

## **BUILDING UP CHARACTER VALUES THROUGH CHILDREN'S SONG**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the process of establishing character values through children's songs. Factors causing the fading of children's character are the crisis of religious values and the fading out of national cultural values which are the effects of globalization. Therefore, the establishment of character values must be carried out from early childhood. Some of the efforts that can be made are to build up some character values in early childhood through singing children's songs in the learning process. This research used a phenomenological qualitative type of research. The research subjects were teachers, students, and parents of the Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember. In collecting the data, this study used interview, observation, and documentation techniques. The collected data were analyzed using a spiral analysis model having the procedures of data management, reading and memo-ing, description, classification, interpretation, and presentation/visualization. The results of the study showed that it was important to build up character values since early childhood because the establishment of character values from an early age is considered to be more effective and very influential in the future development of children. To set up these good character values in children requires a long process and must be started from early childhood. Building up character values in this school was done by singing children's songs. Those songs are songs that contain character values. The strategies or techniques that were used in building up character values through children's songs was done by giving exemplary and make the students get used to doing good things.

**Keywords:** Building up process, character values, children's character, children's song.

### **1. Introduction**

In this globalization era, children are spoiled with the advancement of technology. The presence of children's games in the form of online game and the widespread use of social media platforms, such as *Facebook* and *YouTube*, make it easier for them to access all kind of information, culture, and adult songs. On the other hand, the entertainment offered to children tends to be incompatible with the age and the development stages taking place

within themselves. This particular case makes children forget about cultural wisdom and give such an impact on the fading of children's character.

The current phenomenon shows that good character values among children have begun to decline. It was shown by the fact that the rampant brawl which regularly takes place, inter-student violence, the widespread of free sex among teenagers, drug abuse, theft, robbery, and other criminal acts. The factor that causes the deterioration of children's character is the crisis of religious values. The crisis of religious values in children can be seen from the decreased of religious activities that they do. Another factor that causes deterioration in children's character is the crisis or the dissolution of national cultural values. The fading of cultural values is shown by the rapid influences of western cultures, such as: materialistic culture and the culture of hedonism.

The fading of character values and various moral defects above, according to Syarbini (2016, p. 13), indicates that there has been a shift in ethical values in the life of the nation and the waning of public awareness of the values of religion, culture, and national philosophy. The impact is the loss of character values inherent within our previous nation, such as shame, honesty, politeness, togetherness, responsibility, patriotic, social care, and so on.

Looking at the above phenomena, it is necessary to make efforts to solve the problem of the moral decline of the young generation. One of the efforts that can be made is by instilling character values in children from an early age. By instilling character values in children from an early age, it is expected that it will be the strongest fortress to fight the fading of character values, both for individuals and for the nation. This is because character education, according to Salim (2013, p. 34), basically aims to build noble character as a basic modality in living within the midst of society, both as religious people, as well as in the life of the nation. If we look at the content of such character education, it is basically the commendable of moral education focusing on teaches, fosters, guides, and trains so that the students have a good, positive mental attitude, and a noble character.

To establish good character in children, education is needed. This education, according to Wahyuningsih (2017), is a way to instill culture within an individual. Education is not only the process to transfer knowledge, but also it can be used as a means to instill culture, morals, character, and socialization. Therefore, character education should be instilled within an individual from an early age. Education provided to children should be based on humanity which includes three fundamental aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

In establishing character in early childhood, it needs to be adjusted to the development of children. Early childhood is a period when they like playing around. According to Zuhriah (2007, p. 46), in establishing character values in early childhood, it is necessary to create a pleasant playing atmosphere and habituate actions to a good and orderly life. Children must be invited to see and live a good and pleasant life together.

One of the efforts that can be done to instill character values in early childhood is by singing children's songs in the learning process. Singing songs is an activity that is inseparable from a child's life. Songs, especially children's songs, possess great benefits for children's character development. Jari (2006, pp. 38-39) affirms that the child's song has several benefits, including (1) as a means of relaxation by neutralizing heart rate and brain waves, (2) growing interest and strengthening learning attractiveness, (3) creating a more humanistic learning process and fun, (4) as a donkey bridge in remembering learning material, (5) building retention and touching emotions and aesthetic feelings, (6) the process of internalizing the values contained in the subjects, and (7) encouraging student learning

motivation. Thus, it is clear that children's songs can be used as a medium to instill character in early childhood.

Children's songs are songs whose contents or lyrics are in accordance with the age of the child's development. The lyrics are easy and simple and deliberately created by songwriters to be sung by children. One of the benefits of using children's songs in the teaching and learning process is the fact that it is recognized as a means of relaxation to create more humanistic learning (Yuliana, 2003; Yusuf, et al., 2017). Therefore, singing children's songs in the learning process to instill character values is considered to be more effective and easily accepted by children.

Based on the preliminary studies and preliminary observations done, it showed that in the learning activities in Mutiara Kasih Pre-School, the teachers used children's songs as a medium to instill character in children. The songs taught are quite varied. The learning strategies used by the teachers were also varied, including having such fun games, movements and songs, and pat and singing. Most importantly, the songs sung in this particular Pre-School contain positive character values for early childhood development.

Based on the above explanation, research on building up character values through children's songs in Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember needs to be done. This study focused on (1) establishing character values in early childhood, (2) songs taught at Mutiara Kasih Pre-School to instill character values in early childhood, and (3) strategies used in instilling values of characters through songs in early childhood.

## **2. Research Method**

### ***2.1 Types and Research Approach***

This study aims to describe the process of building up character values through children's songs. In accordance with the objectives of the study, this study used a qualitative approach. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 5) explain that qualitative research is descriptive.

Data collected is in the form of words or images, not numbers. The research report contains excerpts from the data as an illustration and to provide support for what is being presented. The data includes interview transcripts, field notes, photos, video recordings, personal documents, memos, and other official records.

The type of research chosen is phenomenological research. According to Creswell (2007, p. 57) phenomenological studies describe the general meaning of a number of individuals to their various life experiences related to concepts or phenomena.

### ***2.2 Research Data and Sources***

The data used in this study are in the form of primary and secondary data. The primary data are in the form of data about the process of the activity of building up character values through children's songs. On the other hand, the secondary data are in the form of field notes which include descriptive and reflective field notes. Meanwhile, the data sources were teachers, students, and parents of students within Mutiara Kasih Pre-School in Mangli, Jember.

### ***2.3 Data Collection Method***

The data in this study were collected using several techniques, namely (a) observation techniques, (b) interviews, and (c) documentary-studies. The observation was done by directly observing the symptoms that took place related to the research problem. The observation used here is non-participant observation. In this particular case, the researcher directly observed the activities of building up character values through children's songs.

To explore the data, this study also used semi-structured interview techniques. Sugiyono (2012, p. 320) explains that this type of interview is considered to be within the category of in-depth interviews, in which within its implementation, the process of interview is freer compared to structured interviews. The purpose of the interview was to explore the data about the establishment of character values in early childhood, the data about songs that were taught to instill character values in children, and the data related to strategies for building up character values through children's songs. Finally, documentary studies were used to obtain data in the form of documents related to books, articles, journals, papers, and other official documents.

#### **2.4 Data Analysis Method**

The data obtained in this study were analyzed using a spiral analysis model presented by Creswell (2007, pp. 150-152) with the procedures of data management, reading and *memoing*, description, classification, interpretation, and presentation/visualization. In the early stages of the analysis process, researchers organized the data in the form of data about the process of building up character values, songs taught, and strategies for establishing character values through children's songs in the index file and card folder. This process includes: moving from reading and defecting to a describing, classifying, and interpreting process. In this particular matter, a code or category is formed.

During the process of describing, classifying, and interpreting, researchers developed codes or categories and sorted text or visual images into categories. In the final phase of the analysis, the researcher presented the data, both in the form of text/descriptions, tables, and chart forms.

### **3. Research Result and Discussion**

Based on the results of the study, there were several interesting things to analyze. The results of this study were based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation studies. The results of the research presented and analyzed include; (1) the establishment of character values in early childhood, (2) the songs taught in establishing character values in early childhood, and (3) strategies used in establishing character values in early childhood through children's songs at Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli, Jember.

#### **3.1 Establishing Character Values in Early Childhood**

In order to create a young generation with a good character, it is necessary to cultivate character values from early childhood. Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember is one of the early childhood education institutions whose vision and mission focusing on the development of students' character through a variety of fun learning activities. The vision of Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Jember is to provide early childhood education that is superior in intellectual and spiritual intelligence. Meanwhile, the mission; (1) the realization of early childhood children who are faithful, devoted, intelligent and virtuous, (2) making the students to fully develop early childhood.

From the vision and mission, it can be said that Mutiara Kasih Pre-School is not only prioritizing the development of aspects within intellectual intelligence but also on spiritual aspects and prioritizes the realization of early childhood believers, devotees, intelligent and virtuous children and early childhood which are expected to be fully developed. Early childhood education focuses more on laying the foundation for physical growth and development (gross and subtle motor coordination) and reason (thinking and creativity).

Regarding the importance of establishing character values in early childhood, Laily Asiqoh as Head of Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember stated that character values are very important to be established since early childhood because as we witnessed lately, there are a lot of juvenile behavior deviations, such as rape, theft, and a very sadistic murder caused by the fading of morals or character.

In this globalization era, children are spoiled by the internet. Children can easily access the internet. If they do not have a strong character to go with it, they will be easily affected by what they see on the internet and easily fall into negative things. By instilling good characters from an early age, it is expected that a good generation comes along way in the future.

According to Laily Asiqoh, character education has the same goal as moral education. The objective is to shape the child's personality so that it becomes a civilized society. In addition, character education also aims to minimize the occurrence of social behavior deviations (interview, 27 February 2019).

In line with what was conveyed by Laily Asiqoh, Nurhasanah as a Pre-school teacher emphasized that the establishment of character values needs to be done from an early age because the establishment of character values from an early age is considered to be more effective and very influential in the future development of children. The process of establishing good character values in children cannot be done instantly; it requires a long process and must be started from early childhood. Moreover, cooperation from various parties is needed, including parents, teachers, and the community (interview, March 6, 2019).

Concerning to the importance of establishing character values said earlier, Ivadatul Afroh's strengthen the statement. As a Pre-School teacher, she said that establishing character from early childhood is very important, given the fact that an early age is a golden period that greatly determines children's development in the future. At this time, children's brain tissue cells will develop rapidly and optimally if you get external stimuli such as good experiences. Therefore, in early childhood, it is necessary to instill good characters so that children can develop into a good person and can behave according to the values of religious teachings and national cultural values (interview, March 15, 2019).

According to some of the above statements, it can be concluded that the establishment of character values is important to be instilled since early childhood because the establishing of character values from an early age is considered to be more effective and very influential on children's development in the future, given the early age is a golden period that greatly determines children's development in the future. To instill good character values in children cannot be done instantly, it requires a long process and must be started from early childhood.

Within the process of establishing character values, Likona (2013, p. 80) states that character education is one of the efforts to form/carve out human character through the process of knowing good, loving the good, and doing the good, which is related to the educational process which involves three domains: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral acting, so that noble deeds can be etched into a habit of mind, heart, and hands. Without involving those three domains, character education will not work effectively.

Furthermore, Laily Asiqoh explained that in establishing character values in our children, we need to consider 18 character values derived from religion, culture and national education goals, namely: (1) religious, (2) honest, (3) tolerance, (4) discipline, (5) hard work, (6) creative, (7) independent, (8) democratic, (9) curiosity, (10) national spirit, (11) love for the country, (12) respect for achievement, (13) friendly / communicative, (14)

peace-loving, (15) fond of reading, (16) caring for the environment, (17) social care, and (18) responsibility.

This is in accordance with the General Guidance on the Values of Understanding for Primary and Secondary Education, which identifies the values of character education that should be applied and given to the students as described by Hasan, et al. (2010).

### **3.2 Songs Taught to Embed Character Values in Early Childhood**

Children's songs are a fun medium for children to get to know their surroundings. The teacher can use children's songs to explain the situation of nature, animals, objects, affection, love for the motherland/nation, and love for God. Through children's songs, good characters can be embedded.

Based on information got from several Pre-School teachers, it can be concluded that the process of establishing character in children at Mutiara Kasih Pre-School is done by teaching and singing children's songs. The children's songs that were chosen and taught includes: *Pelangi-Pelangi*, *Bangun Tidur*, *Kasih Ibu*, *Aku Anak PAUD*, *Rukun Islam*, dan *Doa Orang Tua*.

The character values contained in the song are as follows.

#### ***Pelangi-Pelangi***

*Pelangi pelangi alangkah indahmu  
Merah kuning hijau di langit yang biru  
Pelukismu agung siapa gerangan  
Pelangi pelangi ciptaan Tuhan*

Viewing the lyrics of the song, *Pelangi Pelangi* contains the values of a religious character. The religious character is manifested by a love for God in the aspect of admiring the beauty of nature created by God. On the other hand, this song also teaches about the introduction of various colors.

#### ***Bangun Tidur***

*Bangun tidur ku terus mandi  
Tidak lupa menggosok gigi  
Habis mandi ku tolong ibu  
Membersihkan tempat tidurku*

This particular song invites children to learn to be responsible for themselves and to get used to doing good things every day. This song contains values of responsibility, discipline, caring for the environment, paying attention to health, and caring for the social surrounding which is realized by helping parents. By teaching and singing this song, it is expected that children have the character of responsibility and discipline in everything, caring for the surrounding environment, always paying attention to health, and always helping others who need help.

#### ***Kasih Ibu***

*Kasih ibu kepada beta  
Tak terhingga sepanjang masa  
Hanya memberi tak harap kembali  
Bagai sang surya menyinari dunia*

The lyrics of this song contain the values of character respecting, loving, and obeying parents, especially to the mother, which can be realized by being friendly.

***Aku Anak PAUD***

*Aku Anak PAUD tidak takut dan malu  
Karena bundaku sangat sayang padaku  
Mama dan papa silahkan pulang dulu  
Tiba waktu pulang mama papa jemput aku*

Looking at the lyrics carefully, this song contains independent character values. This song teaches children to be independent; especially it teaches them to go to school individually without being accompanied by their parents. Through this song, it is expected that students will always be independent in everything they do and it will have a positive impact on their lives in the future.

***Rukun Islam***

*Sebutkan rukun Islam  
Yang pertama, shahadat  
Sebutkan rukun Islam  
Yang kedua, shalat  
Ketiganya puasa  
Keempat membayar zakat  
Kelima pergi Haji naik pesawat  
Hus... Hus*

This song contains the values of a religious character. This song teaches students about the pillars of Islam that must be carried out by every Muslim. By teaching and singing this song in the learning process, students are expected to know and understand the pillars of Islam so that later they can run the pillars of Islam properly and correctly.

***Doa Orang Tua***

*Selesai aku sembahyang  
Tak pernah aku lupakan  
Memohon kepada Allah  
Yang Pengasih Penyayang  
Ampuni ayah ibuku  
Dari segala dosa  
Semoga bahagia dunia akhiratnya  
Amin ya Allah  
Kabulkan doa kami*

The lyrics of this song describe a child who is always devoted to his parents by always praying for his parents and begging forgiveness for all sins. This song contains the values of a religious character that is manifested by serving both parents. By teaching and singing this song it is expected that they will have a good character.

Viewing from the song lyrics, it appears that the songs taught at Mutiara Kasih Pre-School contain simple things that are usually done by early childhood and tell stories about the beauty of nature, the greatness of God, love for parents, and written by using a simple language. This is in accordance with the statement of Murtono, et al. (2007, p. 45) in which

they state that the lyrics of the children's song usually tell about love for others, god, mother-father, brothers and sisters, the beauty of nature, the greatness of God, and it is written in a simple language based on students' minds. Endaswara (2009, p. 66) strengthen that children's songs are songs that are cheerful and reflect noble ethics. Children's songs are songs that are usually sung by children, while the song lyrics contain simple things that are usually done by them.

Thus, the teachers at Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember have used children's songs to instill good character values in early childhood. Among the children's songs that have been used by the teacher to instill good character values in early childhood include *Pelangi-Pelangi*, *Bangun Tidur*, *Kasih Ibu*, *Aku Anak PAUD*, *Rukun Islam*, and *Doa Orang Tua*.

### **3.3 Strategies Used to Embed Character Values in Early Childhood through Children's Songs**

Children's songs are one of the media that can be used to instill character values in early childhood. In this regard, Laily Asiqoh, as the head of Mutiara Kasih Pre-School stated that the reason why children's songs are used as a means to embed character in children is that singing songs can make learning process to be more fun and cheerful. By singing songs, children are not going to be bored and being more excited instead. Moreover, by singing a child's song, their development can be maximally stimulated, such as physical-motoric, social, emotional, and intellectual development (interview, February 27, 2019).

Children's songs have a tremendous influence on children's development. Not only children's songs affect the development of social-emotional skills, but they also affect the development of children's motoric and cognitive skills. In addition, children's songs also play an important role in improving children's language skills, especially practicing speaking skills and recognizing sound differences.

Furthermore, Laily Asiqoh stated that children generally find it difficult to obey orders in the form of explanations without examples. However, by singing songs and giving examples of real actions, children easily want to obey the teacher's orders. For example, when children are told to line up in front of the class, children are reluctant to do so, but as soon as the teacher sings the song and stands in front of the class, one by one the children line up following the teacher's activities (interview, February 27, 2019).

Ratna Ari Andriyani, a Pre-School teacher, suggested that singing is an inseparable activity from the world of children. Therefore, instilling character values in children through songs or singing is considered to be quite effective and easily accepted rather than giving explanations using words. The children's song is simple and the construction of the sentence is not too long. Moreover, she stated that the song that she used in Pre-School has been adapted to the child's soul and the language is easy to understand. The song chosen to be taught in Pre-School was also adapted to the environment and habits done by children on a daily basis. The children's song that is taught is quite varied based on the objective to be achieved in the learning activities such as; *Bangun tidur*, *kasih ibu*, *pelangi-pelangi*, and *Aku Anak PAUD*.

To instill character values in early childhood, Ivadhatul Afroh, a Pre-School teacher, said, "The way that I use in instilling character values for students in Pre-School is by giving example and habituation in doing good things. I always give an example of how to say something with manners, showing an attitude of responsibility in everything, discipline in doing things, having tolerance in dealing with others, and being respectful toward others. That is the way I do it and I apply it in front of children". One of the strategies to instill character in early childhood is by introducing children's songs that contain moral values or messages. The value or moral message that is attached to the children's song aims to develop

the psychological aspects of the child. Embedding character values through songs is more effective because it is easier for them to learn something. It also is easier for them to learn about objects, shapes, colors, animals, and various knowledge (interview, March 15, 2019).

The same thing was stated by Nurhasanah, in which she said that instilling character values in children can be done by singing songs that contain good character values, for example, singing songs that contain the character's value of love to the god of the Almighty creator, love the motherland, tolerance, independence, responsibility, and other characters. To instill character in early childhood, it is essential to use interesting and fun strategies. By doing so, they will sense freedom and relief from their stress. This children's song is an alternative that can be used to instill character values in children. Singing can make learning atmosphere become more cheerful and make them more excited and passionate about learning (interview, March 6, 2019).

Sri Rejeki also emphasized that in instilling character values, one of the things that can be done is through song and motion. Through song lyrics, children will get a variety of valuable experiences. From the movements and songs sung, it will help to develop a child's physical motor. Children's songs are used as a medium to instill children's character because the children are able to easily absorb some aspects related to the values and moral messages contained in the song itself. I think the children's song is more effective to help the students in remembering values or moral messages in a longer period of time.

Kusumawati (2017) strengthen the statement by emphasizing that the positive impact within children's songs which teach about an act of manners can affect their mind, soul, and body because the right song can cover all aspects of learning goals in children. Some aspects of learning objectives found in songs that teach character are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

Sri Rejeki further explained, "The way I teach songs to children is by inviting them to sing songs together, after that, I briefly explain the meaning or moral message contained in the song. Then I ask them to repeat the song" (interview, February 27, 2019).

Based on the above statements, it can be concluded that in instilling character values to students in Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember, the teachers provided exemplary behavior and doing good things. In utilizing children's songs as a means to instill character values in children, the teacher started by giving examples of songs to be sung. Then the children were asked to imitate the lyrics of the song exemplified. After the children began to recognize the song lyrics, the children were invited to sing songs together. After that, the teachers briefly explained the meaning contained in the song that has been sung.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

Character values are important to be instilled or established since early childhood because the establishment of character values from an early age is considered to be more effective and very influential on children's development in the future. To instill good character values in children requires a long process and must be started from early childhood.

Establishing character values in Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember is done by singing children's songs. The children's songs sung are songs that contain character values. Among the children's songs that have been used by the teacher to instill good character values in early childhood include *Pelangi-Pelangi*, *Bangun Tidur*, *Kasih Ibu*, *Aku Anak PAUD*, *Rukun Islam*, and *Doa Orang Tua*.

The process of instilling character values for students at Mutiara Kasih Pre-School Mangli Jember was conducted by giving exemplary and habituation to do good things. In

utilizing children's songs as a means to instill character values in children, the teacher started by giving examples of songs to be sung. Then the children were asked to imitate the lyrics of the song exemplified. After the children began to recognize the song lyrics, the children were asked to sing songs together. After that, the teacher briefly explained the meaning contained in the song that has been sung.

Considering the importance of building up characters from early childhood, it is expected that the teacher chooses the most effective strategy so that the process of character building itself can work well. One of the strategies that can be used is to use children's songs as a medium. Furthermore, it is expected that the teacher, in choosing songs to be taught to early childhood, will adapt to the character and development of the child's soul essence.

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