



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***TEACHERS' PERSONAL BELIEFS ON USE OF NARRATIVES IN MORAL
EDUCATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN***

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EDUCATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

By

MAILA DINIA HUSNI RAHIEM

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

September 2016

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2016

Chairman : Nur Surayyah Madhubala Abdullah, PhD
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A qualitative approach was conducted to both explore and describe the practice and understanding of kindergarten teachers in using narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education. Participants were selected for their sensitivity, knowledge, and insight from their own personal experiences. A total of 14 teachers were selected based on purposive sampling. The study took place in two kindergartens, one is an Islamic kindergarten located on the outskirts of Jakarta. The second kindergarten is a public kindergarten, non-faith based, which is located in South Jakarta. Both kindergartens have consistently and regularly incorporated narrative activities into the students' curriculum, while the teachers use the method of storytelling in learning. The primary data collection method was through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions. Supplementary information was collected using observation and document analysis. The themes in this study were obtained from the process of coding and categorizing themes based on the transcripts of the interviews and analysis of other documents.

This study asked two main questions: how and why do kindergarten teachers use narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children? The findings revealed that there are five ways that the participants in this study use narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children, namely: they repeat the narrative; they give real examples; they discuss the story; they dramatize the storytelling; and they modify the story. The findings indicated three reasons that the teachers have for using narratives to educate in kindergartens, the first reason is because they believe narratives inspire children to behave prosocially. The second reason is, they believe that narratives motivate children to have good character. And the last reason is that they believe narratives are able to strengthen the childrens' faith in God.

In conclusion, the quality of moral education through the use of narratives can be improved, to make it more useful and effective, by improving the ways narratives are used and combining this with a better understanding of the objectives of moral education.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KEPERCAYAAN PERIBADI GURU TERHADAP PENGGUNAAN
NARATIF DALAM PEMBELAJARAN PENDIDIKAN MORAL UNTUK
KANAK-KANAK**

Oleh

MAILA DINIA HUSNI RAHIEM

September 2016

Pengerusi : Nur Surayyah Madhubala Abdullah, PhD
Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan

Pendekatan kualitatif telah dijalankan untuk meneroka dan memerihalkan amalan dan pemahaman guru tadika dalam menggunakan naratif untuk pengajaran dan pembelajaran pendidikan moral. Pemilihan peserta kajian bagi kajian ini dilakukan berdasarkan kepada kepekaan, pengetahuan, dan wawasan mereka terhadap pembelajaran pendidikan moral. Seramai 14 orang guru tadika telah dipilih sebagai peserta kajian dengan menggunakan teknik persampelan bertujuan. Lokasi kajian ini melibatkan penglibatan dua buah tadika yang terletak di Jakarta, iaitu sebuah tadika Islam yang terletak di pinggiran Jakarta dan sebuah tadika awam yang bukan berasaskan aliran keagamaan yang terletak di Jakarta Selatan. Kedua-dua tadika secara konsisten dan kerap menggunakan aktiviti bercerita dalam pembelajaran pendidikan moral. Kaedah pengumpulan data primer adalah melalui temu bual separa berstruktur yang mendalam dengan memberi fokus kepada kumpulan perbincangan. Selain itu, data-data sokongan turut diperolehi menerusi teknik pengumpulan data berbentuk pemerhatian dan penganalisisan dokumen. Pembentukan tema dan pembinaan kategori bagi dapatan kajian dilakukan melalui proses pengekodan transkrip temu bual dan penganalisisan dokumen.

Terdapat dua soalan kajian yang diteliti oleh pengkaji dalam kajian ini iaitu bagaimana dan mengapa guru-guru tadika menggunakan naratif dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran pendidikan moral untuk kanak-kanak? Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat lima cara peserta kajian menggunakan naratif dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran pendidikan moral untuk kanak-kanak. Kelima-lima cara ini terdiri daripada pengulangan naratif oleh guru, pemberian contoh nyata, perbincangan cerita, lakonan semula cerita dan pengubhasuaian kandungan cerita oleh guru. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa terdapat tiga punca utama yang mendorong guru menggunakan naratif dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran pendidikan moral di tadika. Antaranya ialah kepercayaan bahawa naratif inspirasi kanak-kanak untuk berkelakuan prososial, kepercayaan bahawa naratif berupaya memotivasikan kanak-kanak untuk

mempunyai watak yang baik. di samping terdapat kepercayaan bahawa naratif dapat menjadi sumber untuk meningkatkan keimanan kepada Allah. Kesimpulannya, kualiti pendidikan moral melalui penggunaan naratif boleh diperbaiki, untuk menjadikannya lebih berguna dan berkesan dengan memberi fokus terhadap usaha bagaimana pemahaman dan cara naratif digunakan dalam pendidikan moral pada masa hadapan.



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Early childhood is a crucial period for a child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Children experience the most rapid growth from birth until the age of six. Therefore, early childhood education is clearly crucial. Early childhood education should support a child's development and meet their needs. Its focus should not only be on one aspect of development, as often people tend to concentrate only on cognitive development, but schools should also pay attention to other aspects of a child's development. Early childhood is the foundation for further development. Early childhood education is significant in affecting a child's progress as they continue onto the next stage of their education and future life. It is a foundation. Yet, more often than not, schools neglect the importance of character building in their students.

The Indonesian government recently revised the education curriculum. (*see figure 1.1. Education and Global Future Challenges*). The newest national curriculum has been implemented to meet future global challenges, namely to ensure responsible and capable citizens. This curriculum change has been implemented to improve the quality of education and has affected both primary and secondary education. The curriculum of early childhood education, however, has not changed and still uses the earlier 2008 curriculum. Although a curriculum change has not occurred within early childhood education, the curriculum at the level of early childhood education should also be aware of the curriculum of subsequent educational levels (elementary school) that have changed. This is because early childhood education, organized learning, is the preparation program for children entering primary education.

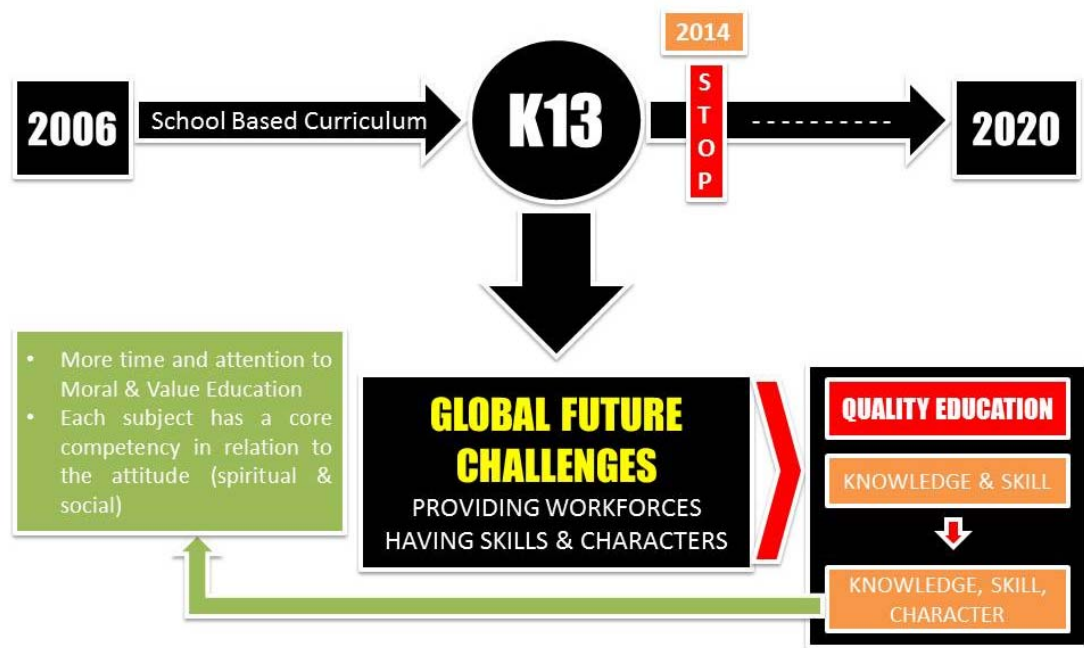


Figure 1.1 : Education and Global Future Challenges

One of the major impacts of the curriculum changes associated with early childhood education is that in the 2013 Curriculum, reading-writing-counting (*calistung*) will be taught and first introduced in the 1st grade, so early childhood education should not proactively teach *calistung*. Instead, the purpose of early childhood education is actually to teach children how to socialize and become familiar with the school environment through using fun or playing activities.

Then again, in contrast with the previous curriculum, in the latest 2013 Curriculum, moral and value education has been allocated more time and attention; each subject instead plans to contribute to the formation of the attitudes of students, so each subject has a core competency in relation to the attitude (spiritual and social). In accordance with the content of the 2013 curriculum for primary and secondary schools that emphasizes the character formation of students, it should follow that the curriculum developed in early childhood education today also emphasizes character education; education is expected not just to educate children, but also to fill their souls. Character education was forgotten and even after a certain period of time considered not essential in learning, although it is now back at the forefront of modern curriculums. This reemergence was marked at the National Education day celebration on May 2, 2010. At the ceremony, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono mentioned in his speech that we should be concerned about the moral condition of the nation that is increasingly heartbreaking. The president and also the community hoped that character education would be able to overcome the problems caused by the nation's moral crisis. Character is challenged to be the solution to answer the problem of changing modern times.

Following the president's statement on the importance of character education, the Director - General of early childhood education at the Ministry of Education took steps to improve the curriculum; especially by preparing suitable guidelines on the teaching and learning of moral education, and also the facilities, infrastructure and the quality of early childhood teachers. The government allocated substantial funds for this, including increasing the competence of teachers through scholarships and training. The discussion on better ways of educating character is becoming increasingly popular. One of the discussions is the use of narratives for moral education programs for young children (*see figure 1.2. The Impact of Curriculum Changes*). The idea of using this technique is becoming a 'trend'. Though, the most commonly practiced moral education program in many kindergartens in Indonesia is applying the habituation model for behavioral formation model. This kind of model has a goal to make students aware of good behavior, encourage them to behave correctly, and then habitulize this behavior. The program prepares students to establish, as early as possible, the correct attitudes and behavior based on the existing values in religion and society.

However, it seems that this method is not sufficient to comprehensively equip the child's moral development. The argument is that character is not only about acting appropriately, character is also about thinking and feeling. The habituation method only teaches the child to do things, but it's clear that not every child actually thinks about and/or understands their actions. Children need to learn to think critically about the consequences of their actions. Children need to learn to act independently and not just memorize rules that may be dictated to them. Now, alternatives of moral education are offered using narratives with a purpose to teach children more than simply to just be moral people, but also to be responsible for their actions. Narratives using storytelling or story reading are believed to be able to explain the reasons why they need to do good deeds, and can also make children become more critical of their own actions. To improve teachers' pedagogic skills in using narratives for moral education, in many places, organized storytelling training for moral education for early childhood teachers is provided.

Effective character education, at an early age, will be the foundation for the formation of the character of the students later in life. Character is more easily and better formed at an early age. Education is expected to prepare students to face the complexities of life in this age of advanced technology, both now and in the future. Education should prepare human resources that are able to compete globally. It should therefore be prepared as early as possible. Education should be dynamic and flexible to enable it to react both quickly and responsibly to any changes that might emerge. So, educational practitioners and policy makers should be perceptive in predicting and monitoring the world changes, and then make improvements where needed. Proper education will produce a useful human resource that is needed in developing the nation further.

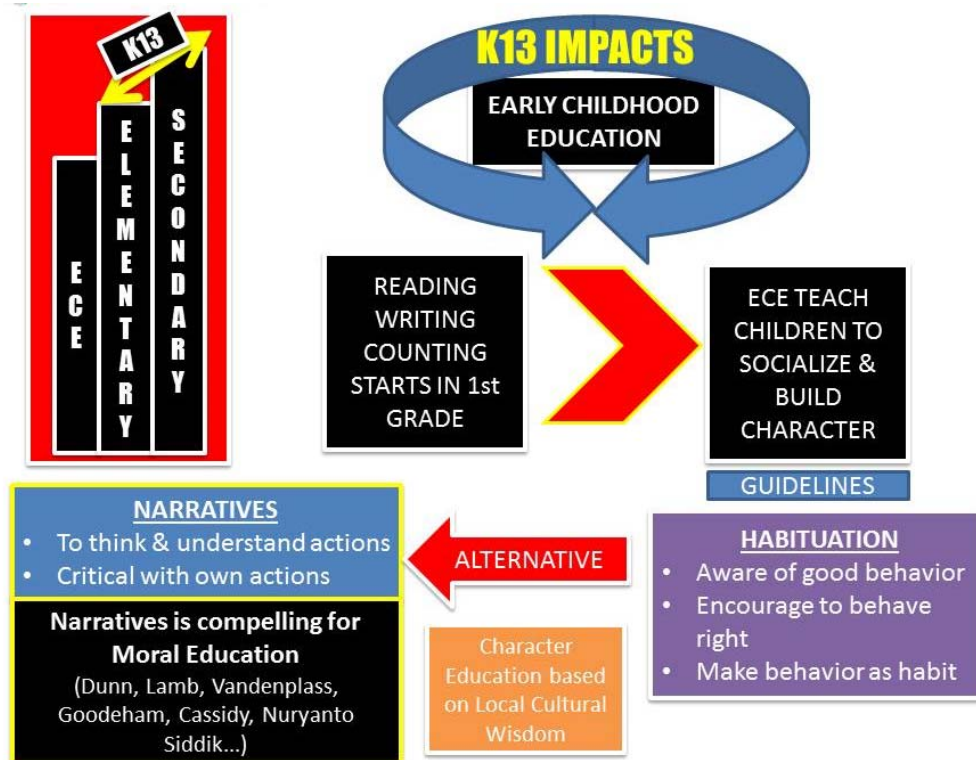


Figure 1.2 : The Impact of the Curriculum Changes

The Indonesian Government is nowadays trying to create a better life for the members of society, including improving the quality of life of the people. Indonesia, together with 189 other countries, has jointly signed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreement. One of the targets of the agreement is to provide equal opportunity education for all. By providing basic education for all, it is expected to increase the welfare and eradicate poverty across the nation. That is why; quality education should be the focus also in the development of the nation. The curriculum changes are one way of improving education. The urgent needs for this country are not only providing a workforce that has the appropriate skills and knowledge, but also people of character. The crisis of morals, as stated by the president above, needs to be addressed and answered. Education has the potential to make changes and people are certainly hoping it works. The shift of the focus of education from a knowledge and skill-based education to a character-based education is a major step. We will not see the results instantly; however we should begin it with good preparation. When people said we need to change the way character education is taught at school and re-think about using narratives as a method of moral education for young children, we began looking at how useful it actually is and what are the possible ways to make it more effective.

There is extensive research and theories present on how stories profess examples of moral living (Dunn, 1990 & 1999; Lamb, 1993; Vandenplass, 1990; Gooderham, 1997; Cassidy, Chu & Dahlsgaard, 1997; McGinn, 1997; Nuryanto Siddik, 2015; Di'amah Fitriyyah & Darmiyati Zuhdi, 2014; Siti Nurhayati, 2014; Fitriana Farhana, Marnawi & Desni Yunarni, 2014). They guide young children into distinguishing a

sense of what is right and what is wrong. Children's literature like fables, folktales, and fairy tales assist in interpreting the underlying rules of society; guiding the child to distinguish from right and wrong. However, there remains a gap in the existing theory; empirical knowledge and practice that has prompted the effectiveness of the use of narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children. There is a lack of empirical data in how teachers see and practice it. This research is expected to provide information on the existing practices of teachers in using narratives in teaching and learning moral education for young children and their reasons or purposes for using the narrative in the teaching and learning of moral education in kindergarten.

Previously, the researcher conducted exploratory research in January to March 2011 (Rahiem, 2011). The research concerned how children understand moral messages in a story. The research ascertained that the children were able to understand stories and were also able to grasp the messages from a story. However, their understanding was rather general and they often stated reasons for behavior that were different from the reasons suggested in the stories or which were initially expected by the teachers for them to understand. The study also explains that teachers certainly have a major role in the success of using narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education. Teachers and other significant adults have a tremendous influence in assisting young children to not only understand stories, but also, to learn from these stories. For young audiences, who are not fluent and not able to read, the way the stories are told or read will certainly affect the way they understand them. It is also the case that they will understand the stories in different ways, even if they have the same person reading the story. Students' understanding of moral values in a story is influenced by the understanding of the teachers and the way the teacher tells stories, which is important in facilitating students to learn from the narratives.

The previous research and theories explained that the use of narratives is compelling for moral education, the government has socialized the methods through seminars and workshops, and a lot of schools have already implemented the use of narratives for moral education, yet how do the teachers actually perceive this method? How and why do they use narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children? An understanding from a teacher's perspective will help us to see how effective is the actual use of narratives as an alternative model of teaching and learning moral education in kindergarten to meet the challenges of the 2013 curriculum. Habituation is the most widely and longest used method of moral education in early childhood education in Indonesia; how can narratives complement this approach? As expected in the recent curriculum, moral education should not only focus on moral conduct but also on the moral feelings and thinking. How does the use of narratives respond to this expectation? This study will include additional information concerning how we should prepare the prospective teachers, how to improve the quality of early childhood moral education and how narratives can be better used in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children.

1.2 Background

Piaget (1997) and Kohlberg (1976), in their models, argued that children are intellectual creatures who use reason, not emotion, when making moral decisions. They develop a sense of morality in an unchanged pattern and hierarchical order. They reach a higher stage by completing sequences from simple to more complex. Piaget (*ibid*) proposed that children are “pre-moral” beings who are incapable of considering the perspectives of others or thinking abstractly. Kohlberg’s research in 1976 strengthened this view. Kohlberg (*ibid*) found that children tended to base their decisions about how to resolve a dilemma with only selfish consideration. Both Piaget and Kohlberg argued that children are limited in their moral abilities.

Current researchers have challenged this view of children’s limited moral abilities by pointing out that the methodology used by Kohlberg most likely fails to capture what children already think and know about moral issues (Schwedere, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1990). Their research also argued that Piaget and Kohlberg were too focused on moral reasoning and did not even consider other moral abilities like sensitivity, knowledge, judgment, motivation and character. Recent research in moral development has shown that even children younger than two years old are capable of developing these abilities. Rest (1983) stated that young children develop the capacity to recognize moral situations, showing empathy and altruism towards others, cultivating habits and dispositions that are necessary for moral behavior, and developing internal motivation to place moral concerns over other concerns. Dunn (1990, 1999) also disagrees with Piaget and Kohlberg with the belief that toddlers have some understanding of how their own actions affect the feelings of their siblings; and that they have a basic understanding of rules. Lamb (1993) argued toddlers are able to discriminate between good and evil; and show empathy from a very early age. Even Cassidy, Chu & Dahlsgaard (1997) explained that preschoolers can recognize moral dilemmas, make decisions about those dilemmas, and give reasons for their decisions.

Based on the theories that state children start to develop their moral conscience from a very early age, some psychologists and educators have sought to develop the best-applied approaches for a child’s moral education. They concluded that narratives could be used in promoting children’s moral development. Narratives are promising to become an active medium of moral education at kindergarten level because we can use stories to improve moral reasoning, knowledge, character, sensitivity, and character.

In Indonesia, narratives are coming back as a trend in educational institutions and have been widely used for young children’s moral education in recent years. Narrating is now a daily activity that is used for teaching language, values and also for entertaining children. The Government, in this matter the Directorate of Early Childhood Education (PAUDNI), Ministry of Education developed a Model of Character Education based on local cultural wisdom at an early childhood level. Narratives are considered as a part of local cultural wisdom. The use of narratives in moral education is not a new phenomenon for Indonesians. Narratives have been used for a long period of time for many purposes. Narrative stories are part of the tradition, culture and

identity of Indonesians. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has its own stories. Narratives have been used from one generation to another, to teach religion, tradition, history, and morals. Each ethnic group also has unique ways of narrating and presenting stories in creative ways. They read, dramatize, sing, and dance to ensure the narrative is both entertaining and enriching. (Bunanta, 2003).

The government actively makes narratives more familiar to early childhood education through their publication and also training. Workshops on the methods and materials of narrating stories are held and organized by the Ministry of Education. Narratives are not believed to just be entertaining, but also, a means to transfer knowledge, values, and morals to the child. Narratives are a powerful way of shaping the character of children, as said the General Director of Early Childhood Education, Non-Formal, and Informal Education (PAUDNI) Lydia Hawadi, in one of her 'Storytelling for Character Education workshops' in Depok, West Java on February 23, 2013.

1.2.1 Moral Education in Indonesia

The history of moral and character education in Indonesia, can be traced back to the teaching of values by Indonesia's father of education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Ki Hadjar is the founder and head of Tamansiswa school (*National Onderwijs Tamansiswa*). Character education is a hallmark of this school. In February, 1954 issue of the magazine, Poesara, Ki Hajar stated that character shall be delivered to students by all teachers. He explained further that the teaching of manners should be provided spontaneously by all officials anytime, rather than only in school subjects, and moral education may be granted when teaching the language, culture, and science, drawing and so on.

In the pre-independence era, moral education was known as *pendidikan budi pekerti* or character education. Character education educates students about the principles of morals, ethics, and etiquette that underlies attitudes and behavior in daily life. Upon entering the era of Guided Democracy under President Sukarno in the early 1960s, character education was promoted widely, and was known as the national and character building education. (Ki Sugeng Subagya, 2009).

Then, during the reign of the new order, the indoctrination evolved into the P4 Upgrading program (Guidelines appreciation and Pancasila). This program was mandatory for all new students when entering high school and college. In addition there were compulsory schools subjects, namely Pancasila Moral Education, which were taught from elementary school onwards. Schools were also required to implement a Monday morning ceremony. At the flag ceremony, the Pancasila was read by the ceremony inspectors loudly, and every student was expected to follow. Pancasila consists of five basic teachings. The five principles are inseparable and mutually qualifying principles:

1. Believe in the one and only God.
2. Just and civilized humanity.

3. The unity of Indonesia.
4. Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives.
5. Social justice for all the people of Indonesia

Efforts to establish the character of the nation through Pancasila subjects continued until the beginning of the 90s. Along with the reform, in the 2000 Competency Based Curriculum, moral lessons were again included in the curriculum.

Character education was starting to regain the government's attention and began to be implemented in schools as part of the main program. The Ministry of Education in this regard, launched guidelines for the implementation of character education programs for the years 2010-2014. The 2013 curriculum emphasized the need for all schools to include character education as part of their teaching programs, which was a major shift from previous curriculums that stated it was only optional.

1.2.2 Moral Education in Kindergarten in Indonesia

The majority of kindergartens in Indonesia are private, only 2.4 percent are public kindergartens out of 67,550 kindergartens (The Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Education in 2009/2010). Private kindergartens are mostly communal/organizations affiliated to religion, and few are independent. Therefore, most private kindergartens are faith-based schools, and most kindergartens are Islamic kindergartens (Rahim & Rahiem, 2012).

The scope of the kindergarten curriculum includes the following aspects of development:

1. Moral and Religious Values
2. Social, Emotional, and Self-Reliance
3. Language Skills
4. Cognitive Skills
5. Physical / motoric Skills, and
6. Art Skills

The six developmental aspects (as mentioned above) are integrated into two integrated programs, which are: The formation of behavioral development using habituation on aspects of moral and religious values; social, emotional and self-reliance and the development of basic skills including aspects of language skills, cognitive skills, physical skills, and art skills.

Moral education is part of the behavior formation through a habituation integrated program. The Basic Competency for Kindergarten-Integrated Program for Behavior Formation is that children are able to say prayer readings/religious songs, imitating the movement of worship and follow the rules, and can control emotions (the National

Curriculum 2008). The aims of the habituation integrated program are for children to practice values directly, and are used to doing things in a good manner. This value can be internalized in the child's life. According to the PP. 58, there are four values that should be the focus of character education in early childhood: spiritual values, personal aspects, social aspects, and environmental aspects. Good and important values that should be introduced and internalized to early childhood based on the supplement of PP. No. 58 are: love and belief in One God, honesty, discipline, tolerance and peace-loving, self-confidence, independence, mutual help, cooperation and mutual support, respect and courtesy, responsibility, hard work, leadership and justice, creativity, humility, care for the environment, and love of the nation and homeland. (See appendix A.1 Standards of Competency for Kindergarten-Integrated Program for Behavior Formation for Kindergarten Level A and Appendix A.2 Standards of Competency for Kindergarten-Integrated Program for Behavior Formation for Kindergarten Level B)

The purpose of the development of habituation is to help facilitate the child to understand the various issues related to daily life, both at school and in the wider environment (family, friends, and community). The development of habituation covers aspects of moral development and religious values and social-emotional development and self-reliance. Developmental aspects include moral and religious values aiming to improve a child's devotion to God and to foster attitudes of children to help them become good citizens. Aspects of emotional and social development, on the other hand, aim to nurture independence so that they can control their emotions appropriately and can interact with peers and adults well, and help them to develop their life skills.

1.2.3 Narratives in Moral Education

Narratives are starting to become an effective medium of moral education at kindergarten level. Narratives can be used in promoting children's moral development. Narratives support moral reasoning, knowledge, character, sensitivity, and character. Vandenplas (1990) made suggestions on how to conduct moral discussions related to children's story books and films to promote children's moral development. Gooderham (1997) offered a model of how to convey moral issues in children's fiction for the moral education of children.

McGinn (1997) observed that, "Fictional work can make us see and feel good and evil in a way that no philosophical tract can." (p. 176) Narrative stories help children define who they were, are, and hope to be. Stories have the potential to open a child's eyes, so they can see and understand more clearly the world around them. Stories provide experience. Stories help children gain insight into the significance of those experiences. Stories are the portrayal of life and mind through language (Anderson & Groft, 1972).

Stories are memorable; their recall may be triggered by either a monumental event or some seemingly minute or inconsequential detail (Weatherford, 2000). Stories provide

opportunities for linking our prior knowledge, for connecting a personal experience with the experience of the characters in the story. Applebee (1978) sees stories as providing children with additional experiences, additional information about their world. Lieberman, as cited by Joosen, (2005) said that from reading stories, children learn good behavior, value systems, and know the consequences of certain actions or situations. Ricceur as cited by Collins (2005) saw stories and narratives as anything we say or hear, and also do or experience. These scholars support the use of narratives for the teaching and learning of moral education.

Nowadays, in relation to the implementation of the 2013 curriculum and the government emphasizing the importance of looking for better and more suitable forms of moral education, many kindergartens use storytelling activities as a powerful way to develop a child's character. Storytelling is believed to be one of the most effective mediums of communication, and to convey messages containing moral values, which is useful for the formation of a positive character in children. Through stories, advice can be delivered in a fun way, and is easily understood by children.

The government itself now encourages storytelling activities as a form of moral education. Storytelling training for kindergarten teachers is conducted in various cities in Indonesia. Most of the content of the training is focused on how to perform storytelling or story reading well (more on the performance skills of teachers). The government and education practitioners have a strong belief in how narratives are used for moral education for young children based on research that supports this belief. They implement and socialize the use of narratives across Indonesia and it is becoming a trend. The researcher, however, sees a gap in this notion. If narratives are effective for moral education for young children, how do teachers understand and see it? It is also important to see how teachers see morality and moral education as they are the people responsible for guiding this form of learning.

1.3 Problem Statement

The revision of the Indonesian school curriculum (2014) has brought about the introduction of narratives in teaching and learning moral education in kindergartens to replace the habituation approach. The shift to the use of narratives in moral education is expected to help teachers to explain to children the reasons for them to act in a manner that is acceptable to society, and also, how they should feel about their actions.

However, in an early childhood setting, particularly in the learning of values through narratives, children are still very dependent on teacher in the learning process (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Specifically, young children's understanding of moral values in a story is influenced by the understanding of the teachers on what the stories are used for in values education, and the way the teacher tells stories for that purpose, which is important in facilitating students to learn from the narratives (Justmai, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to examine how teachers understand the use of narratives and why.

A review of relevant literature found that there are limited studies regarding teachers' understanding on the use of narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children. Not much has been said or researched regarding the teachers' personal perception of morality and their belief in the power of the stories to affect young children's values. Much of the studies are limited to teachers' perception on moral aspects of their teaching, but not specifically in using narrative as media of teaching (Page, 2011); teachers' understanding of morality, but not specifically on their understanding of morality in narratives; and how it will be useful for effective moral education in the classroom (Sanger, 2005) but not on how teachers should use narrative for moral education; the relationship between the moral character of a teacher and the moral development of a student (Osguthorpe, 2005) but not how teachers understanding and belief will influence children's understanding; and how teachers are aware of the presence issues of morality in the literature (Flynn, 2011) but not in ways and reasons they use narrative for moral education. Therefore the existing studies are rather limited in their examination of teacher's understanding of the use of narratives in teaching moral education to young children and their reasons for doing so. They have mainly investigated the role of teachers in the teaching of values using narratives and the role of teachers in moral education and moral development. Based on the review, there is knowledge gap on how teachers perceive morality, and their practice of narrating stories for moral education in the classroom.

Further, existing research also does not specifically look at moral education in early childhood setting (Page, 2011; Sanger, 2005; Osguthorpe 2005; & Flynn, 2011). Aside from this, only one research (Flynn, 2011) looked at the use of narratives in moral education. In addition, the research that were relevant (Page, 2011; Sanger, 2005; Osguthorpe 2005, & Flynn, 2011) were found to use different approaches: philosophical analysis of concept and phenomenon (Page, 2011; Sanger, 2005; & Osguthorpe 2005) and one study is empirical research (Flynn, 2011). There is no clear understanding of what and how teacher's understand the use of narratives in the teaching of moral education for young children. These findings further support the need for this study on the how teacher's view the use of narratives for teaching moral education to young children and why.

The scarcity of research on the teachers personal belief on understanding and practice of the use of narratives for moral education in early childhood setting supports the need for a qualitative study on teacher's understanding of the use of narratives in the teaching of moral education to young children. Therefore, this study examines the kindergarten teachers' personal beliefs in the use of narratives for moral education.

The themes identified through this study allows for a better description of the problem and offers a substantive understanding of the phenomenon towards improving the teaching and learning of moral education, specifically in addressing the problems and issues that teachers' have in the use of narratives in teaching moral education to young children. In the context of moral education for young children in Indonesia, the findings of the study can help identify issues and problems that should be considered by policy makers, curriculum developers and teacher educators in moving from habituation approach to the use of narratives in teaching of moral education to young

children. The articulation of the problem or issues faced by the teachers with the use of narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education can help illuminate theory, policy and practice of teaching moral education to young children using narratives.

1.4 Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe kindergarten teachers' practices and understanding on the use of narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children.

1.5 Research Question

How and why do the kindergarten teachers use narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education for young children?

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are four key terms in this research: narratives, moral education, kindergarten, and young children. To ensure a shared understanding of the discussion, the following are definitions of these terms as used in the study.

1.6.1 Narratives

"A narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events, mental states, happenings involving human beings as characters or actors" (Bruner, 1990, p. 43). The narrative is a description of actual or fictional events, acts, situations, and characters, using the technique of telling or narrating. We can understand that narrative is not a story itself, but rather some retelling of a story about something that happened. Narrative is a story that is told or written (*ibid*). A narrative is usually written or spoken in great detail. There are many forms of narratives: dance, non-fiction texts, lyrics, poems, theater, jokes, and other spoken and written utterances.

1.6.2 Moral Education

In Indonesia, the concept of moral education is closely related and sometimes overlaps with religious education and civic education. In studying moral education, children learn about the rules of religion and state law. Children are taught to be religious and become good citizens. Literally, the meaning of the word moral in Indonesian is *adat* or custom, *sopan santun* or manners and *perilaku* or behavior (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2016). According to the draft competency-based curriculum (2001), the notion of morality are the values of human behavior based on religious norms, legal norms, social etiquette and manners, cultural norms and customs. The character is manifested in the form of the deeds, words, thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and personality of the student.

In this research, the working definition of moral education is the teaching and learning of moral values that aim to develop moral awareness, reasoning, feeling, and doing in children. Moral education is not necessarily a subject; it is possibly a program that is integrated into other core subjects such as math, language, science or arts. This is the most common practice of moral education in kindergarten in Indonesia; schools fuse the learning and teaching of moral skills, knowledge, and attitudes into the regular school curriculum.

1.6.3 Kindergarten

Kindergarten is early childhood education for those aged between four to six years old. Kindergarten is a formal early childhood setting. Kindergarten is the earliest childhood education service available in rural and urban Indonesia.

1.6.4 Young Children

In accordance with the laws of Indonesia, there are several definitions of children. According to Law No. 25 of 1997 on employment, Article 1 point 20, the child is male or female aged less than 15 years; According to Law No. 23 of 2002 on the Child Protection, Article 1 paragraph 1, a child is a person under eighteen years old, including children who are still in the womb; meanwhile, according to Law No. 4 Year 1979 on Child Welfare, Article 1 paragraph 2, a child is a person who has not attained the age of 21 years and has never been married.

According to Islam, a child is a human being who has not reached puberty (adult), puberty in boys is characterized by wet dreams, while in girls it is characterized by periods, if the signs are visible regardless of their age, and then he/she can no longer be categorized as child. Young children are children in preschool aged 2-6 years old.

In this research, the definition of young children is limited to children in kindergarten aged between 4-6 years old.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research is intended to contribute to the knowledge, policy and practice of moral education for young children in Indonesia.

1.7.1 Theory

Although previous research has discussed the power of stories as educational tools for children, it is interesting that there has been relatively little research on a teacher's view and practices in the use of narratives in teaching and learning moral education for young children. There exists some research on how children comprehend moral values in stories, how stories can be effective mediums of moral education, and how

moral imagination in the stories triggers the moral behavior of children. Yet, there is a gap in understanding from a teachers' perspective on how they use narratives for moral education and why they use narratives. I hope this research will be valuable in this field, especially in looking at how teachers perceive moral education for young children, children's moral development, and their role in teaching moral education especially in using narratives as a learning medium.

1.7.2 Policy

Teacher training and education are very important in producing qualified teachers, including teachers who can teach moral education effectively. Teacher training is designed to produce the effective teaching of morals as an advanced educational method and is a valuable tool to improve teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Teachers are expected to not simply use one model of moral education, but to dare to try different models. This research will also contribute to the focus areas that should be taught at the college level, with regards to early moral education, and introduce models for moral education, including storytelling.

1.7.3 Practice

This research is expected to inform teachers about the many models of moral education for young children, including storytelling and class reading. They may have more ideas of how to develop moral education program using narratives.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The proposed study follows a qualitative research approach, involving the use of semi-structured interviews as the primary method. The researcher researched phenomena of the use of narratives in teaching and learning moral education in two kindergartens in the Jakarta area, Indonesia. The researcher did not research other education levels.

1.9 Summary

A change in the national curriculum in Indonesia has changed the direction and practice of teaching and learning in schools, including moral education in kindergarten. Previously, moral education was conducted mainly using the model of habituation, now however, many schools are also using narratives in the teaching and learning of moral education. This study will explore the experience and understanding of teachers in the teaching and learning of moral education in kindergarten. The next chapter will be the literature review for this study.

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