



From Visual Forms to Character Values: A Conceptual Model of Visual Meaning-Making for Character Education

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ABSTRACT

Illustrated children's storybooks play a significant role in character education by communicating moral messages through visual narratives. Although previous studies have examined visual literacy, multimodal storytelling, and character education, limited attention has been devoted to explaining how visual forms construct visual meanings that support moral interpretation and represent character values within an integrated framework. Addressing this gap, this study investigates how visual forms in the Indonesian children's storybook *Aku Bisa Lebih Baik* construct visual meanings, inform moral interpretation, and represent character values. A qualitative visual content analysis was conducted on seven purposively selected illustrations using Wong's (1993) Visual Form Theory as the analytical framework and Lickona's (1991) Character Education Framework as the interpretative lens. The findings reveal an interpretative relationship in which visual forms contribute to the construction of visual meaning, visual meanings support moral interpretation, and moral interpretation supports the representation of six recurring character values: responsibility, honesty, empathy, gratitude, self-regulation, and respect. Based on these findings, the study proposes a Conceptual Model of Visual Support for Character Education, synthesising the relationships among visual forms, visual meaning construction, moral interpretation, and character value representation. Rather than demonstrating children's actual internalisation of character values, the model explains how illustrations may support character education by organising visual cues that facilitate moral interpretation. The study contributes to research on visual communication, children's literature, and character education by providing an empirically grounded conceptual framework and a foundation for future research examining children's responses to visual narratives.

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