

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

History plays a significant role in shaping the character and identity of a nation (Susilo et al., 2024, pg. 550). From a nation's historical narrative, especially of national heroes, students can reflect and internalize the moral values of these stories which are patriotism, integrity and bravery. One of these heroes is Cut Nyak Dhien, a heroine from Aceh who valiantly led the resistance against the Dutch colonizers during the Aceh War in 1870-1901. Abdullah (2023, pg. 16) stated that Cut Nyak Dhien's story is one of the heroes that upbrings the story of sacrifice, unwavering dedication and resilience that remain relevant to the modern generation.

However, over the past few years, there has been a decline in students' interest and engagement when learning about history. A study by Sulistyarini (2024, pg. 1042) doing research amongst 10th-grade students at TKJ SMK Putra Khatulistiwa Pontianak showed a decreasing interest in learning history. The study points out that schools that use a traditional approach in teaching have been a factor in diminishing students' enthusiasm in history class as well as the lack of dynamic media being used during lectures, which further led to the increasing disinterest in learning. This is reinforced by the study of Tanjung, S. (2019, pg. 2), where traditional learning methods such as textbooks and memorization are stated to be dull, monotonous and irrelevant to students in an era dominated by modern technology.

Based on the studies of Tanjung, S. (2019) and Sulistyarini (2024), schools have provided the media and resources that discuss figures like Cut Nyak Dhien in their learning environment. However, the materials provided by these schools fail to connect with students on a deeper and more emotional level as stated on the decreasing interest and performance of students learning history. Most existing media rely heavily on text and offer little to no visual or interactive

elements, which makes the story feel distant and less meaningful to students. As a result, this disconnects students from understanding the depth of struggles of historical figures such as Cut Nyak Dhien, as it is difficult for traditional media to convey emotional resonance and meaningful context to students in the current generation.

If stories like Cut Nyak Dhien are presented in a media that are text-heavy, monotonous and static, the identity, culture, morals and values embodied by her are at risk of losing their meaning (Pasha et al., 2021, pg. 652). The younger generation that do not fully understand the stories of Indonesian heroes in a deeper and contextual manner are at risk of losing their national identity, culture, morals and values from the lack of engagement in history. Some examples of these phenomena would be declining national character, forgetting ancestral or minority languages and degradation of morals (Julianto 2024, pg. 172).

The use of modern technology in the education field opens new opportunities to improve the learning experience of students in schools (Damayanti & Nuzuli, 2023, pg. 210). According to Basuki (2020, pg. 45), the younger generation tends to be more interested in immersive and interactive mediums. The advantage interactive media provides is its ability to visually present immersive narratives and emotional resonance for students. Immersivity in educational media according to Huang & Tseng (2025, pg. 10) has been shown to increase emotional engagement, motivation and memory retention. By allowing students to experience stories more vividly, immersive tools such as AR help form stronger connections between learners and the historical content being taught.

Therefore, from the problems above, the author would like to propose an Augmented Reality Illustration Book design regarding the struggle of Cut Nyak Dhien as a supplemental learning media, intended to support students in studying history. The book aims to increase the interest in learning history by enhancing the learning experience of Indonesian heroes. This design is expected to be implemented in schools to aid in history lessons or classes.

1.2 Problem Statement

Reflecting on the background written above, the following are the summarized problems:

1. Based on previous studies, there is a decreasing interest in students learning history as traditional learning methods disconnect students' engagement with the emotional and complex narratives of past heroes. The continuous use of traditional teaching methods in a world dominated by modern technology may not be an efficient way of teaching history as the newer generation prefer interactive and engaging mediums.
2. The existing media fail to connect with students on a deeper and emotional level when discussing stories like Cut Nyak Dhien as most existing media are text-heavy and static. There is currently no interactive media that discusses an in-depth approach of storytelling relating to Cut Nyak Dhien.

Therefore, the leading research question is summarized into one problem statement, which is: How to design an Augmented Reality Illustration Book regarding the struggle of Cut Nyak Dhien?

1.3 Research Scope

There are several problem limitations to ensure that the research remains focused and aligned with the design objectives. The output of this research is limited to a printed illustration book along with the Augmented Reality application for IOS/Android users. The project primarily targets all genders, teens and young adults aged 16–18 years old, socio-economic class B–A as purchasing AR books require middle to higher sources of income and lives in JABODETABEK. Users will need to have access to a smartphone and data in order to access the Augmented Reality (AR) features. The book is planned to be distributed to middle-higher end schools that will be implemented during history lessons. The content that the author will cover is the struggle of Cut Nyak Dhien, this includes her early life, her fight against

the Dutch, being part of the Aceh resistance, her exile and legacy to the modern day.

1.4 Research Objective

From the problem statement and limitation stated above, the purpose of this final project is to design an Augmented Reality Illustration Book regarding the struggle of Cut Nyak Dhien.

1.5 Research Benefits

The following concludes the benefits that can be obtained from finishing this project:

1. Theoretical Benefits:

The author hopes this research becomes an example to boost student's enthusiasm and engagement in learning history using interactive media. As learning history is an essential practice in character building, emotional literacy and national identity, this project can be an example to promote the values of learning history.

2. Practical Benefits:

The author hopes this research becomes an example for students, teachers and designers as a tool that can visualize historical stories as an interactive and engaging experience. The design process in this research may show that using interactive mediums can communicate emotional content and improve student's learning experience in studying history.