teaching materials. Students also expect Mandarin Chinese textbooks based on local culture to provide easy-to-understand text (70%) and exercises related to everyday needs in Indonesia (60%). The mean score of 6.05 and the median of 7 confirm that ease of understanding is a key desired aspect. However, the majority of students (55%) feel that current textbooks do not adequately incorporate local cultural elements. Only 12% think that they are very adequate.

In terms of Indonesian cultural content, traditions and traditional ceremonies are the most desired topics for inclusion in textbooks, followed

by regional specialties and folklore/legends. Regarding the influence of local culture-based materials on learning motivation, 43% of students found them very helpful, with a mean of 3.01 and a mode of 3. This indicates that local culture can enhance student motivation in learning Mandarin. Regarding the presentation of Indonesian culture, conversational dialogues were chosen by the majority of students (53%), indicating that they preferred the everyday conversation-based approach in textbooks. Furthermore, speaking exercises were the most helpful type of exercise, with 41% of students choosing them, indicating that local culture-based speaking exercises were more effective in deepening their understanding. Sixty-three percent of students agreed that local culture-based textbooks could enhance cross-cultural understanding, with a mean of 3.5 and a mode of 4.



Overall, the results of this questionnaire confirm that the development of Mandarin language textbooks based on Indonesian culture is crucial for enhancing student understanding and motivation, as well as for making learning more contextual and relevant to their daily lives.

Interviews with ten lecturers teaching Mandarin language courses at several universities revealed a significant need for the development of Mandarin language teaching materials that better accommodate local Indonesian culture. These findings highlight two key points: the importance of integrating Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese learning and the impact of this cultural integration on student motivation and comprehension. Most lecturers (80%) agreed that integrating Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese learning is crucial. They explained that teaching that connects the language with local culture makes it easier for students to understand the material, as they can relate the vocabulary and phrases taught to their daily lives. One lecturer stated, "Students will remember Mandarin vocabulary more easily if the material taught is relevant to their own culture." This reflects the belief that local culture can enrich students' learning experiences and make the material more accessible.

However, despite this agreement on the importance of integrating local culture, the majority of lecturers also acknowledged that current textbooks, such as Hanyu Jiaocheng and New Practical Chinese Reader, still focus heavily on Chinese culture and lack Indonesian cultural elements. Interviews revealed that approximately 60% of lecturers felt that these textbooks were not sufficiently relevant to the Indonesian cultural context. This makes it difficult for students to relate the material to their daily lives. One lecturer stated, "Students often find it difficult to understand material that focuses more on foreign cultures, which has no connection to their experiences."

A significant challenge lecturers face in teaching Mandarin is the difficulty students have in connecting the material to their own lives, as Indonesian culture is more familiar to them. Around 70% of lecturers stated that although textbooks provide

comprehensive language material, the limited local cultural context makes it difficult for students to apply the material to real-life situations. Some lecturers attempted to address this issue by incorporating Indonesian cultural examples during their lessons, even though the textbooks did not provide them. They considered it essential to incorporate elements of Indonesian culture, such as traditions, traditional foods, and folklore, into the teaching materials to make them more relevant to Indonesian students.

Furthermore, integrating Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese language teaching materials has also been shown to increase student motivation. Ninety percent of lecturers agreed that Mandarin Chinese instruction incorporating elements of Indonesian culture can increase student engagement and interest. "Students are more motivated to learn a language when they can relate the material to the culture they are familiar with," said one lecturer. This demonstrates that teaching that integrates local culture not only facilitates understanding but also increases students' enthusiasm for learning.

The lecturers also proposed developing textbooks based more on everyday conversations and Indonesian cultural activities, such as shopping at the market or discussing family events, which are more applicable and understandable. They believe that by using concrete examples from everyday Indonesian life, students will more easily remember Mandarin vocabulary and sentence structure.

An evaluation of existing textbooks also revealed that the majority of lecturers (80%) believed the current textbooks were still ineffective in meeting student needs. They desired the development of textbooks that better accommodated elements of Indonesian culture to make the teaching materials more contextual and relevant. These lecturers emphasized that the Mandarin Chinese curriculum in Indonesia needs to be updated to incorporate more Indonesian culture, allowing students to learn Mandarin in a more meaningful and practical way.

Overall, the results of these interviews suggest a significant need to develop Mandarin Chi-



nese teaching materials that are more culturally grounded in Indonesian contexts. The lecturers desire the development of textbooks that not only teach language skills but also introduce Indonesian culture, making learning more relevant, applicable, and contextually appropriate for Indonesian students. Therefore, integrating local culture into Mandarin Chinese textbooks is a crucial step to increase the effectiveness of learning and student motivation in learning Mandarin.

Based on the results of the SPSS analysis of the administered questionnaire, the overall findings indicate a significant need to develop Mandarin Chinese textbooks grounded in Indonesian culture. Integrating Indonesian culture into teaching materials will not only facilitate student understanding but also increase their motivation to learn. Therefore, the development of Mandarin Chinese textbooks in Indonesia must adapt to the local cultural context, so that learning becomes more effective, relevant, and applicable to students' daily lives.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the significance of incorporating local Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese language instruction in Indonesia. Based on survey and interview results, it was found that there is a deep need among students and lecturers to enrich Mandarin Chinese language textbooks with elements of local Indonesian culture, thus making language learning more relevant and contextual. These findings highlight two key points: first, the significance of local culture in textbooks, and second, the impact of this cultural integration on student motivation and comprehension.

The majority of students (65%) felt that integrating Indonesian culture into Mandarin Chinese language teaching is very important. This view is reflected in the questionnaire results, which showed a mean score of 3.6, with a consistent mode and median at 4. These findings confirm that students perceive teaching materials that connect language with local culture to be easier to understand and more engaging. Consistent with

these findings, several previous studies have demonstrated that language teaching that incorporates elements of local culture can facilitate a more profound understanding and increase student engagement in the learning process (Putra & Kurniawan, 2020; Hu & Zhang, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to introduce local cultural contexts into textbooks to improve the effectiveness of Mandarin Chinese language teaching in Indonesia. "However, although integrating local culture is considered crucial, existing Mandarin Chinese textbooks, such as Hanyu Jiaocheng and New Practical Chinese Reader, tend to focus more on Chinese culture. The results of this study indicate that the majority of students feel that existing textbooks do not adequately incorporate elements of local Indonesian culture. Based on the questionnaire, 55% of students felt that the teaching materials used were not relevant to the Indonesian cultural context. This aligns with previous research findings that suggest that language teaching that focuses solely on foreign culture can create a gap in understanding among students (Suharyani & Riyanto, 2019).

One of the main findings of this study is that integrating local Indonesian culture can increase student learning motivation. Forty-three percent of students stated that introducing Indonesian culture in Mandarin Chinese textbooks significantly helped them understand the material. This is evident from the mean of 3.01 and the mode of 3, which illustrates the positive impact of integrating local culture on learning motivation. These results align with findings described by Cheng (2020), who stated that teaching that connects language to local culture can increase student motivation because the material becomes more relevant and connects with their experiences.

Interviewed lecturers also supported this view, stating that teaching that connects language to local Indonesian culture makes the material more relevant and applicable. The use of local cultural references, such as daily customs, food, or traditions in Indonesia, makes learning more lively and easier for students to understand. Several studies have also demonstrated that language learning grounded in local culture can enhance cross-cultural under-



standing, facilitating a more seamless connection between vocabulary and grammar and students' daily lives (Sari & Nugroho, 2019).

One of the main strengths of this study is the use of a combined questionnaire and interview method, which provides a more complete and in-depth picture of the perspectives of students and lecturers. The relatively large sample size (120 students) also provides a good representation of the student population studying Mandarin in Indonesia. This study successfully identified gaps between existing teaching materials and local cultural needs, providing insight into how integrating Indonesian culture can enhance students' understanding and motivation in learning Mandarin.

However, this study has limitations related to time constraints, which limited the study to a single period. This limitation potentially impacts the temporal validity of the data obtained. Furthermore, the variables examined in this study were limited to two main aspects: local cultural relevance and learning motivation, without measuring other factors, such as psychological or social aspects, that may influence the effectiveness of Mandarin learning. Further, more comprehensive and holistic research is needed to explore other aspects that influence language learning outcomes.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that future development of Mandarin language textbooks place a greater emphasis on the systematic integration of Indonesian culture. New textbooks should include easily understood elements of Indonesian culture, such as traditions, daily activities, and regional specialties, which can enrich the context of the teaching material. Furthermore, conversation-based learning methods that incorporate local culture should be developed to enhance students' speaking skills.

It is also important for lecturers to incorporate more examples from Indonesian culture into Mandarin lessons to bridge the cultural gap between China and Indonesia. This will help students more easily connect Mandarin vocabulary and sentence structure to their real lives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, several important points can be drawn regarding the current state of Mandarin language textbook use in Indonesia. First, Mandarin language teaching in universities still relies heavily on Chinese-published textbooks. These books have advantages in terms of systematic structure and alignment with HSK competency standards, but they are not entirely relevant to the socio-cultural context of Indonesian students.

Second, the main obstacle faced by students and lecturers in using these textbooks lies in their limited understanding of the material, which is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Students often struggle to understand texts because they are far removed from their daily experiences. At the same time, lecturers are required to make additional adjustments to ensure the material is comprehensible to them. This indicates a gap between student learning needs and available materials.

Third, the research findings indicate an urgent need to develop Mandarin Chinese textbooks that are more contextualized to Indonesian culture. Students desire materials that incorporate local cultural themes, such as traditions, culinary delights, or national celebrations, which can be used to enrich vocabulary and strengthen cross-cultural understanding. Thus, textbooks serve not only as language learning media but also as a vehicle for intercultural education.

Fourth, the proposed textbook development strategy integrates local Indonesian cultural content into a standard Mandarin Chinese learning framework. This integration is carried out without neglecting international competency standards, thus remaining aligned with HSK outcomes. With this approach, the resulting textbooks are expected to be more relevant, practical, and able to increase student learning motivation while strengthening cultural understanding in the context of Mandarin Chinese learning in Indonesia.

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