



## WAYANG PANDAWA COMIC AS EDUCATION MEDIA FOR CHILDREN CHARACTER

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### Abstract

Wayang (puppet) has been embodied in Indonesian especially Javanese life. Wayang contains local wisdom which is important for Indonesian character building and identity and it is manifested through its plot and characters. Local wisdom-based character building as Indonesian identity is significant for young generation to create an intelligent, virtuous, and good personality generations. One of ways to build a character in children is by internalizing local wisdom through introducing wayang stories and characters. All characters in wayang are adapted from the original character of Indonesian people. The life philosophy embodied in wayang through the stories and characters are significantly comprehended for deep and useful essence for life. Particularly, it is necessary to be introduced to elementary students. By doing so, a wayang comic is proposed in this research as the education media for children character building.

**Keywords:** wayang comic, Pandawa, character building

### Introduction

Wayang commonly tells epic of how good characters fight against mean characters. The fact that wayang has passed historical events over generations shows that it has been deeply rooted in Indonesian life especially Javanese. The high number of spectators on its each puppet show indicates the significance of this traditional art for Javanese community. The wayang story is widely known in the Javanese society, also Indonesian society, especially the one that is presented through the shadow-wayang show (Nurgiyantoro & Efendi, 2017:176). Wayang is a traditional literature categorized as masterpiece (*adiluhung*) (Nurgiyantoro, 2011:19). Local wisdom embodied in wayang contributes to build Indonesian character and identity which is depicted in its stories and characterizations. Mubah in Fajrie (2011:305) stated that nation identity as community identity shall be strongly built and deeply internalized. Thus, local wisdom-based character building as national identity for youth is vital.

Character building becomes the highest priority of Indonesian education goals to create an intelligent, virtuous and good personality generation. Character reflected in the capacity for mature judgment and practical wisdom (Lewin, 2014). So far, education more likely emphasizes on academic intellectual building rather than character building which is in fact, character is substantial in assessing human resource quality. One of high intellectuals might be one who does not contribute to community even disrupts others. As a result, character education should be put in the first priority of national education system. Several cases which violate moral values including corruption, violence, sexual abuse,



vandalism, and riot indicate moral degradation within community. Ironically, some those events involve educated people. Character building for children is then expected to be the base of social skill in the future.

Wayang is one of national heritages to preserve as well as to educate young generation for its high moral values and philosophy. Some stories in wayang teach us how to deal with life, how to live life by upholding good morals through the representation of the characters. Characterization in wayang represents Indonesian characters. Hence, to build children character by internalizing local wisdom can be conducted by introducing wayang characters such as Gatotkaca, Srikandi, Arjuna, Yudhistira, Bima, Nakula, Sadewa, Karna and others which represent love, patience, responsibility, and helpful. Wayang mahabharata depicts egalitarian solidarity, a sense of togetherness, as well as purity and obedience. because of that the five Padawa stories can be used as character education (Laine, 2014:276)

It is not easy to comprehend story and characters of wayang due to complex philosophy and symbols. A deep and thorough reading is required to this. Nevertheless, life philosophy embedded in wayang needs to be deeper comprehended and delivered to young generation. Therefore, an effective media to transfer these treasured values to young generations is required. In regard to this, a wayang comic is introduced in this research.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Character is then interpreted as a special sign or characteristic, and therefore gives birth to a view that character is 'an individual pattern of behavior or a person's moral state' (Ryan, 1999:5). In the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI, 2008), the word "character" is defined as a character, psychological traits, character, and morals or manners that distinguish one person from another. Personal characteristics that have character consist of moral and ethical qualities, qualities of honesty, courage, integrity, and a good reputation. Character education according to Lickona contains three main elements, namely knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (Lickona, 1991:51).

Character includes knowledge about goodness, then creates a commitment intention towards goodness, and finally actually does well. In other words, a character refers to a series of knowledge, attitudes, motivations, behaviors, and skills. Based on the above understanding, it can be understood that character is synonymous with morals, so that character is a universal human behavior value that includes all human activities, both in the context of relating to God, to himself, to fellow human beings, and to the environment, and then manifests in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and actions based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture, and customs. From this character concept comes the concept of character education. It can be said that character or moral education is education to shape one's personality so that it has character or morals, the results of which can be seen in concrete actions, namely in the form of good behavior, such as being honest, responsible, hard-working, and respecting others.

Character education for children can be conveyed through comic media. According to Nurgiyantoro (2005:408), comics are more popular with readers because they appear with rows of pictures in panels (boxes) with little handwriting placed in balloons. Comics are not serious, relaxed, light, or funny, and do not burden the reader. The pictures in comics are different from the pictures in picture story books (Bonneff, 2008:8). The pictures in comics are presented sequentially per scene accompanied by written text to form a story. The pictures in comics are a means of communication through the language of pictures. Because the pictures are interesting, comics are liked by readers, especially children's readers. Thus, comics are suitable as media for character education for children.



## **Method**

This research is qualitative descriptive research with a cultural approach. This is because character education is an activity that must be instilled in children from a young age. One of them is by identifying and explaining the characteristics of the Pandawa puppet characters. The primary data used is Pandawa figures, while the secondary data is in the form of references that are relevant to the research focus. The data collection technique is by literature study. The literature study method is appropriate for this research because it specifically examines texts, namely texts related to wayang Pandawa characters (Pandanwangi, 2022:301). Data analysis techniques use data interpretation models and content analysis.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Philosophical Values in Wayang Pandawa Story**

Wayang is essentially depiction of human life. There are many characters and events which resemble real life. In other words, wayang characters represent human characters and wayang stories represent real life events. Pandawa story is selected in this research since it is well recognized as protagonists. Wayang pandawa story is rich of philosophy and norms which is appropriate for children character education. Pandawa provide good examples for children of elementary school. Loving, patience, kindness, responsible, honest and other good traits are represented by Pandawa. The object of wayang to be referred to can be a character, plot, moral value, or many other aspects including conventions (Nurgiyantoro & Efendi, 2017:141). Through an attractive, local wisdom-based media, good character and personality is expectedly owned by Indonesian young generation. According to Pandanwangi & Nuryantiningsih (2017:26), character education is easy to apply to children, namely by using interesting learning media. One of them is with a children's puppet comic with the theme of Pandawa characters.

Pandawa is five sons of Pandu Dewanata (Senawangi, 1999:981:982). Pandu Dewanata is king of Astina. However, King Pandu died when the five sons were children. Due to their underage, Drestarata, Pandawa's uncle, ascended the throne until the Pandawa is qualified to lead the kingdom. However, this would never happen since Drestarastra and his children (Kurawa) wanted the throne and refused to return Astina to Pandawa. This causes Baratayuda war between Pandawa and Kurawa.

As a life representation, wayang cannot be separated from desire either good or bad. In wayang, good desire/traits is represented by Pandawa while mean traits is represented by Kurawa. Both traits confront in Baratayuda war which both are cousins. According to Senawangi (2008:228), Baratayuda is not only a war which fights for Astina kingdom but also a war of good traits fights for mean traits. It is a battle of honesty and truth confronts greed and wickedness.

Baratayuda is inevitable as explained by Bagawat Gita to Arjuna (Senawangi, 1999:228) since it is a warrior duty to eradicate crime and injustice even though he has to fight against his own brother or teacher. This war symbolizes that good deeds and bad deeds always occur throughout time. The good will always confront the bad ones. Moreover, kinship is not always going on in harmony. Conflicts might happen instead.

Other philosophy depicted in Pandawa story is life cycle from birth to death. This story tells how Pandawa were born until they died. During their life, they experienced joy and grief including being defamed, humiliated, expelled; fighting crimes and wrongdoings until sincerely left power and wealth for eternal death.

### **Pandawa Characters**



Yudhistira also known as Puntadewa is the oldest brother of Pandawa Lima. He is the Pandawa leader. Character of Yudhistira symbolizes belief to defeat crimes. His personal traits include wise and friendly, good attitude, forgiving and merciful. Yudhistira is a holy symbol and possesses warrior character; hence, he is called as warrior of Amarta. He is also symbol of honesty for never telling lies throughout his life. Through Yudhistira, children can learn honesty to be implemented in their life.

Bima also known as Werkudoro is described as one who has physical strength and aggressive yet polite and kind. Called as Sena as he was child, he was the second son of Pandu and Dewi Kunti. He is a manifestation of God of Bayu, thus, he was also called as Bayusutha. He was athletic, the tallest of all yet he was kind. Besides, he was good at using Gada which is called as Rujakpala. Werkudara is his other name. In wayang, it is told that he had three sons namely Gatotkaca, Antareja and Antasena.

When doing something, Bima would focus on it until completed. He also had Aji Pancanaka meaning five powers. In wayang stories, he symbolizes index finger. Despite his huge physical appearance, he has straight heart like index finger. As in Indonesian culture, when one is angry, he will point using his index finger to warn and remind other's mistake.

In wayang stories, Bima is well known for his bravery, strength, high committed, obedience and honesty. He scares his enemy although he was actually kind, faithful, straight forward, determined and always kept his words. Bima symbolizes assertiveness, bravery, honesty and justice to fight crimes. To Bima, the guilty must be punished. From Bima, children can learn assertiveness and justice to uphold truth and keep their promise.

Arjuna also known as Janaka (also Permadi, his childhood name) is the one who loves meditation. He was the youngest son of Dewi Kunti and Pandu. He was manifestation of God Indra, God of war. He was unbeatable warrior, intelligent and continuous learner. He gained near-perfect mastery at archery. His excellent skill at war made his four brothers counted on him to defeat Kurawa. Therefore, he was famous for incomparable fighter.

Arjuna led Madukara. He was tenacious. In wayang stories, he was single-minded concentration which made him strong and calms to face any obstacles in his life. He was also known for intelligent, calmness, virtuous, meticulous, and polite and protecting the weak. All those qualities were gained through hardworking, high commitment and persistence. From Arjuna, we can learn tenaciousness and high commitment during learning process.

Nakula is the older brother of the twin, Sadewa. Bearing Pinten as his childhood name, he was the son of Dewi Madrim and Pandu. He was manifestation of twin gods Aswin, god of Medicine. Nakula was an excellent sword fighter. He was known as the most handsome man and the best sword warrior. He was also recognized as a hard worker, good looking and generous. He was honest, faithful and obedient to his parents and credible. From Nakula, children can learn to keep secret, compassion, and merciful.

Sadewa is the youngest brother of Pandawa Lima who has identical personal traits with his twin, Nakula. Sadewa was diligent and wise, good at astronomy, good looking and generous like Nakula. Sadewa was described as the one who brought stability and sanity. In wayang stories, he was even able to clean Goddess Durga to return into her initial appearance, Dewi Uma. This depicts that Sadewa as the youngest Pandawa was able to clean the tiniest thing. Moreover, he was wise, brilliant and sixth-sensed. From Sadewa, children can learn to be wise and optimistic in pursuing their future.

### **Wayang Pandawa Comic as Education Media for Children Characters**

Wayang comic is selected to be the media of character education through wayang Pandawa. Based on a research (Pandanwangi, 2015), it stated that comic is attractive media



for learning. Comics used in furtherance of missionary and other social projects (King, 2008:215). The result shows that comic help students comprehend abstract and difficult materials much easier. Pandanwangi brought the issue of anti-corruption education in her comic. Through comic, students find a more enjoyable learning. Comics represent stories with new, more interesting images and configurations (Morton, 2015:349). They feel that more like reading a pictorial story rather than learning. Packed with funny, attractive story and colorful display, comics enable students to comprehend the materials easily.

Likewise, Nuryantiningsih, Farida (2016) in her research stated that elementary students found it easier to comprehend Javanese subject through the given comics. Interestingly, it attracts students to study due to its attractive and creative display. It also improves their reading interest. Learning Javanese subject, thus, becomes easier through comic.

Comics is a narrative focusing on motion and acts visualized by image sequences which are made in such a way provided by texts (Franz&Meier in Nurgiyantoro, 2005:410). Most comic text is arranged by sequences of image panels (visual sign) and text (verbal sign). Story is built and developed through images and texts. Words or sentences are provided within speech balloons juxtaposed with images. Speech balloons may indicate dialog, thought, or brief description (Nurgiyantoro, 2005:410).

Comics can be applied as a unique learning media since it combines text and images creatively (Pamuji, 2014: [www.diglib.uin.suka.ac.id](http://www.diglib.uin.suka.ac.id)). Furthermore, comics effectively attract people for it is easily comprehended. Simple image added by some information made comic readable for most people. By using comics, teachers can visually communicate with students during learning process. Moreover, it is considered more informative and attractive to students. According to Sudjana and Rivai (Pamuji, 2014) comics can be implemented to deliver knowledge, boost reading interest, and enrich vocabularies. Hence, wayang Pandawa comic is appropriate to transfer philosophy of wayang Pandawa and its characters as a character education media for elementary students.

## Conclusion

Wayang is one of national cultures to preserve and to educate young generation since it contains moral values and life philosophy to be implemented for character building. Characters in wayang represent Indonesian characters. Thus, one of ways to build a character in children is by internalizing local wisdom through introducing wayang stories and characters of Pandawa.

To comprehend wayang stories and characters, a media is required to transfer philosophical values in wayang for elementary students. Comic is chosen since it is able to visually communicate messages attractively. Further, it enables teachers to deliver learning materials easier and effectively. For students, learning through comic becomes enjoyable activity. By doing so, character education from wayang Pandawa story and characters is easier and better to be comprehended by students.

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