



Maslow's Theory on Building Character Education Through Children's Literature

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Abstract

Emerging technology brings both negative and positive impacts. The negative foreign culture and moral values will bring destruction to the young generation. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen character education in children so that unfiltered negative culture can be avoided as early as possible. The purpose of this paper is to give insight and suggestions to the teachers to apply Maslow's theory with literary works to instill character education in elementary school. This paper provides practical examples that can be applied in the school environment. Maslow's theory is the most ideal learning theory. Literary works provide many examples of good character education that can be imitated. Meanwhile, Maslow's theory prioritizes humanist education, where students must be treated as whole humans, not only in cognitive aspects but must involve emotional and social aspects. Strengthening character education through literary works has been widely carried out because literature has stories and characters that can be imitated, but no literature uses Maslow's theory. Literary works and Maslow's theory can be combined because they both have the same goal to shape the child's personality not only from an academic point of view but also from a non-academic perspective.

Keywords: *Character education, Children's literature, Maslow's Theory*

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INTRODUCTION

Technology provides many conveniences in accessing information and entertainment. The existence of the internet and communication tools or other very sophisticated electronic tools provides various application platforms to make it easier for users to access the information and entertainment they want. The phenomenon that often occurs at this time is that many children prefer to play on cell phones (mobile phones) than playing with their friends, dependence on cell phones causes children to become indifferent, apathetic, and isolate themselves from their environment. Technological sophistication can also result in accessing foreign cultures and moral values that are not suitable for the personality of the Indonesian generation. Negative information that is not filtered properly can endanger the lives of the young generation which will lead to destruction in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the character education of children.

The young generation is the determinant of the future of a country. A good future is determined by a good generation. To prevent the entry of foreign cultures that can damage the personality of the children, the government of Indonesia has launched a strengthening of character education in the formal sector from

kindergarten to middle level to instill Pancasila values such as religious attitudes, and honesty, independence, and discipline.

Law Number 20 of 2003 clearly states that the national goal of education in Indonesia is to create a quality generation that not only has extensive knowledge but also has a noble character. This statement means that the purpose of education is marked by a process of change in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects by a person through teaching and training. Affective learning or noble character can be done by instilling character education in every subject. Character education can be carried out in schools, families, and communities as stated in government regulation No. 20 of 2018 concerning strengthening character education in formal education units.

Character education is a form of humanist education. Humanist education has the goal to shape the personality of students. Humanist education can be done by using Maslow's theory approach that touches on the psychological aspects of students to bring out positive personalities in students, such as self-confidence, and motivation. It will bring positive changes in affective and cognitive aspects.

Character education can be instilled through several media, one of which is through literary works. Literary works have various forms, namely poetry, short stories, novels, plays, and prose. Literary works have stories about characters whose personalities can be analyzed. Literary works that are suitable for instilling the character of students in elementary schools are children's literature because they have many stories that educate and can be used as role models or examples.

There have been many literatures about literary works to build character education (Achsani, 2018; Agustina, 2015; Ernawati, 2019; Panglipur & Listiyaningsih, 2017; Sukirman, 2021; Wulandari, 2015) . However, no literature discusses the use of literary works with Maslow's theory in strengthening character education. This article has a novelty where the researcher uses Maslow's theory learning approach through literary works in instilling character education of children in elementary schools because Maslow's theory has the same goal to shape students' personalities.

This paper aims to enable teachers to apply Maslow's theory with literary works to instill character education in elementary students and teachers can implement character education in a fun and humanist way.

The researcher makes a theoretical contribution to the cultivation of children's character education in elementary schools by using Maslow's theory through literary works. The researcher provides examples of how to apply character education that can be done in elementary schools through literary works using Maslow's theory.

METHODS

The purpose of writing this article is to describe the importance of literary works in shaping children's character that can be applied in teaching and learning activities in elementary schools with Maslow's theory to realize the goals of national education. The method of writing this article used a literature study, which used relevant references and theories.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Importance Of Character Education In Elementary School

Instilling a noble personality character is better if it starts at the lowest level of education. Elementary school is the longest formal education, which is 6 years. Elementary school children are like a blank space that must be filled, children learn a lot and imitate things in their environment, and what they imitate will be embedded in them. Therefore, elementary school teachers must provide role models and good personality examples for their students. It can be done by instilling character in each subject or by directing an example.

Elementary students have different personalities, they still want to play, and they still need a lot of guidance from their parents. The child's personality is influenced by environmental and family factors. Parents as role models at home must set a good example for the development of their child's personality. Meanwhile, the teacher as a substitute for parents at school must also provide a good role model for their students. Teachers and parents play an important role in the development of a child's personality. Therefore, teachers and parents must pay attention to their personality development because it will affect the cognitive and affective abilities of children.

The personality of elementary school children is very happy to play, active, happy with group work or in pairs, and doing things directly or real. By knowing the characteristics of students, teachers can determine the learning methods and strategies to instill character education that is suitable for elementary students.

Character Building

The word character is taken from the Greek " karasso " which means blueprint, basic format (Koesoema, 2007 cited in. Suparno (2015) concludes the definition of character that is taken from several references, character is the values of positive life attitudes, which exist in each person so that they can affect behavior, ways of thinking, and acting, which in turn become the character of his life.

Character education is education that has the aim of helping students experience, and acquire a strong character as desired. The task of education is to change bad characters and develop good characters (Driyarkara, 2006 cited in Suparno, 2015).

Education and technology are not enough to build a developed country, but the young generation's character is an important aspect that can determine the country's competitiveness against other countries. To be trusted and compete with other countries, good character or personality is needed, such as honesty, discipline, hard work, and responsibility. So it is necessary to instill character in the world of education.

Education With Maslow's Theory

Abraham Maslow is the father of Humanistic psychology. The rationale is the approach to the study of personality psychology by focusing on subjective experience and freedom of will. Abraham Maslow is known as Maslow's pyramid of needs or Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow believed that the successful fulfillment of each layer of the needs in the pyramid is very important in the

development of one's personality. According to Maslow in Huitt (2007), a person is ready to achieve self-actualization if all needs have been met.

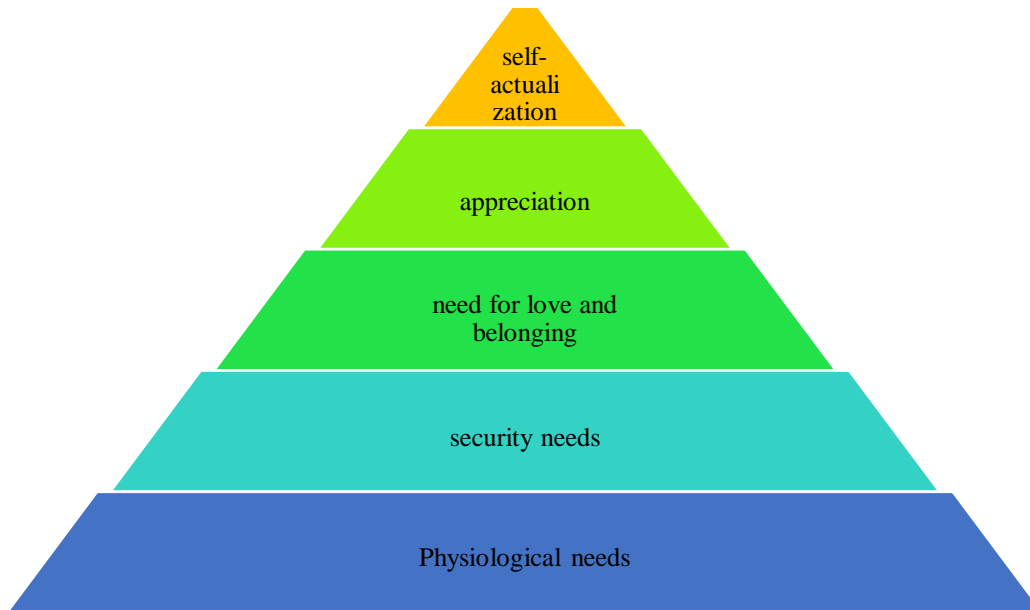


Figure.1 Maslow's Pyramid

Humanist education emphasizes the sense of pleasure that arises during the learning process where students can feel safe and comfortable. Teaching Humanistic language is an approach based on the principle of a whole person, not only involving the mind but also emotionally and socially (British Council, nd)

The application of humanistic theory in education has the advantage that students become active, and creative because they use democratic principles, and the teacher gives students the freedom to choose and develop their potential (Antono, 2019). Maslow's theory treats students as whole humans and it does not treat students as robots. So teachers in schools should not arbitrarily use their will to tell students to learn something. Maslow's theory prioritizes democratic principles and freedom of learning according to the wishes of students. The learning approach using this theory will create a sense of security, comfort, and pleasure in students so that the effective potential and cognitive achievement of students will be achieved properly.

Children's Literature

Literature has two kinds of definitions; the old definition and the new definition. According to the old definition, literature is a place to express ideas, or thoughts about life and society in beautiful words (Ahyar, 2019). According to the new definition, literature is a means to express ideas, or thoughts about anything in a free language, that contains something new, and means enlightenment (Ahyar, 2019).

Children's literature is literature aimed at children. Stories in children's literature are written based on the experiences and feelings of children (Panglipur & Listiyaningsih, 2017). Children's literature emphasizes the visual aspect, which can indirectly attract children's attention to reading so that children will learn to recognize pictures, numbers, and letters, and most importantly improve reading literacy (Krissandi et al., 2018).

Types of children's literature

According to Lukens in Nurgiyantoro (2004) there are several types of children's literature, including:

1. Realism

The stories are real and logical. Although the stories that exist can be real or not real.

2. Formula fiction

This genre has certain patterns that distinguish it from others, such as mystery and detective stories, romantic stories, and serial novels.

3. Fantasy

Fantasy stories are stories from the imagination or imagination of the author, such as fantasy stories, high-level fantasy, and science fiction.

4. Traditional literature

Traditional literature is a story that is told from generation to generation, and its origin is unknown. This story is written in a book so as not to be lost because it has useful values, such as fables, folk tales, mythology (myths), legends, and epics.

5. Poetry

Poetry is written in beautiful language, full of symbols and meaning.

6. Non-fiction

Nonfiction is a true story. Children's nonfiction literature is written communicatively and beautifully.

Benefits of children's literature

According to Panglipur & Listiyaningsih (2017), literary works have several benefits in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. From the intrinsic element, children's literature has benefits, including:

1. Give happiness to children.

2. Can develop children's imagination and help them in considering and thinking about nature, life, experiences, or ideas.

3. Literary works can provide new experiences as if they can be felt and experienced in real life.

4. Literary works can develop insight into children's lives so that they become human beings.

5. Literary works as a medium to introduce children to universal experiences.

6. Literary works as a medium to continue the literary heritage.

In terms of extrinsic elements, children's literature has some benefits;

1. as language development.

2. To develop cognitive aspects in children.

3. To develop the child's personality.

4. As a social development

Children's literature as a medium to foster character education

Characters in children's literature can shape children's personalities because there are many educational stories in children's literature (Panglipur & Listiyaningsih, 2017). A good personality in children can be formed by telling stories in children's literature. Children can also be accustomed to reading children's literature. Events or stories that are often read or told continuously or continuously by the teacher will be embedded in the child's subconscious brain. So that they will remember the good characters, as well as the bad characters, in the story. Here the teacher's role is to provide a role model for the personality of a good character and provide direction that bad behavior should not be imitated, which will be self-defeating.

Building Character Education with Maslow's Theory Through Literature

Instilling character education of elementary students through literary works can be done in several ways based on the principles of Maslow's theory;

1. Put a collection of children's short stories, folk tales, illustrated stories, and etc. on the bookshelves displayed in each class so that students can read them whenever they want. It can stimulate curiosity and reading literacy in children.
2. Give a sense of security, and affection to students through storytelling before the lesson begins. In addition to instilling character, it will create a sense of pleasure and comfort so that it will motivate students to take lessons.
3. Students are invited to read together or the teacher tells a story that has a historical theme such as "Saku Eleven Pak Kulas". After reading, the teacher discusses with students so that students find examples of heroic characters that can be imitated in the short story.
4. The teacher invites students to watch dramas with other themes, which are still related to the lesson. After watching the drama, the teacher invites students to conclude its contents and discuss the characters in the drama.
5. Invite students to play children's dramas, with roles that match what they like. The play of characters in the drama they like is a reflection of self-actualization from within the students. So that the character in the drama played by the student will instill character in them.
6. The teacher gives assignments to students to retell a picture story in groups or pairs. In this case, students are given the freedom to determine the title of the book they like. Group work can foster mutual respect, help, and cooperation.
7. The teacher reads or tells stories, or invites students to read together about folklore, or legends, and then the teacher invites them to explore the culture and local wisdom of the Indonesian people. Where the culture was carried out by our ancestors in ancient times or is still practiced by Indonesian people today.
8. Invite students to draw characters in literary works that they like. After drawing, invite students to discuss the character, asking the reason why they like the character.
9. When children play a drama, document their work, and post it on the classroom wall as a form of appreciation or appreciation for their achievements that have reached the highest level of Maslow's pyramid, namely self-actualization.

10. Entering the names of characters in children's literature can also be applied in learning, for example when a teacher explains a math lesson. For example, the figures of Si Kancil and Pak Tani. "One day Pak Tani planted cucumber seeds, and one month later the cucumber tree produced 10 cucumbers. Suddenly a mouse deer came and stole 5 cucumbers. How many cucumbers are left?". Counting and storytelling activities will be attracted elementary students, especially students in lower grades. They will be happy and comfortable learning math. It is not only instilling character but also educates children to count.

CONCLUSION

Character education through literary works can be done in various ways. One of them is by using Maslow's theory. Strengthening character education in elementary school can shape a child's behavior or personality. Stories in a literary work, especially children's literature, contain elements that educate through events and characters. Literature works not only as a medium to instill character but also as a motivation for children to know the world and increase reading motivation.

Strengthening good character education should prioritize the psychological aspects of students by using Maslow's theory. This article suggests how teachers in elementary schools can form good personalities for students, and change negative personalities into positive ones by touching on the psychological aspects of students based on the principles of Maslow's theory through literary works. Therefore, literary works are not only a medium for building students' character, but also can be used as a means to increase students' motivation to learn and develop their potential in cognitive and affective aspects.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this paper, the author(s) reported no potential conflicts of interest.

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