

# CHILDREN'S STORYBOOKS IN STRENGTHENING CHILDREN'S CHARACTER

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to find out how children's storybook in strengthening children's character. The rapid development of today's era shows the phenomenon that children generally experience a setback in terms of moral intelligence, although not intellectually. There is a tendency that it is difficult for children to communicate using the correct ethical level, also in terms of speaking and behaving politely, both towards friends in their age and those who are older. This of course has an impact on decreasing their sensitivity to the surrounding which is of course a worrying phenomenon. This research uses descriptive qualitative. One of the factors causing this phenomenon is the decline in the culture of reading of qualified children story books in the daily life of today's society. This is due to the rapid flow of technology that makes children very dependent on technological tools to play games, network in cyberspace and also carry out various other activities, spending time in front of TV and other media. All of this, of course, either directly or indirectly, makes children grow passive in communicating in the real world. They tend to communicate only in one direction, only imitating and adapting without learning the context and concepts of manners so they do not understand how to communicate properly and correctly. Departing from the above background which then prompted this research to be carried out. Researchers see the challenges in this technological era to children's moral deficiencies and one solution is to reactivate the use of picture story books in children. The study began by conducting a survey on the feasibility of picture story books circulating in society today and continued by providing an introduction and habituation to a sample of children with different economic backgrounds and quality of education to find out how the stories they read contributed towards their character in the early stages.

**Keywords:** Children's Storybooks, Children's Character, Moral, Communication.

## 1) INTRODUCTION

Literature is one of the constituent elements of civilization which is an inseparable part of human life. Since childhood, various forms and types of works have more or less shaped and influenced every human being, directly or indirectly, consciously or not. Since pregnancy, a mother often communicates with the baby in her womb by singing or playing songs that are considered to stimulate the growth of the baby's brain cells. Even when the child is on earth, he is always treated to lullaby songs (nursery rhymes) full of moral messages or his mother reads a story book. In the early days of a child's life in this world, literature becomes a window for them to see the world. That is why according to (Mwanzi, 1980) literature is considered as crucial to the mental, psychological and social development of a child. Literature provides a stimulus where at

the same time they get comfort when enjoying the series of words that are presented (Sayekti et al., 2017).

The rapid development currently shows the phenomenon that children generally experience a setback in terms of moral intelligence, although not intellectually. There is a tendency that it is difficult for children to communicate using the correct time level, also in terms of speaking and behaving politely both towards friends their age and towards those who are older. This of course has an impact on their decreased sensitivity to the surrounding environment which is of course a worrying phenomenon. (Nelson et al., 2019) One of the factors causing this phenomenon is the decline in reading and storytelling culture in people's daily lives at this time. This is due to the rapid flow of technology that makes children very dependent on technological tools to play games, network in cyberspace and also carry out various other activities, spending time in front of TV and other media. All of this, of course, either directly or indirectly, makes children grow passive in communicating in the real world. They tend to communicate only in one direction, only imitating and adapting without learning the context and concepts of etiquette so they do not understand how to communicate properly and correctly.

Quoting from Umar bin Khattab that "Teach your children literature, because it can turn a cowardly child into a brave one. Teach literature to your children, so that they have the courage to fight injustice. Teach literature to your children, so that they may dare to uphold the truth." Character formation in children is needed because children will later become the face of a nation. Therefore, by understanding the teaching of literature, children are expected to be able to become heroes for their nation, and maintain the independence that has been inherited by still understanding ethics and aesthetics. This book tries to explain further the importance of the role of literature or story books as a solution in the process of forming children's character. This will then show the integration between good children's literature books, and the role of relevant parties in the process of reading literary works.

Considering the phenomena, the researcher then formulated the research question on how do picture books become the solution in building characters for children age 5 to 10 in Gowa, South Sulawesi?

The question above shows that the objective of this research is to find out the use of picture books as the solution in building children's character in the range of 5 to 10 years old in Gowa regency, South Sulawesi.

### **Picture Book**

Reading can provide a greater stimulus in the process of children's verbal and behavioral development (R. Lukens, 1998). When they read, the opportunity to acquire new words is much wider because their understanding is also working more. Especially if what they read is in the form of illustrated readings. They will learn more. Not only learning words, they also learn to interpret, interpret, and transmit the values contained in the books they read or read. In his book, (Nurgiyantoro, 2018) explains that the pictures used in story books can encourage children to read more seriously to follow and understand the series of pictures they see, and it may also be possible to do this many times. This is because illustrated stories have the following functions:

1. Helping children in emotional development because they get an idea of the various forms and ways to express their various emotions, such as fear and joy, sadness and happiness, which are part of life.
2. Helping children learn about the world, understand their existence in the world, in the midst of society and nature. Children can also gain knowledge about the rules of

community life, both in the perspective of past and present history, about the state of geography and natural life, flora and fauna.

3. Helping children learn about other people outside of themselves, relationships that occur, and emotional relationships that can be established. This is presented through picture-story books that show family life, neighbours, friends with peers, relationships at school, and others that tell the life relations between humans. This can teach children to correct attitudes and behavior, verbal and nonverbal in accordance with the demands of the socio-cultural life of the community.
4. Helping children to get inner pleasure.
5. Helping children to appreciate beauty.
6. Helping children to stimulate imagination

A picture book is a book that tells a tale with pictures. The picture is critical to the story's interpretation and enjoyment by the children. It has the ability to directly open children's imaginative vision. It depicts all of the characters' characteristics, places, and moods, but the narrative gradually unveils the information.

Illustration is a type of art that can be used in a variety of ways. It employs techniques or styles such as realism, impressionism, and expressionism to depict visual symbols. Realistic art depicts natural shapes, impressionistic painting emphasizes the visual on the light, and expressionistic art distorts external reality to reflect interior feelings or vision. As a result, picture books can simultaneously provide visual and spoken symbols. Text and illustration work well together in a picture book. Many children's books, however, contain drawings yet are not classified as picture books. They don't fulfill the story's comprehension. The pictures' sole aim is to complement the text.

"A picture book is a collaboration between the author and the illustrator" (M. A. Lukens, 2019). It means that to create a piece, the writer and illustrator collaborate. Illustrator enriches text with details about a character, narrative, or setting. The verbal and textual meaning is conveyed through illustration. A good balance of text and illustration can be achieved in the creation of a successful picture book. It's tough to quantify the quality of authoring children's picture books. The novels must, however, have originality of thought, inventive language use, and a magnificent literary and artistic style that allows them to remain new, intriguing, and significant for many years. They must have a long-term worth.

The usefulness of illustration is cognitive. It assists the kids in telling the story. It is critical to choose a good book since books aid physical, cognitive, verbal, and moral development. The following are examples of picture books:

### **1. Children's Books**

Simple patterns and vivid illustrations are common in baby books. Because these are for babies under the age of two, they must be durable. These are typically made out of cardboard or vinyl. There is little or no text in these books. Animals, plants, objects, and everyday activities are featured in the content.

### **2. Books that are interactive**

Children ages 2 to 6 will enjoy interactive books. Children are encouraged to participate verbally and physically in these stories. When children read these books, they are asked questions, they are asked to move, they are asked to modify the book's instructions, and they are asked to discover an object in the artwork. Laura Purdi Salas's book *Does an Elephant Fit in Your Hand* is a good example. RennyYeniar's "*Rumah di Bukit Cemara*." The children are required to color the picture in this book.

### 3. Toy Books

Toy books are made of paper that has been sliced, folded, and assembled to offer a see-through, movable, changeable, or three-dimensional illustration. These are appropriate for people of all ages.

### 4. Concept Books

An idea, an object, or an activity is presented in a concept book to be investigated and discussed. Many concept books have lack of plot, but the language is easy to follow and the visuals are clear. Children's exploration to discuss about the provided objects is modeled in concept books. Concept books include books that teach the alphabet and counting. Counting books present numbers to familiarize the children with the shape and name of numbers, whereas alphabet books present alphabet letters to acquaint the children with the shape and name of the letters. To get the kids to say the letters and count the numbers, the author and illustrator employ an appealing theme and item. Animals, plants, fruits, buildings, and other objects are commonly used as the object. A counting book, *Negeri Angka yang Menakjubkan* is an example by Sadia Riswinanda.

### 5. Wordless Picture Books

There is no text in wordless picture books. They tell the story entirely through images. Words are unnecessary because a picture can communicate the entire tale. The protagonist and action are easily identifiable. They maintain a steady tone throughout. When children read picture books, they gain various advantages. They can, for starters, construct an idea of narration in the story. Second, they improve their linguistic skills. Finally, kids are taught how to open and read a book page from front to back and from left to right. Finally, they realize that they have the ability to create a story.

### 6. Picture Story Books

The most prevalent sort of picture book is a picture storybook. To explain the story, it uses a good combination of words and visuals. The story's text is enhanced by illustrations. This book is typically aimed at children aged 4 to 7, but many of the best picture books are suitable for youngsters aged 8 and older. The best picture stories use rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, as well as recurring patterns, onomatopoeia, simile, and memorable vocabulary. Picture storybooks are commonly used as early reading books in schools to help students learn to read. They contain a strong plot line that depicts topics such as family life, nature, realistic and imaginative animal and monster stories, as well as tales from different times and places. The narrative *Timun Emas*, narrated by kak Yudi and drawn by bang Odit, is an example of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

### 7. Pattern books and easy-to-read books

Children benefit from easy-to-read books since they help them read more fluently. They have fewer words and print that is larger. Pattern books are so named because they stress the pattern of words. They're designed for kids aged 5 to 7.

Pictures are more natural and straightforward than words in terms of informing and communicating. They help people understand the stories by accompanying the text and providing context. The appealing illustrations draw a child's attention and provide them with a unique reading experience. Words and visuals are inextricably linked. Illustrations are sometimes regarded as a hybrid art form, and their success or failure in converting words into pictures is frequently demonstrated. As a result, effective picture books will benefit children's cognitive and learning skills (i.e. cognitive or intellectual capacities), language, personality, and social development at various stages of development.

## Character Development in Children

Children emulate the people in their immediate surroundings. Imitation is accomplished through a method that is repeated. The child became intimidated by the things that were being done in their immediate vicinity as a result of the constant repetition. According to Bourdieu, the habituation process refers to methodical yet sometimes unconscious repeats. The child receives any signals containing elements of ethics, morals, and qualities of goodness of character carried out by the elders and the surroundings forming them at a young age. Habituation processes began in a variety of ways in response to moral signals delivered to individuals.

Around the world, one form of conditioning is typically done by parents or researchers at school through narrative. For example, in Indonesia, parents use the oral tradition of storytelling to accompany their children to sleep. A bedtime story, such as Cinderella or Golden Snail, is sometimes passed down the generations. By embracing messages that children established their self-identity, the story is sometimes their own creations. Compliant behavior toward parents, honesty, love, independence, and other forms of moral teaching are common themes in these stories.

Since a long time, the form of storytelling through the medium of literature has been immensely popular in the Western world. Parents that engage in storytelling with their children frequently do so by reading stories to them before they go to bed. Western society's tradition is a written tradition passed down from generation to generation with the goal of shaping their personalities. Reading books to children is also done in Indonesia during their study hours or when they are playing. Reading is part of the conditioning process to shape a child's character, in addition to the child who is already beginning to read.

The construction through conditioning occurs indirectly because it is not incorporated in the story, despite the fact that it is widely ingested by children. It denotes that the story contains positive elements. The creation of which, on the other hand, accompanied the story into something that children ingest. As a result, their opinions will be shaped by their consumption. It is critical to choose activities that are beneficial to the growth of the child. This is because children's attention is drawn to other components captured by their senses rather than the story's content. Observational learning is one of the most crucial levels in the development of a kid, according to (Bandura, 2017), who wrote numerous books on the subject. Many children learn by using their eyes to observe. The youngster then imitates the consequences of their observation. The issue is that they can then imitate. The issue is that they can then replicate activities that aren't in the story, such as violence. As a result, parents must supervise their children when they read or watch television.

Dealing with children's literature entails addressing the substance of stories from children's literature that feature characters that are seen as decent citizens. Positive reinforcement for parents and educational institutions is critical.

## Children's Creativity

Character building covers a very large area. So, the researcher in this case will only focus on the creativity as the point of attention. The development of creativity and children's imagination are inextricably linked. According to (Spence & Helwig, 2013) creativity is the result of a well-executed imagination. According to (Olson & Torrance, 2009), there are five elements for rewarding children's creative thinking: 1) handle inquiries with respect, 2) treat ideas with respect, 3) appreciate students' ideas, 4) encourage practice learning without regard for evaluation, and 5) attach evaluation to causes and consequences. Strong motivation, endurance, intellectual curiosity, deep commitment, independence in thought and action, strong desire for self-realisation, strong sense of self, strong self-confidence, openness to impressions from within and without, attracted to complexity and obscurity, high sensitivity, high capacity for emotional

involvement in their investigations are all characteristics of creative people, according to (Králik, 2015).

In addition, according to (Duffy, 2008), creative experiences promote a variety of dispositions and attitudes, including fun, appreciation, confidence, self-motivation, values, enthusiasm, experimentation, persistence, sharing, curiosity, perseverance, enjoyment, cooperation, willingness, acceptance, excitement, reflection, self-esteem, concern, self-discipline, evaluation, concentration, helpfulness, pleasure, lack of inhibition, and respect for others. According to Duffy (2006:39), the creative process in children includes elements such as expressing interest, responding to comments and questions, describing, representing, and constructing, choosing for a purpose, working creatively and creating, using imagination, exploring an experience through the senses, responding to comments and questions, and discussing creations.

Creativity is defined as the ability to create new things. It is the ability of the human brain to come up with fresh conclusions and ideas, as well as solve problems in novel ways. It can take many forms, including artistic, literary, and scientific expressions, as well as improving the quality of daily life. The latter feature, while unlikely to leave an indelible mark on human history, is really what makes life worthwhile (Clancy et al., 2020). Children, according to (O'Donohue et al., 2016), are natural problem solvers who come up with fresh methods of thinking about a new problem or addressing an old one. They break out from traditional thinking and arrive at a solution to a problem in an uncommon, one-of-a-kind way. Creativity is an important aspect of human growth and social advancement.

## 2) METHODS

In this research, the researcher applied the service-learning method that combined between learning and society engagement. The students are having the theories in the classroom as usual: lecturing, presentation, discussion, evaluation and analysis of texts in the context of children literature. After completing the material, the students then designing the service-learning project in the chosen location. In this case, the students decided to choose children from orphanage foundation named *LKSA Rumah Anak Yatim* in Gowa regency. To make it effective, the researcher chose randomly 10 students as the main object. The techniques used are storytelling and story reading to measure the children's behaviour. The picture books chosen are *Raja Lebah* dan *Sesendok Madu* (2014), *Kakak Ompong* (2019), *Under The Ramadhan Moon* (2018).

## 3) RESULTS

The researchers do the experiments by doing the observation. One of the researcher take the role as storyteller and the kids companion when the children read the picture book while the other is doing the observation list and recording to measure the children's creativity development in every meeting. The researcher observes them using the five criteria listed on the observation sheet. The criteria are: asking questions, guessing and answering, paying attention to the narrative, having enough self-confidence to tell a story in front of the class, telling her/his own version of the story, and solving story problems.

In the first category, the researcher measured the courage of the kids. The total percentage of all responses in the first meeting show the average 15% that shows a good attitude by responding to the question when the story was told, but it rises to 45 percent in the second meeting and 70 percent in the third meeting. It is because they started to enjoy the story after an intense communication toward the story. It continues to rise till the last meeting. Up to 95 percent at the fourth meeting, and 100 percent in the last meeting. It indicates that the creative process in children grows from the first meeting to the last meeting.

The children in category 2 are those who are paying attention to a story. This area dealt with the inventiveness of students. It was evident from the kids' desire to fully comprehend the

story. The total percentage in the first meeting is 10%, but by the last meeting, it has risen to 95%. When the narrative is told in the second meeting, 40% of the participants are actively focused on the story. In the third meeting, the total percentage was up to 70%, and in the fourth meeting, it was up to 85%. It demonstrates how the children started to grow their creative thinking.

In the third category measured children's self-confidence to speak in front of the class and share a story. This point was about the ingenuity of the kids. It was evident in their high motivation and perseverance when they stood in front of the class to retell the story they had heard. One of the characteristics of a creative individual is having strong self-confidence. In the first meeting, the total proportion of respondents was 5%, but in the second meeting, it increased to 35%. The third meeting sees a 55 percent increase in self-confidence as they prepare to recount the narrative in front of the class. It is growing up until the last meeting, with 75% in the fourth meeting and 95% in the final meeting. The story begins to captivate all of the participants.

In category 4 is measuring the students' creative thinking by asking them retelling the narrative in their own words. This area dealt with the students' inventiveness, as seen by their independence in thought and action when retelling a story using their own interpretation. They build their own version of the story by recalling and describing the story they have heard. From the first meeting to the fourth one, the total percentage of all respondents reveals the creative process. The percentage increased from 10% to 30% at the first meeting and the second meeting. In the third meeting, the percentage increased to 80%, and in the fourth meeting, it increased to 85%.

In the fifth indicator, the researcher measured the children's ability in solving the story's conflict. This point had to do with the kids' inventiveness. The way they discover a new solution to the story's conflict show how they learn to be a good problem solver. The children as natural problem solvers come up with fresh methods to think about a new problem or solve an old one. They break out from traditional thinking and arrive at a solution to a problem in an uncommon, one-of-a-kind way. Almost everyone in the first meeting didn't know how to tackle the dilemma in the story. Gradually, they apply their sensitivity and independence to think about how to address the dilemma in the story. Furthermore, the overall proportion increased to 40% in the second meeting from 5% in the first. In the most recent meeting, the proportion reached 95%. The third meeting had a 45 percent turnout, while the fourth meeting had a 75 percent turnout. It demonstrates that students engaged in a creative process from the first to the last meeting.

#### **4) DISCUSSION**

The researcher discovered that the picture books utilized were useful in enhancing students' creativity during the observation process in the five meetings. Students demonstrated significant development in each of the five categories, as follows: 1. In the first category, the employment of short stories from the first meeting to the last meeting can motivate, pique students' interest in literature, and also assist students in becoming critical thinkers. 2. In the second category, the use of the picture books from the first meeting to the last meeting plays a role in providing information and knowledge to the kid because the use of a story arouses their curiosity and passion to hear and learn the story. 3. In the third category, the use of short stories from the first meeting to the last meeting helps to increase the students' confidence in speaking their idea. Students practice in describing something in front of their friends. 4. In this category, the use of short stories from the first meeting to the last meeting can teach students how to be independent while doing something and improve their self-confidence. Students can also learn to produce something by using their own language, version, and style. 5. The usage of picture books plays a role in the development of students' creativity from the first meeting to the last meeting. It is

demonstrated by the story's utilization of their emotional development to overcome problems. They can come up with innovative methods to tackle the story's problems.

## 5) CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that the story has a role in the development of children characters, especially their creativity. These roles can excite pupils, pique their interest in literature, function as a critic, impart knowledge, increase their self-confidence, foster independence in thought and action, and invent new ways to address problems. As a result, the researcher concludes that 93 percent of children have developed their creativity. The assistance for children carried out by researcher showed the results of the average character formation at the sixth to eighth meeting. In this case, the children who finds a more courageous and confident self to raised his hand and spoke in front of his friends another. In addition, by not only sharing or reading story books, but involve children in the consumption process story books, then children will understand more about the characterises in the story. By doing it repeatedly, little by little the good side swill stick, and the bad sides they can minimize because they already understand the concept of good and bad.

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