



Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures: Building of Student Character

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to explore and analyze how character education can be developed through the integration of local wisdom, specifically using wayang (puppet) characters at Segulung 05 Elementary School. It investigates both the challenges and supporting factors in using wayang as a medium for character-building, and the overall impact on students. This approach is particularly interesting due to the deep cultural heritage of wayang on the island of Java, where each puppet character embodies moral values and life lessons that can be applied to everyday behavior.

Methodology: This research utilizes a case study approach within a qualitative framework. Data was gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis, focusing on the implementation of wayang in teaching moral values.

Main Findings: The study reveals that character building through wayang involves not just storytelling but the use of wayang characters as moral role models, integrated into lessons in Javanese language and culture. Students engage with the rich symbolism of wayang, although variation in teaching methods is necessary to prevent disengagement. Despite potential challenges, wayang serves as an effective and captivating tool for instilling values, showing a positive impact on student character and increasing cultural awareness.

Novelty/Originality of this Study: This study presents a novel approach to character education by incorporating traditional Javanese wayang as a teaching medium. It demonstrates that local cultural elements can serve as powerful tools for character development, contributing uniquely to educational practices and the preservation of cultural heritage.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Character education has emerged as a significant topic of discussion across various countries, often accompanied by both support and skepticism [1]-[3]. Although it is an essential responsibility of educational institutions, character education frequently receives inadequate attention [4], [5]. As noted by educational theorist Thomas Lickona, this neglect contributes to the proliferation of social issues, such as crime and moral decay in society. Education is fundamentally designed to inspire individuals to develop their full potential, yet the goals outlined in Indonesia's Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System remain unrealized. This failure is evident in the increasing prevalence of moral and ethical dilemmas that plague the nation.

The rise in criminal behavior and moral crises among youth indicates a worrying decline in the moral fabric of Indonesian society [6], [7]. Disconcertingly, negative behaviors such as brawls, academic dishonesty,

and a general lack of discipline have become commonplace. Rian Sugiarto highlights that there are at least 55 detrimental habits affecting the younger generation, even though many still exhibit commendable character traits. Addressing the crisis of morality cannot solely rest on educational institutions; students are also influenced by their families and communities. However, education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' personalities and character. The ultimate aim of education is not merely to foster intellectual prowess but to cultivate emotional and ethical intelligence as well.

As agents of change, schools are responsible for producing intellectually competent individuals with strong character [8], [9]. The educational process must facilitate the development of students who embody the national values that define Indonesia. Education serves as a conduit for transmitting historical values and achievements while fostering new character traits aligned with contemporary and future societal needs. Lickona identifies three critical elements of character education: knowing goodness, loving goodness, and doing goodness. Together, these components work towards cultivating virtuous character and moral integrity in students.

Despite the acknowledged importance of character education, traditional approaches often fall short of effectively instilling deep-rooted and sustainable moral values. This disconnect has resulted in a significant gap between the aspirations of educational institutions and the realities experienced by students in Indonesia. For example, Refny Widialistuti's research explored the incorporation of local wisdom into mathematics education as a means to enhance character education [10]. Her findings suggest that the internalization of local wisdom values during childhood and adolescence can effectively support character formation in educational settings. Similarly, Lis Nuarasiah's study highlights local wisdom as a strategic approach to fostering the Pancasila student profile, advocating for the integration of cultural values into the educational curriculum to achieve global competence [11].

While numerous studies have focused on character education, there remains a critical gap in research that connects character education to contextual, culturally relevant approaches, particularly those that integrate local wisdom. Traditional educational frameworks often overlook indigenous cultural elements, such as the rich narratives found in puppetry, which possess profound moral and ethical teachings. Despite their potential, these cultural resources are underutilized within formal educational settings.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on puppetry as a vital element of local wisdom. Puppetry encompasses a wealth of moral values and narratives that can significantly contribute to character education. This study aims to investigate how elementary school Segulung 05, a primary school in Dagangan District, Madiun Regency, leverages puppet characters as a medium for character development among students, thereby addressing a gap in the existing literature concerning the practical application of local culture in character education. By emphasizing the integration of puppet characters into the curriculum, this research seeks to illustrate the potential for local wisdom to enhance character education. The implications of this study are profound, as they advocate for a more inclusive educational curriculum that incorporates local cultural elements, such as puppetry, to strengthen character education [12]-[14]. Utilizing the stories and values from puppet characters can make learning more relevant and engaging while providing a lasting impact on the character formation of students. Furthermore, the implementation of puppetry in education not only aids character development but also contributes to the preservation and dissemination of local cultural heritage. As a result, the younger generation can develop a deeper appreciation for their own cultural identity.

In the face of globalization, traditional cultural practices like wayang (puppetry) have increasingly been marginalized [15], [16]. This study emphasizes the urgent need to preserve and effectively utilize local cultural heritage as a pedagogical tool, ensuring its sustainability among younger generations. By showcasing the successful implementation of local wisdom at elementary school Segulung 05, this research aims to inspire other educational institutions to adopt similar approaches, fostering a positive impact on the wider community. Therefore, this study is timely and relevant, considering the pressing need for character education in cultivating a more ethical and culturally aware society while simultaneously preserving local culture. At elementary school Segulung 05, wayang stories are used as a medium to instill character values, particularly in Javanese language lessons. Students resonate with these narratives, as they enjoy engaging with the stories. This approach seeks to internalize character values through local wisdom, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of character education in the school setting [17]-[19]. This study aims to further investigate the practical implementation of local wisdom in character development at elementary school Segulung 05, shedding light on the potential benefits of such approaches for student growth and cultural appreciation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore and analyze the dynamics of relationships between observed phenomena using both deductive and inductive reasoning [20]-[22]. Qualitative research emphasizes the detailed examination of speech, writing, and behavior, enabling researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals, groups, or organizations within a specific contextual setting. The focus of this

research is to explain and identify how local wisdom from puppet characters contributes to building student character. The study employs a case study design, which allows for an intensive description and analysis of a particular phenomenon or social unit, such as an individual, group, or institution [23], [24].

Data in qualitative research encompasses a variety of forms, primarily words and actions. These diverse data types enable a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of local wisdom and its impact on character building [25], [26]. The research employed multiple data collection techniques to ensure a thorough understanding of the phenomenon: 1) Observation, Initial observations were conducted at elementary school Segulung 05 in Dagangan District, Madiun Regency, to gather preliminary insights. Follow-up observations aimed to identify how student character is developed through the implementation of local wisdom from puppet characters. This included assessing both supportive and inhibiting factors influencing this development. 2) Interviews, The study utilized open interviews, where subjects were informed about the purpose of the interview. This approach facilitated open dialogue and deeper insights into the implementation of local wisdom in character building. The interviews focused on the principal and classroom teachers, gathering perspectives on how local wisdom is integrated into educational practices. 3) Documentation, The documentation technique involved collecting written materials related to the school's establishment, school profiles, and relevant activity records. This included photos of events and initiatives aimed at integrating local wisdom into the curriculum. Such documentation serves to contextualize the findings and enhance the depth of the analysis.

Data analysis followed a structured approach, based on the framework established by Miles & Huberman. The analysis was interactive and continuous throughout the research process, culminating in data saturation. Key steps in data analysis included: 1) Data Reduction, This process involved summarizing, selecting key themes, and focusing on the essential aspects of the collected data while discarding extraneous information. This reduction provided clarity and facilitated the identification of core themes related to character building and local wisdom. 2) Data Presentation, After reduction, data was organized and presented in various formats, including narrative descriptions, charts, and flow diagrams. The aim was to provide a clear representation of the relationships and patterns discovered during analysis. 3) Drawing Conclusions, Conclusions were drawn from the presented data, leading to new insights about the role of local wisdom in character development [27], [28]. These findings contributed to a clearer understanding of the relationships between local wisdom and student character building.

To enhance the credibility of the research findings, triangulation was utilized. This involved: 1) Source Triangulation, Comparing and validating information obtained from different sources, including interviews with the principal, teachers, and students, to assess consistency and reliability. 2) Technique Triangulation, Cross-checking findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentation. This multi-faceted approach enriched the data and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena [29]-[31].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 How to Build Student Character Through the Implementation of Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures at Elementary school Segulung 05

School is an educational institution that is something very valuable. Because in schools there is a transfer of knowledge as well as the instillation of the nation's noble values, in schools students need to get good character building. Character education should get special attention, not only paying attention to achieving intelligent students. According to the results of an interview with the principal of SDN Segulung 05, Mr. Qomari: "Yes, I think character education is very important. Because good character must be embedded in students from an early age. Because students are not only smart in academics but students must also have good character". Character education must be embedded in students from an early age. Because if good character is formed from an early age, it will produce humans who are not only intelligent in terms of knowledge. Character education must be applied to students since childhood because at that age it greatly determines the child's ability to develop their potential. Students of SDN Segulung 05 have different characters from each other, there are even students who speak dirty and naughty, so here there are characters that must be fixed in students. In an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Rindang about how to build character through the implementation of local wisdom of puppet characters is as follows: "Through the introduction of puppet characters and their characters, through role models, through stories or advice, through learning and inserting characters/values from puppet characters that are told with adapted material.". Wayang stories contain many good moral messages for students to emulate, even with wayang stories can foster a sense of love for local culture in students who currently have very little understanding of the local culture around them. This media is intended for children as a form of introduction to local culture and instilling a sense of love for the homeland from an early age. Where a sense of love for the homeland is one of the character values that must be developed in students.

3.2 Inhibiting and Supporting Factors in Building Student Character Through the Implementation of Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures at Elementary school Segulung 05

In implementing local wisdom of puppet characters as a medium for building students' character, it does not always run smoothly, there are several obstacles or obstacles in implementing it. But there are also several supporting factors for the use of the media. The difficulty faced when teaching is the difference in character possessed by each child. Through the implementation of local wisdom of puppet characters, there are obstacles and supporters in building students' character. As quoted in an interview with Mrs. Rindang, namely: "The supporting factor is that students are interested because of the unique form, considering that so far students have known modern cartoon characters, students enjoy hearing stories (according to the child's development stage and children's literature). Inhibiting Factors, teacher's voice, teacher's creativity, teacher's totality and children are usually able to concentrate for the first 15 minutes only, after that they will get bored and misbehave, considering that the class teacher is telling the puppet show using the lecture method only. Children are not yet familiar with puppet characters and puppet characterization which is difficult so they have to be creative in creating it. "There are several inhibiting and supporting factors in the use of puppet media as a character builder. One of the supporting factors is the students' interest in the uniqueness of the puppet form, the students' liking for stories because they are in accordance with their age who like fairy tales and stories. While the inhibiting factor for the teacher is demanding a loud and hard voice so that students remain conducive. For students, the inhibiting factor is that students only concentrate for the first 15 minutes and are not yet familiar with the puppet characters so it is difficult to understand quickly.

3.3 The Impact of Implementing Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures in Building Student Character at Elementary school Segulung 05

According to Mrs. Rindang after using wayang media as character building, students can distinguish between good and bad behavior, and students can appreciate literary arts. Students have positive character changes which according to Mrs. Rindang the character of grade IV students is: "The character of grade IV students currently varies, such as: naughty children, especially male students who are difficult to remind, and often noisy in class, but the majority of students have good intelligence. Some are selfish, do not respect their parents, and are not familiar with local culture. The characters that have been achieved are honest, faithful, and mutual cooperation". The positive impact of building character through the implementation of local wisdom of puppet characters is that children have polite and noble characters and children have a sense of love for noble traditional arts such as puppets and according to Mr. Qomari there is no negative impact from the use of this media. It can be concluded that the impact of the implementation of local wisdom of puppet characters in shaping students' character is to increase students' understanding of noble local cultural understanding, can distinguish between good and bad attitudes and there are changes in student behavior as expected by the teacher.

3.4 Analysis of How to Build Student Character Through the Implementation of Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures at Elementary school Segulung 05

Character education in Elementary School is the initial foundation for the formation of a nation's character. The vulnerability of character education today is very disturbing for parents and also education nationally. As quoted from an interview with the principal of SDN Segulung 05, according to him, character education is very important, character education must be embedded in students from an early age. Efforts made to build student character are through the implementation of local wisdom of puppet characters. The method used in building student character through the implementation of local wisdom of puppet characters at SDN Segulung 05 as conveyed in an interview with the homeroom teacher IV, namely through: introduction of puppet characters and their characters, through role models, through stories or advice, through learning and inserting characters/values from puppet characters that are told with adapted material. The following is an explanation of each.

Through the introduction of wayang characters and their characters The introduction of wayang characters is very important because to build character, first of all children must know who the wayang characters are and the characters they have. By introducing wayang characters, students can find out the characters that the characters have. The introduction of wayang characters can be done by installing pictures and through wayang stories. Such as introducing the wayang character Bima, showing pictures of the wayang character Bima and the characteristics that Bima has. In the implementation of character education in schools, stories as a supporting method for the implementation of education have a very important role, because in the stories there are various examples and education.

Through role models, Life is mostly passed by imitating or copying each other between one individual and another. The tendency to copy plays a very big role in children, so it has a big influence on child development. The role model that is exemplified here is the role model of the positive characters possessed by wayang characters. The teacher gives examples of wayang traits that can be emulated by children, such as the traits possessed by Semar, namely a patient, sincere, loving figure, a maintainer of goodness. In instilling

character in students at school, role models are a more effective and efficient method. Because students (especially students in elementary and secondary education) generally tend to emulate (imitate) their teachers or educators. This is because psychologically students like to imitate, not only the good, sometimes even the bad they imitate.

With advice and stories, Storytelling is done by paying attention to steps including story selection, location conditioning, and storytelling techniques. Here, teachers are guided to be total in delivering stories and inserting advice in between stories. Teachers must be able to condition the class to remain conducive and monitor student concentration. Through stories, students can see and understand the characters possessed by wayang figures. According to an-Nahlawi quoted by Heri Gunawan, the two words have different meanings. Ibrah means a psychological condition that conveys humans to the essence of something witnessed, faced using reason that causes the heart to acknowledge it. The word mau'idhoh is gentle advice that is accepted by the heart by explaining the reward or threat.

Through the material in Javanese language learning, in learning the role of teachers is very important in building character in students. This method can be done by adjusting the puppet story with the learning material, as well as adjusting the teaching aids. So that in addition to students learning puppet material in the Javanese language subject, students can also take the positive character possessed by each puppet character.

3.5 Analysis of Inhibiting and Supporting Factors in Building Student Character Through the Implementation of Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures at Elementary school Segulung 05

Rapidly growing technology is considered to have a negative impact on the character formation of early childhood. One of these negative impacts is the fading of love for the homeland. This raises concerns when local cultures such as wayang characters become foreign and vice versa, animated characters such as Batman or Superman are more familiar to children's ears. Using wayang as a medium for character formation will not go well, but every time using wayang as a new medium in learning will definitely encounter shortcomings that may become obstacles in its implementation. Data obtained from interviews with grade IV teachers of SDN Segulung 05, where teachers know each character possessed by students, both positive and negative characters. Likewise, in efforts to build student character through the implementation of local wisdom of wayang characters, there are supporting and inhibiting factors, namely as follows.

Supporting factors in the form of the uniqueness of puppets that students like considering that so far students only know cartoon characters on television, the uniqueness of the puppets makes students interested in listening to stories and their curiosity about big puppets. Wayang has succeeded in attracting the interest of the younger generation who have been poisoned by the world of fun. Puppets can be used as a medium of information, because of their communicative appearance as a tool to approach the community in conveying information to be able to understand a tradition, life problems and all its aspects. Students are very enthusiastic about listening to stories and paying attention to the puppet pictures shown by the teacher. According to the development of children in grade IV, they are very happy to listen to stories or fairy tales, they are very enthusiastic when the teacher tells the story of puppet characters.

Inhibiting Factors in the form of When the teacher is reading a puppet story, children are able to concentrate only for the first 15 minutes, after that the conditions begin to be unconducive and noisy because in general teachers only use the lecture method. Furthermore, teachers are required to be innovative and creative so that children do not feel bored. Then students do not understand the puppet characters and do not know the characters owned by the characters. So teachers are required to be creative in introducing characters so that students can easily recognize and understand the characters and characters owned by the puppet. In addition, the inhibiting factor is the teacher's voice when telling stories and students is not conducive, the teacher's voice is lost to the noisy voices of the children.

3.6 Analysis of the Impact of Implementing Local Wisdom of Wayang Figures in Building Student Character at Elementary school Segulung 05

There are several impacts of using wayang media as a character builder for students at Elementary school Segulung 05. From the interview excerpt with the fourth grade teacher, namely students understand or know which attitudes are good and bad, students have respect for teachers, students are able to choose values that are worthy of imitation, there are positive behavioral changes, increasing appreciation of children's literature. The results obtained from building student character through the implementation of local wisdom of wayang characters at Elementary school Segulung 05 can provide changes in knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behavior. One of the impacts is a change in student behavior that is able to distinguish between good and bad traits. From understanding and knowing the character of wayang characters, students know which traits are good and need to be emulated and bad traits that should not be emulated. The teacher includes advice to students to emulate the good traits of wayang characters that the teacher has told and avoid the despicable traits in wayang characters.

Having respect for the teacher, when the teacher is explaining the lesson or telling a story about wayang, students listen to the teacher's explanation quietly and the noise in the class has decreased. Here there is a positive change in attitude in students who initially did not respect the teacher when the learning process is now students have begun to have a change in attitude. In addition, students have an understanding of local culture and their knowledge of local culture increases. Through wayang, students have an interest in getting to know more about local culture, because for students wayang is unique so they are happy and excited to learn about wayang. The existence of wayang until now is still popular with some levels of Javanese society. This can be seen from the various wayang performances that are still in demand compared to other types of traditional arts. One of the things that is attractive is the diversity of wayang stories which are very numerous.

The findings of this research underscore the significance of local wisdom-based learning in enhancing students' character development. The data suggest that integrating local wisdom into educational curricula not only fosters positive character traits among students but also reinforces their cultural identity [32], [33]. This approach aligns with the research by Everhard Markiano Solissa, which highlights that the integration of technology in education can enhance cultural experiences and provide broader access to cultural values.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with local wisdom-based education, there are notable challenges that must be addressed. A critical gap identified in the existing literature is the difficulty in effectively integrating local wisdom into the school curriculum, along with measuring its concrete impact on student character development. Many studies tend to be broad in their analysis and fail to offer specific examples of how particular local wisdom such as puppet characters can be applied in educational settings. Additionally, there is a tendency to emphasize modern technological solutions in character education at the expense of traditional cultural values.

This study introduces a novel framework for the application of local wisdom through the use of wayang (puppet) characters in character education. By creating a bridge between traditional educational approaches and modern pedagogical needs, this framework offers practical guidelines for educators aiming to implement local wisdom in diverse educational contexts. The implications of these findings are significant for both schools and education policymakers. By recognizing the effectiveness of wayang media in character education, schools should consider embedding more elements of local wisdom into their curricula. For example, subjects such as Javanese language studies could serve as platforms for introducing wayang stories that convey essential moral and ethical lessons. To mitigate student disengagement, educators are encouraged to employ innovative teaching strategies, such as integrating technology through animations or digital games that bring wayang stories to life. Project-based learning could also be leveraged, allowing students to engage in mini wayang performances, thereby enhancing their interest and participation.

Moreover, the implementation of local wisdom through wayang characters not only promotes character development but also cultivates a deeper appreciation for local culture among students. Schools could organize extracurricular activities, such as art clubs or theatrical productions centered on local culture, to further instill cultural values and enhance students' sense of cultural identity. While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. Conducted exclusively at elementary school Segulung 05 in Dagangan District, Madiun Regency, the findings may not be entirely generalizable to other educational institutions with differing cultural contexts, resources, and student demographics. Furthermore, the reliance on puppet storytelling as the primary method for character development may restrict the potential for a more diverse and dynamic learning experience. The chosen puppet characters may not encompass the full spectrum of Indonesia's rich local cultures. Future research should explore other forms of local wisdom that could equally contribute to character development, ensuring a more holistic approach to integrating cultural heritage in education.

To build on the insights from this research, the following recommendations are proposed: Curriculum Integration, Education policymakers should consider revising the curriculum to include local wisdom elements across various subjects, ensuring a multifaceted approach to character education. Professional Development, Teachers should receive training in innovative pedagogical techniques that incorporate local wisdom, enabling them to engage students effectively. Community Collaboration, Schools should foster partnerships with local cultural organizations to enhance the authenticity and richness of local wisdom incorporated into educational practices. Research Expansion, Future studies should explore a broader range of local wisdom practices across different regions to establish a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on character education.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of local wisdom through puppet characters at elementary school Segulung 05 plays a significant role in building students' character. This is achieved by introducing puppet characters and their traits, serving as role models, sharing stories or wisdom, and integrating these elements into Javanese language learning. Key factors contributing to the success of this character-building initiative include the unique and engaging nature of puppetry, students' enthusiasm for storytelling, and the broad appeal of puppet characters across diverse groups. However, challenges remain, such as students' lack of concentration and the monotonous

teaching methods, primarily focused on lectures, which can lead to disengagement. Despite these challenges, the integration of puppet characters has positively influenced students' character development, as evidenced by observable improvements in their behavior and a greater understanding of local culture. This approach not only enhances character education but also reinforces students' connection to their cultural heritage.

The findings highlight the effectiveness of using local wisdom, such as puppet characters, in character education, suggesting that similar methods could be adopted in other educational contexts to foster character development. The unique attributes of puppetry its engaging visual form and its ability to convey moral lessons make it a valuable tool for educators seeking to connect students with their cultural roots while promoting ethical values. For further research, exploring additional forms of local wisdom, such as folklore, traditions, and other local cultural arts, could provide valuable insights into character-building strategies tailored to different regional contexts. This expanded exploration could help identify various effective methodologies for integrating local wisdom into education, thereby enhancing students' character development, academic achievement, creativity, and social skills. Moreover, the positive outcomes associated with local wisdom-based learning underscore the importance of developing diverse and dynamic teaching methods. By moving away from monotonous lecture-based approaches and incorporating interactive and culturally relevant content, educators can create more engaging learning environments that cater to students' interests and learning styles. This approach could ultimately yield comprehensive benefits, nurturing well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also culturally aware and socially responsible.

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