



Moral Values in The Little Prince as Character Education in Vocational High SchoolRahma Dian Pradikta¹, Bambang Yudi Cahyono²^{1,2} Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explores the moral values in Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery in correlation to character education in Vocational High School. It is connecting with the learning outcomes of Indonesian subjects in Phase E of the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*). This research is a descriptive qualitative study, with data collection using documentation techniques. The data was in from the story quotes that show the moral values, taken from the data source: the novella. Data analysis using an interactive approach. The results of the study are: (1) the positive moral value and (2) the moral values can be utilized in character education and are in line with the achievements of Indonesian language learning in Phase E of the Curriculum

Keywords: Character education; Indonesian learning outcome; Moral value; The little prince

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INTRODUCTION

Literature is an artwork that gives the readers values that can be learned life and it is entertaining in nature. Literature belongs to an art because of its artistic perspectives, bringing up the values based on the artists' ideas and thoughts (Junaid, 2020). Reading literature exposes students to complex language structures and diverse vocabulary, which are essential for developing higher levels of literacy and cognitive flexibility (Krashen, 2013). Literature forms can be a novel, novella, poem, short story, drama, and others.

One of the types of literary work is a novella (or a small version of a novel), which is produced in a written form that contains stories, events, or the author's imagination (Waruwu et al., 2023). In novella, the readers can take meanings that need to be applied in everyday life. Morality is frequently demonstrated by the characters' experiences in their roles, referring to the goodness or badness of an attitude and deeds as a message sent by the author to his readers. Moral values must be taught to students in the educational system to form the next generation of citizens who are religious and have a sense of humanity (Swandari & Markhamah, 2023).

A special, unique characteristic of a literary work is that it has values that are important for balancing one's education because the values can make a person fully educated. With values, a person not only has intellectual capacity but also has noble character and he or she is capable of becoming a good citizen (Swandari & Markhamah, 2023). Moral value, character value, and character education is needed pretty much to make the generation better. Character education is an effort to actively develop students'

potential through of positive environment and learning process that is conscious, structured, and well planned (Swandari & Markhamah, 2023).

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* is one of the world's most beloved literature, a classic that has been translated in more than two hundred times and has inspired millions of readers across generations. In addition to its engaging storyline, *The Little Prince* contains of moral values, character education that can send a character and morals of young readers. The beauty and depth of the moral messages in *The Little Prince* lie in the way the novel portrays the world through the eyes of a child, the Little Prince, who embarks on a journey across different planets to seek an understanding of life and humanity. Each planet he visits presents unique characters and teaches lessons about human nature, such as selfishness, power, and pride. Through interactions with other characters, the Little Prince learns about the deep of friendship, responsibility, and love. These messages have the potential to greatly impact readers' perspectives by inspiring them to re-evaluate their priorities and outlook on life.

Various studies on moral values analysis in novels have been undertaken by Annuri (2024) Waruwu (2023), Swandari and Markhamah (2023). Unlike the previous studies, which emphasized the moral values, the present research attempts to relate moral values and education. More particularly, this study focused on utilizing the moral values contained in the novella for character education that is adapted to the learning outcomes of Phase E of the Independence Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) at Vocational High School. Thus, this study uses moral values as the main research object for character building in education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the moral values found in *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and their relevance to character education in vocational high schools. The research was conducted at SMK Pemuda Papar, Kediri, East Java, involving tenth-grade students as research collaborators in the data collection process. Data were collected through documentation techniques by identifying and classifying quotations containing moral values in the novella. The researcher acted as the main instrument, supported by documentation sheets and data classification tables. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's Interactive Model, including data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach to examine the moral values contained in *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and their relevance to character education in vocational high schools. Qualitative research is the production of descriptive data in the form of words, either written or spoken (Moleong, 2014). A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this research focused on interpreting meanings, values, and messages embedded in a literary text rather than measuring variables numerically. Descriptive qualitative research enables the researcher to present data in the form of words, descriptions, and interpretations that accurately reflect the phenomena being studied (Semi, 2007). In literary studies, this approach is widely used to explore themes, moral messages, and character values conveyed through narratives.

The source of the data is *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (2024). *The Little Prince* is a novella written and illustrated by the French aristocrat, writer, and military pilot named Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. It was first published in April 1943. The place of research is SMK Pemuda Papar. One of the Vocational High Schools in Kediri, East Java. The school has four majors of expertise, including Motorcycle Engineering, Vehicle Engineering, Computer and Network Engineering, and Office Management and Business Services.

Research Target/Subject

It is important to clarify that the students who participated in this study were research collaborators in the data collection process, not research subjects. Ten-grade students from SMK Pemuda Papar in Kediri

Regency, East Java, constituted the implementation context for this educational research. These students played an active role in the collaborative data collection process: they read the novella alongside the researcher, identified text segments containing character values, sorted relevant passages, and submitted their findings for analysis. Their contributions as research collaborators served to validate the identification of character values through multiple perspectives and to ensure the relevance of selected passages to actual student learning experiences.

Vocational high schools in Indonesia face the significant challenge of preparing students for professional and personal success while simultaneously fostering strong ethical character. According to Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2017), educational institutions should produce graduates who possess professional competence, demonstrate personal responsibility, and exhibit resilience in facing workplace and life challenges. Integrating character education with language arts instruction provides a pedagogical pathway to connect vocational technical training with comprehensive moral development, ensuring that students acquire both marketable, employable skills and enduring ethical values necessary for responsible citizenship.

Research Procedure

The data come from the novella "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (2024). The study used a qualitative descriptive method. And the procedure followed these steps: (1) Determining the data: the author selected the novella *The Little Prince* as the main data source. (2) Collecting the data: read the novella together with the student and used a documentation technique to gather sentences containing moral values in the novel. (3) Sorting and identifying data: The students sorted relevant text segments and identified the moral value, after that send to the author. (4) The author applied the interactive model to analyse the findings, including data reduction, data presentation, make conclusions.

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary research instrument. In this study, the researcher played a central role in planning the research, collecting data, interpreting textual evidence, and drawing conclusions related to moral values in *The Little Prince*. The researcher's competence in literary analysis and understanding of character education concepts was essential to ensure accurate identification and interpretation of moral values embedded in the text.

To support the role of the researcher, several supporting instruments were employed. First, documentation sheets were used as a structured tool to record quotations, page numbers, contexts, and preliminary interpretations of moral values found in the novella. These documentation sheets helped maintain consistency during data collection and prevented data loss. Second, data classification tables were designed to categorize the identified quotations into specific moral value themes, such as helpfulness, humility, responsibility, and love. This categorization facilitated systematic analysis and comparison across data.

In this research, the researchers used reference checklists based on character education values and learning outcomes of Phase E in the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). These checklists ensured that the identified moral values were relevant to educational objectives and aligned with character education goals in vocational high schools. Through the use of these instruments, the data collection and analysis processes became more organized, transparent, and academically reliable.

Data analysis technique

Data analysis in this study was systematically conducted using Miles and Huberman's Interactive Model of qualitative data analysis. This analytical framework was selected because it provides a systematic, cyclical, and iterative methodology specifically designed for analyzing qualitative textual data, making it particularly well-suited for literary studies focused on extracting meanings and identifying values

embedded within narrative texts. The complete analysis process involved four interconnected sequential stages: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion drawing and verification.

Stage 1: Data Collection. During this initial stage, textual data were systematically gathered from the novella *The Little Prince*. The researcher and student collaborators carefully read the complete text multiple times to achieve comprehensive understanding of the narrative arc, character development, thematic patterns, and contextual meaning. During this repeated reading process, specific sentences, dialogues, narrative passages, and descriptive segments containing explicit or implicit moral values were systematically identified and documented. Each quotation was precisely recorded with its corresponding page number and surrounding narrative context to ensure accuracy, enable future verification, and maintain complete traceability of all analytical decisions.

Stage 2: Data Reduction. Data reduction involved careful selection, focused concentration, and systematic simplification of the collected textual data. Not all quotations identified during the initial data collection phase were retained for the final analytical stage. The research team systematically filtered the comprehensive dataset, retaining exclusively those passages that were unambiguously relevant to identified moral values and meaningful to character education contexts. Passages deemed tangential, repetitive, or insufficiently relevant to the research focus were excluded from further analysis. During this data reduction process, retained quotations were assigned systematic codes reflecting moral value categories: helpfulness, humility, reflective thinking, obedience, friendship, love, sincerity, and responsibility.

Stage 3: Data Display. During this stage, systematically reduced data were organized into transparent, accessible, and organized presentation formats. The categorized quotations were systematically arranged in comprehensive tables that explicitly displayed the specific moral value type, supporting textual evidence, moral value definitions, and synthesized interpretations for each entry. This visual and organizational approach enabled researchers to systematically compare patterns across different moral values, observe the frequency and consistency with which particular values were represented throughout the novella, and identify relationships between moral values and narrative elements. Data display also facilitated deeper interpretive analysis and supported complete transparency in the analytical methodology.

Stage 4: Conclusion Drawing and Verification. In the final analytical stage, researchers interpreted the systematically displayed data to formulate meaningful conclusions regarding the moral values embedded in *The Little Prince* and their direct relevance to character education practice in vocational high school contexts. The research team explicitly examined relationships between identified moral values and the specific learning outcomes articulated in Phase E of the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*). To ensure analytical accuracy and validity, conclusions underwent continuous systematic review through multiple verification procedures: (a) re-checking the original novella text to confirm accurate quotation and contextual understanding, (b) verifying consistency between extracted textual evidence, researcher interpretations, and established theoretical frameworks of character education, and (c) cross-referencing identified moral values with established character education definitions and Phase E learning outcome specifications. Through this iterative, multi-stage analytical process, the data analysis ensured that findings were grounded in direct textual evidence and maintained strict alignment with the study's research objectives. The rigorous application of Miles and Huberman's Interactive Model enhanced both the credibility and analytical rigor of the qualitative research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Little Prince is a literary adaptation of its original French title, *Le Petit Prince*. *The Little Prince* is a famous novella with the most translations in the world. Even though, it is packaged like a children's fairy tale book, the novella not only for child but also teenager, adult because it contains many moral values that exist in the midst of human life. PC tells stories from his perspective as a child, with his naivety and

innocence, which send or touch on some of the most basic human values and experiences. To make the identification of the moral values clearer and more systematic, the findings are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Identification of Moral Value in The Little Prince (2024)

No.	Moral Value	Quotation	Interpretation
1.	Helpfulness	“Draw me a sheep...”	Shows willingness to help the Little Prince sincerely. This value teaches students empathy and social care.
2.	Humble	“Seeds are invisible.”	The quotation reflects modesty and awareness that valuable things are often unseen.
3.	Reflective Thinking	“I ought to have judged by deeds and not by words.”	The Little Prince reflects on his past mistakes and learns from experience.
4.	Obedience	“Orders are orders.”	The lamplighter demonstrates discipline and obedience toward responsibility.
5.	Friendship	“Yours is unique in all the world.”	Friendship is build world connection.
6.	Love	“Because she is my rose”	Love is reflected through care, sacrifice, and responsibility.
7.	Sincerity	“What is essential is invisible to the eye.”	Sincerity teaches genuine understanding beyond physical appearance.
8.	Responsibility	“You become responsible forever for what you have tamed.”	Responsibility is shown through commitment and accountability toward others.

Implementation of Moral Values in Character Education in Vocational High School

The novella contains multiple moral values that are explicitly positive and psychologically constructive. These identified moral values produce beneficial impacts for vocational high school students in their personal development and ethical formation. The identified moral values include helpfulness, humility, reflective thinking, obedience, friendship, love, sincerity, and responsibility.

To provide a clearer presentation regarding the implementation of moral values in character education, the alignment between the identified moral values and educational practices in vocational high school is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Identification of Moral Value in The Little Prince (2024)

No.	Moral Value	Character Education Aspect	Implementation in Vocational High School
1.	Helpfulness	Empathy and cooperation	Students help their friend in small group discussion
2.	Humble	Respect and self-awareness	Students appreciate other idea during discussion
3.	Reflective Thinking	Critical self-evaluation	Students write a reflection after reads the literary text.
4.	Obedience	Discipline	Students follow classroom agreements and school regulations.
5.	Friendship	Social harmony and teamwork	Students develop collaboration in a group discussion
6.	Love	Caring attitude	Students show kindness and emotional sensitivity toward others.
7.	Sincerity	Honesty	Students express opinions honestly in oral and written communication.
8.	Responsibility	Accountability and commitment	Students complete assignments responsibly and independently.

The implementation of these moral values in vocational high school learning activities may support students' ethical development and social awareness. Through literary learning, students are encouraged to internalize positive values and apply them in both academic and social contexts. Furthermore, the identified moral values also demonstrate relevance to the learning outcomes of Phase E in the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). The alignment between moral values and Phase E learning outcomes is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Alignment Between Moral Values and Phase E Learning Outcomes

Moral Value	Related Phase E Learning Outcome
Helpfulness	Students participate actively in collaborative communication activities.
Humble	Students critically analyze literary characters and values.

Moral Value	Related Phase E Learning Outcome
Reflective Thinking	Students develop their critical thinking skill
Obedience	Students understand social norms and ethical behavior.
Friendship	Students build communication and interpersonal skills.
Love	Students strengthen character formation through literary learning.
Sincerity	Students express ideas authentically in oral and written communication.
Responsibility	Students demonstrate accountability in learning activities.

In Phase E of the independent curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), the specific learning outcomes for Indonesian language arts include: Students demonstrate ability to comprehend, interpret, and analyze expository information presented across diverse topics and literary works. Students actively engage in structured discussions, deliver presentations, listen critically, and respond thoughtfully to both informational and fictional texts. Students compose various written texts enabling them to effectively communicate observations, personal experiences, and acquired knowledge. Students deliberately develop personal competence and strengthen character formation through deliberate exposure to carefully selected texts emphasizing character development and ethical values.

The identified positive moral values evident in the novella (helpfulness, humility, reflective thinking, obedience, friendship, love, sincerity, and responsibility) directly align with and reinforce the specified learning outcomes of Phase E. Each moral value contributes systematically to achieving the articulated learning objectives: The moral value of helpfulness directly supports the Phase E outcome of students demonstrating ability to “comprehend, interpret, and analyze expository information” through exploring how characters express care and concern through action. The moral value of humility reinforces students’ development of critical analysis skills as they examine how characters acknowledge limitations and learn from others. The moral value of reflective thinking directly cultivates the Phase E outcome for students to “think deeply about mistakes and learn from past experiences,” essential to metacognitive development. The moral value of obedience demonstrates respect for norms and social structures, supporting the Phase E objective of developing “awareness of rules governing healthy social relationships.” The moral value of friendship strengthens Phase E outcomes related to “active participation in structured discussions and presentations,” requiring collaboration and mutual respect. The moral value of love supports comprehensive character development and the Phase E objective of “strengthening character formation through deliberate exposure to values-based texts.” The moral value of sincerity promotes authentic communication and critical thinking, central to the Phase E goal of students composing “various written texts” that authentically convey their genuine thinking. Finally, the moral value of responsibility directly supports all Phase E outcomes by developing students’ sense of ownership and accountability for their learning, communication, and personal development.

In educational practice, the novella is introduced as authoritative knowledge regarding social norms and ethical expectations applicable in real-world contexts. Teachers provide structured guidance enabling students to identify, understand, and internalize these moral values through literary engagement. Teachers systematically instruct students on how to incorporate these identified positive moral values into their daily habits and regular behavioral patterns, beginning with immediate school environments and expanding outward. For example, many schools practice daily prayer before beginning academic instruction, with prayers often containing explicitly religious norms and values. With thoughtful teacher guidance, students examine literary examples, imitate moral values demonstrated by literary characters, and deliberately apply moral principles based on their religious faith, commitment to Pancasila (Indonesia's five founding principles), cultural heritage, and the broader national educational objectives established by the Indonesian government. By reading stories in novellas containing explicit character lessons that are demonstrated through character actions and narrative consequences, students integrate literary learning with personal ethical development.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that the novella contain many kinds of character values that can be utilized in character education in school. A story can have an attraction value that makes it easier to remember, especially for students. From this research, character values can be educated into students' knowledge, activities, and habits.

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