

Children's learning of *Dolanan* songs in the digital era

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to describe the use of children's songs as a learning medium in the digital era. This study is necessary because today, children's behaviors have changed and they tend to not care about the environment. *Dolanan* is a term for Javanese folk songs. These songs are for children that long existed before the 20th century and are still sung today. In Javanese children's songs there are very noble educational values that are useful for the development of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective development. This literature study seeks to uncover the values contained in *Dolanan* children's songs and their relevance in the current digital era. The results of this study conclude that children's songs are very important and must be maintained and developed in accordance with the progress of the times in order to be used as a media.

1 INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a period of play. Parents and childhood experts from the past to the present admit this phenomenon. In Indonesia, the theory that childhood is a period of play has developed since the beginning of the 20th century. Dewantara (1962) has applied this theory to learning in the school that he founded, called Taman Siswa, on beginning of 19th century by using *dolanan* songs (games songs) as a classroom subject matter.

Playing means that not everything is taken seriously. Playing a game means that an activity can be performed in a relaxed manner, not always referring to the overt meaning of the game, and does not have to be done perfectly. Likewise, the period of childhood should be a rewarding time for children because they have not been burdened with serious matters. Thus, every activity can be fun. Childhood is also an opportune time for various competencies to develop making it possible for a child to be exposed to the widest opportunities possible to develop his or her talents. Childhood is a golden age, a period in which all competencies can develop as well as possible. Mutiah (2010) states that various studies show that this period is a golden age during which the growth of the child's young brain is very fast because of the creation of billions of brain cells.

Older people understood this growth period so that parents of the past provided stimuli for their children to stimulate the development of various competencies in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. In Indonesia, nearly all tribes have songs to put the child to sleep (lullaby) with contents that can be in the form of advice, prayer, or life values. Most of the regions in Indonesia have songs that accompany games.

In Java, especially in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Central Java and East Java there are children's songs. These songs can be used to accompany a game or be used in school to teach noble values that must be developed so that children can become successful people later in life.

In the era of globalization, the advancement of information technology has taken place so rapidly and has changed the culture of children's play. Gadgets are inherent in children's lives and better known than physically active games that develop the body and that encourage children to interact with their social environment. In this era, children are more familiar with their gadgets than their peers. This kind of familiarity makes the behaviors of children today

different from children in previous generations. Today's children are more individualistic, self-ish, and ignorant.

In the past, Javanese children were more concerned and responsive to their surroundings compared to Javanese children today. In the past, Javanese children were eager to help when someone worked or did other activities. Today's children are not eager to help and tend to only watch someone who is working. Furthermore, the values and behaviors of children who care less about the environment must be changed and improved. One of the ways to improve appreciation of the environment is by reintroducing games in children's songs that involve physical movement so that children care about the environment. This caring attitude is also very important for developing an attitude of friendship in order to minimize confrontation. Reintroducing *dolanan* songs to children is one of the efforts that can foster positive attitudes in children. The verses that are in the children's songs not only provide entertainment but also give advice so that children and grandchildren behave as expected as stated in the contents of the song. This paper seeks to describe the meaning of children's *dolanan* songs and the values contained therein, and to examine the strategies for teaching these songs as a medium for the formation of children's character in the digital era.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *The children's dolanan song*

The children's *dolanan* song or *tembang dolanan* in Javanese, is one of the Javanese vocal traditions (Endraswara, 2005) classified as a folk song (Endraswara, 2009). As the name suggests, children's songs are usually sung while playing. For example, the *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* song is used by children as a medium of play to hide an object that is held in the hand, then another child has to guess which hand the object is hidden inside. Children's *dolanan* songs in the past were also used as a subject matter in the schools where teachers often used children's songs to start classroom lessons. An example is the song *Siji Loro Telu* (1, 2, 3), a *dolanan* song that is used to signal that the learning will begin. When the song was sung by the teacher, the students immediately sang the song with the teacher and the students had to sit neatly with their arms crossed to listen to the teacher so that when students were asked questions by the teacher, students could answer.

Hans Overbeck has identified that the number of children's songs in Java is actually more than 690. However, according to Overbeck (1930) there were only around 400 songs (Astuti, 2018). Therefore, it can be suggested that from the time of Overbeck until now there are probably fewer than 400 known songs. For this reason, efforts to revitalize this song tradition are necessary. The need for the revitalization of children's songs has been understood by academics such that current studies on children's toys are widely available. Winarti (2014: 51) reveals that *dolanan* songs are included in the Javanese song classification because they have a linguistic order in which they must be sung or preferred. *Dolanan* means "game", so in the song there is an element of simplicity. Winarti (2014) explains that children's songs can be in the form of one stanza such as *Pak Tejo wis teko* (*Pak Pelangi wis teko*). This song is sung when children see a rainbow while playing. Generally, the form of the song is more than one verse. On average there are 4 stanzas while the next stanza is in the form of development. An example is the song, *Nami Kulo Kamit*.

Nami kulo Kamit (My name is Kamit)

Kulo dados dokter (I'm a doctor) *Jampeni sing sakit* (heals a sick person)

Kulo sampun pinter (I'm already capable)

Radi keleresan (very coincidental)

Kulo sakit wudun (I have had an ulcer)

Sampun tigang wulan (for three months)

Mboten mantun-mantun (But have not recovered)

The song is typically sung by two groups of children. The first verse is a statement sent by the first group of children, while the second verse is sung by the second group of children. Furthermore, Winarti (2014: 55) explains that most of the *dolanan* songs are known as songs for children (Javanese children's games) while other songs do not have to be accompanied by certain activities.

2.2 The meaning behind the creation of children's songs

As previously mentioned, *dolanan* songs were created with the intention of developing noble values and attitudes through children singing the songs. The creators of children's *dolanan* songs convey advice through song lyrics with a positive message. Additionally, when these songs are more closely examined, positive values are not only contained in the lyrics of the song. Positive values are also contained in the game through physical movements that support good health or a particular motor skill.

Wang (2015) revealed that the *Jamuran* song is a song that can develop language skills. The song is like a quiz that asks children to explain different types of fungi and therefore can enrich children's vocabulary.

In another example, the song *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* is used to accompany a game where children guess which child is hiding objects in his or her hand and is an exercise for children to sense the feelings of others. For example, by observing each other's faces to discover which child is holding a hidden object, children can learn the meanings of facial expressions. Thus, this game can develop children's empathy and as previously stated children's songs are also created for the learning process in formal schools in the past. One of these songs is the following called, *Siji Loro Telu*.

SIJI LORO TELU

Si ji lo ro te lu as ta ne se da ku mi
pa pat nu li li mo leng gah e sing to to a
reng a ke bu gu ru me no wo di da ngu
ja pa dha sem mbro no mun ndhak o ra bi sa

The song was formerly used by the teacher to start the class lesson. The lyrics "*siji loro telu tangane sedheku*" means "one two three, arms crossed". The meaning of the lyrics is that students must be ready to take lessons by sitting cross-legged because the lesson will begin soon. The next sentence, "*mirengake bu guru*", means "listen to the teacher". The sentence continues with "*menowo didangu*" where the teacher asks students to answer well. The poem in the second verse "*papat nuli limo*" means "four then five", followed by the lyrics "*lenggahe sing ta ta*" which means "to sit regularly". The next sentence, "*ojo podho sembrono*", means "do not do carelessly". The song ends with the phrase, "*mundhak ora*", which means "later it cannot". The *dolanan* song has important meanings with very deep values. Habituation to acceptable attitudes and discipline is the main foundation for children's success in the future. Getting used to a habitualized life of discipline will make it easier for students to achieve goals or targets that support them. With a positive attitude everything can be achieved. The song

also teaches children to pay close attention to important subject matters delivered by the teacher. Sitting in the correct position can help students concentrate. This teaches students to focus on important things that must be learned so that goals will be easier and faster to achieve. At the end of the song, the poem “*Ojo Podho sembrono mundhak ora bias*” means “do not do carelessly and then it can’t”. In the poem it is implied that at the end of the lesson there will be an evaluation so that students do not need to work on the assignment when the evaluation is positive. It is favorable to invite students to start learning by singing simple songs because singing makes the learning environment serious but not tense. Students are happy to take lessons because of the singing. In addition, the song is very simple and easy so that students do not fear being wrong while singing.

2.3 Characteristics of children's songs

Children's *dolanan* songs are intended for children. Therefore, children's songs are adjusted to the characteristics of the child. If the soul of the child is happy, the song is happy or in Javanese, *sigrak*.

Fun in the song can be viewed from the element of tempo. Happy songs generally use a medium or fast tempo or in western musical expression, tempo *andante* (like people walking) or *allegro* (fast). The song “*siji loro telu*” will be more appropriate if the song is sung with the tempo *andante* and it is easy to follow because the tempo corresponds to the pulsing of the human heartbeat. Another characteristic is that the song's lyrics and melody must be simple. The lyrics used in children's songs are easily understood by children with verses that are not long so that children can easily remember the words. Likewise, the melody is adjusted to the child's vocal register which is between *c1* and *d2*.

The children's *dolanan* song brings forth a happy character so generally, major scales are used as in the song “*siji loro telu*”. However, there is also the possibility of using

KEMBANG MELATHI

The musical score for "KEMBANG MELATHI" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and suitable for children. The lyrics are in Indonesian and are written below the notes.

Tak pa thik pa tik kembang me la thi Tak se bar

se bar nga rep ing pu ri Ra me swa ra ning Sa myo se sa

ji Tak su ka su ka nja wi ning pu ri Tak su rak

o su rak hi ya

minor scales in children's songs. An example is the following song "*Tak pethik-pethik Kembang Melathi*".

The song seems simple, but it is able to generate feelings so that the child can feel its beauty. In general, songs with minor scales will easily evoke feelings and make a deep impression on the child. Awareness of these beautiful feelings will stimulate children to be able to feel and like other beautiful phenomena that may be more complex. Beautiful feelings will make children happy and happiness will bring children to always think positively and be able to be thankful for everything they receive.

Another interesting aspect is that in the song *Kembang Melathi*, there is an activity where children bring jasmine flowers and then the flowers are sprinkled. This moment is a very pleasant moment for children especially girls.

3 DISCUSSION

The digital era grew exponentially with the rapid development of computer information technology bringing consequences that must be faced. Digital technology makes it easier for people to receive information faster and different communities can enjoy digital facilities freely. Today, all levels of society including children can access information and communicate via various kinds of gadgets. But Setiawan (2017: 3) argues that the era of digital technology holds a variety of potentially negative impacts that can harm humans. The ease of all jobs with various applications and technology actually makes a person move less so that physical activity decreases and laziness arises.

Thus, efforts need to be taken to better activate children's physical activities and skills. This is necessary because with gadgets only motor and nerves at the fingertips will be developed while a greater range of motions such as running, throwing, and catching are not trained.

The use of children's songs in daily games can be used as a solution to develop children's movements. Not only will physical skills increase but the cognitive and affective aspects of the child will also develop more fully.

It can be said that games have become part of children's lives today. For children to not feel alienated from the surrounding world does not mean that digital games must be abandoned. Children can enjoy application games but at the same time they can also develop cognitive, psychomotor and affective balance.

With digital technology, children's songs can be accessed and children can recognize and imitate songs through social media. But that does not mean that the children should be left alone to sing children's songs on social media. Parents and schools must facilitate this process. Parents can show and accompany children playing with their friends singing and playing children's toys. This kind of activity stimulates very high-quality communication. Alia (2018: 73) explains that quality communication in early childhood will help children to be able to recognize and distinguish right from wrong, make it easier to know the root of problems and provides for the best interests of the child.

The teacher can assign students the task of finding children's songs through their gadgets and invite them to play with children's songs. The teacher can also invite their students to find traditional games that the children can use to play. If possible, children with parents and teachers can together plan a play project based on children's songs. This is in accordance with children's needs as studied in the field of child development. As stated by Hermoyo (Alia, 2018: 68), children communicate using their body words and gestures. Additionally, children must always be encouraged to express their desires and establish relationships with other people.

Singing children's songs directly guided by parents or teachers brings children closer to parents and teachers. Direct communication between children and their parents and teachers will lead to stronger bonds so that children trust parents and teachers. Under these conditions, the child will obey adults making it easier for the child to be guided and directed.

In addition, singing by imitating and direct contact with parents, teachers, and instructors can not only transfer singing skills but can also develop a child's connection to his or her emotions. This kind of development will not happen if the child just imitates videos on YouTube

or uses gadgets only. The presence of a “living” model is needed to develop children’s competencies as a whole person.

However, considering that children can no longer avoid digital technology, digital use in the learning process must not be discouraged as the use of gadgets is still needed. Sukirman (2017) reveals that in many studies it was found that games have the great potential to be used as learning media. This is very possible because in video games there are rules and tasks that must be completed to achieve the goal. Through games, teachers and parents can help children at the unconscious level by including pedagogical elements.

4 CONCLUSION

Planting noble values to shape character must be done early so that a child will become a complete human being and can achieve a good life. Javanese people in the past taught noble values to children in various ways including using children’s songs. By using children’s songs, there are direct and indirect ways to instill desired values and develop cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains that are very important for the formation of a child’s character. In this digital era, planting values through children’s songs can still be done. Parents and teachers can combine digital technology with children’s songs as part of the process of exploring songs and traditional games while maintaining communication through direct interactions with children. In this way, children can develop cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills comprehensively without having to avoid digital influences.

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