



Character Education Model in *Wayang Kulit* for Early Childhood

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Abstract

This study explains the character education model in *wayang kulit* art for early childhood (5 to 6 years old) as one support to form their future personality. This study is based on an action research approach to improve character quality to be better than before. The subjects are male or female students following and understanding character education through *wayang kulit*. The action method transforms adult puppet into children, concludes figures with positive character, and is responsible for early childhood to be actively involved in education and *wayang kulit*. The results show that positive character education, such as diligence, sincerity, firmness, helpful, determination, wiseness, humility, fairness, and friendliness, is found in human and animal children characters named *Punta*, *Sena*, *Juna*, *Pinten*, *Tangsen*, *Bledug*, and *Belo* which follows the child's developmental level rapidly advancing towards the future, and it can be used in the early childhood and kindergarten education environment nationally and internationally. Thus, much support is needed from children's educational institutions and *wayang kulit* arts, i.e., Kemdikbudristek (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia), Kemen KPP-PA (Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children Protection of Indonesia), SENAWANGI (National Secretariat of *wayang kulit* of Indonesia), PEPADI (Association of Indonesian *Wayang Kulit*), UNIMA, UNICEF, and UNESCO, to achieve a culture-based character education program.

Keywords: character education model; *wayang kulit*; early childhood

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INTRODUCTION

Character education in early childhood can use a variety of media, one of which is through *wayang kulit* arts such as *wayang kulit*, *beber*, *golek*, *klitik*, *orang*, *suket*, *walisanga*, *sada*, *orang*, youth, children, Indonesia. This study takes the genre of *wayang kulit purwa* and, in its research for-

mat development, uses *wayang kaper*. It is a tiny form size that is more suitable for children's puppeteers, and it is in a box set of 30 to 300 pieces.

Wayang is part of a culture born in a local community with various elements of local cultural wisdom in an area (Putra, 2021; Sulistiyani, 2020). *Wayang* is a traditional performance presented by puppe-

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teers using media such as puppets (Dwitayasa, 2020). *Wayang* is also a description of the universe, consisting of humans, giants, spirits, animals, vehicles, weapons, trees, houses, fire, water, soil, air, weather, household equipment, writing instruments, jewellery, and so on (Junaidi et al., 2018). In addition, *wayang* represents an object, a person's name, a place of residence, and all objectified forms (Hartati, 2019). A box set of *wayang kulit* contains at least 150 pieces (Sajid, RM, 1981). Indonesian researchers argue that *wayang* originates from East Java. However, another opinion from India says that *wayang* was brought along with Hinduism (Macari et al., 2021; Tilbrook et al., 2017). *Wayang* is present in literary works, represented from life through culture as outlined by the creators in their work (Hidayatullah & Bakhri, 2021). Therefore, *wayang* needs to be preserved, given the development of increasingly sophisticated media. The values of *wayang* cannot be exchanged for anything (Prahmana & Istiandaru, 2021).

Wayang consists of a community life philosophy that plays a crucial role in recording and remembering all events (Reid-Searl et al., 2017; van der Hoeven et al., 2021). *Wayang* describes the improvised cultural form of a nation, especially Indonesia, and constructs a culture that can be readily accepted by today's society (Prahmana & Istiandaru, 2021; Reid-Searl et al., 2017; van der Hoeven et al., 2021). *Wayang* needs to be preserved by involving the next generation, starting from early childhood. *Wayang* preservation can also be achieved by developing and maintaining the *wayang's* authenticity as a culture to become the *wayang's* existence (Macari et al., 2021; Tilbrook et al., 2017). *Wayang* also influences early childhood character education, a facility for making a child a qualified individual (Winarti & Suryana, 2020). Various advantages of *wayang*: make it easier for children to learn, provide more real experiences, attract children's attention, and activate all senses (Devi & Maisaroh, 2017; Pebri, Tegeh, & Rahayu, 2017). Thus, *wayang* can develop children's ability to in-

teract and communicate well (Halimah et al., 2020; Rakoczy, 2022; Shambaugh et al., 2016) through messages described in cosmology, character, and involvement.

The messages can vary, such as character education, religiosity, nationalism, and morals (Sahid et al., 2016), and as a medium for character education or manners through *wayang kulit* and their performances. So far, researchers' study of early childhood character education still uses *wayang* media for traditions (*padhalangan*), which is considered very good for early childhood education. In addition to having a moral message, it can improve children's imagination, social-emotional, cognitive, and artistic skills in early childhood (Ulfa, 2018). A *wayang* model of the Javanese superheroes encyclopaedia has even been created for character recognition media for early childhood by featuring the characters *Anoman*, *Kumbakarna*, *Gatotkaca*, *Arjuna*, *Bima*, and *Antareja* (Isnaini et al., 2018). However, too many characters, too mature/old figures, and the passive involvement make them unsuitable for the developmental conditions of children who still have limited knowledge, are young, and behave aggressively.

This study aims to complete previous studies around the use of *wayang kulit* as an educational medium for children which paid little attention to the compatibility between educational materials and teaching aids, thus ignoring their limited, young, and aggressive abilities. Inflexible traits require reducing the number to a minimum; youthful characteristics are displayed as childish characters and bold features are carried out by active involvement. This study is based on the argument that *wayang*, as a source of noble character education, is very potent and needs to be appreciated by early childhood as a new action, considering philosophy, character, and involvement of children in implementation. It can answer the lack of character education in early childhood with the principles of Indonesian culture. Thus, the research study will develop the potential of *wayang* as a medium for early childhood

character education.

On this subject, several definitions of character education are described. Character education is an education system that instills specific character values in students through components of knowledge, awareness, willingness, and actions to apply these values. Character education is closely related to moral education, which aims to continuously shape and train individual abilities for self-improvement and a better life (Junaidi, 2017). In this context, children must be appropriately stimulated during the golden age of their brain development to determine their ability to develop potential, carried out in a varied and fun way (Latifah, 2020; Nuraeni et al., 2019). Parents must understand the characteristics of their children to determine whether their children grow and develop optimally (Harahap, 2021; Rihlah et al., 2020). Also, parents must be able to listen to children well, make strict rules, be good role models, control emotions, and show affection and love for children to strengthen their character (Diana et al., 2021; Agustini, 2021; Setiawan et al., 2020). In addition to the role of parents, the character of children is also influenced by the community and environment where they live, and it can be seen how children speak, dress, and behave not much different from those around their house (Hidaya & Aisna, 2020; Kasmianti, 2019). Thus, a good environment will form positive character and vice versa. Early childhood education is a must (Nazula & Munastiwi, 2021; Prakoso, MA. et al., 2020).

Strengthening the children's character can also be carried out through the *wayang* model, demonstrating the existence of life values that can be used as lessons and experiences for children (Pandanwangi & Nuryantiningsih, 2018; Wicaksono et al., 2020). Children's character education is also a process that lasts a lifetime, as seen from how they grow to become individuals with character (Rusli, 2020). Children's character education must pay attention to three things: (1) to understand good and evil, (2) to love for something good

and hate evil deeds, and (3) to get used to doing good anywhere and anytime (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016).

Early childhood learning education methods can be done in various ways, such as *wayang* performances, singing, and so on (O'Keeffe & McNally, 2021). Ideally, character education with *wayang* media should start from the beginning, as instilling character in early childhood is the most critical process in forming a better foundation for a child's personality (Alan, 2021; Ardoin & Bowers, 2020). However, it must be done in the right steps to minimize the failure that can cause a poor impact on the lives and morals of children in the future (Lumauridlo et al., 2021; Seow, 2018). Internalizing positive values needs appropriate ways to achieve the intended purpose properly.

A *wayang* performance method needs to be formulated precisely so that early childhood can readily appreciate it proportionally. An action research design is used to determine the most effective ways and steps to make changes, conclusions, and accountability (Sujarweni, 2014: 10). Changes can be made by transforming the philosophy of *wayang* models from adults/elderly to children, concluding about the characters and their positive characters, and carrying out the responsibility through active involvement in the early childhood environment to achieve its goals. These three strategic steps are executed to deliver effective and efficient educational content. This kind of model must have three advantages: (1) minimal: using few tools; (2) young: presenting children's figures and characters; and (3) easy: children can perform it independently. Hence, it fits their characters: limited centralization, egocentric, and intense curiosity.

METHOD

This descriptive qualitative research uses multiple sources such as informants, text, and manuscripts. The informants were kindergarten teachers and puppet experts to obtain data verbally (by inter-

view) about the character education model in *wayang kulit*. Literature data is used to search for books that discuss character education in *wayang*.

Observations were conducted to observe character education practices in *wayang kulit* for early childhood education at Taman Kanak-kanak Kuncup Harapan of Panggungharjo in Sewon of Bantul of Yogyakarta. The interview was conducted by asking several questions about informant's opinions from Early Childhood Education/Kindergarten teachers and puppeteers. Information from Kindergarten teachers could obtain valid data about early childhood character education activities from PAUD/TK teachers, while the existence of the world of *wayang* and its development was obtained from puppeteers and from *wayang kulit* masters.

All of research data in the form of literature search results, interview results and observation results of educational practices, were analyzed using thematic and content analysis techniques.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Cosmology of Character Education through *Wayang* for Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

Character education for early childhood through *wayang* for PAUD (Early Childhood Education) results from a change in philosophy from the world of adults to children. Soetarno believes that most children do not appreciate the *wayang* tradition because most of the plays performed by puppeteers are for adults (interview, 2022). The plays performed by adult puppeteers have the themes of birth, marriage, death, romance, revelation, battle, coups, gambling, disguises, tests, coronations, missions, and so on. It requires many *wayang kulit*, at least 180 pieces. The plays shown in *wayang* for PAUD have the theme of learning and playing, so they only need a smaller number of puppets, namely as many as 30 pieces. These changes can be seen in the following Figure 1.



Figure 1. Examples of traditional *wayang kulit* with lots of equipment and large rooms (left), and *wayang* model for PAUD with minimal and narrow spaces (right)
(Source: Bayu AS, 2021)

Figure 1 shows many traditional puppets that require a staging arena with a minimum length of 1,200 cm and a minimum height of 300 cm and a puppet storage box measuring 120 cm x 80 cm x 50 cm. The *wayang* for PAUD only requires a staging area of 170 cm long and 100 cm high and a storage box measuring 75 cm x 60 cm x 25 cm. This minimal number of *wayang kulit* impacts the efficiency of the mind, place, and time, adapted to children with limited thinking, small bodies ($\pm$ 118 cm height), and a fast 2-year study time. In detail, the cosmology of *wayang* for PAUD can be understood through the Table 1..

The Table 1 describes *wayang* for PAUD regarding identity, age, expression, character, position, and form. Identity using young and adult names. Long names with four syllables and above are especially reduced to two to three syllables. Age starts from children aged 1 to 8 years, adults from 27 to 50 years, and old age from 75 years. Expression is childish, mature, and old. There are 51 types of characters consisting of 30 types of good traits and 21 types of bad traits. The form comprises 20 human beings, nine animals, a tree, and a house. This data shows that *wayang* for PAUD is dominated by the age of children, both humans and animals, as an illustration of the atmosphere of the world of children.

Wayang Characterization as a Character Reference

Character education using *wayang* for PAUD media for early childhood focuses on five human and six animal child figures, with 19 kinds of positive characters. The five human children were named

Table 1. Name, age, expression, character, status, form

Name	Age (years old)	Expression	Character	Status	Form
Punta	7	childish	diligent and sincere	student	human
Sena	6	childish	firm and helpful	student	human
Juna	5	childish	firm and diligent	student	human
Pinten	4	childish	wise and humble	student	human
Tangsen	4	childish	fair and friendly	student	human
Kurupat	8	childish	reckless and greedy	student	human
Dursas	7	childish	lazy and reckless	student	human
Durmag	6	childish	arrogant and ignorant	student	human
Kartamar	5	childish	arrogant and powerful	student	human
Traksa	4	childish	stupid and dumb	student	human
Traksi	4	childish	nosy and arrogant	student	human
Pandu	32	maturity	discipline and responsibility	King	human
Kunti	27	maturity	diligent and compassionate	Queen	human
Madrim	27	maturity	firm and consistent	Queen	human
Destarat	35	maturity	doubt and emotion	duke	human
Gendari	30	maturity	envious and jealous	Queen	human
Semar	75	old	patient, honest, and brave	Head of a village	human
Gareng	50	maturity	Humble and give in	Head of hamlet	human
Petruk	48	maturity	sociable and brave	Head of hamlet	human
Bagong	45	maturity	ignorant, honest, and brave	Head of hamlet	human
Bledug	9	childish	strong and quiet	Baby elephant	animal
Wareng	6	childish	strong and brave	bull kid	animal
Genjik	6	childish	reckless and destructive	Wild boar	animal
Gogor	7	childish	cruel and savage	Tiger cub	animal
Beyong	1	childish	jovial and agile	Baby fish	animal
Piyik	1	childish	agile and obedient	Little bird	animal
Kompreng	6	childish	nimble and docile	deer	animal
Kisi	3	childish	lazy and greedy	Baby snake	animal
Belo	5	childish	energetic and strong	foal	animal
Kayon	75	old	leafy and shady	Thorn and occupancy	tree and house

(Source: Author's compilation, 2022)

Punta, Sena, Juna, Pinten, and Tangsen, while the six animal children were named Bledug, Wareng, Belo, Beyong, Piyik, and Kompreng. The nineteen characters include diligent, sincere, firm, helpful, determined, wise, humble, fair, friendly, strong, quiet, brave, cheerful, agile, obedient,

docile, and energetic. The eleven characters and nineteen characters contrast with the six child human characters and three animal children, namely *Kurupat*, *Dursas*, *Durmag*, *Kartamar*, *Traksa*, *Traksi*, *Genjik*, *Gogor*, and *Kisi*, with 17 kinds of negative characters, namely careless, greedy, lazy,

reckless, arrogant, pretentious, ignorant, dumbfounded, nosy, destroyer, cruel, and savage. Visually, it can be understood through the Figure 2.



Figure 2. *Wayang* for PAUD with Kurawa's children, from the left: *Traksi, Traksa, Kartamar, Durmag, Dursas, Kurupati*; and Pandawa's children, from the right: *Tangsen, Pinten, Juna, Punta, and Sena* (Source: Junaidi, 2019)

From Figure 2, the characters of each member of the two families (Kurawa and Pandawa) can be visually recognized by the colour of their facial expressions. The majority of the Kurawa family members are red, which symbolizes bad characters (fierce, angry, impatient and the like). While the faces of the Pandawa family members are all brown according to the colour of human skin in general, which indicates that they have good human nature traits. From the aspect of the size of the puppet's body, the majority of the Kurawa family members are large, indicating greed and laziness, while the Pandawa family members tend to be thin, indicating concern and simplicity.



Figure 3. *Wayang hewan* (animal) in children, from the left: *piyik, beyong, kisi, kompreng, genjik, gogor, wareng, belo, and bledug* (Source: Junaidi, 2019)

Figures 2 and 3 show a visual of 20 *wayang* for PAUD as characters in a story with their respective characters. Characterizations can be broadly divided into four groups: (1) groups of human children

with good characters, (2) groups of human children with evil characters, (3) groups of animal children with good characters, and (4) groups of animal children with evil characters. These figures and characters are set in childhood stories of human children and animals with good character, as in the two narrative scenario examples below.

(1) In the morning, around 07.00, Punta, Sena, Juna, Pinten, and Tangsen finished showering and had breakfast. The five of them discussed a trip to the zoo. They sang the verses of Pancasila. After discussing and singing, they said goodbye to their parents (Junaidi, 2019).

(2) In the zoo, two animal cages were beside each other. Bledug's cage was in the west, and Belo's was in the east. They were friends with each other's voice communication. While eating, Belo felt he was being fed too much grass, so he called Bledug to take some with his trunk. For Belo's kindness, Bledug thanked him. Whenever Belo was in trouble, Bledug was ready to help (Junaidi, 2019).

These two narrative scenarios talk about the world of human and animal children as positive characters regarding the noble values of Pancasila, even specifically practising peace and sharing God's gifts. Punta, Sena, Juna, Pinten, and Tangsen sang songs entitled Divinity, Humanity, Unity, Wisdom, and Justice as the characters of the five verses of Pancasila. The story of Bledug and Belo being friends with each other and paying attention to their friends, even though they have different looks and voices, they can be good friends. Thus, these characters of *wayang* for PAUD can portray childish-themed stories. Sujinem, a teacher at *Taman Kanak-kanak Kuncup Harapan* of Panggungharjo of Sewon of Bantul of Yogyakarta, expressed her appreciation for the minimal number of *wayang kulit* for PAU, childish expressions, and simple forms for excellent character education media. She said she would love to share it with the parents as an artwork title project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students (Interview, 2022).

This statement delivers a positive response that character education for early

childhood through *wayang* for PAUD is excellent and can even be used as a medium for simple games at school. This positive character education informs the parents of students to show their children's achievements, and they can produce works of art to form a Pancasila student profile. With this character education model, children feel excited and can foster positive thinking through learning and playing. Furthermore, the school facilitated a set of *wayang* for PAUD along with the stage and gamelan equipment. Training activities are carried out every day when entering school, and performances on television, mass media (JogjaTV), and radio (RRI Nusantara Yogyakarta) are leading promotions for the public to find new students. The implementation of positive characters in characterizations, characters, and displays Table 2.

The Table 2 describes the positive early childhood character education model: figures, characters, values, and views. Human and animal children: Punta, Sena, Permai, Pinten, Tangsen, Bledug, and Belo have a calm, polite, gallant, dignified, refined, agile, skilled, and energetic nature. They deserve to convey the values of Divinity, Humanity, Unity, Wisdom, Justice, Diversity, and Sincerity, delivered through

singing accompanied by gamelan *slendro* and *pelog*, along with the lyrics of *faras lendro*, *Keadilan*, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and *Menangkal COVID-19*.

Involvement of Children in Wayang Kulit Roles

The character education model in *wayang kulit* art involves the role of the teacher and students through playing, learning, and acting. As educators, teachers teach five principal values that must be appreciated in early childhood: (1) Divinity, (2) Humanity, (3) Unity, (4) Wisdom, and (5) Justice, which are translated into diligent, sincere, firm, helpful, determined, wise, humble, fair, friendly, strong, quiet, cheerful, agile, obedient, agile, docile, and energetic, using 11 *wayang* characters: Punta, Sena, Juna, Pinten, Tangsen as human children; Bledug, Wareng, Belo, Kompren, Beyong, and Piyik as animal children. Students receive teaching using *wayang kulit* through fun activities (playing), increasing knowledge, skills, thinking, understanding, attitude, and ability (learning), and demonstrating/performing (acting) using *wayang* media. Figure 4 are examples of early childhood involvement in character education using *wayang* media for PAUD.

Table 2. Name, Acting, Speaking, and Singing

Character	Personality	Value	Performance
Punta	persistent and sincere	Divinity	Singing a song called <i>Ketuhanan Slendro</i>
Sena	decisive and helpful	humanity	Singing a song called <i>Kemanusiaan Laras Pelog</i>
Juna	firm and diligent	Unity	Singing a song called <i>Persatuan Laras Slendro</i>
Pinten	wise and humble	Wisdom	Singing a song called <i>Kerakyatan Laras Pelog</i>
Tangsen	fair and friendly	Justice	Singing a song called <i>Keadilan Laras Pelog</i>
Bledug	calm, dignified, and gallant	diversity	Singing a song called <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i>
Belo	energetic and polite	Sincerity	Singing a song called <i>Menangkal COVID-19</i>

(Source: Author's compilation, 2022)



Figure 4. Early childhood involvement in the character education model in *wayang* for PAUD: playing in a school environment (left); a team studying under the teachers' guidance (center); collective performance (right) (Source: Bayu AS, 2019)

The children's involvement includes the main props and supporters, i.e., as *wayang kulit* players, and active, responsible, and collective supporters of gamelan musicians; Being active, i.e., diligently practising performing the *wayang*, playing gamelan instruments, and singing songs. Responsible, i.e., carrying out their duties as puppeteers, gamelan players, and singers. Being collective, i.e., being in a teamwork, playing and demonstrating it collaboratively as the team of *wayang* for PAUD. The children's involvement in character education through *wayang* can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 shows the early childhood involvement in the character education model, consisting of each child's roles, tasks, and positions. Children roles as *wayang kulit* lead performers (dalang or puppeteer) and supporting players (pengrawit or musician). The tasks are to give speeches and puppets with *wayang* movements, play musical instruments such as gamelan kendang, *saron*, *ketuk*, and gong, and sing to liven up the atmosphere of the scene and the *wayang* characters. The po-

sitions of the children are as the narrator and *wayang* mover, players of *saron*, *kethuk*, gong, and singers. Sujinem, a Taman Kanak-kanak Kuncup Harapan kindergarten teacher, has reported the following:

"Every day, they (students) never leave the school without performing *wayang*. They are surely thrilled. It is good to know they have such spirits. I think of developing their mind power through playing *saut-sautan* (reciprocating rhymes) using *wayang* for PAUD" (Interview, 2022).

This interview is the response of a Kindergarten teacher to her students' activities in playing *wayang kulit*: first, they are very active in doing it every day at school; second, they love to play with *wayang kulit*; third, they are assessed as very good and seemed enthusiastic about playing *wayang kulit* activities; fourth, this is a critical time to develop children's mind power through reciprocating rhymes between *wayang* characters. Active, happy, and enthusiastic mind power, as well as being skilled at communication, result from children's positive involvement. Furthermore, programmed character education can be achieved well and helps improve the quality of thoughts, speech, and actions.

The Cosmology of Character Education Through *Wayang* for PAUD

Reducing *wayang kulit* is to adjust the children's learning period and their application ability, namely learning with a short time and limited experience to follow their

Table 3. Examples of the children's involvement in the character education model through the *wayang* for PAUD

Role Play	Job	Position
<i>Wayang</i> performer (lead performer)	Giving speech and <i>wayang kulit</i> movement (<i>mayang</i>)	narrator and mover (<i>pamayang</i>)
<i>Kendang</i> player (supporter)	Playing gamelan <i>kendang</i> (<i>ngendhang</i>)	Playing <i>kendang</i> (<i>pangendhang</i>)
<i>Saron</i> player (supporter)	Playing gamelan <i>saron</i> (<i>nyaron</i>)	Playing <i>saron</i> (<i>panyaron</i>)
<i>Kethuk</i> player (supporter)	Playing gamelan <i>ketuk</i> (<i>ngethuk</i>)	Playing <i>kethuk</i> (<i>pangethuk</i>)
Gong player (support)	Playing gamelan gong (<i>ngegong</i>)	Playing gong (<i>pangegong</i>)
Singer	Singing for supporting the scenes and characters of <i>wayang</i> (<i>nembang</i>)	Singing (<i>panembang</i>)

(Source: author's compilation, 2022)

conditions that still have limited attention (Khairi, 2018, p. 19). The education period for early childhood is two years, shorter than those at elementary school (six years), junior high school (three years), senior high school (three years), and college or university (four years); the daily study is three hours.

In addition, *wayang* is excluded from the education curriculum in early childhood education or kindergarten, so its existence is not a concern for children. Adjusting the amount of educational material provided can overcome time limitations and less attention, considering the appropriateness and level of education: the lower the level of education, the less amount of the material supplied, so there is no overload of educational material. These changes reduce the burden on children, so not too many must be studied relatively quickly. Children's character education is a form of implementation that focuses on the growth and development of intelligence according to children's uniqueness at their age (Harun et al., 2021; Suyanto, 2015; Wijayanti, 2021).

This adjustment can be a character education model with its own *wayang* media, i.e., building a common perception between the world of *wayang* and children. Common perceptions can facilitate integration between children and *wayang* due to the similarity in story and orientation (building childish perceptions) so that it can be used as a friendship between them. Friendship can grow more vital together in building perceptions of togetherness as an embodiment of the value of cooperation in creating strong and unified character education programs.

The common perception can preserve *wayang* well without leaving its nobility values, and can be done by developing the existing *wayang* (Macari et al., 2021; Tilbrook et al., 2017). Thus, the development of *wayang* for PAUD can be interpreted as developing a culture that becomes more existent in the early childhood environment based on the principle of togetherness.

Characterization of *Wayang* as a Character Reference

Most children-aged *wayang* characters are to show the research focus by placing human and animal child figures as the primary or notable roles (standard characters), while the placement of adult and old characters are played as complementary characters (supporting figures) in a story performed in a show. Early childhood is referred to as the golden age, when children have a particular period of development since they have unique psychological, educational, and physical needs to determine what they will be like when they are physically, mentally, and intelligently mature (Rahiem, 2021) so that their presence influences the story raised, i.e., the problem of the world of early childhood. Thus, developing the noble character values imparted from an early age is vital for forming a strong, advanced, dignified, and cultured life order (Neitzel et al., 2019).

Early childhood is when children are approximately six years old. This age determines how character and personality are formed, where children experience rapid growth and development (Jamilah & Lukman, 2021), also known as the golden age (Rahiem, 2021). On this occasion, it is very appropriate to be given character education by using *wayang* with cheerful characters, to be organized, to adapt to new environments, and to be obedient. Three characteristics of early childhood are (1) easy to manage, (2) taking a relatively long time with a new environment, (3) often refusing when invited to do activities, and often crying (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017). Thus, using *wayang* media to instil character in early childhood becomes the most critical process in forming a better foundation for a child's personality (Alan, 2021; Ardoin & Bowers, 2020). However, on the other hand, failure to internalize positive values is also not good for the life and morals of children in the future (Lumaurridlo et al., 2021; Seow, 2018), so the *wayang* with negative characters must be avoided.

Developing positive character can be appreciated through the character of Punta, who is diligent and sincere as part of the values of God; Sena, a helpful and persistent character as part of human values; Juna, a firm and diligent character as part of the value of Unity; Pinten, a wise and humble character as part of the value of Wisdom; Tangsen, a fair and friendly character as part of the value of justice. These five characters and their natures can reflect the noble values contained in Pancasila: (1) belief in the one and only God, (2) just and civilized humanity, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, and (5) social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia. With the character education model presented by these human and animal children's figures, strong orderly learning can be programmed from an early age based on Pancasila ideology, which demonstrates the existence of life values that can be made into lessons and experiences for children (Pandanwangi & Nuryantiningsih, 2018; Wicaksono et al., 2020).

An advanced order of life can be appreciated through the appearance of children's figures and characters as the focus of discussion, which so far is still oriented towards adult and old figures and characters so that children do not get a separate focus of education to achieve future progress, which ideally should start at an early age, is the most crucial process in forming a better foundation for a child's personality (Alan, 2021; Ardoin & Bowers, 2020). Thus, progress in the world of character education and *wayang* can be advanced from an early age, experiencing rapid growth and development. This aligns with Jamilah's opinion that this age determines how character and personality are formed where children experience rapid growth and development (Jamilah & Lukman, 2021). Even more visionary, if character education for children is also a lifelong process, we can see how children grow to become individuals with character (Rusli,

2020).

Having charming and cultured characters, presenting children's figures with noble characters as the embodiment of good character education, through the five human and six animal children's characters above, can be used as a medium to recognize, understand, and carry out noble character and culture based on values of God. Children can become good individuals with certain qualities by knowing, understanding, and presenting figures with noble character and culture of Pancasila. Moreover, their existence must be maintained continuously so they do not let their guard down and fall into the abyss of crime. Wiranti and Suryana state that *wayang* also influences early childhood character education, facilitating children to be individuals with specific qualities (Winarti & Suryana, 2020). Thus, a good environment will form a positive character, and vice versa. This expectation should be achieved through the children's character education: (1) children can understand good and bad things, (2) they have a love for something good and hate something bad, (3) they can get used to doing good anywhere and anytime (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016).

Children's Involvement in Roles of *Wayang*

Education is also vital to early childhood to form a complete human personality, such as building character, manners, skills, cheerfulness and intelligence, and obedience to God (Ayu & Junaidah, 2019). The first years of early childhood education are started at home by parents, then teachers, as determinants of their quality in the future (Rohmat, 2017). Children's education is dynamic, judging from how they are placed in an environment that is prepared to give them the freedom to express themselves (Opie et al., 2021). The educational treatment given to early childhood is believed to be firmly imprinted in the hearts and minds of clear children. Suyanto stated that if children are educated well, given good examples, and accusto-

med to living with good values and character, they tend to be good people with golden hearts, positive minds, and noble characters (Suyanto, 2015). Instilling honest character is also crucial to study by parents and teachers more deeply to foster honest character in early childhood. Early childhood learning education methods can be done in various ways, such as through fairy tales, *wayang* performances, singing, playing war, and so on (O'Keeffe & McNally, 2021).

Character education in *wayang* for PAUD can involve early childhood in roles that are active, fun, enthusiastic, and develop positive character. Active involvement, namely narrating, moving *wayang*, playing gamelan, and singing together in one group, following their respective roles as a facility for the education of the value of unity. At this age, it is imperative to give education to children as a basis for the formation of a complete human personality, such as the formation of character, morals (Pabbajah et al., 2020), character, skilled, cheerful and intelligence, and obedient to God (Ayu & Junaidah, 2019), then it must be actively given a good education through good *wayang* characters so that children become active and always do well. Besides that, it can also be used to deal with the negative things of globalization culture, which allows cultural and moral decadence to occur (Hidajad, et al., 2022).

Involvement is fun; you have to feel like you are in a joyful atmosphere. Playing and singing are ways to create a sense of fun in early childhood. Materials and media for playing and singing are educative, with the appearance of *wayang kulit* (*dolanan*), brightly coloured mini gamelan instruments (*jambon*), and national songs that can educate children in a pleasant atmosphere and build their spirit of nationalism. Thus, a cheerful and ideological atmosphere of early childhood can be created by stimulating children. Children must be given the proper stimulation during the golden age of their brain development to determine their ability to develop their potential, and their application must

be varied and fun (Latifah, 2020; Nuraeni et al., 2019).

Involvement is enthusiastic; the children appear to be enthusiastic about carrying out character education through the art of *wayang*. This enthusiasm can be seen from the seriousness in learning and demonstrating *wayang kulit*, playing gamelan, and singing every day at school; even the school's *wayang kulit* is lent to practice at each student's home. This enthusiasm is triggered by the notion that *wayang* has its own advantages, which can make it easier for children to learn, provide more real experiences, attract children's attention and all senses can be activated (Devi & Maisaroh, 2017; Pebri, Teguh, & Rahayu, 2017). Thus, a good environment will form positive character, and vice versa, so education for early childhood is needed using *wayang* media (Nazula & Munastiwi, 2021; Prakoso, MA. et al., 2020).

Involvement is nurturing, namely the involvement of early childhood in character education programs with *wayang* media as a concrete step in developing positive character and cultural arts. Positive characters originating from Pancasila ideology and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) can grow and develop early. *Wayang* cultural arts can be preserved through early growth and development in formal education environments. Thus, the character education program through *wayang* for PAUD media facilitates positive growth and development regarding the nation's noble values and cultural arts to be sustainable in the land of its birth.

CONCLUSIONS

This writing that analyzes the character education model in *wayang* for early childhood finds that its cosmology describes the world of children who are still limited and childish. The majority of figures prioritize children's characters with positive characters as a reflection of the noble values contained in Pancasila, and it is important to recognize, understand, and

implement them. The active involvement of children as *wayang* and gamelan performers as carriers of good character education can be fun, proud, and educating. Good characters are raised through good stories, main characters, and active roles.

This writing contributes a new perspective in modelling character education through *wayang*, preferably by the age development level, so there are similarities in perceptions and conditions to create a harmonious and balanced character education process. Moreover, active participation is required from (1) the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, (2) the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children Protection, (3) the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, (4) the Ministry of Religious Affairs, (5) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (6) the Ministry of Home Affairs, (7) the Agency for Pancasila Ideology Education, (8) the National Secretariat for *Wayang*, and (9) the Association of *Wayang* Puppeteers to be willing to provide moral and material supports to the achievement of culture-based character education programs. Model research cases in early childhood (5-6 years) represent various kindergarten schools nationally and internationally. This case is only limited to the aspect of *wayang kulit*. Further research is needed to accommodate elements of *wayang* and other good values.

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