

UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE STORY BOOK OF GOING UP TO THE TOP OF THE HILL BY SARAH FAUZIA AND ALIM NUFUS

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Abstract. The formation of a child's character at an early age is a gradual process that does not happen quickly, but is influenced by various factors both inside and outside the child. Internal factors include the child's biological condition and psychological aspects, while external factors include the influence of the family environment, the education system, the culture embraced, the media accessed, and social interactions. These characteristics are formed through learning, absorption, and intense interaction with the environment. Basically, character is a relatively stable moral and ethical quality in an individual and is realized in daily behavior based on religious, legal, cultural, and social norms. The purpose of this study is to understand the formation of children's characteristics from an early age in the storybook Naik-Naik ke Puncak Gunung (Climbing to the Top of the Mountain) by Sarah Fauzia and Alima Nufus. The method used is descriptive qualitative research with data collection techniques through reading and note-taking. The results of the study are to understand that each child has different characteristics, including being a reliable imitator, having curiosity, and having uniqueness.

Keywords: early childhood, characteristics, and children's stories.

INTRODUCTION

The research found in the story book Naik-naik Ke Puncak Bukit by Sarah Fauzia and Alima Nufus which discusses understanding the formation of early childhood characteristics. In the book, there are several stories about the characteristics of early childhood, namely, children have high curiosity, children are reliable imitators, and each child has its own unique characteristics. Early childhood education (PAUD) provides an effort to stimulate, guide, hone and provide activities that will develop children's abilities and skills. Early childhood education is education given to children from birth to the age of six. In accordance with the uniqueness and development of early childhood, the implementation of early childhood education can be adjusted to the stages of development experienced by early childhood (Susanto, 2015).

A child is someone under the age of eighteen who is in a developmental phase with special needs, both physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. Early childhood, which is 0-6 years old, is considered a unique individual who has the potential to grow and develop. At this age, efforts are made to stimulate, guide and provide activities to develop children's abilities and skills. Children at an early age are referred to as the golden age because they develop very quickly and remarkably during this period. Children are distinct and unique individuals with their own characters (Yusuf et al., 2023).

Children grow, develop, and learn from the experiences they gain in family life, outside the family, and in their environment. A child can not only thrive in one aspect of life, but in three aspects of life, namely family, school, and environment (Irawati et al., 2021). Doing optimal stimulation for early childhood development requires a set of tools or media that are interesting to the child's world, namely play (Purnawati et al., 2022).

Kindergarten is an education for early childhood who are at the formal level which must certainly be able to maintain the image and quality of learning. Early childhood character development can be done in two ways, namely, first, formal, which is formed in the educational institution. The second

is non-formal, which is formed in the family institution, the most important of which is from the parents.(Wathoni Nurul, 2020)

Understanding of the process of character formation in early childhood is still not thoroughly possessed by various circles. Not a few parents and educators prioritize children's intellectual development and academic achievement, but ignore the importance of fostering moral and social-emotional aspects. In fact, a mature and balanced character is an important foundation for children in facing the challenges of life in the future (Huliyah, 2021).

In addition, the rapid advancement of technology and the ever-changing social dynamics also pose challenges in the process of forming children's characters. Currently, children are very easy to access various information and are influenced by the outside environment that is not necessarily in line with the stage of development or the values that are instilled (Lestyaningrum et al., 2022). Therefore, a thorough understanding of how early childhood character is formed is very important, so that the education and parenting provided can be adjusted to their developmental needs optimal (Dhiu et al., 2023).

The problem that arises in this study is how to understand the formation of early childhood characteristics, especially in the story book *Going Up to the Hill* by Sarah Fauzia and Alima Nufus. This study aims to understand the formation of children's characteristics such as, children are reliable imitators (imitation), children are independent, children have high curiosity, and children have their own unique characteristics..

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used with the qualitative research method uses library research. (Mahanum, 2021). Literature study is a literature study is the activity of collecting, reading, studying, and analyzing written materials (literature) that are relevant to the topic or research problem being done (Muhyi, 2018). The documents studied in this study using storybooks *go up and down the hilltop*. The data collection technique used uses reading and recording techniques, namely reading storybooks that will be carefully researched. The data is in the form of excerpts from stories that show aspects of data analysis techniques to understand the formation of children's characteristics. Data analysis techniques use data reduction, data classification, and data verification. This study aims to understand the formation of children's characteristics from the story book of *going up to the top of the hill* by Sarah Fauzia and Alima Nufus (Sakuro et al., 2025).

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The formation of children's character at an early age is a gradual process that does not occur quickly, but is influenced by various factors from inside and outside the child. Internal factors include the biological condition as well as the psychological aspects of the child, while external factors include the influence of the family environment, the educational system, the culture adhered to, the media accessed, and the daily social interactions (Fitri & Na'imah, 2020). In the process, the involvement of parents, educators, and the community is very important to instill the basic values that shape children's personalities, such as children such as honesty, responsibility, independence, and curiosity, and have their own uniqueness (Mahanum, 2021).

Characteristics are traits, habits, or characteristics that a person has. In early childhood, these characteristics are formed through a process of learning, absorption, and intense interaction with the environment. Basically, character is a moral and ethical quality that is relatively stable in an individual and is realized in daily behavior based on religious, legal, cultural, and behavioral norms.

The results of the research on the analysis of books *going up and down the top of the hill* there are several readings to understand the characteristics of early childhood. The characteristics of early

childhood are that children are reliable imitators, children have high curiosity, and each child has its own uniqueness. This is related to several characteristics of children. In the storybook going up and down to the top of the hill, there is a connection about the characteristics of early childhood. This can be implemented using the following table:

Table 1. Behavioral Data

Aspects	Storybook	Behavioral Data
A Reliable Imitator (Imitation)	Dad imitated the sound of crickets. It sounds really interesting. The crescent also makes a sound like cricket, cricket, cricket	The child follows and imitates what his Father does
Children have high curiosity	Eh, what does that sound like? The moon wants to find out. The sickle was also interested. He rushed up. The sickle rose immediately. His face looked happy. There was a flower in his hand. That's quinine! The aroma is scented.	Children have a high curiosity about things around them, especially things that children have just met
Children have uniqueness	The sickle begins to cover the ears! The sound of tonggeret must have shocked him. A mother wants to help. The moon immediately notified. Sickle does not like to be touched	Children have their own uniqueness and differences, different ways of learning and if they meet other people, children feel uncomfortable.

In the storybook going up to the top of the hill shows that the child is a reliable rider, in the character in it the child follows the example of his father. Furthermore, children have high curiosity, when they discover new things, children will try and explore. Children have their own uniqueness, in this character as a child when he meets other people he feels uncalm and does not like to be touched.

Then regarding the difference in age and different characteristics, other age phases of the child or the adult phase. Early childhood has distinctive characteristics. Some of the characteristics of early childhood are as follows:

1.1 Imitation (Reliable Imitator)

Children are reliable imitators, of words, and habits of the immediate environment. Imitation is their main social and moral learning mechanism. Habit formation, children imitate what they see spontaneously, parents' concentration in showing good attitudes, speech, and habits is the key. Ensure that positive moral, ethical, and social norms are naturally interconnected. (Nadel & Peze, 2017)

Imitation is the behavior of imitating the actions, attitudes, or styles of others, either directly or indirectly. In the context of sociology, imitation is one of the important factors in the process of social interaction and personality formation. The term reliable imitators is closely associated with children, as they naturally and effectively learn and absorb behaviors, language, and habits from their surroundings, especially parents or figures they admire (Rifqi et al., 2024).

In the storybook going up to the top of the hill about the characteristics of children, children are reliable imitators. In the storybook there is a story that the father imitates the sound of the cricket and then the son follows his father with the sound of the cricket. It can be seen that children are reliable imitators, what they see and hear will be imitated.



Fig. 1. Sabit imitate their fathers' behavior

1.2 Curiosity

Curiosity is the most important thing to learn and understand the world. This characteristic is manifested through incessant questioning and the desire to try new things (exploration). This is important in forming critical thinking skills, because children are encouraged to analyze and find out, not just receive information (Waode, 2023).

Early childhood is very interested in the world around them. They want to know everything that is happening around them. When they are infants, this attraction is shown by trying to reach and put everything within their reach into their mouths. At the age of 3-4 years, in addition to often dismantling everything to satisfy their curiosity, children also begin to ask questions, albeit in very simple language. Questions asked by young children usually use the words "what" or "why" (Bailey, 2021).

In addition to educators, parents also need to facilitate children's curiosity, for example by providing a variety of objects or replicas that are inexpensive enough to disassemble and reassemble, so that we do not feel that children have damaged our expensive equipment (Ratnaningrum et al., 2022). In addition, every question asked by the child needs to be answered wisely and comprehensively, not just answered. If necessary, we can stimulate children's curiosity by asking them back-to-back questions, so that a fun but scientific dialogue is established (Librianty & Yennizar, 2025)

In the storybook going up to the top of the hill about the characteristics of children, namely children have high curiosity. In the storybook there is a story book that children have curiosity or children have high curiosity. When the character of Moon wanted to find out the sound and the Crescent was curious about the sound nearby, it turned out to be the sound. Then the crescent figure sees the scented quinine flower. It can be seen that children have a high curiosity about something, especially those that are nearby.



Fig. 2. Bulan and Sabit finding out about the surrounding.

1.3 Has Its Own Uniqueness

Each child is a unique individual, evident from their diverse learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) and interests. The primary responsibility of educators and parents is to implement individualized approaches and exploratory facilities. By using a variety of media (stories, pictures, movements), parents ensure that all learning styles are accommodated which directly increases the child's learning effectiveness and internal motivation. When the child learns in a way that suits him, he will feel comfortable and appreciated (Trisnani et al., 2024).

Each child has unique traits and is born with different potentials with their own strengths, talents, and interests. For example, there are children who are talented in singing, there are also those who are talented in dancing, music, language, and sports. Early childhood experiences the most rapid stages of growth and development, both physical and mental. Growth and development begin from the prenatal period that is, from the womb (Lucy, 2016).

Although there are many similarities in general developmental patterns, each child, even if they are twins, has their own uniqueness, for example in terms of learning styles, interests, and family background. This uniqueness can come from genetic factors (e.g. in terms of physical characteristics) or from the environment (e.g. in terms of interests). Because of this uniqueness, educators need to take an individual approach in addition to the group approach, so that the uniqueness of each child can be well accommodated. For example, in family planning for groups of 3-year-old children, there are different interests with kindergarten children who are 4-5 years old (Chatib, 2023).

In the storybook going up and down to the top of the hill about the characteristics of early childhood, children have their own uniqueness. In this storybook, children do not want to be touched by others, do not like to be touched by strangers. Every child is different, there are children who when they meet people they just know, children will be curious and approach them.



Fig. 3. Sabit feels uncomfortable when meeting people he doesn't know.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to understand the formation of early childhood characteristics, especially those reflected in the storybook *Naik-naik ke Puncak Bukit* by Sarah Fauzia and Alima Nufus. Character formation in early childhood is a gradual process influenced by internal factors (biological and psychological conditions) and external factors (family environment, education, culture, media, and social interaction). Early childhood is in a golden age with very rapid development, and each child is a unique individual.

The discussion of the characteristics of children concluded that the three main characteristics of early childhood identified in this study are about children who are reliable imitators, children absorb and imitate everything, including words, behaviors, and habits, from adults and the immediate

environment. Furthermore, children have high curiosity (coriosity) is fundamental to learning and is manifested through endless questions and the desire to try new things. These characteristics are important in forming critical thinking skills. Then children have their own uniqueness, each child is different in learning styles and diverse interests or talents. The important role of parents or educators is to apply an individualized approach and facilitate the exploration of interests by providing a variety of learning media, which will ultimately increase learning effectiveness and build internal motivation. Understanding the characteristics of children is very important so that education and parenting policies can be adjusted to optimize child development.

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