

Collaborating 'Wayang' and Traditional Game for Early Childhood Character Education

Siti Supeni^a, Lydia Ersta Kusumaningtyas^b

^aCivic Education, Slamet Riyadi University, Surakarta, Indonesia

^bGuidance and Counseling Education, Slamet Riyadi University, Surakarta Indonesia

Correspondence Author: Siti Supeni,

Abstract

Character building has become a concern in the early childhood education since it needs to be built in their early development. Many ways could be used to support character education, one of them is game. Game is the children's natural activity which brings great value to the children character development such as sportive value, tenacity, group work, bravery, honesty, politeness, etc. The other way to build children character is through introducing them to cultural-art. This kind of activity could both develop the children's character and preserve the nation culture which are vanishing due to the modernization era. Collaborating *Wayang* figures in Snake and Ladder Board Game help the children to learn good and bad characters through an enjoyable activity. This research used small scale Research and Development method which consist of exploration and product development. From the exploration stage, it could be stated that *wayang* based snake and ladder game had not been used in early childhood character education; and it was needed to develop such game which could both give character education and improve the students' knowledge on *wayang* figures. Based on the findings of the exploration stage, *wayang* based snake and ladder board game was developed and then validated through expert judgment and field testing. The result showed that the product was feasible to be used in early childhood character education.

KEYWORDS: character education, early childhood education, snake and ladder game, *wayang*

Introduction

Hedonism and individualistic cultures have engulfed the society, moreover the young people (Supeni, 2015). Corruption level has been increasing proving that the people is no longer appreciating other people. People prefer to look for their own prosperity even if it has to harm the others. This phenomenon shows the degradation of the nation's morality. However, morality crisis could be prevented through moral education. As it is stated by Solichin and Suyanto (2011), dimensional crisis has an influence toward the morality crisis which could be prevented by reviving moral education or newly termed character building. National Regulation number 20, 2003 about National Education System has mentioned that character education should be integrated in the whole national education system. It means that in needs to be implemented from early childhood education until higher education. It is important for schools to give proper attention toward character education since the essence of education is to prepare the students to live, both academically and as a moral agent in the society (Wuryandari, 2014).

Early childhood education has been increasing lately showing that the government and the society have realized the importance of education in the early childhood (Suyadi, 2009). However, early childhood education should be in line with the children basic right that is playing. As it is revealed in UNESCO Children Convention article 31 paragraph 1, children has the right to have a rest and have fun, to be involved in the playing and recreation activities which are proper to their age and also freely involved in the art and culture activity. It could be understood that any kind of education for the children should appreciate their right to play and have fun, including character education. For early childhood education, character education should be integrated in the children game and art.

Game gives a chance for the children to gain other people's perspective and give a chance for them to play using offensive and defensive strategy (Larry, 2014). While playing, children are imagining and expressing their ideas. Children expresses their knowledge about the word and in the same time gaining new information (Musbikin, 2010). However, as the digitalization era has broaden away, the children's game has been changed with digital game such as *play station*, *video game*, *console*, and any games built in the gadget. Though some game has been built to stimulate the brain work, it is not similar to the traditional game which contain more physical challenge and group work. Nur (2013) mentioned that traditional game is indeed different from digital game, not only from the given impression, but also the influence toward the students' character building. Traditional game, even it has outmoded impression, it gives good influence toward the students' character building compared to digital game. While traditional game involve many children to work and play together, digital game makes the children work by themselves and triggers individualism. Technique in traditional game contains many important elements seen from recreational, educational, and competition aspects in which the children could make use of those three aspects.

Besides game, character building could also be implemented in cultural-art lesson. Freedman (2007) stated that cultural-art education has a role in building harmony to students by focusing on the students' needs in reaching intrapersonal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, visual spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, natural and adversity intelligence, creativity intelligence, and spiritual and moral intelligence. Thus, learning Cultural-art can be one way to build students' character to be excellent personalities. Abbas and Hassan (2014) in their research of integrating cultural-art and character education found out that learning cultural-art at school can give unique, deep meaning and benefit for students' need. It is given by esthetic experience in doing appreciation. Esthetic experience in learning cultural-art has a function to increase sensitivity. By having high sensitivity, someone tends to know more about values of life, such as religious value, moral value and character value. In addition to build the students' character, cultural-art education could also be used to shows to the children the cultural richness of Indonesia. Indonesia has tremendous amount of culture which if it is not preserved, it will vanish or even claimed by the other countries.

One of Indonesian cultural-art which needs to be preserved is *wayang* (puppet). Indonesian *wayang* on November 7, 2013 has been crowned by UNESCO as a *Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*. The world admit *wayang* as a *Cultural Master peace of the World*. *Wayang* performance as a cultural-art not only

gives entertainment to the audience, but also knowledge and insight. *Wayang* as a performance also brings emotion to the audience in which the audience could absorb the living value from the story (Arifin, 2014). Astuti (2014) also mentioned that *wayang* performance does not only give performance to be enjoyed, but also guidance. *Wayang* figures could become one media to build the nation character. By acknowledging the *wayang* figures the students could use it as a role model and a guidance in the real live. Albiladiyah (2014) added that dialogue between the teacher and the students, the government and the society, and even among siblings in *wayang* will give guidance for the audience to live their life as a human being in the society. From the previous research done by Wardani and Widiyastuti (2015) in integrating thematic learning model based on *wayang kancil* to teach character education values, it could be point out that the live performance of the *Wayang Kancil* contains character education values, but not in the form of lecturing. Through this performance the pupils are implanted with different kind of values from their interaction with society. Values like honesty, showing appreciation to each other, respect each other, loving friends, and not surrender when facing difficulties are represented through the *wayang* figures.

From the elaboration above, it could be clearly seen that traditional game and *wayang* could be used in character education. From this point, the researcher is going to collaborate *wayang* and traditional game, in this case is snake and ladder board game, in early childhood character education. The combination of snake and ladder game and *wayang* characters could stimulate the pupils to play, getting involved in preserving tradition and unconsciously implanted good character building which could become their life value to face the real world.

The research on the use of traditional game in character building has been done by Nur (2013) entitled '*Membangun Karakter Anak Melalui Permainan Anak Traditional*' (Building Children's Character through Traditional Game). Research on the use of *wayang* has been done by Wardani and Widiyastuti (2015) in '*Integrated Thematic Learning Model Based on Wayang Kancil Which can be used to Teach Character Education Values to Pupils of Elementary Schools in Surakarta, Indonesia*'. Both researches have proved that traditional game and *wayang* could be used as a media to build character for children. The research which is done by the researcher use the finding of the research and elevate it into collaborating both *wayang* and traditional game for character education and this research is specified to the early childhood education. This research is going to: (1) find out the implementation of traditional game and *wayang* to build character in Early Childhood Education; (2) develop *wayang* based snake and ladder board game as a media in Early Childhood Character Education; and (3) find out the feasibility of the developed product.

Method

This research is using Research and Development method since the final purpose of the research is to produce a product in a form of *wayang* based snake and ladder board game to support Early Childhood Character Education. This research used the small scale of Research and Development method proposed by Borg & Gall (1983) which consist of exploration stage and product development stage.

The Exploration stage contains Literature review and Need Analysis. Literature

Review was done to identify traditional game and *wayang* figure which could be used to help pupils in character education. The need analysis was done to find out whether or not *wayang* and traditional game has been implemented in Early Childhood Character Education and whether this kind of media is needed or not. This research used observation and interview in several Kindergarten schools in Wonogiri. 5 schools were taken as a sample using random sampling. Observation and also interview to the teachers were used to collect data. The data which was gained were then analyzed using Spiral Data Analysis which is proposed by Creswell (2007).

The product development stage consists of product specification, product development, expert judgment, and field testing. Product specification and product development were done to build the *wayang* based Snake and Ladder board Game prototype, while expert judgment and field testing were done to find the feasibility of the proposed product.

Result and discussion

Result of Exploration Stage

Based on the observation and interview to the teachers, the early childhood education students had a lot of activities. Most of them were physical and art. The students had sport activity such as swimming and physical fitness gymnastics. Sport activity would not only keep the students healthy but also build their sportive character. ‘The moral value of exercises and sports far outweigh the physical value’ – Plato. This quote by Plato clearly indicates that the building character through sports has been long recognized. Bredemeler and Shields (2006) mentioned three aspect of character which would be influenced by sport participation, they were perspective taking and empathy, moral reasoning, and motivational orientation. By having sport, the students were asked to be high motivated in competing with the other students in sportive manner without leaving empathy and moral reasoning.

Besides having sport activity, the students were also asked to join some art activities such as dancing, singing, painting, working with clay, and other creative art activities. Abbas and Hassan (2014) stated that learning art is part of learning aesthetic value. It means that learning art could form the students’ character. These creative art activities would be able to build the students’ creativity, group work, diligence and of course art value.

The research found that 83% of the teachers never introduced traditional art such as *wayang* to the students. Based on the interview, the teachers admitted that the students had never been introduced to the *wayang* figures. The reasons of not introducing *wayang* figures were: (1) the teachers themselves had limited understanding of *wayang* figures; (2) the teachers were not supported with enough information and sources about it; and (3) the schools were lack of media related to it. However, the teachers agreed that if there was a good source for them to introduce *wayang* figures to the students in a fun way, they would be willing to use it since the students needed to know the *wayang* characters both for preserving *wayang* as the cultural art and building the students’ characters through imitating the *wayang* figures’ characters.

Play is essential for children development and for learning life skills (Anderson-

McNamee, County and Bailey, 2010). Besides sport and art activities, the students were also involved in personal or group games (play). The students were given puzzle games in a form of picture matching, shape matching, and other brain games. In group, the students were also invited to have collaborative games such as hide and seek or mice and cats. Involving students in both personal and group games would trigger the character building. Goldstein (2012) mentioned that play is essential to the children development since the children are involved in cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being development. Play develops the children's creativity and imagination. Play also stimulates joyfulness which promotes self-esteem. It is a self-sustained learning process since it endorses a natural love of learning and playful engagement with life.

From the explanation, it was clear that the students were also involved in games both for the sake of the students' fun activity and building their character. However, the games which were done and the game toys which were provided did not implement traditional art; moreover, *wayang* figures. Game toys which were provided in the schools were more on individual games such as blocks and puzzle. Toys invite play and prolong play. Children will play longer when suitable play objects are available, and stand to gain the greatest benefits that play has to offer (Goldstein, 2012). The availability of toys intended for social play increased social interaction (Driscoll and Mark, 2009). By introducing toys containing *wayang* figures, students would gain the greatest moral values in a fun way.

From the results of the need analysis, it was found out that *wayang* could be used to introduce character education to children. However, the students were lack of knowledge of *wayang*, in which the students could learn life values and preserve culture. The students needed to be introduced to *wayang* as a cultural art as early as possible. Nevertheless, it needed to be introduced in a fun way since the early childhood education students needed to be involved in a fun activity to absorb the new information. The way the students could be introduced to *wayang* figures in fun way was by collaborating *wayang* in their favorite activity. The children's natural fun is playing game. To preserve both cultural art and games, the researcher were intended to collaborate *wayang* with snake and ladder game. Snake and ladder game was chosen since it would clearly represents that good characters (ladder) will help them moving forward, while bad characters (snake) will cause them moving backward.

Result of Development Study

Prototyping

The specification of the product could be seen in the table 1.

Table 1: Prototype Specification

SPECIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Name	<i>Ular Tangga Wayang (Wayang Snake and Ladder)</i>
Target	Children age +5
Size	3 m x 3 m (100 tiles)

Characters	6 good characters (ladders) and 6 bad characters (snake)
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The product was in a form of snake and ladder game board; however, it was made huge so that the students would play by stepping on the tiles by themselves. It consisted of 100 tiles as the normal snake and ladder board game does. On the board, there were placed 12 *wayang* figures with 6 which have good characters, and the other 6 which have bad characters. The characters could be seen in table 2. The figures were placed in one end of the snake/ladder while the characters of each figure were written in the other end of the snake/ladder. It simulated if the children had bad characters, they would slip down and get farther from the 'winning point' (goal), while if the children had good character, they would step up and get closer to the 'winning point' (goal). The product was also completed with double 20 cm³ dices and a manual for the teacher.

Table 2. *Wayang* Figures and the Characters

GOOD/BAD CHARACTER	WAYANG FIGURE	CHARACTER
GOOD CHARACTER	Semar	Wise
	Bimasena	Brave
	Gatotkaca	Discipline
	Yudistira	Honest
	Arjuna	Polite
	Antasena	Down to Earth
BAD CHARACTER	Duryudhana	Envious
	Sengkuni	Sneaky
	Buriswara	<i>The end justify the means</i>
	Durna	Insincere
	Rahwana	Egoist
	Gandari	ruthless

Expert Judgment

After the product prototype had been produced, it was validated through expert judgment. The expert judgment was done by consulted the product to two experts: expert of early childhood education and expert of cultural-art. A checklist was used as a guidance for the experts to judge the product. It consisted of 3 major area: objective, design, and supporting material. Objective was used to make sure that the product has met the objective which consist of the age, difficulty level, and character building. Design was used to make sure that the design was appropriate for the children. While supporting material was used to measure whether the manual has been clearly designed. Based on the result of the expert judgment, several improvements were needed toward the product,

there were age limitation, tile reducing, colorful background, picture clarity, and manual improvement.

Based on the former objective, the product was designed for +5 years old. However, due to the use of two dices in time and many tiles to pass, the expert believed that 5 years old students had not had the basic knowledge yet since it involve counting the dots in two dices and counting their steps for 12 steps at most. The experts suggested to increase the age level into +6 or decrease the amount of the tiles and using only single dice. The researcher chose to decrease the amount of the tiles into 49 tiles (7x7) and used only a single dice to make sure that the product could be applied in kindergarten level and not in the primary level. It was taken since the objective of the product production was to support early childhood character education. Due to the reduction of the tile number, the number of *wayang* figures were also need to be reduced to make sure that it would not be too packed.

Formerly, the background of the product was plain white and the picture of the *wayang* figure was quite unclear. The experts suggested to give soft-colorful background to make it more attracting for the children. The experts also gave commentary of the picture pixel since it was blur and unclear. One of the experts also suggested to mention the name of the *wayang* figure to make sure that the children could recognize the figure. Improvements were made based on the experts' suggestions.

The last evaluation was made due to the too complicated manual. Though the manual was designed to be used by the teacher, the experts suggested to simplify the sentences so that the teacher could read them aloud to the students. Improvement was also made in the manual.

Field Testing

After being improved based on the evaluation from expert judgment, the product needed to be field tested to find out the feasibility of the product. Observation and Focused Group Discussion were used to gain the data. The field testing was done by applying the product in a real class activity. The field testing was done in two kindergarten A classes in Wonogiri, Central Java, Indonesia. The classes consisted of 22 and 20 students whose age was around 5 – 6 years old. In each class, the researcher provided two '*wayang* snake and ladder' board games to be played in two groups. The researcher also involved parents in observing the activity.

Based on the data analysis, there were several evaluation which were given by the stakeholders. The first evaluation was on the amount of the students in one board game. 10 to 11 students in one game makes the students felt bored since they have to wait for a long time before they have their turn. The parents in FGD suggested the researcher to make more similar board games to accommodate the amount of the students. The second evaluation stated by the teachers was that it was better for the researcher to adjust the characters which are appropriate to the children's level. According to the teachers, it was difficult for the students to understand the meaning of 'wise', but easier for them to understand 'brave'. It was better for the researcher to choose *wayang* figures which represents characters which could be easily understood by the students. The last evaluation given by the stakeholders was that it the board looked empty. It was better for

the researcher to add several motivating words such as ‘great’, ‘good job’, ‘fight’, or picture of a thumb-up.

Several improvements were made regarding the evaluation given. After being revised, the product was again applied in the class activity. The same class with the same amount of students were used in this second field testing. In this time, 4 game boards were provided so that 5 to 6 students played in one board game. The similar observation and Focused Group Discussion were done to gain evaluation toward the product. At this point the stakeholders which consisted of teachers, parents, and principals were asked to participate in the observation and FGD. From the data analysis, it could be concluded that the stakeholders were quite pleased with the product and stated that it had already been able to be used in class room activity to support character education. Thus, it could be concluded that the ‘*wayang* snake and ladder’ board game was feasible.

Final Product

The product which was used in the second field testing was stated feasible, so the product became the final product of this research. The specification of the product could be seen in table 3 with the 8 characters as seen in table 4.

Table 3. Final Product Specification

SPECIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Name	<i>Ular Tangga Wayang (Wayang Snake and Ladder)</i>
Target	Children age +5
Size	2.8 m x 2.8 m (49 tiles with .4 m x .4 m for each tile)
Characters	4 good characters (ladders) and 4 bad characters (snake)

Table 4. *Wayang* Figures and the Characters

GOOD/BAD CHARACTER	WAYANG FIGURE	CHARACTER
GOOD CHARACTER	Bimasena	Brave
	Gatatkaca	Discipline
	Yudistira	Honest
	Arjuna	Polite
BAD CHARACTER	Duryudhana	Envious
	Durna	Insincere
	Rahwana	Egoist
	Gandari	ruthless

Conclusion

Character building has become a concern in the early childhood education. Many ways could be used to support character education, one of them is game. Game is the natural activity of children and brings great value to the children character development. The other way to build children character is through introduce them to the cultural-art. Collaborating *Wayang* figures in Snake and Ladder Board Game is one solution offered by the researchers to help the children to learn good and bad characters through fun enjoyable activity.

Exploration stage found out that game was rapidly used in class activity; however, game which was specifically designed by involving *wayang* to help students in character education has not been found. Exploration stage also found that the proposed product was needed. Based on the findings, 'wayang snake and ladder' board game was developed in a 3 m x 3 m MMT in order to make sure that the students were actively involved in the game.

Expert judgment and several field testing were done in order to validate the product. Several improvements were made based on the evaluation given in the both expert judgment and field testing. The improvements consisted of reducing the size (2.8 m x 2.8 m with 49 tiles), adjusting the *wayang* figures with good and bad characters which were appropriate to the children level, improving the design (adding colorful background and motivating words and pictures), and also improving the understandability of the manual. After being revised, the product had been stated feasible.

Acknowledgments

We thank *Direktoral Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi Indonesia (DIKTI)* for the financial support during this research.

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