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Correspondence Address:

Universitas Palangka Raya.

E-mail: marrisaaulia@fkip.upr.ac.id

THE UTILIZATION OF DRAMA ART AS A MEDIUM FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION AMONG STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 4 KATINGAN HILIR

Marrisa Aulia Mayangsari¹, Andi Arie Astuti², Muhammad Ahsin Maulana³, Muh. Andis Hidayatullah⁴, Yuliati Eka Asi⁵

¹ Universitas Palangka Raya

Email: marrisaaulia@fkip.upr.ac.id

Abstract: Currently, character education has become a fundamental aspect in shaping the personality of the nation's next generation. Character education has become part of the national education system to ensure that future generations possess not only academic intelligence but also sound moral foundations. Character education can be instilled through learning media in schools. Drama, in this case, has excellent potential to become a fun and engaging character education medium for students. Drama trains students to develop empathy, responsibility, discipline, teamwork, selfconfidence, and creativity. This research focuses on the use of drama as a medium for character education at SMPN 4 Telangkah Village, Katingan Hilir. In general, the purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the use of drama in shaping student character at SMPN 4 Telangkah Village. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design. The expected outputs of this research are in-depth findings regarding the practice of utilizing drama in the context of character education, as well as a scientific article published in an accredited national journal. The description of the TKT for this research is at level 3, meaning the research design and methodology are comprehensive.

Keywords: Drama Learning, Character Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century not only emphasizes the mastery of knowledge and cognitive skills, but also on the development of character and human values that are the foundation of social life (Komara, Hendriana, and Suherman 2021). In this context, character education is an important element in forming a generation that is adaptive, with integrity, and oriented towards social welfare. Schools as formal educational institutions have a great responsibility in internalizing character values through various creative, contextual, and meaningful learning strategies for students. (Isnaini 2013)

Character education is a fundamental aspect in the formation of human personality and morality (Fresyam Antika Ajeng 2024). This is the basis for creating a generation that has responsibility and integrity. The Ministry of Education and Culture implements strengthening the character of the nation's successors through the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) movement which has been rolled out since 2016. There are five main character values sourced from Pancasila, which are the priorities for the development of the PPK movement: namely religious, nationalism, integrity, independence and cooperation. Each value does not stand and develop independently, but rather interact with each other, develop dynamically and form personal integrity. (Rahmadani and Al Hamdany 2023)

The implementation of character education in learning requires an approach that touches the affective realm of students (Ritonga and Padangsidempuan 2025). One effective approach is through art activities, especially acting or drama. The art of drama allows learners



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to experience, feel, and express life values directly through the roles played. Thus, the process of internalizing character values is not only cognitive, but also affective and psychomotor. Through role-playing experiences, students learn to understand empathy, responsibility, and appreciate the differences in views and socio-cultural backgrounds between individuals. (Alfauziyyah, Aulia, and Hikmah 2024)

In its application, character education is widely carried out in schools in various aspects. Among them, forming good habits during school activities. In addition, instilling character education in students through drama activities can also be a fun learning alternative for students. By engaging intensely with drama works, both as spectators and as performers, students can receive the messages, mandates, teachings, and noble values contained in the drama. (Prabuwati, Indriyanto, and Sari 2024)

Children's drama activities in the school environment are divided into three groups, namely creative dramatization, drama for children, and recreational drama by children (Rojabi and Mustofa 2021). Creative dramatization occurs when children are directed to express themselves totally through drama. Creative dramatization is carried out not for a drama performance, but to create a deep impression for the children who do it. (Prabuwati et al. 2024)

In the context of regional education, the application of drama as a medium of character learning can also be adjusted to local values and cultural wisdom of the local community (Sidabutar 2025). This is in line with the concept of contextual education which emphasizes the importance of associating learning with the social reality of students. Through the script or theme of the drama raised from the local culture, students can learn to know and love their own cultural heritage while internalizing the moral values contained in it. Thus, drama art not only functions as a medium of aesthetic expression, but also as a vehicle for instilling character values based on local wisdom. (Lephen 2023)

Telangkah Village is a village in Katingan Hilir Regency, Central Kalimantan. This village is known as a religious moderation village, meaning that the level of religious tolerance in this village is very high. With most of the population having a strong cultural background and traditions, character education in this area is an opportunity to be given to children through learning at school.

The author sees an interesting learning method applied by teachers in providing character education through Cultural Arts lessons. This research aims to see the extent to which drama art is applied to the subject of Cultural Arts as well as being a medium for student character education at SMPN 4 Telangkah. Through the art of drama, students are expected to be not only academically intelligent, but also to grow into human beings who have good moral and moral provisions.

This research is in line with the research theme and research roadmap of FKIP UPR sub-theme number 5, namely improving the quality of education and learning that has local character and wisdom in the era of society 5.0.

2. METHOD

In this study, the object chosen by the author was students at SMPN 4 Telangkah Katingan Hilir Regency, Central Kalimantan. The selection of objects in the form of students is based on the results of the author's initial observation of the learning method provided by the Cultural Arts teacher in the Drama material. The students who are the objects of this study are students in grade VII.

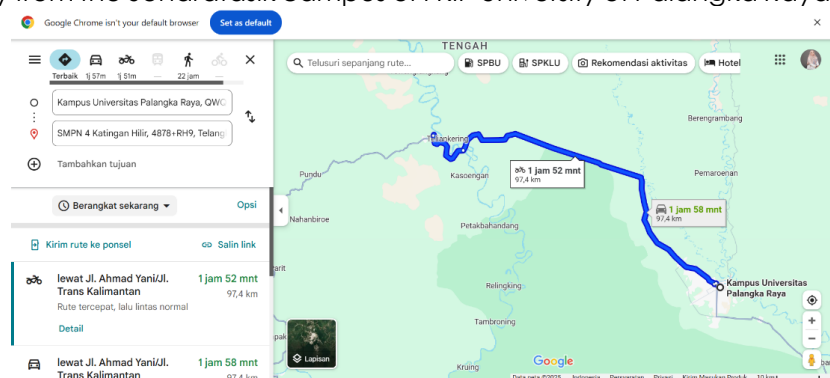
The research method conducted by the author is a qualitative method with a case study approach. Case studies as part of the research method provide a certain framework at the stages of the process, including determining the theme and subject of the research, determining the place, determining accurate methods, determining relevant data collection techniques, analysing the results of data obtained from the research subject, making conclusions and research reports. (Ilhami et al. 2024)

The data collection techniques carried out in this case study approach are in the form of observation, interviews, documentation, and literature studies. Observation is carried out in a participatory manner to drama arts activities that take place in schools, to record student interaction, expression, and the implementation of character values in the role-playing process. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and principals to explore perceptions, experiences, and the impact of drama activities on the development of students' characters. Documentation includes collection of photos, videos, and notes of student reflection. Meanwhile, literature studies are used to strengthen the theoretical foundation and compare the findings with relevant previous research. These four techniques were chosen to obtain rich and triangulated data in understanding the context of the use of drama arts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

SMP Negeri 4 Telangkah is a junior high school in Katingan Hilir Regency, Central Kalimantan. The school has 153 students consisting of 66 male students and 87 female students. There are 6 classes with a ratio of around 19 – 23 people per group. This school is about 97.4 KM away from the Sendratasik campus of FKIP University of Palangka Raya.



Picture 1. Map of the Research Location



Picture 2. SMP negeri 4 Katingan Hilir

Drama material in the Cultural Arts subject is one of the art fields that must be taught to students in the hope of providing an experience of learning to understand and know the basics of acting. In this study, the author observed the learning process carried out by teachers and grade VII students at SMPN 4 Katingan Hilir. Cultural arts learning is held every Wednesday at 10.00 – 11.20 WIB.

The teacher explained that the teaching material in the Cultural Arts lesson in grade VII is about drama or theater. In the learning process, teachers emphasize basic exercises and introduction to drama elements through fun activities so that students do not feel depressed. This approach is in line with the view that art learning needs to provide a space for free expression to foster students' confidence and creativity (Toivanen, Komulainen, and Ruismäki 2011). In addition, hands-on experiential learning such as drama has been proven to reduce performance anxiety and encourage the courage to communicate (Purba et al. 2024). Based on this understanding, teachers then apply creative dramatization strategies as a play method that places students as active actors in the learning process that is oriented towards experience and exploration of life values.

During observation, the author saw teachers consistently use a creative dramatization approach to train students to understand roles and messages in plays. This activity not only introduces theater elements, but also fosters character values such as cooperation, empathy, and responsibility. In line with (Armesto Arias et al. 2025) research, drama-based learning plays an important role in building social-emotional intelligence and increasing student engagement in the classroom. Likewise, (Sumitro and Puniman 2024) emphasized that the creative dramatization method is effective in strengthening character education at the secondary school level. The following is a description of the activities carried out by the teacher while providing creative dramatization material:

Tells

The teacher shows the short video to the students. Previously, the teacher had given the assignment to students to listen carefully to the video and record and conclude the story that had been watched. After the video is shown, students are asked to retell and answer questions orally based on the stories they have heard.

Judging from this method, students are taught to concentrate. The author sees that listening to the video shown is a process of digesting events that requires a high level of concentration, the ability to understand images, language, and the flow of events in the video. This method is one of the basics of learning drama, namely concentration. Actors are required to always concentrate when on stage, this is done to keep the flow of the show running well from start to finish. Concentration is also related to the role of an actor in uniting himself and the character being played.

The author sees this method as very creative and innovative to be implemented to grade VII students at SMPN 4 Katingan Hilir, because this method can build students' concentration power to the maximum and is given in an interesting and innovative way. So that students do not feel forced to practice concentration. Based on observations, the author sees that this method is effective in training students' concentration. This can be seen from the ability of students to record all the storylines displayed, then students retell them in front of the class. Almost all students were enthusiastic to tell stories again, some of them told stories without using text and told stories in front of the class clearly and confidently.



Picture 3. Students Listen to the Video

Play charades

Playing charades is one of a series of basic drama practice patterns using the creative dramatization method carried out by Cultural Arts teachers in grade VII of SMPN 4 Katingan Hilir. This game pattern is in the form of guessing the name of an animal, the name of a profession, or the name of a daily activity with movements that are easy for students to guess. Students who move are only given 5 seconds to move according to the picture, if the movement is unpredictable then it will be replaced with another student.

The game trains students' confidence, memory, intelligence, and concentration. Students who imitate movements are indirectly trained to confidently move in front of their peers. In addition, moving to imitate the instructions in the image also requires kinesthetics intelligence and high concentration. Students who guess the picture,

are trained to recall things related to the movements imitated by their friends.

Based on the observations that have been made, the author sees that this game pattern gives birth to complex abilities for students. Among them is the ability to imitate movements according to the images displayed. Imitation patterns are a basic exercise of acting in drama lessons. The more often students are trained to play guessing, the more students will be used to dare to move and express themselves in front of their friends. This can increase students' confidence while showing good motor coordination development.



Picture 4. Play Charades

Serialized story

The continuous story game is one of the basic drama learning training patterns carried out by Cultural Arts teachers at SMPN 4 Katingan Hilir. This game is carried out by the teacher giving an initial sentence as a trigger for the story, then students take turns adding the next sentence to continue the storyline according to their own imagination. Each student is encouraged to contribute different ideas, resulting in a long, unique, and surprising series of stories.

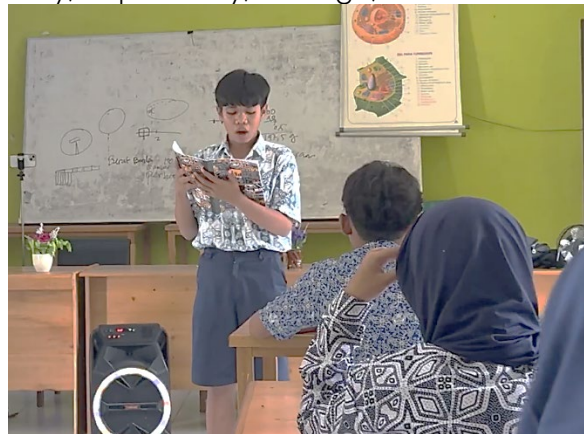
Through this game, students learn to develop creativity, courage to express opinions, and the ability to work together in groups. In addition, continuous story games also train spontaneity, language skills, and sensitivity in listening so that each additional story remains related to the course of the plot that has been built together. This activity is a fun basis in introducing students to the art of drama, because it provides a space for free but still directed expression.



Picture 5. Serialized story in Game

Report an event

Reporting events is almost the same as telling a story, only students are asked to tell real events around them then students report them orally and speak directly in class. The results of this activity show that students become better trained in crafting storylines based on facts, cultivating the courage to speak in public, and improving effective communication skills. In addition, this activity also forms an honest character, because students are required to convey events according to reality without adding things that are not true. Discipline and responsibility are also reflected when students are asked to prepare oral reports in a concise and clear manner, while a sense of care and social sensitivity emerges through the events they raise from the surrounding environment. Thus, drama learning through incident reporting practice not only hone language and acting skills but also becomes a means of character education that emphasizes the values of honesty, responsibility, courage, and concern for others.



Picture 6. Reporting Events

Object Imagination

This method is done by giving students an object which is then asked to imagine the object into another object. For example, a broom can be imagined as a sword, microphone, or even a magic wand as per the student's creativity. After that, students are asked to act out a simple scene involving the object according to their chosen imagination.

This activity trains creative thinking skills, expands imagination, and hones improvisation skills in role-playing. In addition, this method also fosters students' confidence when performing in front of their friends, as well as training them to dare to make decisions in determining characters and storylines. Through this exercise, students learn that drama does not only depend on real property, but also on the power of imagination they must bring the atmosphere of the show to life.



Picture 7. Object Imagination

3.2 Discussion

Character Education Values Developed

In the world of education, art is an important element that must continue to be maintained and developed as a medium to improve students' academic and emotional intelligence. As is well known, education through art can meet the needs of students' natural instincts in terms of beauty, space of movement, and emotions. These elements can only be fulfilled if students get Cultural Arts lessons.

Through the basics of drama training material provided by the Cultural Arts teacher at SMPN 4 Katingan Hilir, the author sees that students are not only given knowledge about aesthetics but also guided to be able to develop a sense of empathy, creativity, and social sensitivity. Through drama, students gain experience in opening a healthy space of expression to manage and understand their emotions. In addition, drama materials also offer more varied learning, not just cognitive learning. Thus, it can be said that the provision of drama material in the subject of Cultural Arts not only plays a role as a complement to the curriculum but becomes an important foundation in the formation of character and emotional intelligence of students in the modern era.

The values of character education that appear in the learning process of Cultural Arts with drama materials include:

1. **Confident**

The drama basics material provided by the teacher provides a stimulus to students to increase their confidence and not be ashamed to show their expression in front of the class. The method given by the teacher managed to attract attention so that students did not feel forced to do all the instructions given. Every game in the creative dramatization method that is done requires high confidence. From the observations that the author has made, teachers and students have managed to do well.

2. **Creative**

The creative dramatization method stimulates students' ability and creativity to express their ideas, feelings, and imagination through the roles played. Through this method, students are not only invited to memorize the script, but also given the freedom to develop dialogue, movement, and expression according to their respective interpretations. This makes the learning process more lively, interactive, and fun.

In addition to honing acting skills, the creative dramatization method also trains cooperation, the courage to appear in public, and the ability to solve problems spontaneously when in a scene. Thus, drama learning not only enhances the aesthetic aspects of art but also contributes to the formation of student characters who are confident, communicative, and able to cooperate with others.

3. Intelligent

The characteristics of intelligent students in school are reflected in their ability to use their thinking, creativity, and social sensitivity to express the role they play. Through the creative dramatization method, students are trained to think critically in understanding the script, connect the storyline with daily life, and find solutions when facing challenges in the staging process. Intelligence is also seen when students are able to improvise dialogues and movements when unexpected situations arise on stage. In addition, drama learning develops students' emotional intelligence, namely the ability to manage feelings, understand character characters, and place themselves in certain social situations.

Thus, the intelligence built through drama is not only intellectually limited, but also includes creative, emotional, and social intelligence that is very important in forming a whole person.

4. Discipline

The attitude of discipline in drama material in the subject of Cultural Arts in school can be seen in the order, responsibility, and compliance of students with predetermined rules and schedules. In the drama practice process, students are trained to be on time, obey the direction of the teacher or director, and maintain consistency in carrying out the roles that have been divided. Discipline is also seen when students are able to memorize dialogues according to the target time, carry out exercises seriously, and maintain an attitude during the activity. In addition, through group work in a play, students learn that the success of a performance depends heavily on the discipline of each member, since the delay or negligence of one person can affect the performance of the entire team.

Thus, drama learning not only trains acting skills, but also instills disciplinary habits that will be useful for students in daily life, both at school and outside of school.

5. Empathy

Having a sense of empathy is an important provision for a student to live his daily social life. Empathy in drama learning at school arises when students learn to understand and feel what the characters they play and their friends are experiencing on stage. When playing a character, students are required to place themselves in the situation, background, and emotions of the character, so that they are used to seeing a problem from someone else's perspective. This process fosters emotional sensitivity and social concern, because students learn to appreciate the joys and sorrows, conflicts, and struggles experienced by the characters. In addition, group work in drama practice also trains students to respect each other, help, and provide support when a friend is having difficulties.

It can be said that drama is an effective means of instilling the value of empathy, because through the experience of role-playing, students learn to be more sensitive to the feelings of others, appreciate differences, and foster caring attitudes in daily life.

6. Responsibility

Responsibility in drama learning in schools is reflected in the seriousness of students in completing the tasks of the roles that have been given and maintaining the property used in rehearsals and performances. When accepting roles, students learn to not only memorize dialogue, but also understand characters, appreciate emotions, and commit to performing their roles as best as possible for the smooth running of the performance together. Responsibility is also seen when students keep their property and costumes neat, safe, and ready to use, so as not to interfere with the course of activities. In addition, in group work, students realize that the success of the performance depends on the contribution of each member. Therefore, each individual is required to be responsible for their duties, whether as the main actor, extra, artistic arranger, or other technical parts.

Through drama learning, students finally get used to instilling an attitude of responsibility not only in acting, but also in daily life, such as completing tasks on time, maintaining shared facilities, and keeping commitments that have been made.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Supporting factors for drama learning at school include the high enthusiasm of students in participating in each exercise, so that the learning process takes place livelier and more interactive. The creativity of teachers in presenting various methods, such as role-playing, improvisation, and continuous stories, is also a strength in arousing students' interest. In addition, well-established group cooperation makes students support and respect each other for the success of the joint performance. The availability of facilities, training rooms, and simple properties also support the smooth running of activities, coupled with school support that provides students with opportunities to display learning results through art performances or extracurricular activities

On the other hand, there are several inhibiting factors that need to be considered. The lack of confidence of some students makes them tend to be shy or afraid to appear in public, thus reducing the quality of training. Time constraints due to tight lesson schedules often make the drama learning process rushed and not optimal. The lack of facilities and property is also an obstacle because it can reduce students' imagination in expressing their roles. Differences in abilities among students, both in memorizing scripts, expressing themselves, and working together, are often a challenge for teachers. In addition, the lack of support from parents who still consider drama not to be the main learning also affects students' motivation in participating in this activity.

4. CONCLUSION

Drama learning at SMPN 4 Katingan Hilir has proven to be able to improve role skills while instilling character education values in students. Through creative methods such as continuous story play, dramatization, and the use of imaginative properties, students show improvement in terms of creativity, communication, cooperation, and the courage to perform in public. Character values such as intelligence, discipline, empathy, and responsibility develop significantly during the learning process. Although there are still obstacles in the form of lack of student confidence, limited time, and lack of facilities and property, these obstacles can be

overcome through innovative teacher strategies and support from the school environment. Thus, drama learning is not only a means of art appreciation, but also a vehicle for character education which is important for student development.

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