

EXPLORING “KAULINAN BARUDAK” TO DEVELOP CHILDREN’S CHARACTER VALUES IN ISLAMIC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mubiar Agustin

Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Jl. Dr. Setiabudi No.229, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, 40154
Email: mubiar@upi.edu

Nordin Bin Mamat

Department of Early Childhood Education, Sultan Idris Education University
Tanjung Molim, Perak, Malaysia, 35900
Email: nordin@fpm.upsi.edu.my

Ernawulan Syaodih

Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Jl. Dr. Setiabudi No.229, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, 40154
Email: ernawulansy@upi.edu

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ABSTRACT

In RA (*Raudhatul Athfal*/Islamic Early Childhood Education) context, since many teachers relied heavily on standard learning guidelines, most of them didn't have the power of creativity to make learning for children fun. As a result, children were likely to experience burn out and this calls for a solution to apply like *kaulinan barudak* to develop children's character values. This study was aimed at determining the effectiveness of the implementation of *kaulinan barudak*, *Sundanese* traditional games in developing character values for children in RA (*Raudhatul Athfal*/Islamic Early Childhood Education). This research applied a quasi-experimental method with Nonequivalent Pretest-Posttest design. This research was conducted in two RA schools namely RA Al Muqadasah 1 and RA Al-Muqadasah 2 with 36 children involved. The test result for average difference on the post-test showed that children's character values of the experimental class and the control class at the 0.05 significance level was obtained p (sig. (2-tailed)) = 0.000. This indicated that there was a significant difference between the average score of the experimental class and control class in their post-test in terms of their character values scores at a level of confidence of 95%. Applying *kaulinan barudak* provided the experimental class a fun learning experience, potential growth, fun game, peer interaction, and a pleasant atmosphere. The process allowed character values to occur and children learned those values and realized them in *kaulinan barudak*.

Keywords: Character Education, Early Childhood Education, Islamic Education, Traditional Game

ABSTRAK

Dalam konteks RA (*Raudhatul Athfal*/Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Islam), karena banyak guru sangat bergantung pada pedoman pembelajaran standar, kebanyakan dari mereka tidak memiliki kekuatan kreativitas untuk membuat belajar untuk anak-anak menyenangkan. Akibatnya, anak-anak cenderung mengalami kelelahan dan ini membutuhkan solusi untuk diterapkan seperti *kaulinan barudak* untuk mengembangkan nilai karakter anak-anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas penerapan *kaulinan barudak*, permainan tradisional Sunda dalam mengembangkan nilai-nilai karakter untuk anak-anak di RA (*Raudhatul Athfal* / Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Islam). Penelitian ini menerapkan metode quasi-eksperimental dengan desain Nonequivalent Pretest-Posttest. Penelitian ini dilakukan di dua sekolah RA yaitu RA Al Muqadasah 1 dan RA Al-Muqadasah 2 dengan 36 anak terlibat. Hasil tes untuk perbedaan rata-rata pada post-test menunjukkan bahwa nilai karakter anak-anak dari kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05 diperoleh p (sig. (2-tailed)) = 0,000. Ini menunjukkan bahwa ada signifikansi perbedaan antara skor rata-rata kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol dalam post-test mereka dalam hal skor nilai karakter mereka pada tingkat kepercayaan 95%. Menerapkan *kaulinan barudak* memberikan kelas eksperimen pengalaman belajar yang menyenangkan, potensi pertumbuhan, permainan yang menyenangkan, interaksi teman sebaya, dan suasana yang menyenangkan. Proses ini memungkinkan nilai-nilai karakter terjadi dan anak-anak mempelajari nilai-nilai itu dan merealisasinya dalam *kaulinan barudak*.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Islam, Permainan Tradisional

INTRODUCTION

Child potential development should be nurtured earlier. This mission is aimed at developing values like honesty, tolerance, creativity and responsibility through various and quality activity for children. Failure to develop a child's potential development will have an impact on future generations who experience potential loss to contribute to a nation (Lickona, 1992). It is very likely that what Lickona feared the most, generation loss, may happen in Indonesia. One of the efforts to tackle this problem is to develop quality education for children. Quality early childhood education plays a significant role in maintaining and protecting the nation (Tilaar, 2002). This is to say that the nation in the future depends on how early childhood education is designed and prepare to nurture character and deliver education for children.

Education should be started before and after the babies are born. The results of neurological studies show that at birth, the baby's brain carries a potential of around 100 billion which in the next process the cells in the brain develop so rapidly by producing trillions of connections between neurons. Failure to provide the connection in this period may lead to brain atrophy (shrinkage) on the part of children. This has been proven by the results of research at Baylor College of Medicine which found that if children rarely got educational stimuli, their brain development is 20-30% smaller than the normal size of their age (Jalal, 2002). This finding has to some extent strengthened the empirical investigation to support children growth and development. Some stakeholders are in position to provide quality stimulus for their appropriate growth and development.

Implementing character education requires basic principles that every individual who delivers it should comprehend. Megawangi (2007) stated the character education proposed by Thomas Lickona emphasizes several principles. Character education must contain values that can shape children's good character. It can be nurtured in the school offering an example of a peaceful and harmonious life. In Islam religion, character education should refer to Quran and *hadits* for the parents to consider (Al Zbon & Smadi, 2017). Both sources are the core reference for parents and teachers to design Islamic education for children. In addition to Islamic sources, character education should also pay attention to the culture. In other words, the culture where the society exist should be taken into consideration to design and implement character education for children (Hasanah, Gustini, & Rohaniawati, 2016).

Teaching character education is not an easy task to accomplish by parents and teachers. In the context of school, teachers are in the frontline to instill character values. Unfortunately, in Indonesia, many teachers of RA (*Raudhatul Athfal*/Islamic Early Childhood Education) are likely to follow the learning routines which are very "rigid" since they focus on teaching styles and material that explore only cognitive abilities. In general, early childhood teachers may be exposed to several problem and challenges like interaction quality between children and teachers (Smidt, 2018). In some places, some early childhood education schools have been seen as a source of economic gap because some schools belong to international agencies (Adriany, 2018). Compared to educational institutions affiliated to local and national foundation, schools affiliated to international agency tend to have strong financial assistance to support school operation. Other challenges have something to do with problems encountered by early childhood teachers, more and more efforts need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of pre-service teachers for early childhood education (Hu & Szente, 2009). There is a need to design better curriculum to prepare pre-service teachers for early childhood education in higher education.

In Indonesia, teachers face the demand of parents to teach their children *calistung* (*membaca menulis berhitung*/reading writing and counting) to provide children with key skills for schooling. This study conducted preliminary research and found that from the sample of 80 Indonesian early childhood education (IECE) teachers, almost half of them relied heavily on

standardized learning guidelines in their teaching activities. They turn out to be static and they do not have the power of creativity to make learning for children fun and entertaining. This situation leads to problems for children because they experience boredom, are not taught to be creative, and exhibit social behavior deviation.

In school, character education should be taught using the method which is appropriate with child development. Games can be an appropriate method to teach character education. Playing any game can provide children extraordinary energy for their growth, development and allow children to explore their potential. It is a medium in which children try themselves to actively participate not in their fantasies but in real action. When children play freely, according to their own will or according to their own pace, then they practice their abilities and skills. When playing games, they may also solve their learning problem (Agustin, 2012; Mutiah, 2010) that they find suit their psychological need (Munir, 2010) they may explore traditional game to learn (Supeni, Hakim, Jumintono, 2019). Traditional games have attracted teachers to implement character education in the school since they feature fun and joy on the part of the students who explored them.

Modern studies on game playing can be traced from the published work by Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in his book "Homo Ludens" (1949). Huizinga describes game playing as a meaningful activity, carried out for self-interest, spatial and temporal interests and separated from the requirements of practical life, and bound by an independent system and rules that are actually held. The philosophical starting point for Huizinga's study is the observation that, where there is a play, there is also a meaning (Puspita, 2019). In the context of school, children may obtain the meaning or character they learn by exploring the traditional games or plays.

Studies have been conducted to investigate traditional games and its relationship with early childhood character education. Andriani (2012) found that traditional games helped children to shape children's character. Nur (2013). reported the development of children's character through traditional games. Armstrong, Rockleff, Donaldson (2016) studied the benefits of traditional games to facilitate social interaction among children. Aypay (2016) investigated traditional game that provided a context in which children achieve deep learning through integration of intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual values and are committed to support child's growth and development. Several skills can be taught to children using traditional games. Aisyah (2017); Marlina (2017) explored int their study traditional games to build early childhood characters. Saputra, Ekawati, (2017) found that traditional game improved children's basic abilities including interpersonal skills.

Traditional games can have various kinds depending on the culture where they exist. In West Java where Sundanese ethnic live, traditional games are known as *kaulinan barudak*. There are many kinds of *kaulinan barudak*. It includes: *boy-boyan*, *ucing sumput*, *galah*, *gatrik*, *ular tangga* and *sondah*. Nur, Lutfi, Halimah, Nurzaman (2017) explored the traditional game of *kaulinan barudak* namely *sondah*, *congklak*, *loncat tingi*, *egrang batok*, and *dam-daman* to teach character education. Wafda (2017) reported that friendly character development and social care can be nurtured through *kaulinan barudak*. Melianasari, Suparno (2018) emphasized the importance of *kaulinan barudak* to improve child interpersonal skills. Amirudin, Mukarom, (2018) investigated *kaulinan barudak* to explore the character education values.

Studies on character value education using *kaulinan barudak* in the context of Islamic early childhood education namely RA (*Raudhatul Athfal*/ Islamic Kindergarten) have not been discussed extensively. There is a need to conduct the study to fill the gap. This study was aimed at exploring *kaulinan barudak* implementation in learning character values for children at RA.

METHOD

This study is quantitative in nature and it applied a quasi-experimental method. It deployed the design of Pretest-Posttest Nonequivalent Control Group Design. In this design there were two groups used for research and they were not randomly selected. Before being treated, the group was given a pretest to investigate their initial condition of whether there were differences between the experimental group and the control group. It implies that a good pretest features no significant differences between the experimental and the control group. The design used in this study was quasi experimental method with the pre-post-test control group design and it can be illustrated as follows:

Group A O1 _____ X _____ O2

Group B O3 _____ O4

Explanation:

X: Treatment given to children using *kaulinan barudak* in learning character values

O1 & O3: *Pre-test*

O2 & O4: *Post-test* (Creswell, 2014).

For research site, this study was conducted in RA Almuqodasah 1 and 2 which are located in Cimaung, Bandung regency. In terms of population, there were two classes involved in this study. From RA Al-Muqadasah 1, there were 52 children involved and they were 5-6 years old. On the other hand, from RA Al-Muqadasah 2 there were 66 children participated in the study. For sample, there were 16 children taken from group B, RA Al-Muqadasah 1 who served as experimental group and 20 children were taken from group B, RA Al-Muqadasah 2 who acted as a control group.

To collect the data, several instruments were used, namely observation sheets, field notes, and documentation. These instruments were used to record the fact in tracing the development of changes that occur during learning when they received treatment *kaulinan barudak*. One of the instruments used in this study was in the form of direct observation to evaluate children's character development. The character values were objectively measured using a Likert scale with three alternative assessments to measure children's abilities, namely (1) Unable, (2) Poor, (3) Able.

Before the study was conducted, there was a pilot study to test the instrument. This was done in other RA school which was considered to have similarities with RA schools involved in this study. Data were collected through tests which was aimed at obtaining students' initial ability in the form of behavior test questions. Table 1 below outlines the instrument used to reveal the character values of for early childhood education:

Table 1. Character Value Instruments for Islamic Early Childhood Education

Variable	Indicator	Sub- Indicator
Character values of early childhood education	Honesty	Behavior that is based on child's efforts to make himself as a person who can always be trusted in words, actions, and work.
	Tolerance	Attitudes and actions that respect differences in religion, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions of others that are different from him.
	Discipline	Actions that show the organized behavior and obedience toward the rules and regulations
	Curiosity	Behavior and action that show constant effort to investigate and learn in depth and breadth things that can be seen and heard
	Friendly/ communicative	Actions that show happiness in speaking, interacting and collaborating with others.
	Hard work	Behaviors that show determination to solve barriers in learning and accomplish tasks well

This study collected data using the following techniques: *First*, Observation. This technique was applied to monitor directly 16 research respondents. This was done to take a closer look at their activities in learning character values. This study used observation sheets and anecdotal notes, that is, to record everything that happened during the observation. An event which was considered important was recorded briefly without following certain rules. In this study, the data were collected in the form of written answers from respondents. A number of questions were listed in the observation guidelines. This was done to find out various things related to the implementation of learning. *Second*, Field Notes. This technique served as the backbone of this study. They refer to notes written by researchers from the research site. They can be descriptive (as observed) or reflective (contain the interpretations of researchers). *Third*, Documentation. This technique referred to the document which were obtained directly from the research site, including the media / game equipment used, rules of the game, activity reports, photographs, documentary films and other data relevant to the research.

Having collected the data, this study analyzed them in several steps. *First*, selecting data stage. It was applied to check the completeness of the netted instruments. Its purpose was to select sufficient data to be processed and analyzed. The data that was processed and analyzed was the data that had both the identity and the number of answers that were filled in, so that the data can be processed and analyzed. *Second*, Scoring. This was administered using scoring system designed for this study. In a simple manner, each alternative option contained meaning and values of score as seen in the following table 2:

Table 2. Possible Scores for each option response

Statements/ item option	Scores for each option response (Likert Scale)		
	Able (A)	Poor (P)	Unable (U)
1-30	3	2	1

Third, determining score conversion. The research data which were obtained from the observation sheets were distributed. Then they were processed and analyzed to determine the profile of early childhood student character values. Alternative categories of assessment to measure the children’s abilities, namely Able (A), Poor (P), Unable (U). The data obtained were analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel 2007 For Windows. *Fourth*, determining children’s character values development using *kaulinan barudak*. This involved several steps namely: (a) calculating Normalized Gain. Children’s character value development before and after learning using *kaulinan barudak* were calculated using the formula $g\text{-factor} = \frac{N\text{-Gain}}{N}$. (b) Hypothesis testing. This study applied two-way ANOVA to conduct normality test, homogeneity test variance and t-test with SPSS version 17. (c) Applying Parametric test. It was conducted to measure children’s’ character values increase between experiment group and control group using independent sample t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was sought to explore the implementation of *kaulinan barudak* to learn character values for children in RA. Prior to the implementation of the treatment, this study conducted pre-test to find out students’ initial ability. The detailed description is given in the following section.

Initial mastery of character values refers to the result of research related to childrens’ abilities before they received treatment *kaulinan barudak* in their learning. Initial data of children’s character values (honest, tolerance, discipline, curiosity, friendship, and hard work) were obtained from the initial test. This was done using observation techniques. To see the data distribution of the pre-test score of the control class and the experimental class a

normality test was performed. Kolmogorov Smirnov test was applied to measure the normality test. It compared sig. with α (0.05). The test criteria are data said to be normally distributed if sig. $>$ ($\alpha = 0.05$) and data distribution is not normal if sig. $<$ ($\alpha = 0.05$). Normality test results for the experimental class pre-test data of $0.143 > \alpha$ value (0.05), meaning that the experimental class pre-test data were normally distributed. As for the control class pre-test data of $0,000 < \alpha$ value (0.05), it means that the control class pretest data was not normally distributed. After determining whether the data distribution is normal or not, the next step is to conduct a homogeneity test.

Homogeneity test was intended to determine the distribution of homogeneous or non-homogeneous data. Homogeneity testing can use the homogeneity variance test with the test criteria comparing the results of sig. and α (0.05), whose conditions: if sig. $>$ ($\alpha = 0.05$) then the data is considered homogeneous, but if sig. $<$ ($\alpha = 0.05$) then the data are not homogeneous. After determining that the data was normally distributed then the homogeneity test was performed. Homogeneity test results of pre-test data values of the control class and experimental class showed the value of sig. (0.677) $>$ ($\alpha = 0.05$), thus it can be concluded that the pre-test data of the two classes of research were homogeneous. Based on the results of the normality and homogeneity test for the pre-test data which shows that the data was normally distributed. The data met the requirements for the use of the parametric statistical difference test (comparative).

The next step was to conduct a difference test (comparative) using the independent samples test. The testing hypothesis is as follows:

Ho: $\mu_1 \leq \mu_2$, There is no significant differences in character values between the control and experimental groups before treatment.

Ha: $\mu_1 \geq \mu_2$, There is a significant difference in character values between the control and experimental groups before treatment.

Significance difference test was done by comparing between sig. with ($\alpha = 0,05$). Criteria of the test is as follows:

Accept null hypothesis if sig. $\geq \alpha$ (0.05)

Reject null hypothesis if sig. $\leq \alpha$ (0.05)

The result of the test using independent *samples test* can be seen in the table 4.4 below:

Table 3. the result of difference test for Children’s Character Values

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.177	.677	-2.808	34	.008	-2.613	.930	-4.503	-.722
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.846	33.582	.007	-2.613	.918	-4.479	-.746

Based on table 3 above, the different test above shows that the value of sig. (0.008) $<$ ($\alpha = 0.05$). Based on this result, Ho of this study was rejected because the result is in the area of rejection meaning. It means that there is a significant difference of score in students’ character value between the control and experimental groups before treatment.

Children’s final ability in this study refers to data on their character values which was obtained after they received treatment of learning using *kaulinan barudak*. Post-test data can be

divided into two types namely control class and experimental class post-test data. Control class received no treatment in terms of using *kaulinan barudak*. Meanwhile, the experimental class received treatment of *kaulinan barudak* in their learning character values.

Based on the data collected, 20 children in the control class obtained an average score/mean of 77. Meanwhile, 16 children from experimental class obtained 77.56 for their mean score in the post-test. It can be seen that the average score of the control class is smaller than the experimental class. Using this result, it is not safe enough to say that there is a significant difference between two classes. To ensure the significance, the result should undergo difference test.

Prior to test the difference, the data must first be tested for their normality and homogeneity. The normality test results for children’s character values in the control class is sig. $0.102 > \alpha (0.05)$ and this result can be considered that data was normally distributed. Meanwhile post-test normality test results for the experimental class of sig. $0.200 > \alpha (0.05)$ and the data is considered normally distributed. Since the post-test data both the control class and the experimental class were normally distributed, parametric statistics can be applied.

The next step is to calculate a homogeneity test. This is done to find out whether the data is homogeneous or not. Homogeneity testing criteria is administered by comparing between sig. with $\alpha (0.05)$. Data is said to be homogeneous if sig. is greater $\alpha (0.05)$, whereas if sig. is smaller than $\alpha (0.05)$ then the data are considered non-homogeneous. The result of homogeneity test above indicates that sig. $(0.916) > \alpha (0.05)$ means that the post-test data on children’s character values were homogeneous.

After the posttest data was obtained and they were categorized into normal and homogeneous distribution, the posttest data were tested for significant differences by using independent samples test.

Hypothesis to test is as follows:

Ho: $\mu_1 \leq \mu_2$, There is no significant increase in children’s character values between control and experimental group.

Ha: $\mu_1 \geq \mu_2$, There is a significant increase in children’s character values between control and experimental.

With the hypothesis testing criteria as follows:

Accept null hypothesis if sig. $\geq \alpha (0.05)$

Reject null hypothesis if sig. $\leq \alpha (0.05)$

The results of the different test post character values can be seen in table 4 below:

Table 4. The Result of Post-test Difference on Children’s Character Value

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.011	.916	-4.900	34	.000	-5.250	1.072	-7.428	-3.072
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.861	31.218	.000	-5.250	1.080	-7.452	-3.048

Based on table 4, the result of different post-test on children’s character values above, the value of sig. (0.000) $\alpha (0.05)$ then H_0 is rejected, meaning that there are significant differences in children’s character values between the control and experimental groups at the time they participated in the post-test.

The Increase of Children’s Character Value Ability after the Implementation of *kaulinan barudak* in learning

The results of children’s character values in each school can be seen in the following table 5 below:

Table 5. The Result of Children’s Character Value Increase at RA Al-Muqadasah 2

No.	Sub Variabel	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1	Hard work	114	71.125 %	136	85 %
2	Discipline	106	66.25	126	78.75 %
3	Honesty	99	61.87 %	135	84.37 %
4	Tolerance	127	50.8 %	156	62.4 %
5	Friendly	167	81.46 %	170	82.92 %
6	Curiosity	154	75.12 %	168	81.95

On the other hand, the increase of children’s character values at RA Al-Muqadasah 1 can be seen in the table 6 below:

Table 6. The result of Children’s Character Value Increase at RA Al-Muqadasah 1

No.	Sub Variable	Pretest		Post test	
		total	Percentage	total	Percentage
1	Hard work	116	72.5 %	204	99.5 %
2	Discipline	86	53.75 %	136	85 %
3	Honesty	72	45 %	123	78.87 %
4	Tolerance	89	35.6 %	193	77.2 %
5	Friendly	105	51.21%	178	86.82 %
6	Curiosity	99	61.87 %	132	82.5 %

Based on the two tables above, it can be seen that every aspect of the children’s character value had increased both in RA Al-Muqadasah 1 and RA Al-Muqadasah 2. However, children’s character values score in RA Al-Muqadasah 1 are higher than their counterpart.

Difference Test Result *N-Gain* can be seen in tabel 7.

Table 7. Gain Difference Test for Children’s Character Values

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
gain	Equal variances assumed	3.562	.068	2.763	34	.009	3.175	1.149	.840	5.510
	Equal variances not assumed			2.621	23.555	.015	3.175	1.211	.673	5.677

Based on table 7 above, it can be seen that N-Gain character values above, obtained sig. $(0.009) \leq \alpha (0.05)$ then based on this result, H_0 is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the increase of children's character values between the control and experimental groups.

This study sought to explore the implementation of *kaulinan barudak* in learning character values in Islamic kindergarten. This study found that children in RA Al-Muqadasah 1 Bandung Regency performed lower than children in RA Al-Muqadasah 2. This means that the children's character value at RA Al-Muqadasah 1 had not achieved well in each indicator and they needed to be developed. After the implementation of *kaulinan barudak*, there was an increase in the children's character value in experimental group or in RA Al-Muqadasah 1. There was a significant difference in children's character values between children of experimental and control group. Based on the results of the study, it can be said that *kaulinan barudak* traditional games can develop the children's character values.

Character Education for Children in Islamic Perspective

This study explored children in Islamic early childhood education learning character values. In Islamic perspective, education should refer to Qur'an and *hadits* as the source (Al Zbon & Smadi, 2017). Islamic education should enable children to read Arabic, read and memorize Qur'an (Berglund & Gent, 2019). When it comes to practical stage, learning activity for children should be designed in a fun and exciting way to explore children's potential and their growth and development. Playing games may be interpreted as an activity to obtain pleasure for children and at the same time to learn things.

In Islamic perspective, playing game can be traced from the hadits. Obtaining pleasure in playing a game once happened in the prophet life. In the hadith, the Prophet states: from Abu Hurairah R.A. he said: "When the people of *Habasha* played spears in front of Rasulullah SAW, suddenly Umar Bin Khatabb (may Allah be pleased with him) then he took small stones and they were hurled with them." Rasulullah SAW said: "Let them play O Umar ", and Ali added that he had told us Abdur Razak who had also told us about it at the mosque. (Narrated by Bukhari). This *hadits* to some extent, has shown from the prophet life example that game playing can be a source of happiness for anyone performing it. For children, game playing is a need and they gain pleasure when performing it. In educational context, games can be a powerful learning media. Traditional games can be designed to support children in learning character (Nur, 2013).

When it comes to source for educational purposes, God has provided abundant source for human to explore. Al-Qur'an surat Al-Baqarah 22 states: Who has made the earth your couch and the heaven your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto God when ye know (the truth). In line with this, Shihab (2002) states that humans are encouraged to take advantage of everything in the natural environment, both physical, mental, spiritual and material benefits and manage them to seize the benefits for their life. If explored further, the nature has provided a source for learning in the form of games and they can be explored with improved designs that will have more values such as educational values, aesthetics, and being able to develop aspects of child development (Wartini & Askar, 2015). In line with this, traditional games *kaulinan barudak* were used in this study to teach children in Islamic early childhood education character values.

In relation to learning process to develop children's character values, Islamic scholars have expressed their views. Al-Ghazali (2011) in his masterpiece *Ihya Ulumiddin*, proposes to integrate material, methods and media or teaching tools in learning process. All these components must be combined and seized to the fullest so that they can develop all the potential nature of children. Other Islamic scholar, Al-Jarnuzi, the author of kitab *Ta'lim*

muta'alim, has paid great attention on character education for children (Hulawa, 2018). Teaching material must be in accordance with the children's level of child development, both in terms of age, integration, as well as their interests and talents. This must be taken into consideration by educator when dealing with children in their learning. In Islamic perspective, the best knowledge given for children at the first level is religion and *sharia*, especially the Qur'an (Rodiah & Hamdani, 2016). This study applied *kaulinan barudak* to design learning process which is appropriate for children in Islamic early childhood education.

This study is aimed at nurturing character values like honesty, tolerance, discipline, curiosity, friendly and hard work for children in RA *Al-Muqodasah*. According to Ryan, Karen (2003), character is a pattern of a person's behavior. People with good character have an understanding, preference and action of goodness. When it comes to education, character education to some extent is similar to moral education. They have one thing in common that is to shape the children's personality as their goal. Character education also influences positive personal growth especially for children (Hauer & Hauer, 2000).

***Kaulinan Barudak* Application to Teach Character Values in RA**

Traditional games can have various kinds depending on the culture where they exist. In West Java where Sundanese ethnic live, traditional games are known as *kaulinan barudak*. Alif (2014) describes in detail type of traditional games in Sundanese and the procedures how children can play each traditional game for example *bakiak*, *oray-orayan* and *congkak*. Those traditional game like *Bakiak* can be used to teach values like dexterity, leadership, collaboration, creativity, insight and honesty. There are many kinds of *kaulinan barudak*. It includes: *boy-boyan*, *ucing sumpit*, *galah*, *gatrik*, *ular tangga* and *sondab*. Nur, Halimah, Nurzaman, (2017) explored the traditional game of *kaulinan barudak* namely *sondab*, *congklak*, *loncat tingi*, *egrang batok*, and *dam-daman* to teach character education.

In the process of *kaulinan barudak* implementation, this study found that children in experimental group felt very happy. They received treatment for two weeks. They involved in several stages: preparation or pre-play, implementation of *kaulinan barudak* activities and assessment stage. Assessment of character education should be designed well (Erihadiana, 2019). Those stages met the criteria of very good, systematic, and suitable to the child's development. These findings are in line with Aypay (2016) who investigated traditional game that provided a context in which children achieve deep learning through integration of intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual values.

This study found that *kaulinan barudak* improved children's character values learning. Children had shown their ability to learn and improve values like honesty, tolerance, discipline, curiosity, friendly and hard work. The findings of this study are in line with previous studies on *kaulinan barudak* implementation to develop children's character (Andriani, 2012; Nur, 2013; Aisyah 2017; Marlina, 2017; Amirudin, Mukarom, 2018).

This study found that children performed *kaulinan barudak* and they enjoyed it to the fullest. In the process of learning and performing traditional game, the children interacted well to accomplish the game. In addition, they also had shown their ability to improve their interpersonal skill when performing traditional games to learn character values. This finding is in line with the previous studies like Armstrong, Rockloff, Greer, & Donaldson, (2016) which reported the benefits of traditional games to facilitate social interaction among children; Saputra, Ekawati (2017) who explored that traditional game improved children's basic abilities including interpersonal skills; Wafda (2017) who reported that friendly character development and social care can be nurtured through *kaulinan barudak* and Melianasari, Suparno (2018) investigated the importance of *kaulinan barudak* to improve child interpersonal skills.

The Increase Ability of Children’s Character Values using *Kaulinan Barudak*

This study found that there was an increase in the children’s character value in experimental group or in RA Al-Muqadasah 1. There was a significant difference in children’s character values between children of experimental and control group. Based on the results of the study, it can be said that *kaulinan barudak* traditional games can develop the children’s character values. The finding of this study is in line with previous studies on *kaulinan barudak* implementation to develop children’s character (Andriani, Tuti, 2012; Nur, 2013; Aisyah, Nur, 2017; Marlina, Serli, 2017; Amirudin, Mukarom, 2018).

In an effort to develop personal development, RA Al-Muqodasah 1 and 2 applied several programs. This study found that the two schools implemented programs namely: (1) routine; (2) spontaneous (3) modelling (4) conditioning activities. Those activities tried to facilitate the learning of cultural and national character combined with Islamic values into education through integration into the daily activities of the school (Abdurrahman, 2016).

First, routine school activities refer to activities carried out by students in a manner continuously and consistently at all times. Examples of these activities were ceremonies on state holidays, physical hygiene checks (nails, ears, hair, etc.) every Monday, worshipping together or praying together, praying when the lesson starts and finishes, saying greetings when meeting the teacher, head school, or friend. *Second*, Spontaneous activities refer to activities carried out spontaneously at that time. This happened when the teacher and school principals found out that there were bad deeds from the child that must be corrected at that moment. Some bad behaviors include: throwing trash out of place, screaming so that it disturbs others, fighting, yelling, behaving rudely, stealing, wearing indecent clothing. *Third*, Modeling refers to providing examples of good behavior and attitudes from teachers and other school principals so that children can imitate role models. *Fourth*, conditioning refers to school effort to support the implementation of the character education. The school must be designed and prepared to promote and support character education. They must reflect and promote the desired cultural values and national character. They should maintain several conditions like toilets are always clean, trash bins are put in various places and always cleaned, schools look neat and learning tools are placed regularly. These education program offered by early childhood education may benefit children in the long term Bakken, Brown & Downing, 2017).

This study investigated the use of *kaulinan barudak* to teach character values in RA. Since studies on traditional games in the context of Islamic early childhood education have not been discussed extensively, this study has contributed to the body of knowledge in Islamic education for early childhood context. This study has a limitation since it was conducted in a small sample. Further study may conduct this kind of study with a larger sample.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the implementation of *kaulinan barudak* in learning character values in Islamic kindergarten. This study found that children in RA Al-Muqadasah 1 Bandung Regency performed lower than children in RA *Al-Muqadasah* 2. This means that the children’s character value at RA *Al-Muqadasah* had not achieved well in each indicator and they needed to be developed.

In the process of *kaulinan barudak* implementation in learning, children in experimental group felt very happy. Based on the observations, this study found several things during that the implementation of *kaulinan barudak* for two weeks. It included designing stages of preparation or pre-play, implementing *kaulinan barudak* activities, assessing stage. Those stages met the criteria of very good, systematic, and suitable to the child's development.

There was an increase in the children's character value in experimental group or in RA *Al-Muqadasah* 1. There was a significant difference in children's character values between children of experimental and control group. Based on the results of the study, it can be said that *kaulinan barudak* traditional games can develop the children's character values.

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