

Transformation of the Story of Malin Kundang in Digital Media: An Analysis of Narrative and Visual Content on Social Media

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Abstract

The transformation of folklore in digital media, particularly on short video platforms, presents challenges related to narrative consistency and visual representation that still honors cultural values. In this context, this research analyzes how the transformation of the story of Malin Kundang is manifested through narrative content and visuals on three TikTok accounts: Gromore Studio, Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif, and animasiceritaindonesia. The analysis shows that although all three maintain the core structure of the story, each account employs different narrative and visual strategies based on their audience orientation. Gromore Studio features a complex narrative with realistic visuals and strong Minangkabau cultural symbols; Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif adopts a child-friendly educational cartoon style; while animasiceritaindonesia presents the most concise version through minimalist illustrations with a humorous tone. These findings emphasize that the transformation of folklore in digital media not only serves as entertainment but also has the potential to support the preservation of moral and cultural values and its use in school learning.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Folklore, Malin Kundang, Social Media, TikTok.

Introduction

The development of digital technology has significantly changed the way society accesses, produces, and distributes folklore. In the past, folklore was passed down through oral traditions, family tales, or reading books, but now narratives are present in the form of short videos, animations, digital illustrations, and storytelling that is reconstructed by social media users. This transformation demands a new form of literacy, particularly digital literacy, where people need not only to understand the content of the stories but also to interpret the presentation format, visual symbols, and the cultural context embedded in each digital production. In the context of education, this demand becomes increasingly important as students now interact more with folklore through digital platforms rather than through textbooks. Therefore, teachers need to possess adequate digital literacy to guide students in recognizing, critiquing, and appreciating folklore in digital formats, while ensuring that the moral and cultural values contained within it can still be understood in their entirety.

The transformation of folklore into digital forms is increasingly visible on social media. This transformation not only modifies the delivery format but also influences the narrative structure conveyed verbally or in text within videos, as well as visual elements such as illustrations, animations, settings, and cultural symbols that shape the meaning of the original stories. This digital representation often follows the aesthetic patterns of the platform, such as short video durations, dramatic storytelling styles, or the use of eye-catching visual effects to attract user attention. This condition results in a wider range of interpretations of folklore and has the potential to shift meanings far from their traditional forms. Therefore, it is necessary to have research objects that can clearly depict how cultural narratives adapt in the digital space, while also demonstrating how cultural values are preserved, simplified, or reconstructed within the modern social media ecosystem.

The folklore of Malin Kundang from West Sumatra serves as a highly relevant example for study. This story is not only popular and widely recognized throughout Indonesia, but it is also rich in moral values about filial piety, responsibility, and the consequences of arrogance. These values are still very much needed to shape the character of Indonesia's younger generation (Bahri & Fikri, 2024). Additionally, several studies have shown that Malin Kundang has a clear and consistent narrative structure, namely the introduction of characters, a conflict stemming from disobedience to a mother, a climax in the form of a curse, and an ending that entails punishment, a structure that allows the moral message to be conveyed emphatically (Vavalin et al., 2025). Because of this strong structure and clear moral message, Malin Kundang is often used as material in character education and teaching materials in schools (Sholikhah, 2023). Furthermore, teachers can develop students'

critical thinking skills while fostering concern for the preservation of Indonesia's culture through the introduction and study of folklore as part of the literary heritage that needs to be maintained.

With the advent of the digital era and the increasing use of social media, the Malin Kundang folklore has been adapted into various modern formats, such as animated films, audio-visual content, and other digital offerings. Recent research on the "media transfer" of folklore indicates that such transformation can bring changes in visual elements, presentation tempo, and emphasis on certain values (Piliang & Andriyani, 2024). This phenomenon reinforces the relevance of Malin Kundang as a study object, as digital adaptation allows for the preservation of folklore but also opens up the possibility for modification, whether in plot, characters, or moral values, so that the public can understand them. In this context, it is important to examine how specific media platforms shape the way folklore is reinterpreted and represented to the younger generation. Among various digital platforms, TikTok stands out as the most prominent medium in this transformation process (Hapsari, 2024).

The We Are Social & Meltwater report (2024) indicates that Indonesia is among the countries with the highest growth in TikTok users, with the majority of users aged 13–24. This age group is also the generation that is least exposed to traditional cultural sources directly, making TikTok their primary gateway to learn about or even reshape the folklore of the archipelago. Furthermore, TikTok's highly personalized and interest-based recommendation algorithm allows folklore content to spread rapidly even if its creators are not major celebrities.

TikTok also has the characteristic of short video formats that demand visual and narrative efficiency. This format aligns well with contemporary digital consumption styles, especially among teenagers and young people who frequently use their mobile phones (Fatimah & Nasir, 2025). This condition encourages creators to condense storylines, simplify conflicts, or highlight certain dramatic elements to align with users' consumption rhythms. This phenomenon is supported by findings from digital literacy research stating that short video platforms trigger compressive storytelling, which is the tendency to simplify storylines to fit the aesthetics of digital media (Scolari, 2021). As a result, folk stories like Malin Kundang are not always presented in their complete form but rather through creative adaptations that better suit the preferences of the younger generation.

This situation makes TikTok not only a space for preserving folk stories but also an arena for cultural negotiation, where local values intersect with global tastes and the logic of virality. This is why analyzing the transformation of folk stories on TikTok is essential, particularly to see how the narrative and visual changes affect the younger generation's understanding of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Therefore, TikTok is chosen not just for its popularity but because it has a direct influence on how the current generation reads, interprets, and reconstructs folk stories.

Based on this, this research aims to explain how the narrative and visual elements of the Malin Kundang story are represented, adapted, and modified in TikTok content. This finding can also be utilized to strengthen digital literacy among students in schools, especially in understanding, interpreting, and critiquing cultural content consumed online. Additionally, the research results are expected to assist teachers in designing digital media-based learning that is more contextual and relatable to students' daily experiences. Thus, students not only recognize folk stories as part of cultural heritage but also appreciate and assess their representations in the ever-evolving digital media environment.

The novelty of this research lies in its analytical focus that integrates narrative and visual elements simultaneously on the TikTok platform, an approach that is still rarely found in digital folk story studies. The narrative analysis in this research refers to contemporary narrative structuralism, as explained by (D. Herman, 2003; Ryan et al., 2004) which emphasizes that story transformations in digital media always involve changes in plot structure, perspective, and characterization influenced by platform characteristics. Meanwhile, the visual analysis refers to theories of multimodality and recent visual representation (Bateman et al., 2017; Jewit et al., 2025) which explain how visual elements, including color, cultural symbols, artistic layout, and illustration style, construct social and cultural meanings in digital media.

Previous research often highlighted folk story adaptations in the form of long animations (Wozniak, 2025) or examined digital storytelling on the YouTube platform (Ndandara & Ludji, 2025). There is also research on cultural preservation through social media in general (Diego et al., 2024), but none specifically study the relationship between narrative simplification, digital visual styles, and the reinterpretation of cultural values in short TikTok videos. Therefore, this research contributes new insights by presenting a comprehensive analysis of the narrative and visual representation of the Malin Kundang story in short video format, which has become a popular

medium for the younger generation and holds the potential to support learning and cultural preservation in schools.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a content analysis method. This approach was chosen to examine how the folk tale of Malin Kundang is transformed into a digital format through TikTok content, focusing on both narrative and visual aspects. Qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to explore meanings, patterns, and changes in story elements that emerge in digital videos (Tracy, 2024).

The primary data source for this study consists of videos of the Malin Kundang story uploaded by three selected TikTok creators using purposive sampling criteria: 1) the videos present the Malin Kundang story in its entirety, either in a full single video or divided into several parts; 2) the videos were published within the last 1–2 years; 3) the duration aligns with TikTok format; 4) they have a minimum total interaction of ≥ 500 likes for each story title; and 5) they contain narratives and visuals that can be analyzed.

The Malin Kundang stories analyzed in this research come from three TikTok creator accounts: Gromore Studio (@kisah.nusantara), Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif (@riri.cerita), and animasiceritaindonesia (@animasiceritaindonesia). Based on the latest observation on December 6, 2025, at 07:30 WIB, Gromore Studio was found to have 698.000 followers and presented the Malin Kundang story in four parts. The first part garnered 558.900 views with a duration of 5 minutes 55 seconds, and 9.337 likes. The second part achieved 419.800 views with a duration of 6 minutes 31 seconds, and 8.732 likes. The third part received 3.6 million views with a duration of 7 minutes 38 seconds, and 76.700 likes. Meanwhile, the fourth part had 8.0 million views, lasting 7 minutes, and 187.700 likes.

Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif had 50.600 followers and uploaded the Malin Kundang story in two parts. The first part received 255.600 views with a duration of 4 minutes 58 seconds, and 2,418 likes. The second part obtained 25.800 views with a duration of 4 minutes 22 seconds, and 314 likes. In contrast, the animasiceritaindonesia account had 14.100 followers and presented the Malin Kundang story in five parts. The first part secured 879 views with a duration of 1 minute 21 seconds, and 25 likes. The second part received 1,075 views with a duration of 1 minute 8 seconds, and 24 likes. The third part had 538 views for 1 minute 15 seconds, and 15 likes. The fourth part attained 1,286 views with a duration of 1 minute 16 seconds, and 14 likes. The fifth part showed a significant increase, amassing 91.100 views with a duration of 1 minute 31 seconds, and 524 likes.

The data analyzed includes narrative and visual elements present in each piece of content. The units of analysis in this research encompass two main elements: 1) narrative elements, which include duration and structure, theme, character development, plot, setting, narrator and language style, conflict and resolution, moral messages, and story orientation; 2) visual elements, which consist of illustration style, visual details and textures, character representation, dominant colors, Minang cultural symbols, visual setting, visual modernization, visual effects, and artistic arrangement.

The data collection techniques used are online observation, documentation, and note-taking and coding. The researcher conducted online observations by examining various Malin Kundang videos on TikTok through search features, recommendations, and hashtags (#malinkundang, #dongengnusantara, #storytelling). Documentation involved capturing important illustrations and visuals corresponding to the analysis unit. Note-taking and coding were carried out by creating a coding sheet to systematically record narrative and visual elements. The primary instrument in this research is the researcher themselves, acting as the main analytical tool, while a supporting instrument includes a sheet for analyzing narrative and visual elements, focusing on categories, indicators, and findings.

The data analysis in this research utilizes the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data reduction stage, the researcher transcribes video narratives, records dialogues, captures important visual frames, and codes narrative and visual elements. The reduced data is then presented in the form of matrices and tables to map out patterns in the plot, characters, conflicts, moral messages, illustration styles, cultural symbols, and visual modernization that emerge across the three TikTok accounts. The final stage, involving conclusion drawing and verification, is conducted by interpreting the forms of transformation of the Malin Kundang story in each content, ensuring the consistency of findings, and linking them to implications for cultural preservation and their relevance for elementary school education (Miles et al., 2014). The validity of the research data

includes: 1) source triangulation, 2) theory triangulation, 3) peer debriefing with research colleagues to ensure consistent interpretation, and 4) audit trail, which involves keeping records of the analysis process to ensure research transparency.

Result and Discussion

This section presents the main findings of the research regarding the representation of narrative and visual elements in the story of Malin Kundang, which has been adapted into short video format on the TikTok platform by three creators: Gromore Studio, Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif, and animasiceritaindonesia. The analysis focuses on the story structure, the techniques used in oral or textual narration, and the visual elements that appear in each content. The findings indicate not only variations in how the creators reinterpret the folk tale but also reveal how moral messages and cultural values undergo simplification, emphasis, or transformation according to the characteristics of digital media and audience preferences. Additionally, the results of this research are discussed in relation to digital literacy among students and teachers in schools, especially in the context of how cultural content on social media can be utilized as a relevant, critical, and contextual learning resource.

Narrative Elements of the Malin Kundang Story

The analysis of narrative elements includes duration and structure, theme, characterization, plot, setting, conflict and resolution, narrator and language style, moral message, as well as story orientation (D. Herman, 2011; L. Herman & Vervaeck, 2019). Based on the analysis results, the three creator accounts show differences in presentation style, narrative depth, and visual complexity in representing the Malin Kundang story. Gromore Studio, as the account with the largest number of followers, presents a relatively complete and detailed narrative. Each part of its video has a longer duration compared to the other two accounts, allowing for a more comprehensive presentation of the storyline, including the introduction, conflict, climax, and conclusion. The narrative tends to follow the traditional version, although there are some simplifications in dialogue to fit the characteristics of fast and easily digestible digital content for TikTok users.

The main theme of the story focuses on a child's disobedience towards their mother. This is a classic moral message in Indonesian folklore, which in this version is emphasized through intense visuals and dialogue, especially when Malin, who has become successful with a large ship and a beautiful wife, returns to his hometown but refuses to acknowledge his mother. Malin pushes his mother down to emphasize that he no longer has a mother. This scene shows both a physical and internal conflict experienced by Malin between his origins and the self-image he wants to maintain in front of his wife.

The characterization in this animation shows the transformation of Malin from a diligent poor child to an arrogant figure after achieving success. Meanwhile, Mande Rubayah is depicted as a loving and loyal mother, visualized through scenes of her routinely waiting for Malin's ship to dock at the beach. Malin's wife is portrayed as a figure that strengthens the conflict, as she looks down on Mande Rubayah and influences Malin to reject his mother's existence.

The Malin Kundang animation produced by Gromore Studio presents a complex narrative structure through the use of a mixed plot, which combines both forward and backward narratives. The story begins with beautiful views of the sea and beach, setting the stage for the appearance of teenage Malin working on a ship with a trader. This opening indicates that the plot does not start from Malin's childhood but from his phase of wandering, thus forming a flashback narrative structure.

The setting in the animation includes the sea, beach, port, Mande Rubayah's simple house, Malin's wife's luxurious house, and the trading ship that serves as the arena for Malin's identity formation. Although West Sumatra is not explicitly mentioned, its visual representation supports the context of Indonesian folk stories. The narrative then moves back to Malin's childhood, showing a scene where he falls and gets hurt; this scar is used by Mande Rubayah as evidence of their relationship.

The story's resolution is built through a clear moral consequence. After being rejected by Malin, Mande Rubayah prays for divine justice: "If he is not my child, I forgive his actions. But if he is truly my child, I ask for Your justice, God." This prayer catalyzes the destruction of Malin's ship during a storm. Visual scenes show the ship wrecked, his wife dead, and Malin stranded alone on the beach in despair. In the end, Malin cries and begs for his mother's forgiveness before his body gradually turns to stone. This tragic conclusion strongly emphasizes that pride and disobedience

towards parents lead to severe consequences. Overall, Gromore Studio's animation manages to present a more detailed and emotional version of Malin Kundang, with a duration of about 26 minutes divided into four parts. This animation highlights the moral message regarding the importance of respecting one's mother, being honest, and not being harsh toward parents.

The adaptation of Malin Kundang by Riri Interactive Children's Stories presents a more concise and educational storytelling experience with a duration of nearly ten minutes divided into two parts. The main theme revolves around a child's disobedience towards their parents, but the delivery is made more explicit and straightforward for children to understand. The narrator plays a dominant role in developing the characters, for example, when describing young Malin, who is somewhat naughty but diligent in helping his mother, hardworking in fishing, and cheerful. However, that character changes when Malin becomes an adult. After achieving success and marrying a wealthy woman abroad, Malin becomes arrogant and refuses to acknowledge his mother. The character of Malin's wife is also portrayed as someone who belittles Malin's mother.

The plot in this version follows a linear narrative, starting from Malin's childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. The simplification of the plot is evident in the development of supporting characters and the background, which is not explained as complexly as in traditional versions. The setting is clearly and consistently visualized, including the sea, beach, Malin's mother's hut, and the market as a location for social interaction. The visual storytelling is packaged in a bright and educational animation style, which indirectly influences the audience's interpretation, particularly in understanding the intensity of the conflict. The main conflict is built when Malin returns to his hometown and refuses to acknowledge his mother, further reinforced by the contemptuous response of his wife. In that moment, the conflict arises not only in verbal form but also in physical conflict when Malin pushes his mother, causing her to fall, although the visuals are presented gently to suit a children's audience. Additionally, there is an inner conflict within Malin seen through his moment of hesitation before he ultimately chooses to follow his wife's wishes and his social ego. Thus, Riri Interactive Children's Stories maintains the intensity of conflict but packages it in a more educational and safe visual style for early childhood viewers.

The conclusion of the story still follows the moral pattern of Nusantara folklore, where a mother's prayers in distress are answered by God. After Malin's mother prays for justice, a great storm destroys Malin's ship and everything on it, including killing his wife. Malin gets stranded on an island, regrets his actions, begs for forgiveness from his mother, and ultimately turns to stone. This ending emphasizes the moral message conveyed explicitly, namely that children must respect and love their parents and should not be arrogant when they achieve success. The simplification of structure and the dominance of the narrator slightly reduce the depth of cultural meaning found in traditional versions. Nevertheless, this approach is effective in making the story more accessible and understandable for children as a means of character education.

Meanwhile, the animasiceritaindonesia account presents a simpler and more modern narrative approach, both in terms of plot and visuals, with very short durations of around five minutes divided into five parts. The main theme revolves around the child-mother relationship, namely a disobedient child, but the delivery is packaged in a lighter and more entertaining manner. The narrator uses contemporary and humorous language, so the characterization feels more relaxed compared to traditional versions. Malin is depicted as a teenager who is hardworking and obedient to his mother. After a merchant asks him to go abroad, Malin requests his mother's permission. Malin's success abroad is shown briefly, highlighting his hard work, achievements, and marriage. Meanwhile, Malin's mother is portrayed as a loving mother, evidenced by her waiting for Malin to return.

The storyline progresses forward and is condensed to fit the duration. The story begins with Malin wanting to go abroad until he returns to his hometown. The settings include a simple village, Malin's mother's house, a port, and the sea, even though they are visualized without deep detail. The conflict peaks when Malin returns to his hometown with his wife and refuses to acknowledge his biological mother. Unlike the previous two versions, Malin's wife in this story does not try to influence him to reject his mother. Additionally, when the rejection occurs, Malin's mother only cries and then goes home, thus maintaining the intensity of the conflict without visual violence. The resolution in this version also differs significantly.

In the previous two versions, disaster strikes after Malin's mother prays for justice from God. However, in this version, the sky becomes furious when Malin denies his mother. Suddenly, it becomes dark, and there is much lightning. Malin, frightened, runs after his mother to apologize and beg for forgiveness. However, his body slowly turns to stone. Upon seeing her son's condition, Malin's mother cannot bear it and forgives him. In the end, they all live happily. This more optimistic

ending emphasizes an additional moral message, namely the importance of mutual forgiveness alongside the obligation to respect and love one's parents. The adaptation by animasiceritaindonesia has presented a children's-friendly, light, and moralistic folk tale model, albeit with the consequence of a simplification of cultural meaning and depth of conflict compared to more traditional versions.

From a narrative element perspective, all three accounts maintain the core structure of the Malin Kundang story, including Malin's life journey, his success abroad, his rejection of his mother, and the curse that follows as a consequence. However, in-depth analysis shows that each account presents a different narrative approach and reflects a unique storytelling orientation. Gromore Studio presents the most complex and dramatic version with a mixed plot, detailed settings, and emotional and physical conflict portrayal. Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif offers a concise forward plot dominated by the narrator, with more explicit characterizations and an educational visual style, making the moral messages delivered directly and easily understood by children. Meanwhile, animasiceritaindonesia opts for the simplest style with a very short duration, modern and humorous narration, and a different story resolution that highlights the value of forgiveness as a conclusion. The variations in language style, conflict intensity, plot simplification, and moral message emphasis reflect the efforts of each account to adapt this folk tale to the characteristics of a TikTok audience that enjoys fast, light, and easily digestible content.

Table 1. Analysis of Narrative Elements of Malin Kundang on TikTok

Narrative Elements	Content Creator		
	Gromore Studio	Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif	animasiceritaindonesia
Duration and Structure	Long duration (±26 minutes, 4 parts). Complex and detailed story.	Medium duration (±10 minutes, 2 parts). Concise yet complete story.	Very short duration (±5 minutes, 5 parts). Highly condensed story.
Theme	A child who is disrespectful to their mother	A child who is disrespectful to their mother	A child who is disrespectful to their mother
Characterization	Characters are depicted in greater depth. There are inner and physical conflicts (Malin pushes his mother).	Explicit characterization through the narrator; Malin is portrayed as cheerful, diligent, then arrogant.	Simple characterization; humorous narrator. Malin is hardworking, successful, then arrogant.
Plot	Mixed plot (flashback). Begins with Malin as a teenager on a ship.	Forward plot from Malin as a child to the end.	Forward plot starting from Malin as a teenager who is already trading.
Setting	Detailed: sea, beach, house, harbor. Supports a dramatic atmosphere.	Simple setting: sea, beach, rickety hut, market. Visuals for children.	Minimalist setting, only general depictions of house, village, and sea.
Narrator and Language Style	Serious, dramatic narrative style, oriented towards traditional folklore.	Educational, clear narrative style with many character descriptions.	Modern, light, fun, and trendy narrative style.
Conflict	Complex conflict: physical (Malin pushes mother), inner (denial), and emotional.	Subtle verbal and physical conflict; focuses on Malin's arrogance.	Conflict presented lightly: Malin refuses his mother without violence; the mother cries and then goes home.
Conflict Resolution	Malin is cursed to become a stone after a storm destroys his ship.	Traditional: Malin turns into stone	Alternative version: Malin nearly turns to

		after rejecting his mother.	stone, but the mother forgives; happy ending
Moral Message	Respect parents, do not be disrespectful, justice for the oppressed.	Respect mother, do not be arrogant, the importance of good character.	Respect parents and the value of forgiveness; the moral is conveyed explicitly.
Story Orientation	Dramatic and cultural, emphasizing the depth of folklore.	Educational and child-friendly, focused on moral lessons.	Entertaining, concise, and modern; suitable for fast content audiences.

Visual Elements of Malin Kundang Story

The analysis related to visual elements includes illustration style, visual details and texture, character representation, color and cultural symbols, setting (visual background), visual modernization, visual effects, and artistic arrangement (Jiang, 2022). Gromore Studio employs realistic visuals with detailed animation, enhancing the depiction of the sea atmosphere, fishing village, and emotional expressions of the characters. Visually, Gromore Studio content features a semi-realistic illustration style with sufficiently detailed animation, particularly in facial expressions, body movements, and coastal environment representation. This visual approach makes the story's atmosphere feel more alive and dramatic, while also bringing the audience closer to the emotional tension between Malin and his mother.

The representation of characters is depicted with natural body proportions and strong expressions, such as the sad face of the mother waiting for Malin and Malin's arrogant gestures after achieving success. The details of clothing are also carefully crafted, with the mother wearing simple attire typical of coastal communities, while Malin, when older, is shown wearing a neater and more modern merchant outfit, indicating a change in social class.

In terms of color and cultural symbols, the video uses a warm and natural color palette, in harmony with the atmosphere of the fishing village and the sea of the archipelago. Minangkabau cultural elements are prominently featured through traditional clothing, the architecture of the *Rumah Gadang* (traditional house), and the use of Minang vocabulary such as *ambo*, *uda*, *amak*, and *mande*. Additionally, the background music presents traditional Minang instruments, functioning as both a cultural symbol and a reinforcement of the local atmosphere. The presence of these elements indicates that Gromore Studio not only retells the legend of Malin Kundang but also revives ethnic identity through visual and audio symbols.

Regarding visual modernization, this account retains the traditional Minangkabau setting, including the fishing village, *Rumah Gadang*, and wooden boats, but utilizes modern animation techniques, such as digital camera movement, dynamic lighting, and realistic wave texture effects. Visual effects like sea waves, storms, and crashing waves against rocks are visualized with high intensity, thereby enhancing the story's dramatization. Additionally, the artistic arrangement of the video showcases a cinematic scene composition, such as the use of close-ups to emphasize character expressions, wide shots to showcase coastal landscapes, and high angles to highlight the mother's vulnerability as she is abandoned by Malin.



Figure 1. Visual story of Malin Kundang at Gromora Studio

Overall, Gromore Studio uses visuals as a primary means to build an emotional and culturally authentic atmosphere. The semi-realistic approach, detailed ethnic symbols, and the use of modern effects make this version of Malin Kundang more dramatic and aesthetically rich compared to two other accounts.

Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif features bright, child-friendly visuals dominated by vibrant colors. The content is illustrated in a cheerful, simple 2D cartoon style that is friendly for children. This visual characterization positions their content as an educational medium that is easily accepted by

early childhood viewers. The proportions of the characters are rounded, facial expressions are made very clear and explicit, and the illustration lines tend to be bold but not detailed, reflecting a children-friendly animation style. The representation of the characters emphasizes clarity of emotion rather than realism, for example, through enlarged eyes and more animated mouth movements when the characters talk or sing. In terms of color, the videos use a soft and bright color palette, particularly with pastel colors that create a cheerful atmosphere. This color choice not only strengthens the educational function but also makes dramatic scenes, such as Malin's rejection of his mother, appear "safer" for children without being frightening. Regarding Minangkabau cultural symbols, the account maintains the distinctive visual identity of Minangkabau, such as the shape of the Rumah Gadang and simplified ornaments. Traditional clothing is also displayed with characteristics similar to those of Gromore Studio, but presented in flatter colors and without detailed textures. Malin's mother wears a green traditional outfit, while Malin and his wife are adorned in red with a combination of orange and brown, reinforcing a bright impression consistent with the overall video aesthetic.

Elements of visual modernization primarily appear in the simplification of object shapes and backgrounds. Fisherman villages, coastal areas, and the interior of huts are depicted with simple geometric forms, lacking complicated textures or complex lighting effects. Although containing traditional symbols like the Rumah Gadang, its cartoon style makes Minangkabau culture appear more universal and recognizable to children from various regions. Modernization is also evident in the use of smooth digital transition techniques, such as fade-ins, slides, or zooms, which enrich the visual experience without compromising the simplicity of the illustrations.

In terms of visual effects, Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif tends to choose minimalistic effects. Storms or emotional scenes are not visualized with high intensity; for example, waves move slowly, dark clouds change color gradually, and lightning is depicted in simple icon forms. This approach aligns with the goal of creating a safe and comfortable viewing experience for children while maintaining an enjoyable impression. The artistic layout of the video focuses more on clean and uncluttered compositions, with character placement in the center of the screen during key moments and the use of close-ups to convey the characters' feelings, especially when the narrator describes the traits of Malin or his mother. Overall, the visual style of Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif presents a more educational and child-friendly interpretation of the Malin Kundang story, through a soft color palette, simple cartoon illustrations, and minimal yet effective visual effects. The presence of Minangkabau cultural symbols is still maintained but framed within a more modern and inclusive aesthetic that is easy for the intended child audience to understand.



Figure 2. Visual story of Malin Kundang at Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif

The animasiceritaindonesia account showcases a very simple visual approach, tending to resemble static illustrations with minimal animation. Its illustration style does not rely on detail or realism but rather on basic geometric shapes and bold lines. The characters are depicted more like light digital comics, featuring frequently repeated pose patterns and limited animation movements, such as only moving their mouths when speaking or slightly shifting their bodies. Emotional representations of the characters are not explicitly shown through detailed expressions but conveyed through humorous and contemporary narratives, making the visuals complement the story rather than intensifying the drama as seen in Gromore Studio or Riri Cerita Anak Interaktif.

In terms of color, the palette tends to be solid, bright, and with minimal gradation. The color of the characters' clothing is relatively simple, dominated by yellow and red, without the ornaments usually found on Minangkabau traditional attire. This simplicity indicates that the content creators do not emphasize accurate cultural representation but prioritize concise visuals to support the short video duration (around 5 minutes). The bright colors are used to maintain a cheerful and light tone, in line with the humorous style of the narrator.

Cultural symbols of Minangkabau in this video are more minimal compared to the other two accounts. The traditional house depicted is a simple stilt house that does not showcase the characteristic features of a Rumah Gadang, such as the curvy roof or carved ornaments. Thus, the Minangkabau symbols appear only briefly, without strong visual emphasis. The clothing of the characters, including Malin, his wife, and his mother, does not explicitly reflect traditional Minangkabau attire. However, one notable cultural symbol is the use of pantun recited by Malin at the beginning of the story, highlighting the presence of oral cultural touches in the narrative delivery even if not visually represented.

From a visual modernization perspective, this account adopts a style characteristic of digital platforms, which is quick, concise, and simple. Backgrounds such as markets, beaches, or houses are drawn minimally without texture or lighting details. This choice emphasizes that the production focus is not on creating a rich visual world but on the speed of storytelling and humor. Objects such as boats, houses, and markets appear in highly simplified forms, as if using uniform graphic assets for various scenes. In terms of visual effects and artistic layout, this account employs minimal animation effects, such as cut transitions, slides, or simple movements of important objects. There are no dramatic storm effects; dark clouds, waves, and lightning are presented with simple visual icons. The presence of a humorous narrator reinforces the content's character as light entertainment, while the visuals serve more as supporting elements that do not dominate. Overall, animasiceritaIndonesia emphasizes visual simplicity with a focus on quick narratives and humor, minimizing cultural details and prioritizing accessibility for TikTok users who enjoy short and entertaining content. Although Minangkabau cultural symbols are not dominantly visual, the presence of the pantun and the character of Malin as a young trader still provide a local nuance that complements the narrative without requiring visual complexity.



Figure 3. Visual story of Malin Kundang at animasiceritaIndonesia

The variation in narrative and visual representation shows that TikTok is not just a medium for distributing folklore, but also a cultural interpretative space that allows users to reproduce stories according to the needs of their audience. Thus, the content of the Malin Kundang story on TikTok illustrates how moral values, cultural identity, and narrative structure undergo negotiation in the context of fast-paced and visual digital culture.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of narrative and visual elements on the accounts of Gromore Studio, Riri Interactive Children's Stories, and animasiceritaIndonesia, it can be concluded that all three adapt the folk tale of Malin Kundang while maintaining the core structure, such as Malin's life journey, his success, his rejection of his mother, and the moral consequences he faces. However, each account presents it in different styles and depths. Gromore Studio offers a more complex narrative with a lengthy plot, flashback techniques, character development, and conflicts portrayed more explicitly, supported by realistic visuals rich in cultural symbols from Minangkabau, such as traditional houses, customary clothing, and traditional music. Riri Interactive Children's Stories presents a more concise version with a linear plot and a dominant narrator style, along with brightly colored cartoon visuals that still incorporate cultural elements in a simple and child-friendly manner. Meanwhile, animasiceritaIndonesia delivers the briefest narrative with a humorous tone, simplifying the conflict and providing a lighter story ending, combined with minimalist visuals resembling static illustrations. Overall, these differences indicate that the narrative and visual strategies are significantly influenced by content goals, audience characteristics, and the dynamics of short video platforms like TikTok. In the context of elementary school learning, these variations in adaptation can be utilized by teachers as multimodal literacy media to help students understand the plot, characters, moral messages, and the richness of the culture contained in folk tales. Thus, adapting

Malin Kundang into engaging short video formats while respecting cultural values and moral messages is a relevant and important step in the digital age.

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