



Representation of Early Childhood Character Values in the Animated Film Jumbo at the Pocenter Playgroup

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the embodiment of early childhood character values in the animated film *Jumbo* and investigate its relevance in character learning practices at the Pocenter Playgroup. The method applied is a qualitative approach through library research and content analysis, in addition to limited field observations. Data were obtained through narrative analysis of segments in the film that include eighteen character values. The research findings show that the film *Jumbo* presents character values clearly and emotionally through characters, conversations, and conflicts related to the world of children. At the Pocenter Playgroup, this film is used as a learning tool through discussions, role-playing, and thematic activities that support the internalization of values in children. This study concludes that local animated films such as *Jumbo* can function as effective educational media for character education for preschool children if supported by contextual and reflective teaching strategies. These findings contribute to the development of learning media that contain values and the implementation of character education in early childhood education environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Character education is an important foundation in the development of early childhood, because in this period children are in a golden age that determines the formation of their personality, morality and social attitudes [1]. Based on the Ministry of Education and Culture [2], Character education is a structured process aimed at instilling noble values, not only cognitively but also in the affective and psychomotor aspects. In the context of early childhood education (ECE), character building becomes increasingly important because children begin to develop social and moral perceptions through interactions with their environment and familiar media. One of the most popular forms of media for children is cartoons. The advantages of animated films lie in their visual appeal and narrative, which can indirectly influence children's thought patterns and behavior [3]. However, amidst the rapid production of digital entertainment content, it is crucial to ensure that the programs children watch truly contain educational and character-building values. This research began with the need to assess and identify the depiction of character values in animated films popular with children, particularly the film "Jumbo," and their

relevance to the character learning process at the Pocenter Playgroup, an early childhood education institution that actively incorporates visual-based learning media.

With the rapid advancement of digital technology and the proliferation of mass media, concerns have arisen about the lack of oversight of children's content, which could obscure moral values that should be taught from an early age. Children are adept imitators of what they see and hear, as stated by Bandura in his Social Learning Theory, which states that children learn through observation and imitation [4]. When animated films depict positive behaviors such as honesty, mutual assistance, and responsibility, these values can be easily accepted by children. However, shows filled with violence or destructive values can actually have negative impacts. Therefore, the animated film *Jumbo*, a local work and offering a meaningful narrative, is a worthy subject of research. Based on this foundation, this study aims to answer the main question: how the animated film *Jumbo* depicts early childhood character values, and how relevant these values are applied in the context of character education at the Pocenter Playgroup.

Several previous studies have indicated the important role of audiovisual media in developing children's values and character. For example, the animated film *Diva The Series* can foster social awareness in young children [5]. There is also research on the effectiveness of educational television programs as a learning tool. [6]. On the other hand, it is explained that the storytelling method has a powerful ability to internalize Islamic values from an early age [7]. Similar to the narrative approach applied in animated films, however, few studies have specifically examined modern local animated films in the context of character education in early childhood education institutions. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how character values such as empathy, honesty, hard work, and curiosity are displayed in the animated film *Jumbo*, and to explore the relevance of their application in the character education process in early childhood education environments, particularly in the Pocenter Playgroup.

Recent literature emphasizes that character education must be closely linked to children's everyday contexts and the media they actively use. In the pre-operational phase, according to Piaget's theory, children cannot yet understand values abstractly, so they require concrete examples and engaging visualizations [8]. Vygotsky emphasized that social and cultural interactions play an important role in the development of higher mental functions, including the formation of moral values [9]. In this context, the animated film *Jumbo* serves as an effective educational tool because it presents characters and conflicts relevant to children's psychosocial realities. This research is expected to provide practical contributions for early childhood educators and parents in utilizing animated films as a tool to instill values, while also serving as a reference for content creators to prioritize positive values that support comprehensive early childhood character education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character education is a comprehensive approach to the learning process that aims to develop students into individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also morally, socially, and emotionally mature. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology [10], tujuan pendidikan karakter adalah membentuk siswa dengan enam dimensi utama in the Pancasila Student Profile, namely faith, unity in diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity. These values form the main framework of national education which is also applied in the curriculum for early childhood education. Currently, children are in a crucial phase of brain and

personality development, so the instillation of character values needs to be done in a structured, consistent manner, and through methods that are appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Children at an early age who are in the pre-operational stage according to Jean Piaget's theory are not yet able to think logically and abstractly, so they need concrete media that are interesting and touch their emotional aspects to understand the values of virtue [11].

In the context of early childhood character education, animated films are a highly effective visual medium because they integrate elements of story, visuals, audio, and emotion. Albert Bandura's social learning theory states that children learn by observing their environment, including the media they consume [4]. When children watch animated characters who demonstrate honesty, responsibility, or caring for others, they will adopt these behaviors in their daily lives [12]. Animated films also provide opportunities for children to express their emotions and thoughts in beloved fictional characters, so that value learning occurs not directly, but through a process of emotional recognition and symbolic identification. The film *Jumbo*, for example, features the character Don who faces social rejection but rises through imagination, courage, and social support, reflecting values such as self-confidence, perseverance, and curiosity that are crucial in early childhood development.

Furthermore, the character education approach focuses not only on the values taught but also on delivery methods that are appropriate to the child's developmental characteristics. Based on a holistic approach, successful character education involves three main aspects: cognitive (understanding of values), affective (emotions regarding values), and psychomotor (actual actions related to values) [13]. These three aspects must be integrated into learning media, and animated films can achieve this simultaneously. The narrative in the film builds understanding, the characters evoke empathy, and the visual repetition of positive behaviors strengthens the opportunity for children to emulate them in the real world. In this context, animated films serve not only as passive entertainment but also as an active medium for building bridges between children's values and behavior, especially when used in educational settings such as those implemented at the Pocenter Playgroup.

In addition, Vygotsky highlighted the significance of social and cultural interactions as the primary context for children's cognitive and moral development. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), introduced by Vygotsky, explains that children more easily reach their learning potential when they receive guidance from a supportive social environment, such as parents, teachers, or peers [14]. In this context, educators in early childhood education play a key role in facilitating children's interactions with learning resources, including films. When animated films are watched together, then discussed and connected to everyday behavior, children gain deeper character learning. The use of visual media such as educational films or school television, accompanied by teacher guidance, is more effective in instilling character values than passive viewing without guidance [15]. Thus, an early childhood education environment that combines educational films with reflective activities will create more meaningful character learning.

Ultimately, in today's digital age, character education through animated films is a relevant and adaptive solution, especially given children's familiarity with gadgets and visual media. However, not all animated films contain content that aligns with educational values. Therefore, selecting appropriate films, such as *Jumbo*, which has been proven to represent 18 character values, is a strategic step in the educational field. Local animations

that contain positive values are usually more easily accepted by children because they are more relevant to their cultural context [16]. In this context, the study of value representation in the film *Jumbo* makes a significant contribution to assessing and recommending media-based character education practices in early childhood education institutions. Consequently, the Pocenter Playgroup can serve as an example of the implementation of contextual, values-based local educational media.

METHODS

The research method applied in this study is a qualitative approach with library research combined with content analysis, and strengthened through limited field observations at the Pocenter Playgroup, which is the location of this research. This study aims to analyze the depiction of early childhood character values in the animated film *Jumbo* and investigate its relationship to the implementation of character education in early childhood education institutions. Initial data were obtained through systematic observation of key moments in the film *Jumbo* that reflect 18 character values. The analysis was carried out by identifying and categorizing scenes containing representations of these values, then linking them to character learning practices at the Pocenter Playgroup through activity documentation, casual interviews with educators, and a review of the Daily Activity Plan (RKH) and character strengthening programs implemented at the institution. The data collection method also involved a literature search from academic journals, books, and regulations regarding character education for early childhood to deepen the context of the analysis. This method was chosen because it can provide in-depth insights into the film's narrative content and its indirect impact on children's character development. This research is descriptive-analytical and contextual, with the aim of providing a practical contribution to the use of educational media in character education in PAUD environments, especially in Pocenter Playgroups [17], [18].

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A content analysis of the animated film *Jumbo* shows that the film clearly and implicitly represents 18 character values that align with the indicators of character education. The main character, Don, a child facing social challenges such as body shaming and bullying, is depicted as possessing perseverance, courage, and a strong fighting spirit. In the moment when Don remains determined to show his parents' inherited fairy tale despite being ridiculed, the values of hard work, independence, and self-confidence are very strong. Religious aspects and honesty are clearly visible when Don and his friends apologize to each other and sincerely show their guilt. Although brief, the scene has a strong emotional impact and is very appropriate for instilling a basic understanding of ethics and morals in children. This statement is in line with previous research that children more quickly grasp values through real behavior and the figures they idolize [19].

The values of responsibility, social awareness, and cooperation are also clearly evident in the film, particularly during Don's journey with his friend to help Meri find her parents. During the journey, the children experience both physical and emotional adventures, displaying values such as empathy, good communication, and a spirit of cooperation. In the context of the Pocenter Playgroup, teachers responded positively to this by using these scenes as discussion and reflection material during group viewings. Based on field observations, children at Pocenter were encouraged to express their opinions after witnessing and imitating Don's positive behavior, such as supporting each other and

comforting a friend who was feeling sad. This activity aligns with the experiential character education method, which emphasizes children's direct participation in interpreting values from real and symbolic situations [20].

The values of patriotism, national spirit, and appreciation for achievement are evident in several moments showing Don and his friends celebrating August 17th. By actively participating in village competitions and events, the characters in the film reflect a love of local culture, a positive competitive spirit, and a respect for successful individuals. At the Pocenter Playgroup, these values are reflected in the Independence Day themed activity, where clips from the film *Jumbo* are replayed to foster children's nationalism. Teachers actively link these moments to daily school activities such as a small flag ceremony, singing the national anthem, and recognizing national heroes. These activities demonstrate how film can bridge the gap between popular media and national values embedded in context.

The aspect of creativity is also a key point evident in Don's way of creating a performance based on his parents' folktale. This scene serves to demonstrate how creative ideas can emerge from imagination, courage, and collaboration. At Pocenter Playgroup, teachers use this scene to encourage children to draw stories or put together small performances inspired by the film. Children's work, such as Meri's painting, the haunted house, and the drama performance, demonstrates that they not only understand the storyline but are also encouraged to express themselves. This demonstrates the relationship between understanding values and the development of a child's overall motor and cognitive skills. Effective character values need to be taught not only as theory but also internalized through real-life experiences and creative expression [21].

The values of tolerance, democracy, and friendly/communicative attitudes are reflected in the interactions between the characters. Don, Mae, and Nurman often have differing views, but always manage to find a solution through dialogue and listening to each other. These values are also evident in the Pocenter Playgroup activity where children role-play the roles of characters in the film. The teacher directs the children to act as Don or Meri and reenact social situations, such as deciding who goes first or making decisions for group activities. This environment creates a natural opportunity to hone democratic attitudes, empathy, and skills in resolving conflicts peacefully. Civic education, starting at an early age, can be implemented through playful and relevant social simulations [22].

A love of reading is a core value embodied in Don's love of his family's fairy tale books. Don is portrayed as a child who discovers his identity and strength through the stories within these books. The scene of Don reading and then bringing the story to life in a stage performance is a significant sign that literacy and character can develop together. At Pocenter, teachers subsequently incorporated short story reading sessions based on film clips into the early literacy program. Children were encouraged to bring their favorite books from home, read with friends, and share stories. This practice supports literacy values while developing proactive and self-confident learners, as expected in the Early Childhood Education curriculum based on Freedom to Learn. [23].

Furthermore, the values of environmental and social concern are evident in moments when characters help tidy the house, water the plants, and feed the animals. While not central to the story, these moments demonstrate positive behaviors that are closely linked to the development of a sense of responsibility and concern for the environment. At Pocenter Playgroup, these values are instilled through daily activities such as caring for classroom plants and feeding the fish together, which relate to the behavior of the

characters in the film Jumbo. Reflective activities conducted by teachers after watching the film allow children to connect visual experiences with real-life actions, strengthening their understanding of the characters through direct experience. This approach supports the view that internalization of character values will be more successful if they are consistently embedded in meaningful daily activities [24].

Overall, the animated film Jumbo has proven to be an educational tool containing important values and is suitable for supporting the character development of early childhood. The values contained in the film are not only narratively structured but also easily accessible emotionally and visually to children. At the Pocenter Playgroup, the application of this film in character learning strategies has shown positive results in improving children's understanding of values and social skills. The collaboration between educational shows and thematic activities in this early childhood education institution demonstrates that popular media, when used correctly, can serve as an effective tool for shaping children's overall character. Therefore, it is crucial for educators, parents, and content creators to continue developing and utilizing local animated films rich in values as part of the early childhood character development ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and discussion results show that the animated film Jumbo depicts 18 character values that align with early childhood character education guidelines, such as honesty, hard work, responsibility, tolerance, love of the homeland, and social awareness, through clear and emotional visual narratives. The depiction of these values is not only clearly visible in the storyline and character behavior, but is also highly relevant when applied to character teaching in the Pocenter Playgroup. The use of the Jumbo film in educational activities has been proven to increase children's ability to absorb and apply these values through reflective activities, role-playing, literacy, and discussions integrated into the daily ECE program. In this way, local animated films such as Jumbo can function as effective teaching tools in strengthening early childhood character education in a comprehensive and relevant manner, especially if supported by the active participation of teachers in supporting the process of internalizing values.

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