



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effect of Storytelling in Shaping Social Behavior among Students at UPT SPF Elementary School Barabaraya 1

Andi Nurul Annisa Yudha¹, Sawedi Muhammad², Rahmat Muhammad³

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

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***Corresponding Author:**

nisayudha22@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Humans, as social beings, rely on interaction, and in education, fostering social behavior is crucial for elementary school students to collaborate and develop character. This study analyzes the impact of storytelling on the formation of social behaviors such as cooperation, prosocial actions, and empathy among elementary school students. The research aims to examine how fairy tales influence the development of social behaviors, specifically cooperation, prosociality, and empathy, in elementary students. A qualitative approach with experimental testing was employed, involving three classes of 2nd, 4th, and 6th-grade students. Over a two-month period, students participated in a storytelling program consisting of four sessions. Data were collected through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with teachers and parents. The observations revealed notable improvements in cooperative behavior, such as teamwork in group tasks and shared responsibilities. Prosocial behaviors, including helping peers and sharing resources, also increased. Empathy levels improved, with students offering emotional support to classmates. Interviews with teachers confirmed these positive shifts in student interactions, validating the effectiveness of storytelling in internalizing social values. Using social behavior theory and symbolic interactionism to assess behavioral changes, the study concludes that storytelling effectively enhances social behaviors in elementary school students, with practical implications for character education.

INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans rely on interaction, often using symbols to communicate, even when they do not share a common language. Social behavior reflects the actions, attitudes, and feelings of individuals in society, showing the basic dependence in social life.(1). This behavior does not emerge suddenly; it is triggered by a stimulus that elicits a response, which can vary. For instance, in a school study group, some students may work on group assignments seriously, while others may not engage.

Social behavior is very important for students in interactions and collaboration when working on group assignments. Therefore, teachers need to find ways to foster social behavior, allowing students to develop their potential to the fullest.(2). Elementary school, as an educational institution for children aged 7-12 years, is an important stage in the moral and behavioral development of children, where they begin to transition from children to adolescents with more concrete and logical thinking.(3).

Elementary school is an important period for children's development, where they begin to form moral concepts, social interactions, and behaviors that will influence their future growth.(4). Elementary school-age children are in a critical phase of learning, where formal education begins to shape their understanding of the world. Both academic and social experiences at school directly influence their behavior and personality.(5). The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child's character, with peers and teachers having a profound impact on the development of social behavior, both explicitly and subtly.(6). Elementary school-aged children have simpler and more explicit behaviors, facilitating objective observation of social interactions, and providing opportunities for effective early intervention in preventing long-term behavioral problems.

Fairy tales, which contain scary stories and are passed down from generation to generation, attract children's attention and provide space for imagination, as well as enhance their personality and intelligence development. The use of media in storytelling can strengthen children's interest, while research shows that most children's intelligence can be developed through fairy tales at various ages. Research shows that at the age of 0-4 years, 50% of children's intelligence can be achieved through fairy tales. At the age of 8 years, intelligence can reach 80%, and at the age of 18 years it reaches its peak, which is 100%(7). In everyday life, knowledge is essential for addressing various problems. Behavior, often referred to as morals or ethics, involves actions aligned with societal values, arising from genuine intention rather than coercion, and is accompanied by a sense of responsibility(8). Symbols are social objects used in interaction for communication, and according to Herbert Blumer, individual behavior is interpreted based on their actions, with social meanings formed through interactive processes. Individual social behavior is influenced by internal factors, such as instincts and values, as well as external factors from the environment including family and society, which provide sanctions and praise to reinforces behavior in line with social expectations.

Communication between individuals and groups forms the foundation of interaction of interaction, with symbolic interactionism, an essential focus in sociology exploring the nuances of human behavior. This study aims to analyze the influence of storytelling programs on elementary school students in fostering social interaction and positive behavior, as well as to identify the most effective fairy tales for developing future storytelling-based educational programs.

This study has significant significance in both academic and practical contexts, with new contributions to the literature on education and social behavior through the use of storytelling as a learning method. By combining social behavior theory and symbolic interactionism, this study offers educators valuable insights into the effectiveness of storytelling for fostering positive social behavior among students, while also providing a foundation for developing a more holistic curriculum and integrating social values. The findings also have implications for educational policies and teacher training, as well as opening up opportunities for further research on other creative methods in education. Thus, this study not only contributes to the academic field but also offers practical solutions that can be applied in educational contexts to improve the formation of students' social behavior in elementary schools.

PARTICIPANTS & METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative, which aims to understand the phenomenon in depth through inductive analysis of the dynamics of the relationship between observed phenomena, with an approach that focuses on exploring the process and subjective experiences of participants. The research process begins with a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with parents, followed by observations of students while listening to fairy tales and in-depth interviews with teachers and principals to analyze changes in students' social behavior. This research was conducted at the UPT SPF SDN Barabaraya 1, Makassar City, involving relevant informants such as storytellers, teachers, principals, and parents of students through purposive sampling techniques to obtain in-depth information about the impact of instilling values through storytelling. By focusing on participant

interaction and experience, this research is expected to contribute to improving literacy and understanding of values among students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Emerging Behavior Patterns

Following exposure to fairy tales, behavioral patterns related to cooperation, prosocial actions, and empathy became clearer and more consistent.

Cooperative Behavior

Cooperative behavior is very important, particularly in the school environment, as it allows students to not only learn academics but also develop interpersonal skills that help shape them into responsible and empathetic individuals. Research showed that a positive learning environment and peer support increased students' motivation to participate in cooperative activities.

One example from the principal's observation was a second-grade student who had previously been absent from school. After listening to a story about responsibility, the student expressed awareness of the mistakes he had made and how his actions had worried his parents. This statement indicated that storytelling was an effective tool in helping students understand the consequences of their actions and encouraged them to behave more responsibly. A sense of responsibility was integral to cooperative behavior, as students who understood their responsibilities were more likely to collaborate in groups and contribute to shared success.

The principal also noted an increase in cooperative behavior in 4th grade students, who previously tended to be passive in group activities. After listening to the story about hard work and responsibility, these students began to take initiative in group assignments and even volunteered to be group leaders. This was a positive indicator of the development of cooperative attitudes, where students not only participated but also showed a desire to lead and support their peers. Students who behaved cooperatively actively contributed to discussions and group work, creating a more dynamic and productive learning environment.

In addition, the teacher observed significant changes in students' discipline after they listened to the story. He revealed,

"I often see many students who are not very disciplined. For example, they often come late to sports lessons, the excuse is from the toilet, queuing in the canteen, all sorts of things, or not wearing sports clothes. However, after listening to the story, I saw a significant change. They became more disciplined because there was mutual reminders among the students."

This statement suggested that stories facilitated the development of disciplined behavior, where students reminded each other of the importance of following school rules, thus creating a culture of mutual support. This positive change was also observed in 6th grade students who previously often did not follow instructions.

The teacher explained,

"For example, there was a student in grade 6 who used to often not follow instructions; directed to the left, he went to the right. But after hearing a fairy tale, his friend said 'you'll disappear like a duckling,' he finally followed directions better. In addition, the children's courage was formed, yes, because they together reminded students who were difficult to direct."

This shows that after listening to the story, students not only became more obedient to directions but also dared to remind each other, creating an environment where they supported and helped each other. The teacher also noted a change in attitude in students who previously often gave up on challenges. He stated,

“There are students who used to give up when faced with physical challenges or difficult tasks. However, after hearing stories about hard work, they became more persistent and kept trying until they succeeded in completing the task or challenge.”

This reflects how the values taught through storytelling can shape resilience in students. As they collaborate in facing challenges, students learn that persistence and consistent effort can produce satisfying results.

Overall, the results of the interviews with the principal and Teacher Anna showed a significant increase in students' cooperative behavior after they listened to the story that taught important values such as responsibility, hard work, and discipline. First, students showed an increased awareness of their actions and their impact on others, as seen by a grade 2 student who realized his mistake and the impact on his parents. In addition, students who were previously passive became more active participants in groups, even willing to take the initiative and lead. This indicates that they are able to contribute more positively and develop cooperative skills that are important in an educational context.

Prosocial Behavior

The pattern of prosocial behavior is seen through students' initiatives to help each other without being asked. For example, students who complete assignments faster often help other friends who are still having difficulties. In addition, the habit of giving praise or motivation to friends who successfully complete assignments has also increased. Changes in student behavior reflect prosocial behavior, where they are more open to collaborating and supporting each other in social interactions. The principal observed an increase in caring scores among grade 6 students. Previously, students were more focused on their own groups and less concerned about their surroundings. However, now they show greater concern for friends who are facing difficulties. For example, students began to help each other with assignments and invite friends who seemed gloomy to talk, which showed significant changes in their social behavior. The principal said,

“In 6th grade there was a term called Ibarani. The kids always said 'be like Ibarani' or 'aih bukan Ibarani'. After I asked where the term came from, it turned out it was a character in a fairy tale.”

The term “Ibarani” coined by the students signifies the positive impact of the characters in the story who convey the values of caring. By adopting the phrase “be like ibarani,” students not only internalize the lessons from the story but also strive to apply them in their daily lives. This shows that the story can serve as an effective tool in building empathy and prosocial behavior among students. The teacher also noted a significant change in students' attitudes when facing friends who were having difficulties in the game.

“Previously, if a friend had difficulty in the game, students tended to just let it be and even laugh at it. But now I see students starting to help friends who are having difficulty, for example by giving advice or encouragement when they feel like they can't follow the game.”

These observations show that students are now more inclusive and responsive to the difficulties faced by their friends. By providing support, advice, and encouragement, students not only strengthen social relationships among themselves but also create a more positive and supportive environment. Overall, the changes in student behavior indicate that education through stories not only teaches moral values, but also forms character and increases empathy. Students not only learn to care for others, but also to actively contribute to creating a cooperative and respectful atmosphere.

Empathy

Empathy patterns emerge when students begin to be more sensitive to their friends' feelings. They appear to be more careful in speaking, avoiding harsh words that could hurt their friends' feelings.

In addition, some students appear to try to cheer up friends who look sad by listening or playing together. The learning process that uses stories, especially fairy tales, has proven to be an effective method in developing empathy among students. Through the characters and situations presented in the story, students can feel and understand the experiences of others, which in turn broadens their view of the world. Fairy tales often present moral dilemmas that encourage children to reflect on their actions and their consequences, thus strengthening their understanding of human values and caring for others. The teacher noted,

"These children are usually more difficult to direct to the field, even though the field is right in front of us. Now they understand better, when it's time for sports they are already on the field. Usually I pick them up from class, here they are ready. This is what I feel the most, I am very touched."

This statement shows that the teacher observed a positive change where the children now understand their responsibilities better. They no longer wait for instructions to go to the sports field, but do it independently. This reflects an increase in empathy, where students begin to realize and appreciate the importance of shared responsibility. They become more sensitive to the situations around them, such as preparing for sports activities, thus reducing the burden on the teacher in providing directions. The teacher continued,

"For example, before the story, they tended to wait for instructions from me or other teachers. Now, they are more courageous in making their own decisions, such as organizing games or finding solutions if there are problems in their group."

This reveals that students now show the courage to make decisions and find solutions in groups. This development reflects the values of empathy and independence. Students begin to understand how to work together and support each other without always having to rely on teacher direction. They learn to recognize the feelings and needs of their friends, and strive to create fair solutions to problems that arise in groups.

Overall, learning through storytelling not only provides moral lessons but also creates space for students to develop as more empathetic and independent individuals. By understanding responsibility and supporting each other, students build better relationships with their peers, create a positive learning environment, and hone social skills that are important for their lives. Overall findings from observations and interviews with teachers indicate that storytelling has a positive and significant impact on shaping cooperative, prosocial, and empathetic behavior in elementary school students.

Social Behavior

Social Behavior Theory focuses on how individuals learn from their social environment, primarily through observation and experience. Students' cooperative behavior after listening to a story can be seen as the result of a social learning process, in which they observe the actions and reactions of others to certain situations (9). For example, when a 4th grader takes initiative in a group after listening to a story about hard work and responsibility, this reflects the application of the principles of social behavior theory, in which students learn that positive actions, such as leadership and responsibility, will lead to recognition and support from their peers.

This theory explains how individuals learn behavior through observation and experience in social interactions. Increased prosocial behavior among students, such as helping a friend in trouble and showing concern, indicates that they have observed and internalized positive behaviors demonstrated by their classmates. This learning process occurs when students are involved in a learning environment that encourages collaboration and support for one another. Through real-life examples of positive storytelling and interactions, students can learn to behave more cooperatively (10).

Socialization

Fairy tales act as an effective means of socialization. Through stories, children learn about social roles, norms, and values that can be applied in real life. Stories about friendship, cooperation, and empathy provide students with a clear picture of how they should behave in their social environment. Socialization also plays an important role in the formation of cooperative behavior (11).

The socialization process that occurs in schools helps students understand the norms and values expected in social interactions. In this study, fairy tales as a teaching method functioned as an effective socialization tool, teaching students about values such as responsibility, hard work, and discipline. For example, the principal's statement about 2nd grade students who realized their mistakes after listening to fairy tales shows how socialization of values through stories can influence individual self-awareness and responsibility. Additionally, the increase in caring values among 6th-grade students—evidenced by their willingness to help friends in need and build better relationships—illustrates how the socialization process in the classroom can shape character and behavior. The fairy tales conveyed not only impart values but also serve as a medium for socialization, helping students understand their roles in the community and the importance of supporting one another (12).

Symbolic Interactionism

In symbolic analysis, characters in fairy tales become models of behavior that are internalized by students. Symbols such as “good heroes” and “selfish villains” provide students with an understanding of what is acceptable and what is not. This meaning-making process is very visible in students who begin to imitate the positive behaviors displayed in the story. Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes the importance of meaning generated in social interactions (13). In the context of this study, students construct meaning through their experiences while listening to fairy tales, which leads to changes in behavior and attitudes. The change in attitudes of students who previously often gave up when facing challenges to become more persistent can be understood through this perspective. When they remind and support each other, they create new symbols in their interactions that reflect a culture of mutual respect and support among classmates.

This theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and the use of symbols in constructing meaning in everyday life. The term “Ibarani,” coined by students, reflects the symbols that emerge from social interactions in the classroom. By saying “be like Ibarani,” students not only adopt the positive characteristics of the characters in the fairy tale, but also create new social identities that bind them to the learning community. These interactions generate new meanings and norms that encourage students to behave more empathetically and cooperatively, and demonstrate how symbols and meanings constructed in groups can influence individual actions. They learn to recognize the feelings and needs of their peers, and work to create fair solutions to problems that arise in the group (14).

This can be analyzed through the socialization framework, which suggests that interactions with others, especially in educational contexts, help students form social norms and values of empathy. Through shared experiences in group activities and dialogues that occur in the classroom, students learn to respect each other and understand the perspectives of others (15).

Overall, learning through storytelling not only provides moral lessons but also creates space for students to develop as more empathetic and independent individuals. By understanding responsibility and supporting each other, students build better relationships with their peers, create a positive learning environment, and hone social skills that are important for their lives. Through a symbolic interactionism approach, these behavioral changes can be seen as a result of the meanings that students construct through their interactions with the story and each other (16). These

meanings shape the way students behave and interact, which reinforces the values of empathy and collaboration within the group.

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