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Implementation of Storytelling Method with Folktales in Instilling Character Values in Children: A Study at ABA Warungboto Kindergarten

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Abstract

This study aims to see how the implementation of the storytelling method using folklore in instilling character values in children at TK ABA Warungboto. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation involving 15 children from Class B as research subjects. The research results indicate that storytelling methods significantly enhance children's enthusiasm and learning motivation, with noticeable improvements in their attitudes, honesty, responsibility, and independence. Furthermore, this study found that supporting tools such as puppets and storybooks can reinforce the impact of this method in instilling these values. However, this research has limitations as it only focuses on one school and the use of folklore as the sole medium. Practical implications include increasing storytelling methods in character education, emphasizing diversifying stories, and employing interactive media. This study also recommends routine evaluations to measure the effectiveness of this approach. In conclusion, storytelling methods hold great potential in character education at the kindergarten level, and the findings of this research can serve as inspiration for character education in other schools.

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Introduction

Early childhood education is an educational effort aimed at developing various aspects of child development, including cognitive development, physical-motor development, language development, formation of religious and moral values, and artistic development (S. Ramdhani et al., 2019). All aspects of development are the goals and achievements of the early childhood learning process, and the learning process emphasizes all aspects of child development (Lee, 2016). One of the main aspects of child development is the development of religious and moral values, which cannot be separated from early childhood education (Fitroh, 2015).

Character education becomes a priority in early childhood education, not only within the family but also a central theme in educational institutions, especially in Early Childhood Education (ECE) (Wardani & Widiyastuti, 2015). According to Ozbey, as stated by Haerudin and Cahyati, the introduction of character values is related to the level of self-control individuals exhibit by demonstrating directed attitudes and values universal in society. Therefore, the education process of introducing character values to children from an early age becomes the main focus of ECE learning and significantly influences child development (Haerudin & Cahyati, 2018).

Character education is urgently needed to be introduced to children from the early stages, as this period is considered the most crucial in human development (Zakiyah et al., 2021). Experts refer to this period as the golden age. Character education refers to an individual's nature, habits, or customs as a distinctive characteristic. According to Lickona, the character is seen as a person's natural disposition that balances the moral atmosphere. It means behaving well, being honest, responsible, and compassionate (Kartini et al., 2021). Islam states that character is a child's innate nature, which emerges spontaneously without consideration, logic, or motivation. Good character is always supported by knowledge, good intentions, and actions, so character formation must be instilled early (Imroatun et al., 2021).

The education of character is a soft skill that encourages learners to mature into well-rounded individuals with values manifesting in intellect, soul, body, emotions, and thoughts. This education is founded on moral values influencing learners' behavior patterns and attitudes. More specifically, character education shapes personality by integrating three components: honest feelings, moral knowledge, and moral behavior. Such an educational approach is critical for children's development as it helps them understand, experience, and apply good values (Rangkuti & Rangkuti, 2020). Learning activities can stimulate children's curiosity, motivation, intelligence, and interests when effectively executed. Storytelling methods are one such approach (Azizah et al., 2015).

Storytelling, according to the Oxford Dictionary of English "the Action of telling stories." Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language defines a story as "the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings, whether true or fictional, an account: narration." Storytelling, or narration, conveys real or fictional events in a narrative or oral form (Haryadi & Ulumuddin, 2018). Storytelling involves delivering stories to listeners in an enjoyable manner, without being preachy and stimulates the imagination (Alkaaf, 2017). Presenting stories through storytelling enhances children's memory of knowledge, life values, and experiences, contributing to learning. Various types of stories, such as short stories, fairy tales, and folktales, are used in educational institutions to develop children's characters. Folktales, in particular, are often utilized for character education.

Storytelling plays a vital role in shaping children's character and personality, allowing moral values such as patience, discipline, caring, cooperation, and honesty to be transmitted through storytelling activities. Children readily accept and imitate these values with enthusiasm. Moreover, the neurons in a child's brain react efficiently and shape their personality in the future (Gusmayanti & Dimiyati, 2021). The use of storytelling as a method helps shape children's character and morals, instilling confidence in expressing their imagination, developing speaking abilities, and stimulating their curiosity (Umar, 2020).

Auliana explains in her research that the implementation of character education in early childhood education is still limited to the learning process (Auliana, 2022). Most learning activities in ECE focus primarily on cognitive aspects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. This results in other parts of child development, especially religious and moral elements that emphasize character education, not being adequately addressed. Syamsul Huda et al.'s research, also states that the character problems of the younger generation frequently observed in society and social media can be minimized by introducing character values in early childhood education and using storytelling. By using inspiring stories featuring characters with good traits, children can learn language skills and character development (Huda et al., 2022).

Teaching character values is an essential objective in ECE learning activities. Children are trained early to instill character values such as attitudes, integrity, independence, and responsibility. Character education and moral values instilled in children from an early age must be relevant to their development and have specific developmental goals taught through the

learning process. Various group and classroom methods are used in learning activities to instill character values in children (Ramdhani et al., 2019).

Previous research has shown the importance of instilling character values in children through storytelling methods. For instance, Kartini et al. (2021) utilized stories of prophets as a storytelling method for moral development, which has proven effective in shaping positive behavior in children (Kartini et al., 2021). Additionally, Puspitasari and Hidayatullah (2020) employed fable stories from the Surah Al-Fil of the Quran to instill children's spiritual and moral values. Both studies confirm the effectiveness of storytelling methods in educating children. However, there have been controversies in previous research regarding the variation and relevance of the stories used in the learning process (Puspitasari & Hidayatulloh, 2020).

Although previous research has demonstrated the benefits of storytelling methods, Consistent with the findings of Leli Halimah et al. (2020), moral education has been extensively documented in early childhood education curricula. Still, storytelling methods remain infrequent (Halimah et al., 2020). Some limitations need to be addressed. Firstly, previous studies have primarily focused on using religious or mythical stories, while research involving a broader range of folktales in education is scarce. Secondly, previous research has not specifically explained how storytelling can enhance children's self-confidence and stimulate curiosity. Therefore, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap by using storytelling methods using folktales to instill character values and morals in children while also evaluating the effects of this method on enhancing self-confidence and curiosity in children.

The research under discussion took place at TK ABA Warungboto. The selection of this location came from the researchers' observations that many children exhibited a lack of character development. Indicators of this issue included indifferent attitudes toward learning, diminished motivation, and a lack of enthusiasm. These problems were primarily attributed to using passive teaching methods and a lack of innovative approaches for instilling character values in ways that inspire children. These observations spurred the researchers' interest in studying the potential of using storytelling methods with folktales for instilling character values in the children at TK ABA Warungboto. This research has the potential to provide educators with new insights into the effectiveness of storytelling methods in instilling character values. Furthermore, the findings of this study can inspire the development of other innovative ways for character education in kindergarten settings.

Methods

This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach. The data obtained in the field consists of facts or phenomena rather than symbols and numerical data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Therefore, the researcher examines, organizes, and systematizes the data and information obtained qualitatively to find valid data regarding the implementation of storytelling methods in instilling character values using folklore among early childhood children. Data collection methods employed include interviews, observations, and documentation. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured, adaptable interviews conducted in the field. Data was collected from informants to obtain transparent and open information about the scope of the research (Sudaryono, 2016).

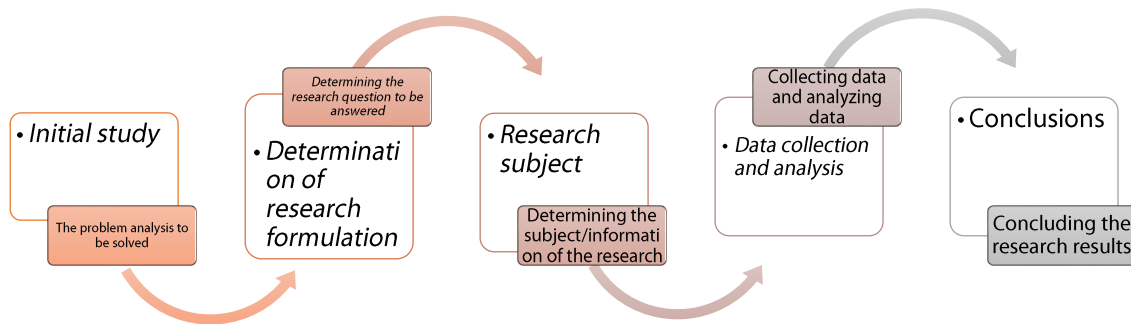


Figure 1. Research Design.

This study was conducted at TK ABA Warungboto, located at JL. Veteran No. 102, Warungboto, Kec. Umbulharjo, Kota Yogyakarta, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55164. The primary data sources in this study were teachers and children involved in implementing storytelling methods for character development. The study involved 15 children from Class B in implementing storytelling methods using folklore to instill character values. The reason for involving 15 Class B children was based on observations that revealed many of these children had difficulty being disciplined, were indifferent, and lacked focus during the learning process. Furthermore, data analysis was conducted using the stages of Miles and Huberman, which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Sugiyono, 2015). Data reduction involved summarizing and selecting data relevant to the research focus from interview and observation results. Subsequently, data display was used to present the data obtained through observations and interviews related to instilling character values in children using storytelling methods with folklore in written descriptive form. The final step involved concluding. This study concluded by comparing the findings obtained from observation and interview data, allowing the researcher to derive conclusions from the reduced and presented data.

Result

Culturing children's character values is carried out through various methods; one is storytelling, which teaches children about good and bad things and understand right and wrong behaviors. This process helps develop children's character and morals by teaching them patience, honesty, independence, caring, and responsibility, which are learned through the examples set by characters in stories or storytelling activities. It is an effective way to teach these values to children. Based on the research conducted at TK ABA Warungboto regarding the implementation of storytelling methods using folklore for instilling character values in young children, three folktales were used, namely "The Arrogant Ant," "The Wise Bear," and "The Deer and the Wolf." These stories teach children patience, honesty, independence, caring, and responsibility. Based on these stories, storytelling explains the impacts received from the storytelling activities.

Based on observations at TK ABA Warungboto, when using storytelling methods with folklore, it is evident that the children were happy and enthusiastic while listening to the teacher's storytelling. They sat quietly, attentively listening and watching the teacher. When asked about the story, the children could answer the questions, retell the story, and show a greater interest in following the characters with protagonist qualities. After completing the report, the teacher demonstrated how folklore relates to everyday life. Simple examples illustrate caring attitudes, sharing with friends, and other behaviors. This way, children could easily understand the story's content and follow the good qualities of the characters while avoiding negative traits. Similarly, as stated by Wardani and Widyastuti, the cultivation of children's personalities and morals is introduced through exemplary examples (Wardani & Widyastuti, 2015).

Based on an interview with Ms. Wahyuni, the homeroom teacher of class B, after using the storytelling method with folklore, she stated, *"Using folklore stories makes it easier for children to listen and pay attention actively. When we tell stories using props like hand puppets, they become even more enthusiastic and ask for more stories in the classroom and outside."* (Interview, Wahyuni, December 22, 2022).

In conclusion, character development in children through folklore can be done anytime and anywhere. Engaging media, such as animal hand puppets, wayang (shadow puppets), illustrated storybooks, and theatrical stages, can make children enthusiastic about listening and facilitate character development. Children begin to contemplate the story's content by listening to stories featuring character roles and directly grasp its meaning.



Figure 2. The hand puppet theater media, utilizing puppet animals, is used as an instructional tool.



Figure 3. Media of a picture book featuring animals.

Ms. Wahyuni also mentioned that "character development in children through folklore can be tailored to their interests; for example, many children like animals, so instilling character values through animal-themed folklore can foster qualities such as helping each other, cooperation, affection, wisdom, honesty, and discipline. By presenting stories children enjoy, they can easily apply those values daily. For example, with patience and discipline, children are accustomed to greeting their teachers when coming and leaving school, showing affection, and sharing with their friends. They apologize when they make mistakes or cause their friends to cry, and they help each other when their friends are in need. To make character development through storytelling easier, using different vocal tones according to the story's character is important, and as teachers, we need to be close to and connected with the children, avoiding creating distance, so that they can easily understand what is being conveyed." (Interview, Wahyuni, December 22, 2022).



Figure 4. Interview with Mrs. Wahyuni.

The folklore storytelling method has been effectively implemented for children at TK ABA Warungboto. The children are more enthusiastic about what they hear and apply what is taught, which helps deepen their understanding and stimulates their curiosity. The success of this method is supported by the teachers' efforts in delivering the stories, developing character recognition, and selecting accounts liked and enjoyed by the children. The teachers' communicative skills attract the children's attention and emphasize important values aimed at them. The chosen stories match the children's interests and are relevant to their environment. Many children are fond of animals, so animal-themed reports were presented, and the children were highly enthusiastic when listening to stories about animals, as observed during the research.

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that storytelling methods with folklore for instilling character values in young children have been successfully implemented. The change in children's character and behavior after applying folklore stories in the learning process is evident. Children have become more patient and respectful toward their peers and elders. They exhibit honesty in their actions and behaviors and independence in completing their tasks. Apart from character development, using folklore stories with animal themes motivates and inspires children in their learning process. They are more focused and engaged when listening to the stories.

Therefore, based on the observation results, it can be seen that the use of storytelling methods with folktales to instill character values in young children has proven to be effective. Children undergo changes in character and behavior after implementing folktales in the learning process. They become more patient and respectful towards their peers and adults. They exhibit honesty in their actions and behaviors, as well as independence in completing their tasks. In addition to character development, the use of folktales with animal themes motivates and inspires children in their learning process. They become more focused and engaged when listening to these stories. Thus, storytelling with folktales is an effective way to shape character values in young children.

Discussion

Storytelling represents using stories as a communication tool to convey various knowledge. Telling or transmitting a report becomes a means of entertainment and increases the likelihood of knowledge acquisition (S. Ramdhani et al., 2019). Storytelling provides children with experiences and learning opportunities to support their understanding, and using the storytelling method can help children understand various multicultural differences and group learning. Four aspects form the basis of storytelling for children. First, remember a more comprehensive main message when discussing a previously-read story. Second, adopting characters or roles children are familiar with when storytelling—third, placing the story in the correct sequence. Fourth, using media when retelling a story.

Instilling character in children from an early age is essential in the learning process. Nurturing nature by prioritizing local wisdom values can instill character values in children, consistent with the findings of Wardani & Widiyastuti (2015) that revealed folk stories summarized in story form can shape various characteristics in children, such as discipline in time, independence, teamwork, honesty, and responsibility in completing tasks and overcoming challenges. In early childhood learning, the story method aligns character education with understanding. (Wardani & Widiyastuti, 2015). Development is needed in the implementation of learning and improvisation of children's character education, which is influenced by school support and commitment, suitability of place, and a conducive environment (Lisenbee & Ford, 2018)

The instillation of character in children can be facilitated through the storytelling method using folk tales. This process involves utilizing varied techniques and engaging media to captivate children's interest during storytelling and fostering creativity to make the narratives easily understandable for children. Such an approach is consistent with the findings of Azizah et al. (2015), who suggested that storytelling methods could be executed in multiple ways, including 1) reading directly from a storybook, 2) using story illustrations, 3) oral storytelling, 4) employing flannel boards, 5) using puppet media, and 6) integrating finger puppets.

The application of learning through the story method can enhance children's learning abilities, positively impact character change, and motivate children to behave and carry out learning activity actions (Liu dan Wang, 2010). The application of learning through the story method can enhance children's learning abilities, positively affect character change, and motivate children to behave and engage in learning activities (Liu dan Wang, 2010). Children play and influence their growth comprehensively, where they are in a phase to play, develop, and explore (Wardani & Widiyastuti, 2015). The storytelling method using folk tales impacts the application of learning in kindergarten; the children obtain behavioral changes and introduce children to the origin of a story.

Using storytelling to instill character in children is executed in various ways, often aligning with the nature of the characters being narrated. For instance, animal-themed stories might be told using diverse voices corresponding to these animal characters. Such a method resonates with the view of Essa (2014) that employing distinct character voices assists in character clarification and compelling stories. In their roles as narrators, teachers can focus on correct vowel pronunciation and imitation of original sounds. Their communication abilities in storytelling can command children's full attention during the story delivery, enabling children to swiftly understand the story's meaning (Essa, 2014).

As facilitators, teachers help children develop and learn the character values inherent in stories. They accomplish this through storytelling, discussions with the children, and engaging in meaningful, enjoyable interactions. These techniques allow children to discern and appreciate differences in behaviors and actions. When teachers employ these engaging methods, storytelling becomes a more enjoyable experience, rendering the moral messages easier for children to comprehend and accept. Furthermore, the interaction between teachers and children can make storytelling more interactive and easily understood (Ramdhani & Sumiyani, 2020).

The instilling of character traits in children, as conveyed through the three stories about the arrogant ant, the wise bear, and the cunning hare, involves attitudes of patience, caring, honesty, responsibility, and independence.

Patience in children is discernible when they control their emotions and do not hastily rush into activities. Such children abide by established rules and refrain from disturbing their peers. This observation aligns with Antara's proposition which indicates that children's patience

is exhibited through their respect for others, polite speech, willingness to yield to peers, capacity to forgive, patience in awaiting their turn, and eagerness to share games (Antara, 2019). A caring attitude is illustrated when a child cooperatively plays with peers, shares, and demonstrates consideration by caring for their and others' belongings. This behavior is consistent with Hutasuhut and Yuswinda's claim that a caring attitude is shown towards someone in distress, as seen when a child assists their friends or shares food (Hutasuhut & Yaswinda, 2020).

Honesty is visible when a child's actions reflect consistency between their heart, words, and deeds (Juanda, 2019). This observation is in agreement with Yasbiati et al.'s statement that honesty in a child is discernible when they truthfully discuss their activities, accurately describe events, respect rules, seek permission when utilizing others' property, return borrowed items, and acknowledge their own mistakes (Yasbiati et al., 2019).

Responsibility is a duty or obligation of a child to perform tasks and complete assignments with total effort (Kurniasih et al., 2020). According to Abdussalam in Surifah, a responsible attitude is seen when a child puts their bag or shoes in their place, tidies up items they have finished using, completes tasks well, accepts the consequences of their actions, and can take care of their belongings (Surifah et al., 2018). Independence is a child's ability to make and consider these decisions independently while having the courage to take responsibility for their choices. According to Mulyadi, independence in a child is seen when a child carries out all activities individually but still under supervision. They can make decisions that align with their thinking and communicate and socialize with others without being accompanied (Mulyadi, 2019).

The stories employed by educators to instill character in children can range from folk tales and fiction to factual narratives. Such a diverse approach resonates with Mukti's assertion that storytelling, one of the oldest forms of folk work, carries moral messages. At ABA Warungboto Kindergarten, the conveyance of narratives employs various aids or media such as hand puppets, shadow puppets, and storybooks. These diverse and visually appealing tools excite and engage the children in storytelling. The concept above aligns with Jackman's statement: storybooks introduce children to new concepts and provide comprehensive knowledge, bringing children joy (Kusumastuti & Rukiyati, 2018). Hand puppets during storytelling make the children more enthusiastic and the story more colorful and enjoyable.

Storytelling serves as a tool to refine emotions, nurture imagination, develop children's critical thinking skills, and promote positive educational values. Through stories, children learn to manage emotions, cultivate dreams, and foster critical thinking. Folk tales are particularly rich in moral and character values, aligning with Rukayah's viewpoint that these tales carry great moral messages which children can understand and absorb.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that storytelling methods play a crucial role in developing children's characters. Through the use of stories, children can gain an understanding of character values such as patience, caring, honesty, responsibility, and independence. The use of stories can also enhance children's learning abilities, positively influence character development, and motivate them to behave and engage in learning activities. Teachers, as facilitators, have a key role in helping children understand and internalize the character values contained in stories through meaningful and enjoyable interactions. Through interactive and engaging approaches, the moral messages in stories become easier to comprehend and accept by children.

Furthermore, the use of folklore as a medium in storytelling methods has a positive impact on children's character development. Folklore is rich in moral and character values, and through these stories, children can learn about the origins of stories and gain an understanding of diverse cultures. The use of various techniques and media such as storybooks, hand puppets, shadow

puppets, and flannel boards in storytelling can captivate children's interests and facilitate creativity in creating narratives that are easily understood by them. With this diverse and engaging approach, stories become effective tools in sharpening emotions, nurturing imagination, developing critical thinking skills, and promoting positive educational values for children. Therefore, storytelling methods using folklore are effective and engaging approaches to instill character in children.

Conclusion

Character education in early childhood is an important aspect that needs to be tailored to their developmental stages. As implemented in TK ABA Warungboto, the storytelling method using folktales has proven effective in instilling values such as attitudes, honesty, responsibility, and independence. Character building is carried out through engaging media such as puppets, wayang (traditional Indonesian puppet theater), and storybooks, which shape characters and enhance children's motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Implications and suggestions based on the provided information emphasize the integral role of storytelling in developing a child's character. The stories imbued with virtues like patience, honesty, responsibility, and independence, serve as a practical and enjoyable medium for children to learn and internalize these core values. Children are entertained and educated through such narratives, nurturing their emotional intelligence, imagination, and critical thinking skills. Hence, educators and parents must sustain and enhance this practice. They should incorporate a broad range of narratives, supplemented with engaging tools like visual aids and interactive materials, and contextualize these stories in real-life situations for a more profound understanding. Additionally, it is recommended that schools implement regular evaluations to measure the effectiveness of this educational approach, thereby.

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