

# *Punakawan Picture Storybook's Role in Fostering Character Education to Elementary School Students*

Veronika Unun Pratiwi<sup>1</sup>, Arin Arianti<sup>2</sup>, Nurnaningsih<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara (UNIVET)  
Sukoharjo, Central Java, Indonesia  
E-mail: veronikaup@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara (UNIVET)  
Sukoharjo, Central Java, Indonesia  
E-mail: ariantiarin7@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara (UNIVET)  
Sukoharjo, Central Java, Indonesia  
E-mail: nurnaninx@yahoo.co.id



**Abstract**—the current study's scope is confined to some criteria, including the author's limited focus on design-related challenges, such as developing story content, redesigning Punakawan characters for children in cartoon type for interactive digital storybooks in a values-based approach. This study was designed using a qualitative descriptive research model with data from the literature. The researcher used interview techniques, observations, and direct storytelling with elementary school children in grades 4-6, aged 9 to 12. The results of the study revealed that the picture story book illustrated the story. The Kisah Teladan bersama Punakawan in this study recounts the story of Punakawan, who is present and communicates with readers through visual language. The combination of educational content, puppet characters, and digital media is something unique and appealing. Kisah Teladan bersama Punakawan is a picture story book that portrays children's daily life in a modern and contemporary manner while maintaining the character features of the Punakawan characters from authentic wayang stories. The depiction of the Punakawan character in a cartoon version for children expresses the impression that the Punakawan character is not only an old school figure designed for the elderly, but also has its own unique personality when intended for children

**Keywords**— Picture Storybook; Character Building; Elementary School; Children.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of character education is indispensable, particularly in elementary schools, as students today need moral education which can communicate abstract ideas about right and wrong, enabling it to be preventive in conquering attitudes and behavior issues in the classroom. This confirms Hurlock's view that moral development remains low in childhood and that children are therefore unable to apply abstract concepts of right and wrong. Character education in elementary schools should be prioritized in order to lay a solid basis for children's noble values. This is accomplished to make kids aware of the importance of

excellent values and to develop in them a desire to continually perform well in school and daily life. Character education must begin in elementary school since character is unable to be modified if it is not developed at a young age.

There are numerous forms of learning media available for character education for elementary school students, including story books and comics. Such media have pictures and light storylines that are simple for children to understand. However, these media still rely on conventional media, such as actual books. Children's digital books are an excellent and educational contribution to digital media, nonetheless there is a need for alternative media. Children can interact with digital books by presenting them in an engaging way as they read. In addition, the characters who will communicate the story's material must also be taken into consideration when presenting subjects related to character education for children. The Punakawan puppet characters, Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong, are characters that can be used to convey messages on the value of character education. The characters in Punakawan story vary from one another.

A number of other studies examine children's character education, including the benefits and types of traditional children's games in developing children's characters [1], and early childhood character formation includes factors such as family, school and community [2]. The objective is to explore preschool teachers' perspectives and implementation of character education through picture story books, as character education implementation is very crucial and effective when using picture story books. Picture story books for teachers are very beneficial and successful in expressing the character education lesson content [3]. Teachers must not only be competent in teaching character values through picture books, but they must also be role models in the practice of character education. Teachers must employ creative and applicable character education approaches, such as drama, games, questions and answers, and so on. Children prefer varied and creative methods of teaching character education.

Numerous studies have been conducted the same area as the present study, among others study on picture storybooks supporting young children's story comprehension through eye-tracking experiment [4]; young children's patterns of image use in a picturebook [5]; character education for local wisdom figures transformed through digital storybooks [6]; Javanese graded reading books for elementary school students [7], Punakawan's story indicating Islamic character values [8], Baneswa offering an innovative introductory media of Javanese culture for children based on pop-up books [9].

The present study limits its scope to include some criteria including, the author's limited focus on design-related problems, such as developing story content, redesigning Punakawan characters for children in cartoon type, and creating assets and illustrations for interactive digital storybooks and character education content presented in a values-based manner. The four character education elements that have been emphasized in the 2013 version of the Ministry of National Education's Character Education program are: independence, discipline, honesty, and love of the environment. The target users are students ages 9 to 12, or comparable to grades 3 to 6 in elementary school. Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong are the Punakawan characters featured in the storybook.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1. Picture Storybook

Picture story books have an important role since they help children learn about nature, get to know other people, and develop their emotions. This allows children to grasp and relate it to their own personal experiences, spark their imagination, gain pleasure, and participate in society. According to Hurlock [10], school-aged children enjoy picture stories for the following reasons: (1) These stories allow children to comprehend difficulties on a personal and social level. This will help children solve difficulties effectively; (2) picture stories enhance children's imagination and curiosity; (3) Easy for children to read and understand because children who are less able to read may use images to understand the content of the story; (4) picture story books are common and easy to find; (5) pictures in story books increase children's enthusiasm in reading; (6) Stories can be developed into a series, so improving children's desire; (7) The characters in the narrative often act or do something they would not dare to do alone, regardless of whether they desire to do it; this is very encouraging; (8) The characters in the book are shown as being strong, bold, and nice. This fascinates children and makes them desire to follow the character (idol). (9) The picture display in the story is full of color and basic enough to make the story easy for children to understand. Children in early childhood who are in the concrete pre-operational stage still need physical items to aid in their thinking processes. Early childhood children are still developing their mental and verbal skills. Thus, using picture story books is a good and appropriate means of communicating knowledge or learning material.

According to Piaget [11], children's cognitive development progresses from concrete to abstract concepts. If it is relevant to the child's way of thinking, objects or events that the child can see and experience will help in their understanding. Using picture story books in school will help children's transition from concrete to abstract ideas. Concrete events from a child's life are frequently shown in picture story books. Picture story books make it easier to introduce new vocabulary through the images. This allows children to better recognize concrete forms of words and images. If the story is presented again, children will be able to recall it abstractly.

## **2.2. Punakawan figures**

According to puppetry, the word *punakawan* is derived from the word *pana*, which indicates clever, clear, bright, and meticulous in observation, whilst the word friend implies friend or best friend [12]. Thus, the word for Punakawan refers to a friend or companion (*pamong*) who is astute, trustworthy, and has a broad viewpoint as well as acute and careful observation; in Javanese, it is known as *tanggap ing sasmita lan Limmad Pasanging Grahita*, which means sensitive and concerned about numerous difficulties. Punakawan consists of four figures: Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong. The four of them are father and son, who have intriguing qualities since they represent humility and knowledge. Punakawan in wayang are the embodiment of human nature and character, with their respective symbols, namely: Semar, the symbol of *karsa* (will or intention), Gareng, the symbol of creation (thinking, ratio, reason), Petruk, the symbol of *rasa* (feeling), Bagong, the symbol of work (effort, conduct, deed) [13]. Each Punakawan character depicts a general human profile [14]. They are multi-role individuals who can advise rulers, warriors, and even gods. They also serve as entertainers, critics, communicators of truth, and supporters for excellent. Punakawan always lives harmoniously as a family. If there are no special interests, they will never separate. Punakawan also educates humans to interact towards each other based on their varied characteristics.

## **III. METHODS**

This study was based on a qualitative descriptive research model. The descriptive method is data analysis from a collection of data collected to describe or describe phenomena that occur in research, or a symptom, event, or incident that occurs during research (Sudjana, 2004), which seeks to describe events that occurred during the research, rather than seeking for or testing theories. The data collected in this study does not include quantitative statistics or statistical figures, so all of it is provided descriptively or narratively. To enhance the reliability and efficacy of the data analysis, as well as to supplement the data from the literature used as a reference, the researchers used interview techniques, observations, and direct storytelling with elementary school children in grades 4-6, aged 9 to 12. Observation, interviews, and direct storytelling are data collection techniques used with a personal approach to children in accordance with the principles of qualitative research to create emotional closeness so that it is easier to identify the extent to which children can accept stories and they can be comfortable interacting directly in providing information that has been obtained regarding the identification of Punakawan characters in the story book "Kisah Teladan bersama Punakawan".

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Picture Story Books and their role in Elementary School Character Education**

Based on interviews with elementary school teachers in Sukoharjo and observations, it was found that teachers had difficulty finding teaching materials related to instilling character values that were in line with the school's vision and mission. This is because there are no guidebooks or storybooks with character education material for elementary school children in grades 4-6. During interviews with teachers, they inquired about the types of learning resources that needed to be developed, especially those related to instilling school character values, and all of the teachers stated that the story books contained nuances of local wisdom, such as the illustrated Punakawan wayang characters that included values. -Character qualities that are in complying with the school's vision and objective are highly important. According to the teacher, the story books must be at least A4 in size, full color, utilize appropriate language for elementary school children in grades 4-6, and be based on real-life situations. This way, children will be able to learn character education learning more effectively, and the story's content will be better comprehended. If the explanation above is related to the theory that the characteristics of a good illustrated story are that the images and content of the story are suitable for the child's age level and abilities, the content of the story and images are not complicated or complex, the images are realistic or similar to real objects, and the images must be touchable and held by students.

Regarding the role of picture story books with Wayang Punakawan characters, according to teachers interviewed, picture story books contribute to making it easier for children to understand models of how they can use the character values contained in the story books. Furthermore, if the story includes true stories or anecdotes about everyday events given by legendary Wayang characters like Punakwan. According to the teacher, having a picture story book featuring the character Wayang Punakawan may help students comprehend how to implement the character's values in real life. The justification given above corresponds to the idea that picture story books are helpful as either a learning instrument or a readily accessible learning resource. Susanto [15], on the other hand, believes that picture books are Picture story books help children learn new words, provide illustrations of stories that children may easily understand, and provide language excitement while also developing their creative skills. Consequently, having teacher involvement and observation findings based on requirements analysis, it is critical to create picture story books with concepts, plots, settings, themes, and story characters that are appropriate for learning needs in elementary school.

#### 4.2. Punakawan Picture Storybook as a teaching medium for character education

Reading and peering at pictures are part of development, which entails transforming symbols or pictures into sounds and words that are arranged in such a way that children are able to understand them. Visual media for children must be provided in order to increase their interest in reading and help them improve their skills. The storytelling method is a means of communicating or presenting learning material orally in the form of stories from the teacher to elementary school children in grades 4-6. The implementation of activities to introduce Punakawan individuals using the storytelling approach in Punakawan video books seeks to give children with knowledge or explanations about Indonesian culture's past. One strategy used is to narrate stories using Punakawan picture story book, as well as to tell a story from the book. Choosing an appropriate story book theme that is relevant to the daily lives of elementary school kids in Sukoharjo is critical to the learning process as it fosters children's interest in being able to communicate directly with the stories and images in picture story books.

Learning about Punakawan figures through picture story books is a fascinating pleasure for children because, in addition to lessons and guidance, children can become acquainted with the symbols and characteristics of Indonesian cultural figures, one of which is the Punakawan figure, at a young age. This kind of education is intelligent and clever since teaching children through image stories can satisfy their need for imagination and fantasy. Punakawan image storybooks not only entertain but also educate and boost children's intellect development, the most significant of which is the capacity to identify the characters in Punakawan picture storybook. This introductory technique is also seen to be extremely helpful for children since they are very keen on participating in the learning process, listening and hearing, and discovering the Punakawan in the storybook presented.

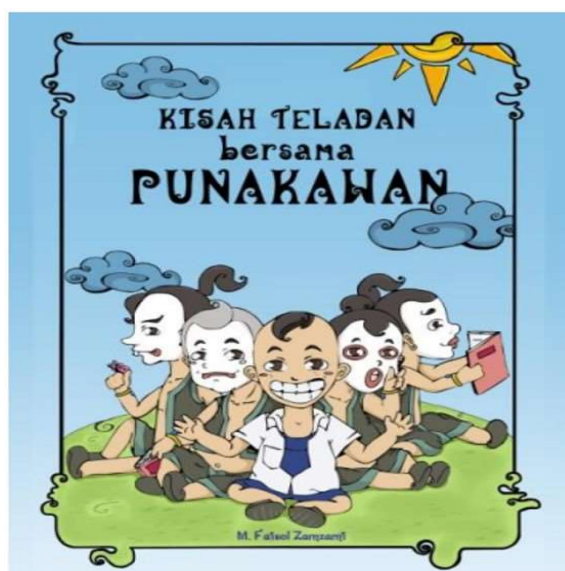


Fig.1. Book Cover



Fig.2. First chapter

Figure 1 shows a book cover of a picture story book. From the characterization of 18 character education values regarding the noble qualities that a person must have, which are reflected through the four Punakawan figures, there are four major character education values that will be discussed in this study, namely honesty, independence, caring for the environment,

and discipline, which are applied to the story content and become a sampling of this design. Character design in the portrayals of characters was carried out by analyzing Punakawan figures in line with the literature and existing Punakawan, as well as by referring to cartoon depictions of children with body shapes, huge heads, and depicted as children's physical bodies. Figure 2 depicts the first chapter of the Semar story, with a cartoon delivery of the Punakawan character design for elementary school children.

The picture story books in the present study feature Punakawan stories that appear and communicate with readers using visual language. Punakawan are the story's primary the main characters. Several other puppet characters perform supporting roles in each chapter of the story. The Punakawan picture story depicts children's daily lives in a modern and contemporary setting, while remaining true to the traditional Punakawan characters seen in actual wayang stories [16]. The Bagong character brings honest values to the title of the story “*Menemukan Tempat Pensil*”. The character Petruk brings independent values to the title of the story “*Piring Pertama Limbuk*”. Gareng conveys the value of caring for the environment with the title of the story “*Semut di Bawah Meja*”. The character Semar conveys the value of discipline with the title of the story “*Lebih Dekat Bersama Semar*”. Each page of the story book includes a conversation balloon and interesting illustrations and story writing so that the story is conveyed through a series of stories that are easy to see and read. The arrangement of the letters and the resulting images are also appropriate for elementary school children in grades 4-6. The composition of the illustration images is also suitable for children to appreciate because it separates the written story from the accompanying visual images. Figures and Tables

## V. CONCLUSION

The pictures of story books in this study feature Punakawan stories that appear and communicate with readers using visual language. The combination of educational information, puppet characters, and digital media is both distinctive and in-demand. The Punakawan picture story portrays children's daily lives in a modern and contemporary setting, while remaining authentic to the traditional Punakawan characters seen in real wayang stories. After introducing and applying character education values into the characterization of Punakawan figures. The picture book Exemplary Stories with Punakawan reflects the overall values of character education as defined by the Ministry of National Education in 2013, comprising 18 points. Meanwhile, the presentation of the Punakawan character in a cartoon form for children provides an impression that is not just an old school figure designed for older people, but also has his own distinct personality when intended for children.

## REFERENCES

- [1] H. Nur, “Membangun Karakter Anak Melalui Permainan Anak Tradisional,” *J. Pendidik. Karakter*, vol. 4, no. 1, Jun. 2013, doi: 10.21831/jpk.v0i1.1290.
- [2] D. Prasanti and D. R. Fitriani, “Pembentukan karakter anak usia dini: Keluarga, sekolah, dan komunitas?(Studi kualitatif tentang pembentukan karakter anak usia dini melalui keluarga, sekolah, dan komunitas),” *J. Obs. J. Pendidik. Anak Usia Dini*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 13–19, 2018.
- [3] F. Turan and I. Ulutas, “Using Storybooks as a Character Education Tools,” *J. Educ. Pract.*, vol. 7, no. 15, pp. 169–176, 2016.
- [4] Z. K. Takacs and A. G. Bus, “How pictures in picture storybooks support young children’s story comprehension: An eye-tracking experiment,” *J. Exp. Child Psychol.*, vol. 174, pp. 1–12, Oct. 2018, doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2018.04.013.
- [5] K. M. Feathers and P. Arya, “Exploring Young Children’s Patterns of Image Use in a Picturebook,” *Lang. Lit. A Can. Educ. E-Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2015.
- [6] V. Pratiwi, A. Andayani, R. Winarni, and A. Anindyarini, “Digital Storybook to Transform Character Education of Local Wisdom Figures for Elementary School Students,” *J. Soc. Stud. Educ. Res.*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 250–264, 2022, doi: <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/222986/>.
- [7] S. Supartinah, S. P. Kawuryan, and W. S. Hastuti, “Javanese Graded Reading Books For Elementary School Students,” *RETORIKA J. Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, vol. 13, pp. 56–65, 2020.
- [8] M. Muthoifin, S. Narimo, S. Shobron, and A. Mubarakah, “Values of Islamic Character in the Story of Punakawan,” in *Proceedings of the Tegal International Conference on Applied Social Science & Humanities (TICASSH 2022)*, Paris:

- Atlantis Press SARL, 2023, pp. 251–263. doi: 10.2991/978-2-494069-09-1\_31.
- [9] S. Yulisetiani, “Baneswa: Innovation of Introductory Media of Javanese Culture for Children Based on Pop-Up Book,” *J. Javanologi*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 74–81, 2022.
- [10] G. A. Hurlock, *Middling Through: The Mixing and Matching of Selfish Genes in British World-War-II Home-Front Fiction*. The University of Tulsa, 2020.
- [11] P. Barrouillet, “Theories of cognitive development: From Piaget to today,” *Dev. Rev.*, vol. 38, pp. 1–12, Dec. 2015, doi: 10.1016/j.dr.2015.07.004.
- [12] F. Meralda, “PENERAPAN KARAKTERISTIK WAYANG PUNAKAWAN TERHADAP BENTUK PERANCANGAN CONVENTION CENTER DI SURAKARTA,” *AGORA Jurnal Penelit. dan Karya Ilm. Arsit. Usakti*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 16–24, Jan. 2021, doi: 10.25105/agora.v17i01.7489.
- [13] P. Guritno, *Wayang, Kebudayaan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1988.
- [14] R. U. Dona, M. Mulyanto, and M. Margana, “Character Wayang Timplong of Panji Asmarabangun Figure and its Relevance to the Pancasila Students’ Profile,” *AL-ISHLAH J. Pendidik.*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 2846–2856, Jul. 2023, doi: 10.35445/alishlah.v15i3.3177.
- [15] A. Susanto, *Perkembangan anak usia dini*. Jakarta: Kencana Prenada. MediaGroup, 2011.
- [16] M. Yoesoef, “Punakawan in N. Riantiarno’s Dramas: Revitalization of Local Cultural Values in Modern Theater,” in *International Seminar on Recent Language, Literature, and Local Cultural Studies (BASA 2018)*, Atlantis Press, 2018, pp. 398–405.