

Model of Character Education for Early Childhood *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* through Outing Class Activities

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the character education model by Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto Ponorogo through outing class activities. It examines the level of success in instilling various characters developed in Indonesia for early childhood. The research approach uses descriptive qualitative field research type. Data collection techniques are carried out by observation related to the early childhood character education model, interviews with managers, teachers and students during outing classes and documentation of outing class activities. Data analysis is done by organizing, interpreting, presenting data narratively, and drawing conclusions. The study results revealed that the early childhood character education model through outing classes at Eduwisata Dalem Kerto includes gardening activities, learning fun, interaction with livestock, and cooking fun. This outing class activity is designed for 2 hours and is guided directly by the instructor from beginning to end. The results of the character education model through outing classes effectively instil various early childhood characters from characters developed in Indonesia. It should be noted that this study is still limited to the early childhood character education model using outing classes in eduwisata. The findings of this study provide originality in the form of a character education model for early childhood through outing classes in the form of gardening, learning fun, cooking fun and livestock edu-tourism that can be used as a fun and meaningful early childhood education model. These findings provide many contributions to the enrichment of character education models, specifically character education for early childhood which is rich in stimulation that develops the character and intelligence of early childhood.*

Studi ini mengkaji model pendidikan karakter yang dilakukan *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* Ponorogo melalui kegiatan *outing class*, serta mengkaji tingkat keberhasilan dalam menanamkan berbagai karakter yang dikembangkan di Indonesia bagi anak usia dini. Pendekatan penelitian menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif, jenis *field research*. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan observasi terkait model pendidikan karakter anak usia dini, wawancara dengan pengelola, guru dan siswa saat *outing class* dan dokumentasi kegiatan

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outing class. Analisis data dilakukan dengan cara mengorganisasikan, menafsirkan, menyajikan data secara naratif, dilanjutkan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa model pendidikan karakter anak usia dini melalui *outing class* di *Eduwisata Dalem Kerto* berbentuk kegiatan berkebun, *fun learning*, interaksi dengan hewan ternak, *fun cooking*. Kegiatan *outing class* ini didesain selama 2 jam yang dipandu langsung oleh instruktur mulai awal hingga akhir. Hasil model pendidikan karakter melalui *outing class* efektif menanamkan aneka karakter anak usia dini dari karakter yang dikebangkan di Indonesia. Perlu diketahui bahwa penelitian ini masih terbatas pada model pendidikan karakter anak usia dini menggunakan *outing class* di eduwisata. Temuan penelitian ini memberikan orisinalitas berupa model pendidikan karakter anak usia dini melalui *outing class* berupa berkebun, *fun learning*, *fun cooking* dan eduwisata hewan ternak dapat digunakan sebagai model pendidikan anak usia dini yang menyenangkan dan bermakna. Temuan ini memberikan banyak kontribusi bagi pengayaan model pendidikan karakter, lebih khusus pendidikan karakter pada anak usia dini yang kaya akan stimulasi yang mengembangkan karakter dan kecerdasan anak usia dini.

Keywords: *Character Education, Early Childhood, Outing Class, Ndalem Kerto.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Character education is a significant issue in today's world. It is about empowering children from an early age to shape their character, a skill that will be invaluable in their future lives (Wati et al., 2024). The term 'character' is often used with 'moral' to describe preparing children to resist negative influences (Cervantes et al., 2020). However, character education differs from moral education (Hidayati et al., 2020). It's about distinguishing right from wrong and instilling good life practices (Anwar et al., 2023). This ensures that children develop a high level of awareness, understanding, and a sense of care and commitment to uphold virtues in their daily lives (Hermino & Arifin, 2020; White & Seob, 2017).

Even though character education inherently contains messages of instilling noble character and awareness in cultivating it in daily life, the process of instilling these values requires continuous and consistent stimulation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In this context, various forms of stimulation can be provided to children, especially at an early age, including through early childhood education institutions, parental upbringing at home, and education within the community environment. According to Ningsih et al. (2021), the grades of character education consist of 18 types: religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, appreciation of achievements, communication, love of peace, reading habit, social care, environmental care, and responsibility. These eighteen grades of character are currently being instilled, nurtured, developed, and habituated through various learning activities, both inside and outside the classroom (Aprilia et al., 2021).

Outing classes are one of the learning activities designed to equip and develop children's skills in various aspects (Utami & Zulfahmi, 2024). Research findings by Bentsen et al. (2022) indicate that outing classes can be conducted in open environments or tourist sites. This is supported by the research of Mawardi & Supadi (2018), which states that outing class activities are both challenging and enjoyable for students. Consequently, outing classes are difficult because their medium involves learning characteristics that can be utilized to achieve educational goals, particularly in developing intellectual skills, behaviour, motor skills, cognitive strategies, and verbal information (Chen et al., 2019).

Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto is a playing and learning venue designed for nature-based educational tourism (Anisa & Wulansari, 2023). It focuses on exploring character development through nature-themed activities. One of its key offerings is facilitating outing class programs for various educational institutions in the Ponorogo East Java Indonesia, which include gardening and fun learning activities. Children visiting this site are encouraged to explore the natural environment, recognize and interact with different plants, observe their growth, and try planting them with their hands. This is all made possible under the guidance of our dedicated and trained educators, who play a crucial role in the children's learning journey (Safrudin et al., 2024). Additionally, children have the freedom to enjoy learning while playing in nature. They learn to care for fish by feeding them, recognize growing rice plants, observe fruiting guava trees and practice gentle fruit picking, and get acquainted with the behaviors of peacocks and other animals (Anisa & Wulansari, 2023). These uniquely designed outing class activities significantly contribute to the children's character development.

Instilling character in children, especially in early childhood, requires extra effort, both in terms of methods and strategies and various stimulations. This research study follows Chaer (2016) theory of character education stages, that character formation in children is through three methods: habituation; understanding of good and bad behavior; and role models through role models that children can imitate (Nurdiyanto et al., 2023).

Research to strengthen the reasons that this research still has gaps that need to be studied and to provide a comparison with previous research. Research on outing class activities has been conducted by several experts including Ginting et al. (2020), which examines the influence of outing class on the development of soft skills including teamwork, communication, leadership, and ethics, focused on students. The results of the study found that outing classes can significantly improve students' soft skills in the aspects of communication and leadership. This differs from the focus of this research study, which examines the character education model through outing class. Ginting et al. (2020) research focuses on students, while this study focuses on early childhood. Further research Jaya & Wati (2024) focuses on studying teacher strategies in improving student creativity through outing class activities, although discussing outing class activities, the research focuses on elementary school students. The results show that outing class activities can improve student creativity in the form of being able to find new ideas from observing the surrounding environment. Jaya's research is more focused, studying the relationship between outing class activities and increasing creativity in elementary school students, in contrast to this research which focuses more on the character education model for early childhood through outing classes, this research is on early childhood and reveals various characters that develop, not just one character (Faiz et al., 2022). Subsequent research Sunardiyah et al. (2023) researching aesthetic exploration based on outing class models in Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. The results found an outing class activity model, creating enjoyable learning for students; outing class can provide

empirical experience for students because they get knowledge and experience from teachers, expert mentors, and fellow visitors so they produce batik products. Sunardiyah's research explores more about outing classes to create enjoyable learning and provide empirical experience for students in making batik. In contrast, this research differs from Sunardiyah research, et al., focusing on the character education model for early childhood through outing class activities; the object is also different from Sunardiyah et al. on the batik industry. At the same time, the researcher is more on *Ndalem Kerto* edu-tourism.

Ndalem Kerto Eduwisata is a place to play and learn that is packaged in the form of natural educational tourism. This natural educational tourism explores character building with the title of the only natural tourism in Ponorogo. One of the activities is facilitating outing class activities from various academic institutions in the Ponorogo Regency with sub-activities of "gardening" and "fun learning". Every child visiting this location is invited to recognize the natural environment, recognize plants, see their growth and development, touch their parts and then try to plant them with their own hands under the guidance of educators *Ndalem Kerto* has prepared. On the other hand, children freely express their joy in learning while playing in nature. They learn to love fish by feeding them, recognising growing rice plants, observing guava plants that bear fruit while learning to pick them gently, and acknowledging the behaviour of peacocks and several other birds and animals. This outing class activity is packaged in a somewhat unique way so that it impacts children's character-building.

The main objective of this study is to examine the character education model carried out by *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* for early childhood through gardening and fun learning activities, as well as to explore the level of success in instilling various characters developed in Indonesia for early childhood. Seeing the dynamics of *Ndalem Kerto* nature tourism from the perspective of visitors, especially early childhood, shows significant developments and strategic value for the development of more exciting and quality character education to be studied. Based on the statement of Mr. Edi Kurniawan (Owner and Manager of *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*), the data on children visiting this location in 2023 was 4564 children.

II. METHOD

This research approach is descriptive qualitative, following Wahyuni et al. (2023) suggestion, as the research instrument itself. The choice of location, *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*, is significant as it is a unique place that combines play and learning in the form of natural educational tourism, focusing on character building with a natural tourism theme. The character education model, unique to this location, has proven to be effective in instilling various noble characters, developed in line with the Indonesian government's guidelines. This model, not found elsewhere in Ponorogo and its surroundings, is guided by expert tutors, allowing students to enjoy learning in nature and gain empirical experience while understanding the results often with friends and expert tutors.

The data source of this study is the results of interviews with the owner, facilitator, teacher, and early childhood who carried out an outing class at *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*. The next data source is the results of the researcher's records and observations and documentation of various outing class activities and literature relevant to this theme.

The subjects or informants of the study were the owners of *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*, the eduwisata facilitator, the teacher and the students who carried out the outing class.

This study examines the early childhood character education model through outing class activities by *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* in Ngrupit Village, Jenangan District, Ponorogo. Outing class activities carried out by *Ndalem Kerto* when early childhood children visit this eduwisata location include gardening and fun learning.

The data collection techniques in this study are systematic and comprehensive, including observation, interviews, and documentation (Agustini & W, 2021). The chosen observation method is structured observation, where the researcher has a considerable understanding of the stages of character education activities conducted by *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*. Therefore, the observation guidelines can be systematically arranged before conducting the observation. The observations focus on the outing class activities, including gardening and fun learning, carried out by *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* during visits from early childhood children, both from formal educational institutions and the general public. The interview method used is a guided free interview (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021). The researcher has prepared a broad interview guide to delve deeper into the early childhood character education model through gardening and fun learning activities. These interviews aim to reinforce the results obtained from observations. Additionally, documentation is carried out to support the data collected through observation and interviews, making it easier for the researcher to implement all research stages and report the findings. Data analysis is carried out by organizing data from interviews, observations and documentation, interpreting, presenting data narratively, followed by drawing conclusions (McAllum et al., 2019). Meanwhile, data validation techniques are carried out using triangulation techniques (Nielsen et al., 2020).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

***Ndalem Kerto* Educational Tourism Character Education Model Based on Outing Class**

Public visits to *Ndalem Kerto* occurred during the Covid-Pandemic era in 2019 along with the issuance of Government policies to improve healthy lifestyles, one of which is increasing the consumption of fresh fruit. Starting in 2021, public visits to *Ndalem Kerto* have occurred, with the primary purpose of nature tourism while consuming crystal guava fruit by picking it themselves. At the same time, visitors to the Crystal Guava Garden can also enjoy the sensation of breeding peacocks, lady Amherst birds and jungle fowl, which are in line with the Crystal Guava Garden land. Even the peacock breeding managed by Mr Edi Kurniawan based on education has received public attention occasionally, so visits have increased. The educational side lies in caring for peacocks from eggs to adulthood through CCTV monitoring that every visitor can see. The process of egg hatching, caring for baby peacocks, feeding and drinking, understanding their behaviour until they are tame towards the owner/caretaker, mating periods, and the natural feather shedding process can be observed by visitors in detail. The name *Ndalem Kerto* itself was born in 2022 when visitors were increasing, so this year, the concept of natural educational tourism was confirmed under the idea of Mr. Edi Kurniawan with the name *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*. Starting in 2022, *Ndalem Kerto* became the first place in Ponorogo Regency to carry the concept of playing and learning in nature to love God's creations even more. Specifically, *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* is here to provide meaningful experiences for children to learn outside the classroom. In

subsequent developments, this place is open to the public as a place to study for school students from PAUD to high school, even universities (Fägerstam, 2013). *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* is also very relevant to support fulfilling the demands of the independent curriculum among students and students through outing classes, internships, KKN, and PKL programs, besides being used as a place for family or individual tourism. Along with this research, *Ndalem Kerto* became an intern for the Islamic State University of Surabaya Islamic Sociology Study Program. *Ndalem Kerto Eduwisata* has various activities that visitors can choose from, including gardening tours, fun learning, fun cooking, interaction with fish and pets, and introduction to peacock behaviour.

This is relevant to Widiastuti (2021) statement that the contextual approach is an approach that helps teachers find the relationship between learning and the real world of students and encourages students to make connections between the knowledge they have and its application in everyday life.

At *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*, there's something for everyone. The outing class activities are not limited by age, with options for early childhood, adults, and even the elderly. As Mr. Edi Kurniawan shared in an interview with researchers, visitors to *Ndalem Kerto* come from diverse backgrounds, including PAUD, SD, SMP, SMA, and Universities, as well as various government and private institutions. The variety of activities, from gardening educational tourism to cooking fun, ensures that every visitor, from family groups to the elderly, can find something to enjoy at *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*.

Meanwhile, for early childhood, outing class activities are focused on gardening educational tourism, learning fun, cooking fun, and livestock educational tourism. This outing class activity is designed for 2 hours and is guided directly by the *Ndalem Kerto* instructor from beginning to end. In the implementation process, children are accompanied by a teacher. All outing class activities in instilling the character of early childhood are planned, including preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

Gardening

Gardening activities, a three-step process of preparation, implementation, and evaluation, are designed to be fun and engaging for both the children and the instructor. The instructor's role is to introduce gardening tools to children, making sure each child is familiar with the details and even gets to touch the tools. The order of the participants is conditioned at this stage, and the instructor uses various interesting methods, such as lining up in a row or singing while lining up, to keep the session lively.

The implementation process includes *first*, refreshing the child's memory. At this stage, the activity begins by refreshing the child's memory during the preparation so that they are more familiar with the details. Gardening equipment includes soil, polybags, shovels, and seeds. Instructors should instil a more detailed understanding in each child, taking turns approaching the equipment and touching or lifting it carefully. This step is taken with the aim that children really understand what should be done when planting plants.

Second, choosing plant seeds. The following process is the introduction of plant seeds and how to select good seeds. This is done before children learn to plant plants. The instructor then shows the characteristics of good plant seeds by showing the parts of the plant seeds, namely: 1). the seedling stem is not injured or broken; 2). the leaves are not wilted (fertile and fresh); 3). the plant looks fresh; 4). the leaves are intact, not perforated

and not yellow. At this stage, children are directed to focus in various ways, including repeating these characteristics.

Some of the characteristics instilled through this activity are curiosity, independence, creativity, communication, responsibility, mutual respect, cooperation, love of peace towards plants, and accompanying children's actions and creations when choosing plants according to the criteria conveyed by the instructor. In this session, receptive language skills are also honed through activities to listen to the instructor's explanation and children's understanding of the instructions. This is relevant to the scientific learning approach in asking, observing, exploring and communicating (Setiawan, 2020).

Third, Removing Seedlings from the Wrapper. At this stage, children are taught how to remove seedlings from the plastic wrapper in the correct way. The instructor demonstrates in front of the children by tearing the plastic from the edge while conveying a clear message "we remove it slowly so that the roots that have grown and formed in this plastic are not damaged". Once again, the instructor exemplifies or practices it followed by all participants while repeating the same instructions. The accompanying instructor, who is there to support and guide the children, checks the results of removing the plant seedlings to ensure that the participants have done it correctly. This stage is then closed with a celebration of success with collective applause.

Fourth, Planting Seeds. Before being taught how to plant seeds in polybags, children are first taught how to put soil or planting media into polybags. At this stage, children's memories of the shovel-like tool that has been known before are refreshed again. The instructor then practices using the tool in front of the participants to take soil or planting media and put it into polybags with a half-measure size.

Participants then practice putting soil into polybags that have been provided in front of each of them as instructed by the instructor. After the instructor ensures that all participants' practices are correct, they give a signal to applaud together as a sign of celebration of success. This celebration is an important part of the learning process as it not only acknowledges the children's efforts but also motivates them to continue their plant cultivation activities.

Fifth, make a hole in the middle of the polybag filled with soil or planting media. The instructor then points to the middle of the polybag, directs the shovel to the middle, and makes a hole in the middle to insert the plant seeds, followed by other accompanying instructors to ensure that all participants have succeeded correctly. Next, the instructor invites the children to hold their respective plant seeds insert the root part into the planting hole and then cover it with soil with a measurement that almost fills the polybag. The instructor then looks at the results of the participants' work and after ensuring that everything has been done correctly, celebrates the success with applause. Furthermore, the results of planting the seeds are watered with sufficient water and then put into a plastic bag to be taken home.

In this activity, the child's character is honed in detail concerning motor and cognitive abilities. Motoric abilities are honed through activities such as removing plants from polybags, inserting soil, and making planting holes, all of which use the child's five senses. Meanwhile, the child's cognitive abilities are honed through activities to understand the instructor's explanation starting from removing seedlings from plastic wrap, preparing planting media in polybags, making planting holes and practicing planting.

This stage is an opportunity to observe changes in the children's attitudes and behaviour after the activity. The continuous evaluation process involves the school, ensuring that the gardening activities provide meaningful experiences for the children. *Ndalem Kerto* coordinates closely with the school to ensure a consistent approach.

Fun Learning (Eventual Educational Tourism)

The process of fun learning activities includes preparation, implementation of activities, and evaluation of activities. Each is explained as follows: This preparation stage is directed at preparing tools and materials for each activity. Fun learning activities include garden exploration, plant learning, interacting with animals, and fun cooking. Eventual educational tours are carried out to ensure that activities run well, and facilitator briefings, child or participant briefings, and companion briefings are carried out.

The implementation of the activities includes: *First*, garden exploration. This session is directed so that children are familiar with plants or vegetation around their lives with the aim that they understand and know from an early age that they are part of the natural life around them. Children are also directed to understand the creation of the surrounding nature, including the plants or gardens they enjoy. This garden exploration activity package includes: 1). picking crystal guava fruit; 2). recognizing fallen leaves around the tree, picking up fallen leaves and putting them in a particular place (already provided), and processing leaves into compost.

Second, Learning to Plant. In the gardening activity session, children were introduced to how to plant seedlings. The difference with learning to grow in this fun learning activity is that the completeness of the planting knowledge given to children is more comprehensive.

In this session, children are also introduced to the composting process, with the following activities: leaves collected by children during garden exploration activities are used as compost material along with the equipment needed for the composting process. In the same place, the instructor has provided compost that has been finished through a process of about 3 months so that children can describe the manufacturing process through the primary material (leaves).

After understanding the composting process, the children are invited to a learning session on planting. They learn to plant using poly bags, apply the ready compost, and sow plant seeds that have also been prepared. This learning experience is further enhanced as they are explained how to care for plants and sensory planting under the guidance of the *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* facilitator.

Interaction with Animals

In this session, children are invited to learn the characters of various animals in *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*, namely fish, goats, multiple types of birds, and peacocks. The stages are as follows: feeding fish, holding goats, and observing the behaviour of ladybirds and peacocks.

Specifically for introducing peacocks, *Ndalem Kerto* has prepared unique materials and an Instructor Team because of the position of peacocks as rare animals protected by the government. In addition, it is also essential to preserve them through captivity. At this stage, *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* provides facilitators who accompany the children to explain the following: 1) the meaning of captivity, that captivity is a breeding effort that involves a lot of human intervention; 2) the status of the green peacock, as a peacock

whose existence is highly protected in the world, is currently in a threatened status, so it is essential to conserve it so that it does not become extinct; 3) management of captivity, that peacock captivity can be successful if done with passion because it is directly related to the preservation of the Reyog Ponorogo art, one of the components of which (*dadak merak*) is made from fallen peacock feathers.

Another important point related to peacocks is to provide children with an understanding that the art of Reyog Ponorogo is directly related to conservation. This art, which is an action that is very relevant to the mission of the caliphate (Yusuf & Sadat, 2019), is environmentally friendly and relies on the preservation of peacocks for its *dadak* component.

Fun Cooking

In this session, children are directed to recognize and love cooking through their direct involvement in the cooking process. In the first stage, children are directed to acknowledge how to catch fish properly, process it, and cook it. All are done with their own hands. The second stage is cleaning the fish by processing it to prepare it for cooking. In the third stage, children practice cooking accompanied by a facilitator.

Character education, especially for early childhood, is currently critical. This is because in addition to the new challenges in character education related to advances in science and technology, to ignoring the attention of many parties in shaping children's character, there is also the increasingly open access to children's broader social interactions which are very likely to be affected by "negative" impacts because of it. Therefore, not a few formal and non-formal educational institutions are trying to maintain children's growth, one of which is forming and getting used to noble character from an early age through various activities. In addition, character building from an early age is significant for children so that they understand what things are allowed and not allowed to be imitated and done. Children have very high sensitivity at an early age, so the power to imitate stimuli received from outside is extreme. Imaniyati et al. (2024) wrote data that early childhood children (around 3 years old) had formed 1000 (one thousand) trillion connection networks in their brain cells. Adults are only half, meaning that the number of brain cells in early childhood is twice as much as that of adult connection networks. This means that children are much more receptive to stimulation than adults.

In this context, Elbes & Oktaviani (2022) mentioned three reasons why character building is given from an early age. *First*, children do not yet know good and bad behaviour; *Second*, they will not be able to differentiate between good and bad behaviour; and *Third*, children are not yet aware of the impact of good and bad behaviour.

Instilling character in children, especially in early childhood, requires extra effort, both in terms of methods and strategies and various stimulations. According to Chaer, (2016); Nurdyanto et al., (2023), character formation in children is done in three ways: through habituation, understanding of good and bad behaviour, and role models or through models that children can imitate. Meanwhile, the methods and strategies are the same as those used in early childhood education: using children's language (*bi qadri uqulihin*). Children's habits usually involve reflex movements and body activities. Cantor et al. (2018) detail how children learn through body movement activities, learning to act out feelings and conscience, learning while playing, learning through communication, interaction and socialization, learning from the environment and learning through desires and needs (Cantor et al., 2018).

In early childhood character education carried out outside the classroom, various methods, media, and games are needed. Therefore, the readiness of the teacher/instructor/mentor dramatically determines the success or failure of the education. Aningsih et al. (2022) call it programmed activities and habituation activities, in addition to various methods, media, games, habituation, routine activities, spontaneous activities, and exemplary activities.

Furthermore, the character education model for early childhood through educational tourism can be described as follows:

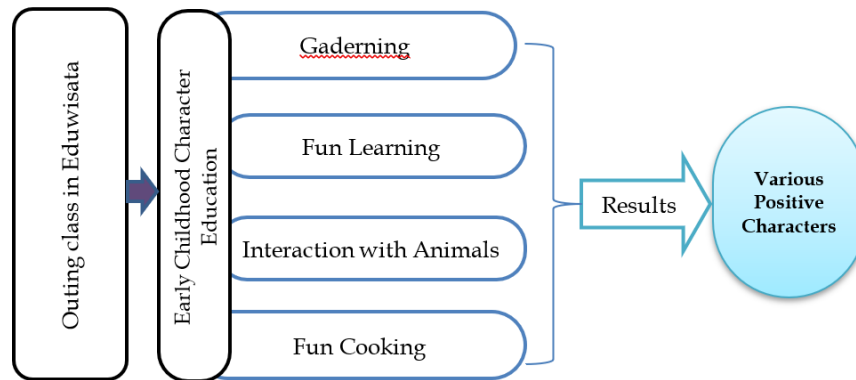


Figure 1. Early childhood character education model through outing class

Adapting from Choer's opinion above the character education model through outing classes in the form of gardening and fun learning activities, interaction with animals, and fun cooking in instilling character can be classified into three stages of character education, namely providing understanding in the form of giving understanding, knowledge from facilitators about how to plant, how to choose good seeds, how to raise animals, cook, use equipment. Furthermore, outing classes with gardening activities, fun learning, cooking fun, getting to know livestock (interaction with animals), and providing modelling to early childhood with various things explained by facilitators and teachers. Furthermore, conditioning students through practice and habituation, using equipment, habituation to practice how to plant, make compost, discuss and study in groups, and to listen to explanations from teachers and facilitators as well as the culture of queuing, deliberation and expressing opinions are forms of habituation that are conditioned (conditioning) in outing classes that can foster various characters of early childhood, which are then described as follows.

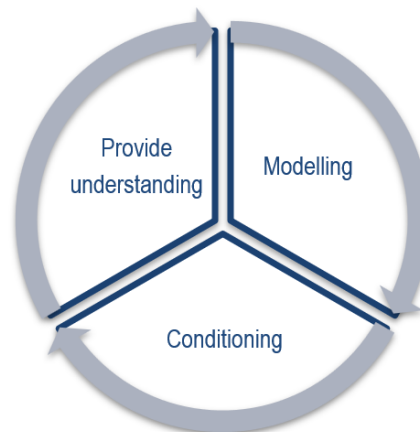


Figure 2. Three stages of character education

The Success Rate of the Character Education Model by *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*

According to the explanation of early-age students named Irfan, outing classes and gardening activities are given knowledge about introducing gardening tools, how to use tools, and how to garden in a fun way while singing and clapping with friends. The result is happiness and an understanding of what should be done when planting plants. Children are introduced to plant seeds and how to choose good seeds.

According to Mrs Nurdiani's statement, through this gardening activity, a religious character grows by being grateful for God's blessings for creating beautiful plants and various flavours to be eaten and enjoyed by humans. Gardening activities in *Ndalem Kerto* foster tolerance by respecting teachers, facilitators, and friends when listening and participating in group gardening activities. Gardening activities also foster a sense of curiosity about how to plant plants, choose good seeds, and recognize plant needs. The body and soul are creative and independent, and they have experience in selecting good seeds, caring for plants, using gardening equipment, and making compost.

This gardening activity develops children's inquisitive character by remembering the types of tools and their functions (Wahyudi et al., 2023). Several character traits such as discipline, tolerance, respect for others, and curiosity are also formed through patience in queuing when taking turns to get to know and touch the tools used for gardening (Ningsih et al., 2021). Outing class with new activities in the tourist park makes learning fun (fun learning). This activity combines various character learning skills such as curiosity, tolerance, mutual respect, courage, discipline, independence, cooperation, and others. This is reinforced by Septatiningsih's statement that fun learning activities ultimately develop children's characters (Saptatiningsih & Permana, 2019).

The religious character of children is actualized through garden exploration activities, that all plants and life in the garden are creations of Allah SWT, which must be cared for by humans properly. Children's curiosity is honed through activities such as touching plants, picking crystal guava fruit, interacting with animals (goats, fish, peacocks, and several other animals), cleaning fish and processing (cooking) through fun cooking successfully developing children's independence and creativity. Communicative and friendly characters develop through fun learning activities, demonstrated by activities to understand the instructor's explanation and respond to the instructor's explanation with questions. Outing classes also teach children to communicate with people around them, friends, teachers, and facilitators to understand how to select seeds, use tools and garden. This activity fosters a democratic character. Education on selecting seeds, making compost, getting to know and caring for animals and plants, and processing them will give children creative characters who can directly use various methods and get inspiration for gardening, cooking, making compost, and raising valuable animals. Meanwhile, children's social care skills are honed through mutual respect and helping when filling plant polybags.

Some of the characteristics instilled through this activity are independence, creativity, communication, and responsibility accompanying the child's actions and creations when choosing plants according to the criteria conveyed by the instructor. In this session, the child's curious character is also honed through the activity of listening to the instructor's explanation as well as the child's understanding of the instructions given. This is relevant to the scientific learning approach in asking, observing, exploring and communicating (Setiawan, 2020).

Outing class by getting to know livestock children are invited to learn the characters of various animals in *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto*, namely fish, goats, multiple types of birds, and peacocks. The stages are as follows; feeding fish, holding goats, observing the behavior of ladybirds and peacocks. Getting to know livestock such as peacocks, which are rare and protected by the state, gives birth to responsibility, love for the homeland, a national spirit for conservation and protecting rare animals, social care, environmental care, and love of peace that nature that is loved and cherished will be very beneficial for humans.

Another important point related to peacocks is to provide children with an understanding that the art of Reyog Ponorogo is directly related to conservation, which is an action that is very relevant to the mission of the caliphate (Yusuf & Sadat, 2019). Outing class activities in *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* Ponorogo can foster various characteristics, namely religious character, discipline, honesty, tolerance, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, appreciation of achievement, communication, social care, environmental care, and responsibility. It almost meets all the character criteria Ningsih and other education experts suggested.

These findings support the research results of Ginting et al. (2020) that Outing Class can develop students' soft skills, including cooperation, communication, leadership, and various other characteristics, but Ginting still needs to explain what characters can be created. This research supports research Jaya & Wati (2024) that outing class activities can increase student creativity, but the results of broader research found that outing classes can develop 16 characters. This research strengthens Sunardiyah et al. (2023) about Aesthetic Exploration Based on Outing Class Models in Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta. This research and Sunardiyah's research found that outing class activities creates enjoyable learning for students. Outing classes can provide empirical experiences for students because they gain knowledge and experience from teachers, expert mentors, and fellow visitors, thus producing a helpful learning experience.

Experts suggest that outing class activities are learning activities carried out outside the classroom with the concept of fun learning. The boundaries outside the room or classroom, Dessi can be in open places, such as open yards or other tourist attractions (Dessi, 2020). interpreting outside school more broadly is not only limited to open spaces such as farms, plantations, playgrounds, and so on. Still, it can also be done indoors, such as in shoe factories, car repair shops, and even convenience stores (Muñoz-Garcia, 2020).

The primary purpose of the outing class activity is to equip students with abilities and skills by seeing and doing directly through the objects visited. Husamah explained that the purpose of the outing class is to equip students with skills and develop their abilities. (Aladağ et al., 2021). Dabbagh & Castaneda (2020) added the power of the effects of out-of-class learning, stating that out-of-class learning activities are a form of experience that can never be ignored and will be inherited continuously. The reason is that outing class activities allow children to have concrete experiences in a guided manner. The objectives were conveyed in sufficient detail by Ginting et al. (2020) that at least there are 4 (four) objectives of outing class as follows: 1. children can compare theoretical classroom learning with real learning in the field; 2. children can think creatively through learning outside the classroom; 3. refresh children's enthusiasm for learning or eliminate boredom through free and fun learning; and 4. gain recreational learning experiences through diverse and varied activities. Furthermore, outing class is

one of the learning activities outside the classroom that can equip children with skills and develop their abilities. This out-of-class context can be in an open yard or a tourist spot (Bentsen et al., 2022).

Edward called this outing class activity a challenging yet enjoyable place for students to learn. Because of its nature, outing classes can be used for various learning purposes. It is challenging because the outing class media involves learning characteristics: intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, verbal information, and behavioural and motor skills (Edwards-Jones et al., 2016).

Early childhood education is unique, on the one hand the child's mental and emotional condition is still innocent which allows it to be easily formed through the habituation of nature-based characters which are indeed part of their world. While on the other hand, children respond to learning in the language of play or through the world of play. This uniqueness requires unique learning assistance, which is undoubtedly different from learning for adults. Therefore, although learning is carried out outside of school or the classroom, it still requires mature and measurable steps. The steps suggested by Ginting et al. (2020), which are modified from the field trip strategy, are worthy of following, including planning, implementation, and follow-up. In the planning step, there are 5 (five) activities, including formulating objectives, determining objects according to objectives, determining time, compiling a learning plan, and planning learning equipment that must be prepared. Then in the implementation steps, there are 7 (seven) activities, namely, guiding children's learning activities according to objectives, emphasizing learning focus, preparing solutions to possible problems, providing assistance and supervision during learning, providing freedom to explore to gain knowledge independently, disseminating the results obtained by children, facilitating presentations of learning outcomes. Furthermore, follow-up steps include reporting results individually and in groups, assessing children's performance at the location, and writing report results.

Learning outside the classroom is more popular with children than in school. This is because children naturally prefer to do free activities, not bound by empirical or meaningful spatial boundaries. In more detail, Taqwan (2019) noted 6 (six) advantages of learning outside the classroom, namely; learning is more interesting so that learning motivation is higher; learning is more meaningful because children are faced with actual (natural) conditions; children gain more accurate knowledge because they get richer materials naturally; learning activities are more comprehensive and more active because they are carried out in various ways such as observing, asking questions, and interviewing, proving, demonstrating, testing facts, making environmental engineering creations; learning sources are richer because they are faced with diverse environments, such as social environments, natural environments, artificial environments and so on; making children familiar with nature to form individuals who love nature or the environment (Taqwan, 2019).

However, it is also necessary to be aware of several shortcomings or weaknesses of learning that are carried out outside the classroom to avoid them as early as possible. There are at least 6 (six) shortcomings of learning outside the school, as written by Waite (2011), namely, children can experience concentration disorders, difficulty in conditioning students, the possibility of a lot of time being wasted on management activities, reinforcement of concepts can be disrupted by other children or groups who are also doing the same activities, need more instructor guidance, false interests arise.

Outing class is one of the learning stimulations that is quite effective for children, especially in instilling character from an early age. In instilling character, stimulation is needed that takes place continuously and consistently. In this context, various stimulations can be given to children accompanying outing class activities, including through early childhood education institutions, parenting patterns at home, and education in the community environment.

IV. CONCLUSION

The early childhood character education model through outing classes at *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* Ponorogo includes gardening, fun learning, animal interaction, and cooking. Various outing class activities at Eduwisata can improve multiple positive characteristics of early childhood. The outing class activity packaged through a unique character education model has succeeded in instilling several complete early childhood characters, including religious aspects, naturalist intelligence aspects, language aspects, motor aspects, and social-emotional aspects of children. When consulted with the character indicators recorded by character education experts, these aspects are manifested in the following character behaviours: religious, disciplined, honest, tolerant, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curious, appreciating achievement, communicative, caring for society, caring for the environment, and responsible. This means that it meets all the character criteria suggested by education experts. Thus, the character education model by *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* is worthy of being used as a reference for developing character education in terms of literacy and best practices, especially for early childhood. The results of this study will likely provide an understanding to the broader community that the character education model through outing classes that are packaged uniquely is effective in instilling various noble characters in early childhood. Specifically, this study will make it very possible to conduct further development research, especially towards applied research to be able to contribute to the development of *Eduwisata Ndalem Kerto* from various aspects, especially in the aspect of character education based on modern learning and technology with a natural outdoor package.

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