



The Use of Short Stories as Learning Media for Character Education for Elementary School Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACTS

The purpose of this study was to find out whether short stories can affect the attitudes and behavior of a child related to efforts to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. The research was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods to 10 elementary school students 3 Pagerwangi. The results show that learning with short stories media can influence children's attitudes and behavior. There is an increase in student behavior in an effort to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Some students who previously lacked an understanding of health protocols, have better understood how important it is to obey health protocols, and also always do it in their daily lives. This can be seen from the decrease in students who are negligent in carrying out health protocols. Learning through this short story media, students are expected to further improve efforts to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in their daily lives, as well as remind each other the importance of carrying out health protocols correctly for others.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The condition of the world in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic has made all activities limited. No exception with teaching and learning activities, all students carry out online. Inequality of teaching staff also occurs in various regions, thus making teaching and learning activities less than optimal. An educator is an important factor in the learning process (Indiani, 2020). Usually students get more education with teachers at school, but because of all the limitations during this COVID-19 pandemic, parents certainly have a more role to play at home. A child needs to get character education from an early age, especially the basic level of education, to avoid bad habits in the future. Character education can be obtained anywhere and anytime.

Character so conceived has three interrelated parts; moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior (Marzuki, 2019). Character education not only teaches goodness, but is also related to habits, ethics, and morals. One of the learning media that can teach character education is short stories (Marta, 2015). Short stories for children have a light nature and the message is easy to observe (Hidayah, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic period certainly adds new knowledge to all humans. There are people who already understand, there are also those who do not understand. A child also needs to be properly informed about COVID-19. This knowledge can be transmitted through short stories. Not a few people violate health protocols in their daily lives, so a small child who sees it and doesn't understand it tends to follow it. In addition to people who violate health protocols, there are still many people who often spread hoaxes about COVID-19. Children do not necessarily understand things like that. If someone is wrong in educating, it can have a bad impact and can even harm others. The role of the family is also very important to guide and educate a child (Solihat & Riansi, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to be taught about efforts to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, as well as the causes and effects of violating health protocols.

There are several similar studies that discuss the relationship between children's literature and character education. First, research that discusses whether there are character values contained in short stories, proves that children's stories contain many values that are useful for shaping character (Rosid, 2021). Then, research that discusses the storytelling method for kindergarten/elementary school children, explains how to use the story method in developing children's moral values (Putri, 2017). Next, research that discusses the existence of folklore in the Bali area, shows that the values in the Balinese unit contribute to the character education of elementary school students (Parmini, 2015). Subsequent research discusses how the character education of a child through fables, the results show the values of life that play a role in character education contained in the five fable short stories (Juanda, 2019). The next paper explains how the continuity between children's literature and the process of forming children's characters is (Nurgiyantoro, 2010).

The similarity with our research is that they both discuss the role of a literary work in the process of character education of a child. But the difference is, our research uses pre-test and post-test methods to find out how short stories influence children's behavior. Several previous studies tend to examine how the method is used, what values are contained in the story, how is the relationship between the two, and so on.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature according to the KBBI is the language (words, language styles) used in books (not everyday language); literature; writing; letter; etc. Literary works can be in the form of poetry, prose, or plays (drama). A literary work has various important roles other than entertainment,

one of which is character building. Literature is a form of the author's creativity to pour his thoughts into a work (Kartika, 2016). Short story is a form of prose literary work, which is popularly used as a medium of learning. Short stories can be interpreted as stories that can be read in one sitting, and are generally fictional. Along with the times, short stories are published in print or digital media, then can be presented only in the form of writing or added with illustrations. For a child, short stories are one of the learning media that is easy to understand because of its attractive presentation. Knowledge of the values of life can be poured into short stories as a form of character education (Nisa & Aryni, 2019). Short stories for children are presented briefly and packaged in an attractive manner so that they are easy to understand. There are even short stories that are presented with picture illustrations, so that children can more easily imagine the story. There are several types of short stories that are popular among children, namely fables, folklore, fairytales, etc. Fables are short stories that tell about animals. Animals are made into characters who can act like humans, such as talking and going to school. Examples of popular fables include "The Mouse Deer", and "The Rabbit and the Turtle". Folklore generally tells of legends and myths in an area. Popular examples are, "Sangkuriang" from West Java, and "Malin Kundang" from West Sumatra. Fairytale stories are usually more about fairies, for example the story of "Tinkerbell".

Character related to morals, are universal human behavioral values covering all activities, which can be in the form of human relationships with God, oneself, fellow humans, as well as with the environment (Martono, 2018). This is manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on religious norms, laws, karma, culture, and customs (Marzuki, 2019). The character of a human needs to be formed from an early age, to create a good person. Therefore, character education is something that plays a very important role in the growth and development of a child (Suhardi & Thahirah, 2018). Character education is not only for children, but the basic things of life need to be instilled in children from an early age. How a person respects each other, courtesy to others, responsibility, even religious values, are some of the basic things of human life (Putri, 2017).

3. METHODS

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This study produces data in the form of words, which describe changes in a child's behavior after reading and observing a short story. The research was conducted on 10 students of elementary school 3 Pagerwangi, Bandung Regency, with the aim of knowing whether short stories can affect a child's character. The sample of students was obtained by means of a direct survey to the field, taking a study group containing as many as 10 grade 3 elementary school students. The data is obtained by several steps. First, we prepared two short stories about COVID-19. The first short story is in the form of a picture story book entitled "My Hero is You: Storybook for Children on COVID-19", which was developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC MHPSS RG). The second short story is entitled "Didn't They Said Would Follow the Health Protocol?" the work of one authors. Before reading short stories, students filled out pre-test questions related to short stories and efforts to prevent COVID-19, in the form of an online google form questionnaire. This is done to become a reference whether or not there is a change in attitude in students. In addition, we will also explain the types of short stories to students online via whatsapp video calls. Short stories are sent to students in PDF form via parents via whatsapp. Then, parents are asked to guide students in reading and understanding the short stories that have been given. After reading and observing the short story, the students returned to fill out the post-test as an evaluation. After all the data is collected, we will then analyze the results

of the pre-test and post-test that have been filled out by students. Data analysis was carried out by observing changes in the content of each student's answers in each pre-test and post-test item. Then the results will be concluded, whether the short story can affect the behavior of a child.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. DEMOGRAPHY

The research was conducted at elementary school 3 Pagerwangi, Bandung Regency. The research was conducted online on 10 samples of 3rd grade students. Although school regulations remain online, due to limited facilities and teaching staff, students tend to study in groups every day offline. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching and learning activities take place online.

Teachers and parents experience limitations in the field of technology, so the teaching process has limitations. At the beginning of online school, students study in groups (10 people) offline at one person's house, then the teacher approaches to teach. The teacher comes to teach alternately from each group to another. But for now, guidance is left to parents (still in the same group) with direction from the teacher.

4.2. PHENOMENA IN THE LEARNING

From the student demographic data, we found that public awareness was still weak to comply with health protocols. The study was conducted to teach how important it is to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus through short stories. Therefore, we also ask parents to accompany students when reading and observing short stories.

- (i) Students do not show enthusiastic reactions, their reactions are just normal when they are explained about this program
- (ii) Students are given pre-test questions via WhatsApp, then answer them with the help of their parents.
- (iii) Students are given independent assignments to read and observe two short stories about COVID-19. Short stories sent in PDF form via parent's whatsapp. Parents were also asked to guide students when reading and observing short stories.
- (iv) Students then answer the post-test questions after reading and observing the short story. The questions on the post-test are still the same as the pre-test. This is done to see an increase in student answers.

4.3. PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST RESULT

Character education includes knowledge of goodness, then raises the intention to do good, and finally does that goodness for real (Marzuki, 2019). Through a short story, a child is expected to understand something good and eventually do it in his daily life. Education related to efforts to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, also needs to be applied to a child. Short stories are one of the learning media that are easily understood by children, especially if they are presented with illustrations. Many values of life are contained in short stories, which can be a lesson for a child (Marta, 2015).

The characters in the short story create imagination, and can be imitated by children (Nahdly, 2020). Of course, it also becomes a lesson for children, which ones to imitate, which ones to avoid. This will be proven by the results of the pre-test and post-test analysis, which will be presented based on each question:

- (i) Do you often play outdoors?

All students answered "Yes" to the first question. In both questions (pre-test and post-test), all students gave the same answer. So it can be concluded that there is no change in playing activities. Before and after looking at the contents of the short story, students still often play outside the house.

(ii) Do you follow the daily health protocol?

The second question on the pre-test, as many as 5 students answered "Occasionally", 4 students answered "Yes", and 1 student answered "No". There was a change in the answers to the post-test questions, namely 7 students answered "Yes", and 3 students answered "Occasionally". It can be seen that after looking at the short story, there are no students who do not follow the health protocols at all. This proves that there is an increase in the good attitude of students.

(iii) What do you know about health protocols?

The third question on the post-test, only one student did not know about health protocols. While the other nine students answered correctly, such as washing hands with soap or hand sanitizer, using masks, maintaining distance, avoiding contact with other people, and minimizing travel. After filling out the post-test questions, there was an increase, that all students already knew the health protocol correctly.

(iv) What is your attitude when you see your friend who is very strict about implementing health protocols?

In the pre-test, almost all students (7 people) answered with "It's okay", while the other 3 answered "Happy", "Appreciate it", and "Follow it". There was a change in the answers to the post-test questions, all students no longer answered "It's okay". The average answer is like the three answers in the previous pre-test.

(v) What do you do when you miss the people you care about during this COVID-19 pandemic?

In the pre-test, almost all students answered online, such as sending text messages, calling, or making video calls. There was only one student who answered to come directly. However, after observing the answers on the post-test, all students answered online, and there were no longer students who answered offline. There is an increase, that students have understood to minimize travel, and better communicate online.

(vi) What is your attitude if you see people who do not comply with health protocols?

In the pre-test, as many as 7 students answered with "It's okay", while the other 3 answered that they would tell them. There was a change in the pre-test answers, namely all students answered to tell them to obey the health protocol, and there were no more students who answered "It's okay". This is an improvement, because students have understood how important it is to remind each other of health protocols.

(vii) Do you like reading short stories?

All students answered "Not bad" on the pre-test. Then, there was a change in the post-test, namely all students answered "Yes". This is an increase in student literacy interest.

(viii) Do you prefer short stories with pictures or not?

A total of 9 students answered that they liked short stories with pictures, while 1 student answered that they liked them without pictures. There are no changes to the post-test answers. This is only related to one's taste in reading.

(ix) Have you understood the types of short stories?

All students answered that they did not understand the types of short stories in the pre-test questions. However, on the pre-test questions, all students have answered quite understanding. This is in the form of an increase that, although less than optimal,

students managed to gain knowledge about the types of short stories from our explanation.

(x) How do you feel after reading a short story?

All students answered happily on both questions (pre-test and post-test). It means that there is no change in students' feelings after reading the short story, and they still have feelings of pleasure.

4.4. DISCUSSION

Nothing has changed from the habit of students who still often play outside the home, but they seem more alert to obey health protocols more. Students who do not know about health protocols have become more aware. Students also always respect and follow if they see people who apply health protocols very strictly, then are willing to reprimand people who violate health protocols. This is in line with what was stated by Martono (2018), that children can imitate the good attitudes of characters in stories.

In addition to increasing students' understanding of efforts to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, there was also an increase in student literacy interest. This also proves that the literary appreciation learning method can influence habits and increase students' knowledge, as stated by Martono (2018). Students become more aware of the types of short stories after being explained by us even though they are not optimal. Most students prefer short stories that are accompanied by picture illustrations. It just depends on the taste of each individual. All students feel happy after reading the short story.

Based on the pre-test and post-test results, some answers stated that there was a change, but some also stated that there was no change. This change is supported by what Putri (2017) stated, which states that a story can change a child's ethics, providing experience and moral learning through the attitudes of the characters in the story.

5. CONCLUSION

Character education needs to be instilled in a child from the basic education level. Not only teaching goodness, character education also teaches how humans shape their morals and habits. Knowledge about efforts to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus is also included in the form of character education. Various media can be used as a reference for learning character education, one of which is short stories. Short stories for children have a light nature and the message is easy to observe. There are many values of life contained in short stories, which need to be taught from an early age. Knowledge related to COVID-19, can be poured into short stories so that children can observe it more easily.

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test analysis, it can be concluded that short stories have an influence on students' knowledge regarding COVID-19. There has been an increase in efforts to implement health protocols. After observing the two short stories prepared by the researcher, although the students still often played outside, they became more aware of the importance of implementing health protocols. Students also better understand cause and effect if they do not obey health protocols. This proves that students can also choose which character attitudes to follow and which ones to avoid in their daily lives.

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7. AUTHORS' NOTE

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