

## INSTILLING MORAL VALUES THROUGH THE SONG 'PLEASE AND THANK YOU' IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the moral values embedded in the song "Please and Thank You," commonly used in early childhood education. Recognizing that early childhood education plays a significant role shaping children's character and moral development, this study investigates the effectiveness of simple songs in conveying moral messages. The song "Please and Thank You" emphasizes the importance of politeness, manners, and social respect, using the magic words "please" and "thank you" as central elements of moral instruction. Using a qualitative descriptive approach based on content analysis, this study analyses the song's lyrics through the lens of Kohlberg's moral development theory, particularly focusing on the preconventional stage of moral reasoning in children. Since, it comes to songs designed for children, especially those in the preconventional stage, the lyrics often reinforce basic moral lessons such as distinguishing between good and bad behaviors, and the consequences of those behaviors. Findings suggest that the song not only enhances cognitive skills but also plays a crucial role in instilling values such as respect, kindness, and consideration for others. The results highlight the significant potential of songs as a medium for moral education, contributing to the development of positive moral. This study underscores the importance of incorporating moral value driven content in early childhood song education to foster a supportive environment for moral and social growth for children in their early age.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world of children is filled with imagination and represents a stage in the development of their attitudes or character for the future. The process of character building can be achieved by instilling moral values through messages conveyed by parents via various literary forms, such as songs, poems, or fairy tales (Jurnal et al., 2021). Early childhood education ages cover birth through age eight. This education stage is fundamental to the development of a child. It can significantly shape the later years of an individual's life. Since birth, children are very easily attracted to a song. By hearing a song, a baby will fall asleep with deep sleep and when they started to talk with only listen over and over again, they can remember and can sing back to lyrics of the song especially is the lyrics you hear are simple and fun for them. This is where the role of parents to introduce children's song lyrics that contain a moral message in it (Apriliane et al., 2024).



Songs can be considered a form of language as they convey meaning through lyrics." The song sings the lyrics which are meaningful with the expectation that listeners can enjoy and receive the feeling and meaning of the lyrics. The text in the lyrics of a song that has been sung are a language of meaning. The meaning of the lyrics can be various such as message, story, advise, or value. The something meaning can be delivered like moral and educational values. Moral value is all things or aspects that regulate human life to always doing well in his life that has been arranged in religion or culture (Mulia et al., 2022).

According to Kohlberg, we learn our moral values through thinking and reasoning, and that moral development happens in stages. He gave moral values to children, teens, and adults. Each stage represents a unique way of thinking about morality, from self-interest to a more profound grasp of justice and ethical values (Azizah, 2024). Kohlberg divided into six stages, which are grouped into three levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional (Wahidah & Maemonah, 2020). Pre-conventional stage, children's behaviour is influenced by the idea that punishment results from their actions and the authority of others. This phase is also known as the punishment and obedience orientation. For example: "Syafi doesn't want to lie because if he does, his father will punish him. This stage also, children learn to evaluate things based on their usefulness, enjoyment, or appearance. They also begin to understand the desires and needs of others. This stage is referred to as the relativist-instrumental orientation. For example: "If you are friendly to everyone, they will likely be friendly to you in return."

The conventional stage, the development process moves toward moral and social growth. The child begins to understand and focus on groups, as well as assess the personality of individuals within a community. This phase is also known as group adjustment or orientation. While the post-conventional stage, the focus is on rights and responsibilities, fostering a process of democratization. During this phase, a sense of patriotism and respect for a government based on law is developed. This stage is known as the legalistic social-contractual orientation. For example: "Adlin follows legal policies carefully because society can function smoothly when people respect and adjust to each other

Each stage of development shows moral traits that children can learn. There are no clear boundaries, and it mostly depends on the children's individual norms. Kohlberg pointed out that conversations between children and parents about values and rules are very important in shaping discipline, punishment, and rewards from parents. He also said that moral thinking is influenced by cognitive growth, education, and learning about social and moral values (Sunaryo & Fauziati, 2023). This study is significant since it explores the substantial role of early childhood education in shaping children's moral development, which is crucial for their future behaviour and character. One of media for shaping the moral values and character in early childhood is trough song. As song is fun media for children to acquire and to learn the surrounding environment. In addition, through songs, children can learn and discover various things. Children's songs are not just a source of entertainment but also a way to convey important life lessons and positive messages (Jurnal et al., 2021).



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in shaping children's future. As Sholikhah highlighted, early childhood requires comprehensive efforts to support development in areas such as parenting, health, education, and protection. One way to foster potential development is through structured educational programs, such as PAUD programs in Indonesia or ECCE programs abroad. According to UNESCO, Early Childhood Care and Education refers to the "holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing." These early experiences significantly influence young learners' minds, attitudes, and behaviours. (Paramitasari & Rompas, 2021).

Morality exists within each individual, but it is also reflected in the rules of existence. The idea is that humans will develop and adhere to moral qualities in order to seek God's approval and treat others with kindness and respect. Moral values are not only learned through formal discussions or books but can also be conveyed through songs that carry moral messages. As humans, we must possess morality; without it, we risk being rejected and disrespected by others (Mulia et al., 2024.)

In line with my study, several previous studies that utilize the same scope were reviewed to find the novelty of this study. Kurniawan (2021) with his study entitled Moral Values in the English Children's Song Lyrics. He found that the moral value of self-relationship, conveyed through the lyrics of English children's songs, teaches ways to build self-confidence, joy, and sincerity in facing life's experiences. The moral lessons derived from human relationships with others in these songs that focus on how to treat others with kindness, respect, and love. He used descriptive analysis during his research. His study also emphasized that children's literature that highlights moral values should be more widely produced to serve as a valuable medium for teaching and fostering better morals and character in children. Furthermore, it is important for parents to actively support their children's development by instilling moral values from an early age (Jurnal et al., 2021). This research is similar to the study I intend to carry out that song may convey the lesson about moral values since early childhood stage. Apart from that, there is also fundamental difference, namely my study is more focus on moral values based on Kohlberg's perspective.

The study conducted by Ardiantari (2023) entitled Discourse Analysis on Jiwa yang Bersedih Song Lyrics. She used discourse analyses method to analysed the lyrics of the song. Her result study was the song reveals a well-structured composition with a conventional format comprising verses, choruses, an interlude, and an outro. Repetition of specific phrases, especially in the verses and choruses, underlines the empathetic message, emphasizing understanding and support for individuals grappling with sorrow (Putri et al., 2023). She even used linguistics element to analysed her study. Ardiantari's study is analysed the lyrics song is parallel with study which analyses the lyrics of a song, nevertheless my study used moral values for early childhood education based on Kohlberg's perspective.

Furthermore, a study was done by Wahidah (2020) entitled Moral Thought of Early Childhood in Perspective Lawrence Kohlberg. She discovered that a good strategy must be implemented to determine moral behavior should be based on an understanding of the phases of moral development. For moral development in early childhood to occur, moral education is essential. She implemented library research method to complete her study. Then, she pointed out



from her study that early childhood undergoes a phase of moral development during the first stage (pre-conventional phase). In this period, a child's moral development is shaped by the behaviour of the adults around them, who serve as role models (Wahidah & Maemonah, 2020). The similarity with my study is the using of theory from Kohlberg in analysing the moral values of early childhood. The difference is that my study used a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis, whereas Wahidah used a library research method.

By applying these theoretical frameworks and drawing from those previous researches, this study seeks to offer a thorough understanding of the topic moral values based on Kohlberg's perspective for early childhood education through lyrics song which contain moral messages. Since, early childhood education plays a crucial role in helping children understand and navigate social life. Children's growth, learning, and comprehension are deeply influenced by their surrounding environment and social interactions. Parents' lifestyles and parenting methods significantly shape their children's foundational attitudes. According to Irma, et al (2019), the family serves as the first educational foundation for children. Early childhood education, including programs like kindergarten, continues this educational development. Its primary goal is to support the holistic development of a child's personality. In addition to teaching and learning, it encompasses basic care, ensuring children are prepared and mature enough for a smooth transition to formal schooling. Moreover, education emphasizes the integration of theory into practical application (Härkönen, 2002.)

Morals are the core values that reside within a person and have a positive impact on the development of traits, style, spirit, a constructive mindset, and life motivation. Positive moral values play a crucial role in shaping society and fostering the growth of civilization. Many moral teachings can be drawn from literary works such as novels, short stories, plays, and films (Sari & Maisarah, 2024). There are various moral values, including honesty, tolerance, fairness, respect, discipline, kindness, responsibility, independence, hard work, and curiosity (Sari & Maisarah, 2024).

Morals encompass basic actions, manners, personality, and values that shape an individual's character, enabling them to distinguish right from wrong. These traits are cultivated within a community, fostering respect and understanding among peers. Children's moral development is heavily influenced by their environment, particularly the role of parents. During the formative "Golden Age," children absorb values and behaviours that serve as essential learning foundations. Parents play a crucial role in shaping their child's morals, as each developmental stage introduces unique moral characteristics. According to Kohlberg, open dialogue between children and parents about values and norms significantly impacts moral development. Family dynamics, including discipline, rewards, and punishment, contribute to this process. Kohlberg further emphasized that moral reasoning is shaped by cognitive growth, education, and exposure to social and moral knowledge. Education, in particular, plays a critical role by offering diverse opportunities and challenges that stimulate cognitive and moral development (Wahidah & Maemonah, 2020).

Moral development is the process of shaping behaviour based on an internalized system of norms. Key factors influencing adherence to these norms include cognitive understanding—such as awareness of the norms and the consequences of violating them—and emotional responses to people's behaviour (Molchanov, 2013). Children's moral growth requires guidance and nurturing not only from parents and teachers but also from a well-rounded environment. Without such



comprehensive direction, moral development may remain incomplete. Parental and teacher contributions typically encompass aspects of faith, worship, morality, and social engagement. Another perspective defines morality as an inherent trait or disposition that resides within the soul, prompting spontaneous actions without deliberate thought or reflection. (Khulusinniyah, 2023).

According to Kohlberg, children in the early stages of middle childhood typically exhibit "Preconventional" moral reasoning. At this stage, they internalize basic cultural rules about right and wrong, such as understanding that stealing is immoral and that one must earn or be given things rather than taking them. However, their adherence to these rules is largely self-centred, motivated by a desire to avoid punishment and gain praise. Children begin to recognize their ability to make choices and understand the consequences of their actions. They learn that morally good behaviour earns approval and positive feedback from peers and adults, while bad behaviour results in negative consequences and disapproval. Consequently, their actions are driven by a hedonistic approach, aiming to maximize personal rewards and minimize discomfort (Wahidah & Maemonah, 2020).

Moral reasoning at each stage presupposes a certain level of cognitive development, Kohlberg argued that advances in children's cognitive development did not ensure development of moral reasoning. Instead, moral reasoning also reflects children's experience in dealing with moral questions and moral conflict (Santrock, 2023). Children learn if they are given meaningful tasks where they can see a purpose in the activities such as sing a song. Children usually notice from their teacher, parents or what they see from their body language, the tone of voice, facial expression (Eaude, 2020). Moral values are both positive and negative qualities socially constructed that we express and experience in our own and others' behaviour, acts and attitudes. Morality concerns the life we live and norms for how to treat others (Johansson et al., 2011). Moral values are given in the early age. Since Childhood is a crucial period for human socialization. One key aspect of this socialization is the learning of moral norms and the development of morals during this stage (Molchanov, 2013)

The rapid development of the digital world and technology significantly influences educational mindsets, particularly for early childhood. In the era of digital transformation, parents and teachers must carefully assess and adapt their roles to determine suitable educational approaches. Creating a supportive environment is equally crucial in shaping children's development. Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights the importance of the environment in this process. According to Piaget, children are born with sensorimotor schemes that form the basis for their initial interactions with their surroundings. This underscores the significant impact of environmental factors on a child's growth (Paramitasari & Rompas, 2021).

Moreover, Champbell argued that many of the song's children sing particularly those perpetuated by adults in their interactions with children fit these criteria, many more do not. In fact, children's musical expressions do not always fit the adult conception of some universal progression of forms from simple to complex, either (Champbell, 2010). Childhood is a phase rich in imagination and serves as a critical period for shaping future attitudes and character. Character-building can be achieved by instilling moral values through creative mediums such as songs, poems, and fairy tales, delivered by parents as part of their guidance (Kurniawan et al., 2021).

Song as a universal form of communication, possesses a remarkable ability to stir emotions, deliver messages, and cross-cultural divides. It can also express complex feelings, emotions, and





societal reflections (Putri et al., 2023). Song is a piece of music sung or composed for singing (Naralita & Amin Azis, 2020.) Song also considered has its impact of music on cognitive development is profound. When children engage in musical activities—be it singing, dancing, or playing an instrument, they are not just having fun; they are undergoing a rigorous workout for their brains. This melodic exercise enhances memory, attention span, and even problem-solving skills. Music for children is a powerful instrument of education and growth. It enriches their minds, introduces them to the vast world of cultures, and shapes their character. By integrating music into children's lives, we offer them a gift that keeps on giving—inspiring them to learn, embrace diversity, and live with kindness (Jukeboxy blog., n.d).

Kurniawan explained that children's songs are joyful tunes that reflect noble values. These songs, typically sung by children, often feature simple themes that align with the activity's children engage in. They commonly express love for others, God, family members, the beauty of nature, and the greatness of God, using simple language that resonates with young minds. Children's songs serve as a fun medium for children to explore and understand their environment. Through music, children can learn and discover various concepts. These songs are not just for entertainment; they also convey meaningful messages and promote positive life lessons, particularly regarding character values. (Kurniawan et al., 2021).

Listening to children's songs is one way for parents to instil moral values in the development process of a child. Listening to a simple song over and over is something that children really like. Song lyrics, especially those found in children's songs, have great benefits for the development of children's character. According to Jari (2006, pp. 38-39) asserts that children's songs have several benefits as follows:

- a. as a means of relaxation by neutralizing heart rate and brain waves,
- b. growing interest and strengthening learning attractiveness,
- c. creating more humanistic and fun learning process,
- d. as a bridge that builds in remembering the learning material,
- e. retention and contact of emotions and aesthetic feelings,
- f. the process of internalizing the values contained in the subject matter, and
- g. encourage students' learning motivation.

Thus, it is clear that the song lyrics contained in children's songs can be used as a medium to instil character at an early age (Kurniawan et al., 2021).

Lyrics are the words that make up a song, written specifically to be sung and accompanied by music. When songs are performed with accompaniment, they can be regarded as artistic works involving musical instruments. According to Moore, songs are "short musical works set to a literary text," with both the music and lyrics carrying equal significance. Song lyrics serve not only to entertain but also as a medium for conveying messages and expressing personal emotions (Mulia et al., n.d.). Each lyric is carefully written with a message intended for both the listener and the reader. The purpose of this message is to leave an impression after they have listened to or read the lyrics (Sholihah et al., 2018). Lyrics are a song's spoken words. Verse sequences, which are the song's longer verses that explain the story, and refrains, which are brief phrases repeated at the end of each verse, can both be included in the lyrics (Fauzi et al., 2023)



Further, lyrics are the words of a song, designed to be sung and accompanied by music. When performed with music, songs can be regarded as artistic expressions through musical instruments. According to Moore (2012), songs are "short musical works set to a literary text," with both the music and lyrics given equal importance. Song lyrics not only serve to entertain, but they can also act as a medium for conveying messages and personal emotions (Mulia et al., n.d.). The lyrics, especially, act as a poetic representation of the artist's message, connecting with listeners on multiple levels. Music serves as a powerful platform for artists to share deep emotions and stories, often offering valuable perspectives on the human experience. There are some reasons for parent or teacher should take songs to a teaching context. It has to do with social context, in this study namely moral values (Hadian, 2015.)

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative analysis method., since it is the most suitable research method applied in research with data in the form of collections of words such as quotations in books, novels, poems, and others (Sari Lubis & Endang Woro Kasih, 2025). In addition, this study implemented qualitative descriptive approach to analyse the moral values found in the song "Please and Thank You," with analyse its content from the lyrics. A lyric while the objective is to interpret the meaning in qualitative research the term variable is not used, and instead the inquirer seeks to gather information on single concept (Sholihah et al., 2018).

The data was obtained from the internet by selecting a song lyric that contains moral values relevant to early childhood education. A lyrics song used because according to Kemp and Dayton, it has the ability to adapt the material, a more interactive process, clarity, increased interest, greater time efficiency, improved learning outcomes, and the flexibility to learn anytime and anywhere (Defika et al., 2020). In this study, the researcher collected the data through the following steps. First, one song lyric was selected from the internet. Second, the lyric was read and its content was being analysed to identify the moral values relevant to early childhood education based on Kohlberg's perspective. Kohlberg's theory offers an important framework for understanding moral development; however, its use in education requires thoughtful modifications to suit the social and cultural contexts of children (Azizah, 2024).

#### **Please and Thank You Lyrics**

There are lots of things  
We can do to be nice  
Sometimes they're hard to remember  
But there are two little things  
You should never forget  
From January through December

He's talking 'bout please and thank you  
They're called the magic words  
If you want nice things to happen  
They're the words that should be heard  
Remember please and thank you



'Cause they're the magic words

Use 'em in the morning, at noon, and night  
'Cause it's a great way to be polite!  
Please and thank you  
They're the magic words

We're talking 'bout please and thank you  
They're called the magic words  
If you want nice things to happen  
They're the words that should be heard!

Remember please and thank you  
'Cause they're the magic words  
Use 'em in the morning, at noon, and night  
'Cause it's a great way to be polite!

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the lyrics of the song "Please and Thank You" reveals several important moral values suitable for early childhood education. The song's simple, repetitive nature makes it easy for young children to understand and internalize these values. Below are the key moral values identified in the song, alongside their relevance to early childhood development.

##### **Politeness and Respect**

The primary moral value conveyed in the song is politeness, specifically through the use of "please" and "thank you." These words are described as "magic words" that help create positive interactions and social harmony. This aligns with Kohlberg's concept of **pre-conventional morality**, where children learn to associate certain behaviours (like saying "please" and "thank you") with positive outcomes, such as receiving good treatment from others.

*Use 'em in the morning, at noon, and night  
'Cause it's a great way to be polite!  
Please and thank you*

These lyrics are "magic words" reinforces the idea that politeness is not just a habit but a necessary part of social interaction. It encourages children to use these words "morning, noon, and night," thus helping them to integrate this value into their daily routines.

##### **Gratitude and Acknowledgment**

Another significant moral value highlighted in the song is gratitude. The act of saying "thank you" is closely tied to the expression of appreciation for others' actions, reinforcing the concept of **social moral values**. Expressing gratitude is essential for building and maintaining positive relationships, as it helps children recognize the efforts of others and acknowledge their contributions.





*If you want nice things to happen  
They're the words that should be heard  
Remember please and thank you*

Early exposure to the concept of gratitude encourages children to value the actions of those around them and fosters an understanding that kindness is a reciprocal process. By embedding these values into a child's daily interactions, the song helps shape their moral understanding of social exchanges. Further culture and character are focused on equipping children to become more responsible members of society (Ali et al., 2024)

### **Consistency and Habit Formation**

The song emphasizes the importance of consistency by encouraging the use of "please" and "thank you" throughout the day—"morning, noon, and night." This repetition aligns with **moral development theory**, which suggests that consistent practice of certain behaviours is crucial for their internalization. As children repeat these phrases, they develop a sense of routine and understand that politeness is a behaviour that should be maintained at all times, not just when it is convenient. The repetitive nature of the song also helps reinforce the importance of forming positive habits at a young age, a foundational concept in early childhood moral development.

Repetition in a fun, musical context makes the learning process engaging for children, thus increasing the likelihood that these behaviours will become second nature (Khulusinniyah, 2022). The lyrics of this song repeat the words "please" and "thank you" approximately five times within a single verse (line 7, line 11, line 15, line 17, and line 21). This emphasized that early children able to remembered these magic words for instilling moral values for early childhood education.

### **Social Harmony and Cooperation**

The song also subtly encourages cooperation and social harmony by teaching children how their words and actions impact others. By using "please" and "thank you," children learn to engage with others in a manner that promotes mutual respect and understanding. This moral value aligns with **individual moral values** and **social moral values**, as children recognize that their actions influence their relationships with others in both positive and negative ways.

*We're talking 'bout please and thank you  
They're called the magic words  
If you want nice things to happen  
They're the words that should be heard!*

The song's portrayal of "please" and "thank you" as essential for "nice things to happen" further reinforces the idea that positive social interactions require effort and consideration. It teaches children that good behaviour not only benefits them but also contributes to a harmonious environment for everyone involved.



### **Simplicity and Age-Appropriate Messaging**

The simplicity of the song's language is another important factor that makes it an effective tool for moral education in early childhood. Songs can be diffused into different stages of lessons as warm-ups or fillers to keep the students interested in the lesson (Kumar et al., 2022).

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The song "Please and Thank You" serves as an effective tool for instilling key moral values in early childhood education including politeness, gratitude, consistency, and social harmony. The lyrics has magic word which repeated approximately four times in one verse. By this simply lyrics and repetition of magic words from the song "Please and Thank You" expected able to convey the moral value namely always say "please" when asking for something and say "thank you" after get something. Its accordance with the theory of Kohlberg's pre-conventional stage, where children begin to learn politeness and respect stat from the early age. Since in the early children begin understand about right and wrong through the consequences of their actions.

By incorporating these lessons into early childhood education, this song helps set the foundation for positive social interactions and moral reasoning that will continue to develop throughout a child's life. The role of songs in early childhood education is thus multifaceted—not only do they entertain and engage, but they also serve as an essential medium for the moral and social development of children, as demonstrated through the analysis of this simple yet profound children's song. In summary, a good and simply lyric song for children has a role in instilling the moral values for their early childhood education.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Desty Survia is an English lecturer for Islamic Education for Early Childhood Program Study at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah INSIDA Jakarta. I am passionate about researching literature, especially books, novels, films, and songs, while keeping a focus on early childhood education. I have several of my writings, especially those which discussing character education for children, have already published in national journals indexing on Garuda, Google Scholar, and Sinta.

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