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# IMPROVING POLITE BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN AGED 5-6 YEARS THROUGH THE STORYTELLING METHOD

**Insyafiatul Ummi[1*], Ahmad Syukri Sitorus[2]**
[1,2] Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara
Email: *insyafiatul0308223128@uinsu.ac.id*

## Abstrak

Sikap sopan santun merupakan aspek penting dalam perkembangan moral anak usia dini. Hasil observasi awal di RA Azrina menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar anak usia 5–6 tahun belum terbiasa menggunakan kata-kata santun seperti tolong, terima kasih, maaf, dan permisi serta belum konsisten menunjukkan perilaku sesuai norma kesopanan dalam interaksi sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan meningkatkan sikap sopan santun anak melalui metode mendongeng. Penelitian menggunakan desain Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) model Kemmis dan McTaggart yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus dengan subjek 20 anak Kelompok B di RA Azrina, Kecamatan Medan Marelan. Data dikumpulkan melalui lembar observasi checklist dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketuntasan klasikal meningkat dari 0% pada tahap pra-siklus menjadi 25% pada Siklus I dan 90% pada Siklus II. Pada akhir penelitian, 12 anak (60%) mencapai kategori Berkembang Sangat Baik (BSB), 6 anak (30%) Berkembang Sesuai Harapan (BSH), dan 2 anak (10%) Mulai Berkembang (MB). Dengan demikian, metode mendongeng efektif meningkatkan sikap sopan santun anak melalui penyampaian pesan moral yang menarik, kontekstual, dan sesuai dengan karakteristik perkembangan anak usia dini.

**Kata Kunci:** *Anak Usia Dini, Sikap Sopan Santun, Metode Mendongeng.*

## *Abstract*

*Politeness is an important aspect of moral development in early childhood. Initial observations at RA Azrina showed that most children aged 5–6 years were not yet accustomed to using polite expressions such as "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me," and did not consistently demonstrate behavior in accordance with politeness norms in their daily interactions. This study aimed to improve children's politeness through storytelling. The study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, conducted in two cycles with 20 Group B children at RA Azrina, Medan Marelan District. Data were collected using checklist observation sheets and documentation, and were analyzed descriptively using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The results showed that classical mastery increased from 0% in the pre-cycle stage to 25% in Cycle I and 90% in Cycle II. At the end of the study, 12 children (60%) achieved the Very Well Developed (VWD) category, 6 children (30%) reached the Developed as Expected (DE) category, and 2 children (10%) remained in the Beginning to Develop (BD) category. Thus, storytelling was effective in improving children's politeness through the delivery of moral messages in an engaging, contextual manner appropriate to the developmental characteristics of early childhood.*

***Keywords:*** *Early Childhood, Politeness Behavior, Storytelling Method.*

Corresponding author: Insyafiatul Ummi
Email Address: *insyafiatul0308223128@uinsu.ac.id*
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## A. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education represents a fundamental phase in shaping the quality of human resources, as this period is charcterized by rapid development in physical, cognitive language, social emotional, moral, and character dimensions. Experience acquired durinf early chilhood have a long term influence on children's personality, adaptility, ad social behaviour. Therefore, early chilhood education should not only emphasize academic achievement but also prioritize character development, particularly polite behavior, as a foundation for estabilishing harmonious social interactions.[1]

Character education is an important aspect of national development because it is closely related to the moral values and civilization of society. In Indonesia, character education is expected to help address the decline in students' moral values and ethical behavior caused by the rapid development of globalization.

Character education plays a vital role in shaping individuals who possess good morals, ethics, and values. Therefore, character building should begin in early childhood. However, this process cannot be achieved instantly; it requires time, continuous practice, and consistent efforts so that positive character values can be firmly developed in children.[2]

Politeness is a way of showing respect for others and is an important foundation for children's future success. Polite behaviour can be

[1] Rina Purwani and Dian Mustikasari, 'Pembelajaran Berbasis Kearifan Lokal sebagai Media untuk Membentuk Karakter Siswa Sekolah Dasar melalui Dongeng', *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia*, 12, no. 1 (2024), p. 43.

[2] Nurul Mu'min, 'Kajian Psikologi Sastra Berorientasi Nilai Karakter tentang Karakterisasi Tokoh dalam Buku *Dongeng Pembangun Karakter Anak* Karya Rucita Arkana dan Kesesuaiannya dengan Tuntutan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia Sekolah Dasar Kurikulum 2013 Edisi Revisi', *Wistara: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 3, no. 1 (2022), p. 92.

developed through modelling, stimulation, and positive reinforcement. When children receive praise or rewards for displaying polite behaviour, they are more likely to repeat it. Children also learn politeness through guidance from adults and social interaction. Moreover, direct experience in everyday life plays an important role in children's learning.[3]

Instilling character from an early age is important to help children adapt to their surrounding environment. Therefore, the government has included character education as part of the educational curriculum. Character education is not only about teaching children the difference between right and wrong, but also about helping them develop good habits in their daily lives. As a result, children are able to think, behave, and act according to positive values that have become part of their character. This process includes developing good understanding, positive feelings, and good behavior, which together help build strong and positive character in children.[4]

Polite behavior serves as an important indicator of children's moral development, reflected in simple habits such as saying please, sorry, thank you, and excuse me, as well as the ability to respect others, show empathy, and observe social norms. Children who possess these habits tend to adapt more easily and build positive social relationships.[5]

However, observations at RA Azrina (10 October 2025) revealed that children aged 5–6 years had not yet consistently practiced polite behavior. Some children were not accustomed to using polite words in daily interactions, while learning was still dominated by lecturing, so that moral

[3] Luthfiyyah Tasya and Ahmad Syukri Sitorus, 'Pembentukan Karakter Sopan Santun pada Anak Usia 4–5 Tahun', *Jurnal Caksana: Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 8, no. 1 (2025), pp. 345-346.

[4] Luh Putu Ayu Sumartini, Putu Aditya Antara and Mutiara Magta, 'Pengaruh Metode Dongeng Interaktif terhadap Karakter Anak pada Kelompok B Taman Kanak-kanak Kuncup Harapan Singaraja Tahun Pelajaran 2016/2017', *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Undiksha*, 5, no. 1 (2017), p. 4.

[5] Trie Utari Dewi, Nini Ibrahim and Heni Ani Nuraini, 'Penanaman Nilai Karakter Islam melalui Dongeng pada Anak TPQ An-Nazar, Bengkulu', *E-Dimas: Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*, 13, no. 1 (2022), pp. 76-77.

values had not been internalized into actual behavior.

This condition indicates the need for a more contextual learning strategy that is appropriate to the characteristics of young children, who learn through direct experience, interaction, and meaningful activities. One relevant approach is storytelling, as it allows children to observe characters' behavior, understand cause and effect, and construct moral meaning from stories.

Previous research shows that storytelling is no longer merely a medium for conveying messages but has evolved into an interactive and reflective learning experience. The effectiveness of storytelling depends not only on the content of the story but also on the interaction that occurs throughout the storytelling process.[6] Other studies have likewise demonstrated that storytelling can gradually enhance children's moral understanding and social behaviour.[7]

In addition to the method employed, instructional media also play an important role in supporting the effectiveness of storytelling. As a large-format visual medium, the Big Book can enhance children's attention and comprehension of stories. Agustina's study found that the Big Book is effective in supporting the internalisation of moral values through clear and engaging illustrations that attract children's attention.[8]

The effectiveness of storytelling also increases when accompanied by reflective activities after the story is told. Discussion allows children to connect the story with real experiences, evaluate the characters'

[6] Anisa Laksita, Devi Hastiana and Sri Lestari, 'Penanaman Karakter Tanggung Jawab pada Anak Usia Dini dengan Metode Dongeng', *JIIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6, no. 10 (2023), p. 7666.

[7] Runi Karyani, Resa Respati and Sumardi, 'Analisis pada Buku Dongeng Karakter Utama Anak Usia Dini Setia dan Jujur', *Jurnal PAUD Agapedia*, 5, no. 2 (2021), p. 170; Ririn Dwi Puspita, Jenny Dian Lestari, Rahmah Permata, Loliek Kania Atmaja and Ajat Manjato, 'Membentuk Karakter Anak melalui Dongeng "Pohon Apel yang Tulus" di SD Negeri 85 Bengkulu Selatan', *Almaun: Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*, 1, no. 2 (2023), p. 65.

[8] Rini Agustina Putri, 'Nilai Moralitas sebagai Pengembangan Karakter Anak dalam Seri Dongeng 3D Nusantara: Malin Kundang', *Jurnal Edukasi Khatulistiwa: Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 4, no. 2 (2021), p.64.

behavior, and understand moral values more deeply. This strengthens the internalization of values through a process of reflective thinking.[9]

Nevertheless, previous research has largely focused on general moral aspects such as empathy and prosocial behavior, while specific studies on politeness as a concrete behavior remain limited. Furthermore, the integrated combination of storytelling, the Big Book, reflection, and ongoing assessment has rarely been implemented in a unified manner.

This study is grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that behaviour is shaped through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, involving the processes of attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. In early childhood, the process of imitation is particularly strong, making model-based behavioral learning highly effective.

In this study, storytelling functions as a medium for presenting models of polite behavior through story characters. The Big Book is used to strengthen children's attention and visual comprehension, while reflective discussion and habituation reinforce the imitation process until it becomes a habit through the teacher's reinforcement.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of storytelling assisted by an interactive Big Book, reflective discussion, and post-storytelling assessment within the framework of Bandura's Social Learning Theory. This integration forms a systematic learning model designed to optimize observation, reflection, imitation, and the habituation of polite behavior, an approach that has not been widely examined in an integrated manner.

This study aims to improve the polite behavior of children aged 5–6 years through the implementation of this model at RA Azrina. The findings are expected to provide a theoretical contribution by strengthening the implementation of Bandura's Social Learning Theory, as well as a practical contribution in the form of an innovative, effective, and sustainable

[9] Angger Gilang Praditama, Ari Kusmiatun and Dwi Hanti Rahayu, 'Dongeng sebagai Media Pembentuk Karakter Anti Perundungan pada Anak Usia Dini', *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7, no. 6 (2023), p. 6766.

learning model for early childhood education.

## B. METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, comprising planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection in each cycle. CAR was chosen because it allows for direct and continuous improvement of learning to enhance the polite behavior of children aged 5–6 years through the storytelling method assisted by an interactive Big Book.[10]

The study was conducted at RA Azrina, Medan Marelan District, Medan City, from October to November 2025. The research subjects consisted of 20 children in Group B (11 boys and 9 girls). All children were included as subjects because CAR focuses on improving classroom learning as a whole. The researcher served as both the implementer of the action and the data collector, while the teacher acted as a collaborator.

The study consisted of two cycles, each comprising two meetings. The planning stage involved developing the daily lesson plan (RPPH), the interactive Big Book, observation sheets, and documentation. The action was carried out through storytelling activities assisted by the Big Book, reflective discussion, and habituation of polite behavior. Observation was conducted throughout the process, and the results were then analyzed at the reflection stage to inform improvements in the subsequent cycle.

Data were collected through observation and documentation. The main instrument was a checklist of politeness indicators (saying please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me, as well as showing respect to teachers and peers). Documentation in the form of photographs, field notes, and learning materials was used as supporting data. The instrument was validated by two early childhood education lecturers and one senior teacher.

Data trustworthiness was maintained through technique and source triangulation, namely

[10] Muhammad Rizal Pahleviannur et al., *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Pradina Pustaka, 2022), p. 127.

comparing the observation results with documentation and discussions between the researcher and the collaborating teacher. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were maintained through complete documentation and a detailed description of the research context.

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative descriptive approaches. The quantitative analysis was conducted using the classical learning mastery percentage formula.

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where f is the number of children in the DE/VWD categories and N is the total number of children. The qualitative analysis was carried out through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The study was considered successful if at least 80% of the children reached the DE or VWD category. The entire research procedure followed the Kemmis and McTaggart CAR cycle, presented in diagram form in Figure 1.

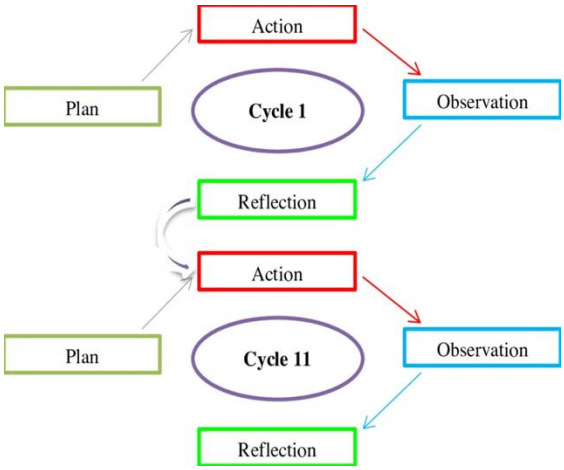



**Figure 1. Stages of the Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research Model**

Figure 1 illustrates the cyclical process of Classroom Action Research based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection. The process begins with planning and implementing storytelling activities assisted by an interactive Big Book, followed by observation of the learning process and children's polite behaviour. The findings are then reflected upon to evaluate the action and inform improvements for the subsequent cycle.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This classroom action research began with pre-cycle observations to obtain an initial picture of children's polite behavior before the intervention through the storytelling method

assisted by an interactive Big Book was implemented. Observations were conducted on six indicators of polite behavior, namely the habit of offering greetings, respecting teachers and peers, speaking in a polite manner, and using the expressions *please*, *thank you*, *sorry*, dan *excuse me* in daily activities.

**a. Pre-Cycle Results**

The pre-cycle observation results showed that most children had not yet consistently displayed polite behavior. Children rarely greeted their teachers, were not accustomed to using polite expressions in daily communication, and showed limited respect toward peers during interactions.

**Table 1. Pre-Cycle Results**

| No | Category | Number of Children | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | NYD | 12 | 60% |
| 2 | BD | 8 | 40% |
| 3 | DE | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | VWD | 0 | 0% |

Table 1 presents the children's polite behaviour abilities during the pre-cycle stage before the implementation of the action. The results indicate that 12 children (60%) were categorized as Not Yet Developed (NYD), while 8 children (40%) were categorized as Beginning to Develop (BD). No children were categorized as Developing as Expected (DE) or Very Well Developed (VWD). These findings indicate that the children's polite behaviour had not yet developed optimally, thereby demonstrating the need for an appropriate learning intervention.

The data presented in Table 1 are further illustrated in Figure 2, which provides a visual representation of the distribution of children across the four developmental categories. The figure clearly shows that the majority of children were in the NYD category, while no children had reached the DE or VWD categories.

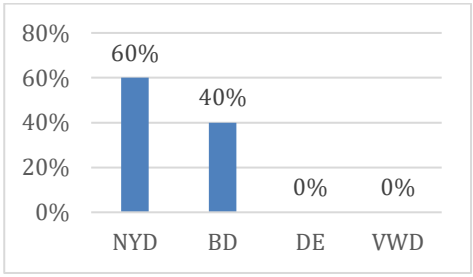



**Figure 2. Pre-Cycle Results**

Based on the pre-cycle results, classical learning mastery was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{0}{20} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

Thus, the percentage of classical learning mastery at the pre-cycle stage was 0%. This result indicates that none of the children had achieved the expected level of polite behaviour development, highlighting the need for an appropriate intervention to improve children's polite behaviour through more effective and engaging learning activities. The documentation of the learning activities conducted during the pre-cycle stage is presented in Figure 3. This figure illustrates the initial learning conditions before the implementation of the planned intervention.



**Figure 3. Documentation of Pre-Cycle Learning Activities**

**b. Cycle I Results**

The action in Cycle I was implemented through storytelling activities that incorporated values of polite behaviour in everyday life. The storytelling activities were designed to introduce and reinforce polite behaviour through meaningful situations that children could relate to in their daily interactions.

**Table 2. Cycle I Results**

| No | Category | Number of Children | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | NYD | 4 | 20% |
| 2 | BD | 11 | 55% |
| 3 | DE | 5 | 25% |
| 4 | VWD | 0 | 0% |

Table 2 shows that 4 children (20%) were categorized as Not Yet Developed (NYD), 11 children (55%) were categorized as Beginning to Develop (BD), and 5 children (25%) had reached the Developing as Expected (DE) category. However, none of the children had yet achieved the Very Well Developed (VWD) category. The distribution of the children's development categories is illustrated in Figure 4.

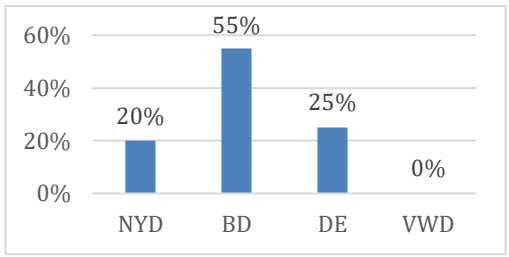



**Figure 4. Cycle I Results**

Based on the results presented in Table 2 and Figure 4, the percentage of classical learning mastery was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{5}{20} \times 100\% = 25\%$$

Thus, the percentage of classical learning mastery in Cycle I was 25%, which remained below the predetermined success criterion of 75%. Therefore, the action was continued to Cycle II. The documentation of the storytelling activities conducted during Cycle I is presented in Figure 5. The figure illustrates the implementation of storytelling activities containing values of polite behaviour in everyday life as part of the intervention provided to the children.



**Figure 5. Documentation of Storytelling Activities in Cycle I**

**c. Cycle II Results**

The implementation of the action in Cycle II represented a refinement of the action taken in the previous cycle. The improvements were made based on the results of the reflection conducted after Cycle I, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of storytelling activities in developing the children's polite behaviour. The results of the observations during Cycle II are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Cycle II Results**

| No | Category | Number of Children | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | NYD | 0 | 0% |
| 2 | BD | 2 | 10% |
| 3 | DE | 6 | 30% |
| 4 | VWD | 12 | 60% |

The data in Table 3 show that 12 children (60%) achieved the Very Well Developed (VWD) category, while 6 children (30%) were categorized as Developing as Expected (DE). Meanwhile, 2 children (10%) remained in the Beginning to Develop (BD) category, and no children remained in the Not Yet Developed (NYD) category. The distribution of the children's polite behaviour development categories is visually illustrated in Figure 6.

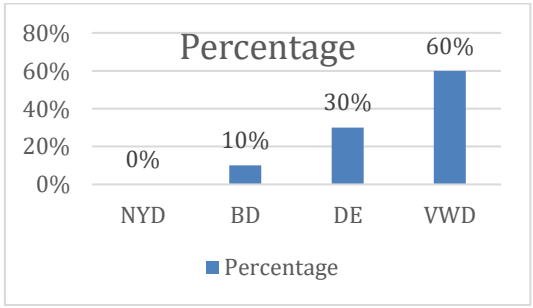



**Figure 6. Cycle II Results**

Based on the results presented in Table 3 and Figure 6, the percentage of classical learning mastery was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{18}{20} \times 100\% = 90\%$$

Thus, the percentage of classical learning mastery in Cycle II reached 90%. This result indicated a significant improvement compared with Cycle I, in which classical learning mastery was only 25%. The achievement of 90% also exceeded the predetermined success criterion of 75%. Therefore, the action was considered successful, and the research was concluded at Cycle II.

The documentation of the learning activities conducted during Cycle II is presented in Figure 7. This figure illustrates the implementation of the improved storytelling activities following the reflection and refinement of the action conducted in Cycle I.



**Figure 7. Documentation of Learning Activities in Cycle II**

**d. Comparison of Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II Results**

The comparison of the children's polite behaviour development across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages is presented in Table 4. The table illustrates the changes in the number and percentage of children in each developmental category following the implementation of the storytelling activities assisted by the interactive Big Book.

**Table 4. Comparison of Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II Results**

| Stage | NYD | BD | DE | VWD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Cycle | 12(60%) | 8 (40%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Cycle I | 4 (20%) | 11 (55%) | 5(25%) | 0 (0%) |
| Cycle II | 0 (0%) | 2 (10%) | 6(30%) | 12(60%) |

The data in Table 4 indicate a progressive improvement in the children's polite behaviour across the research stages. In the pre-cycle stage, most children were categorized as Not Yet Developed (NYD), with 12 children (60%), while no children had reached the Developing as Expected (DE) or Very Well Developed (VWD) categories. In Cycle I, the number of children in the NYD category decreased to 4 children (20%), while 5

children (25%) reached the DE category. By Cycle II, no children remained in the NYD category, and 12 children (60%) had achieved the VWD category. The comparison of the results across the three stages is visually presented in Figure 8.

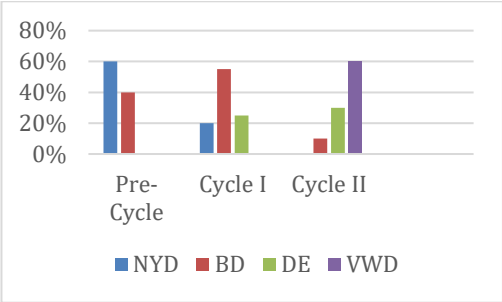



**Figure 8. Chart of the Increase in Children's Polite Behavior**

The findings of this study can be explained through Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that children acquire new behaviors through the processes of attention, retention, reproduction, and reinforcement from their social environment. In this study, the characters presented in the storytelling activities served as behavioral models that demonstrated appropriate polite behavior. The use of the interactive Big Book enabled children to focus their attention on the characters' actions and better understand the moral messages conveyed through the stories, thereby facilitating the learning process.[11]

The improvement in the children's polite behaviour was also reflected in their active participation during the learning activities. The documentation of the children's participation after the intervention is presented in Figure 9.



**Figure 9. Documentation of Children's Participation after the Intervention**

These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that storytelling plays an important role in promoting character development among young children. Storytelling has been shown to strengthen empathy and improve children's ability to

[11] Desy Ayu Ningrum Ayanah, 'Storytelling the Story of Prophet Ayyub (A.S.) in the Internalization of Religious Behavior among Children Aged 5–6 Years', *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 12, no. 2 (2026), p. 321.

distinguish appropriate behavior in accordance with social norms.[12]

Other studies have also demonstrated that the storytelling method enables teachers to communicate moral values in a more engaging and meaningful manner, making them easier for preschool children to understand.[13] In addition, storytelling activities have been found to encourage children to use polite expressions such as *please*, *thank you*, *sorry*, and *excuse me* more consistently during daily interactions.[14] Furthermore, a narrative-based learning approach provides enjoyable learning experiences that foster prosocial behavior and the development of polite attitudes in early childhood.[15]

Nevertheless, the present study offers a distinct contribution compared with previous research. Most earlier studies focused primarily on the effectiveness of storytelling as a strategy for introducing moral values. In contrast, this study integrates storytelling, an interactive Big Book, reflective discussion, and post-storytelling assessment into a single learning sequence. This integrated approach allows children to experience the complete social learning process, beginning with observing behavioral models, understanding the meaning of polite behavior, practicing these behaviors in everyday situations, and receiving reinforcement from the teacher. Consequently, polite behavior is not merely understood at the conceptual level but gradually becomes an established habit that is consistently demonstrated during classroom activities.

## D. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the storytelling method supported by an interactive

[12] Lailatul Maghfiroh, 'Pembentukan Karakter melalui Dongeng pada Anak Usia Dini', *MAANA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 3, no. 2 (2025), p. 40.

[13] Jesika Rahmah and Muthmainnah, 'Implementasi Metode Bercerita Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Karakter Anak Usia Dini', *Murhum: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5, no. 2 (2024), p. 916.

[14] Wiranti and Taruni Suningsih, 'Pengaruh Penerapan Buku Cerita Empat Kata Ajaib terhadap Sikap Sopan Santun Anak Usia 5–6 Tahun', *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 11, no. 1 (2025), p. 120.

[15] Sri Jamilah, 'Penanaman Karakter Positif pada Anak Usia Dini melalui Metode Bercerita', *PELANGI: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 5, no. 2 (2023), p. 222.

Big Book, reflective discussion, and continuous behavioral reinforcement is effective in improving the polite behavior of children aged 5–6 years. The integration of these learning components enables children to observe, understand, imitate, and consistently practice polite behavior in everyday classroom interactions. The findings also reinforce Bandura's Social Learning Theory by showing that meaningful social learning experiences facilitate the development of positive character through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Therefore, the storytelling method assisted by an interactive Big Book can be recommended as an effective and engaging instructional approach for fostering polite behavior in early childhood education.

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