

## The Impact of Folklore-Based Storytelling on Empathy Behavior in Kindergarten Children

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### ABSTRACT

Empathy, a moral emotion that enables individuals to understand and respond to others' emotions, is essential for fostering positive behavior and preventing harm. Storytelling, particularly folklore, can effectively develop empathy in children by immersing them in relatable narratives that encourage empathetic responses and social-emotional skills. This research aims to assess the impact of folklore as a storytelling method on children's behavior in kindergarten. The research used a quantitative method. Accordingly, this experimental research employed a Non-Equivalent Control Group Design with six treatments, with each experimental group and control group consisting of 10 children. This study analyzed empathy behavior data collected through observations using Wilcoxon & Mann-Whitney tests. The results showed that the pretest score for the experimental class was 15.50. After the treatment, the score increased to 28.70. In comparison, the control class had a pretest score of 16.10 and a posttest score of 16.90. The Wilcoxon test resulted in an Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value = 0.005. The hypothesis test conducted resulted in a significant value of 0.005, which meant  $H_0$  was rejected ( $p < 0.05$ ). This study found that there was an increase in the use of storytelling because it can foster children's imagination and help children better understand the message in the story. This research is expected to assist other schools in addressing the problems experienced by students..

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a crucial stage of development for children and the nation's future (Sufiati, 2021). It is important to invest in this stage to ensure a successful future. During the ages of 0 to 6 years, children are commonly referred to as being in the 'golden age' due to their rapid development of intelligence (Putri, 2023). This stage serves as the foundation for children to develop attitudes, potential, abilities, and skills, as well as creativity (Sopandi, 2021).

Indonesian Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system in chapter 1, article 1, paragraph 14, provides a statement that education in early childhood is a way of providing guidance to the child starting from birth until they are six years old. What is done in terms of this guidance is to provide a design in education to assist with physical and spiritual growth and development so that each child will be ready to further their education (Rukanda, 2020). The efforts that can be made are to provide intellectual stimulation, maintain good health and nutrition, and provide opportunities for children to explore themselves (Inawati, 2017). Therefore, education provided in early childhood is intended to provide stimulation, guidance, care, and behavioral development to enhance children's abilities (Amrullah, 2022).

Agusniatih (2019) states that one of the essential skills that children must develop in educational institutions, such as kindergarten, is social skills. These skills can help children adapt, interact, cooperate, and understand others. As social beings, children require the assistance of others, particularly teachers, to grow and develop properly (Frey, 2019). Furthermore, an important aspect of child development in terms of social skills is the ability to exhibit empathetic behavior. This is because the capacity to empathize enables children to comprehend the emotions of others (Hutasuhud, 2020).

Juniarti (2020) says that several variables can inhibit the development of empathy skills in children. These include the emotional absence of parents, authoritarian parenting that imposes too many rules, and negative experiences (Dewi, 2021; Purwandari et al., 2022). It is important for children to develop their abilities and emotional intelligence, which can be hindered by these factors. Lickona (2022) suggests that the low quality of teachers in schools inhibits the development of empathy in children.

Mardiyah (2020) suggested that support from various parties, including parents, teachers, schools, and society, is necessary to cultivate empathy in children. Instilling and fostering empathy in children during their formative years can help them develop positive character traits and the ability to understand the emotions and struggles of those around them. Empathy is important to instill in children because it helps them relate to others, socialize, and become assets as adults (Nuraeni, 2020). The attitude of empathy is very important to instill in children because empathy can be a way for children to relate to other people, to get along with friends, and can be a social provision when they grow up (Kumari, 2023). Instilling empathy in children will keep them away from envy, spite, and

hostility towards others so that they can grow into children who are kind, wise, and liked by many friends. In addition, empathy can stimulate children's social and emotional attitudes to be healthier and more meaningful. Inviting children to be empathetic is also part of developing moral values (Sholeha, 2021).

Empathy is a moral emotion that enables individuals to understand the emotions of those around them (Carkhuff in Hanggara, 2019). Agusniatih (2019) suggested that the ability to empathize can increase awareness of the needs and emotions of others and motivate individuals to provide assistance to those in need. Empathy can encourage children to exhibit positive behavior as they are able to recognize the suffering of others. This can prevent children from acting in ways that harm others, as they possess the ability to understand, think, and pay attention to those around them (Broderick, 2021).

Based on some of the opinions expressed above, the ability to empathize is an activity that involves understanding the feelings of others and being able to experience and express these emotions through words or actions. Agusniatih (2019) stated that when young children have empathy, they can develop social-emotional skills that are full of understanding, tolerance, and concern for others. Children who are also empathetic can feel and understand what others feel, have good behavior and morality, can externalize difficulties, get along, have moral behavior, respect the welfare of others, and share and help without coercion (Ndari, 2019). The ability to empathize is the ability to understand, tolerate, and pay attention to others. The same thing is also expressed by (Mardiyah et al., 2020), who argue that for some students, empathy is understanding something from another person's point of view, more abstract and challenging than most other social skills.

Relevant cognition includes the ability to consider others' points of view, sometimes referred to as perspective taking, i.e., being able to 'put oneself in someone else's shoes' (Ardiansari & Dimiyati, 2021). One aspect of perspective-taking is the ability to empathize with fictional characters (Wijaya, 2021). An empathetic audience will experience sadness, fear, or joy when these emotions are experienced by the characters in the story. Related to this opinion, Van Noorden et al. (in Amrullah 2022) stated that empathy involves not only cognition but also emotional responses. Empathy is often defined as largely voluntary, a response that represents the emotional cues of another person or situation.

Based on some of the theories above, it is clear that the essence of empathy is the activity of understanding the emotions of others and being able to participate in experiencing these emotions and expressing them through words or actions. When children have empathy, they can develop their social-emotional skills, which include understanding, tolerance, and care for others. When empathizing, children can also feel and understand what others are feeling, have good judgment, have a moral sense of assertiveness, and can externalize problems. They can also engage in moral behavior, respect the well-being of others, and

willingly share and help (Faliyandra, 2019). In addition, having empathy allows children to center themselves on other people's situations, have a perspective that can be seen and heard, and even feel the emotions of fictional characters in a story (Tan, 2021). Empathy is conceptualized into affective and cognitive components (Yalcin, 2020). According to Hoffman (in Pratiwi 2019), the aspects of empathy are as follows: (1) Cognitive aspect: This aspect is based on a person's ability to see, think about, and describe the situations of others. It also includes an introspective process to understand others' perspectives and to be able to feel what others think and feel. (2) Affective aspect: This aspect refers to the internal empathic response felt by a person. For example, a person can feel the sadness that someone else is experiencing.

The research by Pratiwi (2019) indicates that children's empathy in group A1 of Santo Aloysius Bandung Kindergarten is lacking. This can be observed through their activities at school, both in the classroom and during playtime outside the classroom. For example, children do not want to share their games or play together with their friends. They also struggle to control their emotions when faced with problems involving their friends. Furthermore, they tend to be less sociable and prefer to play alone. Additionally, children have difficulty expressing their feelings (Hasanah, 2019). This suggests a lack of mutual love and attention among early childhood students (Fauziah, 2023).

During the observations conducted from Monday, April 3, 2023, to Thursday, April 6, 2023, it was concluded that Harapan Kindergarten and Bopkri Kindergarten also lack a sense of empathy. This was apparent in the children's inability to recognize their classmates' feelings, indicating a lack of empathetic response. Preschool-aged children often exhibit individualistic and selfish behavior, which can contribute to the occurrence of conflicts. To address this issue, teachers employ various strategies to promote empathy in the classroom, such as using storytelling. According to Daniel Goleman in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, storytelling is an effective method for teachers to foster and instill a sense of empathy in early childhood. Storytelling involves conveying messages and facts orally (Hidayati, 2019). It serves as a means to communicate social values (Sriyanti, 2023). Storytelling is crucial for the development of young children as it helps them develop social values, including empathy, with the guidance of teachers and parents (Tanfidiyah, 2019).

Sari's (2022) research suggested that certain folktales, such as the Kaluku Gadi folktale and the Origin of the Ntaapo-apo Bird from Southeast Sulawesi, promote empathy values, including giving love and helping others. These stories also engage children in the narrative, creating a positive emotional experience when good characters receive help from others. Folklore refers to stories that convey moral values and are believed to influence children positively. According to Cress, S. W., and Holm (in Dheasari, 2020), folklore can be used to promote empathy in children. The stories depict the daily lives of the characters. Folklore can have a significant impact on children, not only in developing their creative

abilities but also in fostering a sense of empathy for those around them. Children can learn these attitudes by emulating the characters in the story (Retnasari, 2023)

Based on research by Nurkhalizah (2023), folklore plays a crucial role in developing children's emotional intelligence through the concept of story as a model of life. Folklore has the potential to shape children's behavior, including their ability to empathize with others by observing the behavior of characters in the story. Folklore provides an interesting and enjoyable learning experience for children by immersing them in the lives of story characters. Children may become emotionally invested in the story, feeling anger when a character commits a crime and happiness when another character protects them (Bahiroh et al., 2019). If presented appropriately, folklore can significantly impact the development process, particularly in building children's empathy (Goldstein, 2021). This impact can be strengthened by using folktales that are relatable to children's daily lives (Rofiq, 2022). The folktales used in this study include Si Pitung, Keong Mas, Kapal Island, Lake Toba and Samosir Island, Ikan Mas and Pohon Ajaib, and Lutung Kasarung. Two markers of children's empathetic behavior are their ability to understand their friends' feelings and respond with empathy, as well as their willingness to share with friends. The research utilized pictures that corresponded with the story being presented and were incorporated into a PowerPoint presentation.

This study is an updated version of the research conducted by Joseph Chinwuba Odumegwu (2022) titled 'Fostering Empathy in Children through Storytelling: A Protocol for Scoping Review.' In addition to Odumegwu's (2022) research, we also found several similar studies that used experimental methods. After conducting our own research, we discovered some shortcomings in previous studies. Specifically, previous studies did not incorporate folklore variables in their research. However, folklore is a type of story that is commonly shared during early childhood in Indonesia. Folklore is often used as a strategy to shape a child's character. Therefore, in this study, we chose to use folklore as our experimental method. Both studies aim to examine the impact of storytelling on empathy in children. However, our research differs from Odumegwu's (2022) study in terms of research subjects and research methods. Odumegwu's (2022) study focused on children aged 5-12 years using the literature method. In contrast, our study used the experimental method. The research subjects were selected from different schools for each group. Specifically, grade B students from Harapan Gandok Kindergarten were included in the experimental group, while grade B students from Harapan Cendekia Kindergarten were included in the control group. Sari et al. used a random sampling technique in their study, whereas we employed a total sampling technique. Data analysis in Sari et al.'s research was conducted using the t-test, while we utilized the Wilcoxon test in this study.

Based on the explanations provided above, the researcher intends to conduct an experimental study titled 'The Effect of Folklore on Empathy Behavior of Group

B Children.' The study includes a null hypothesis (Ho) that there is no significant difference in children's empathy behavior when exposed to storytelling using folklore and an alternative hypothesis (Ha) that there is a significant difference in children's empathy behavior when exposed to storytelling using folklore. According to Ha, there is no significant difference in children's empathy behavior between those who received the storytelling method using folklore and those who did not receive any treatment (children learned as usual). However, there is an average difference in empathy behavior between the two groups after the storytelling method was implemented.

## METHODS

The study was carried out at Harapan Gandok Kindergarten and Bopkri Kricak Kindergarten from April 3, 2023, to April 15, 2023. The experimental research was conducted to gather information about a particular treatment of a controlled condition, as suggested by Sugiyono (2019). The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a Non-Equivalent Control Group Design, using a quantitative approach. The table below shows the research design model.

**Table 1.** Research Model Design

<i>Group</i>	<i>Pretest</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
KE	O1	X	O2
KK	O3		O4

Remarks

KE : Experiment Class

KK : Control Class

O1 : Pretest in Experimental Class

O2 : Post-test in Experimental Class

O3 : Pretest in Control Class

O4 : Post-test in Control Class

The experimental class was given the treatment of the storytelling method using folklore by searching for pictures that match the content of the story and then inserting the pictures in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. In the control class, children learned as usual.

The study consisted of six stages using the same folktales: *Si Pitung*, *Keong Mas*, *Pulau Kapal*, *Danau Toba dan Pulau Samosir*, *Ikan Mas dan Pohon Ajaib*, dan *Lutung Kasarung*. In the first stage, a pretest was conducted once at the initial stage. The second stage involved adjusting the model and modifying the story to be used, incorporating a message about empathy values. The third stage began with preparing the folklore that would be presented, preparing media in the form of pictures that match the story, establishing storytelling rules, and determining the time. The fourth stage involved giving the experimental class the treatment by using the storytelling method with folklore for six sessions. Finally, the sixth stage involved administering a post-test to both groups.

## Subject of Research

The study population consisted of Group B children from Harapan Gandok Kindergarten and Bopkri Kricak Kindergarten aged 4-7 years old. The experimental group consisted of 10 children from Group B of Harapan Gandok Kindergarten who were taught using the folktale storytelling method, while the control group consisted of 10 children from Group B of Bopkri Gandok Kindergarten who received regular teaching. Total sampling was used to determine the sample in this study by selecting all members of the population.

## Measurement

This research began on Monday, April 10, 2023. The research was conducted for six meetings, during which six treatments were given to the experimental class. Due to the limited time available and the approaching holidays and collective leave, this research was conducted from April 10-15, 2023.

The following is the action scenario carried out in the experimental and control classes:

1. The pretest was conducted once at the initial stage. This stage was used to assess the children's empathy behavior before they received treatment through storytelling methods using folklore.
2. Treatment was conducted in the experimental group, while learning was controlled in the control group.
3. The folktales used were modified to convey messages about the values of empathy.
4. The treatment implementation began with preparing the folklore to be delivered, preparing media in the form of pictures that matched the story, establishing rules for storytelling, and determining the time period to be used.
5. The treatment was provided in the experimental class by applying the storytelling method using folklore for 6 treatments, while learning was controlled in the control class. Afterward, a post-test was conducted on both groups.

To address the hypothesis, the researcher devised two data collection strategies: observation and Likert scale. Organized observation of children's empathy skills was used as the observation method, as this study aimed to examine the behavior and attitudes of children at Harapan Gandok Kindergarten and Bopkri Gandok Kindergarten. The researcher then employed a Likert scale to assess children's empathy behavior. The researchers used the EmQueue instrument, taking 13 out of 20 statements, including emotional contagion, sensitivity to other feelings, and prosocial behavior. This instrument takes the form of statements filled out by parents after monitoring their children's behavior (Takamatsu et al., 2021).

## Data Analysis

To determine whether the storytelling method treatment using folklore can improve children's empathy behavior, it is necessary to analyze the data. To test

the hypothesis, a prerequisite analysis is needed, which includes (1) a Normality test to determine the distribution of data. If the analysis requirement test has been conducted, then the hypothesis is tested using non-parametric techniques since the sampling is not random and the research samples are fewer than 30 individuals. The hypothesis is tested using non-parametric analysis methods due to the limited data available. These methods include (1) Wilcoxon test, used to test non-normally distributed data and determine differences in paired observations of two data sets. (2) Mann-Whitney test, which can indicate whether there is a significant difference between the experimental class and the control class.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study examined data on behavioral scores reflecting children's empathy in Group B of Harapan Gandok Kindergarten and Bopkri Kricak Kindergarten. The experimental group received treatment in the form of a storytelling approach with folklore for six sessions, while the control group did not receive treatment. Afterward, both groups were post-tested in the final stage to observe changes in children's empathy behavior, which can be seen in the table below.

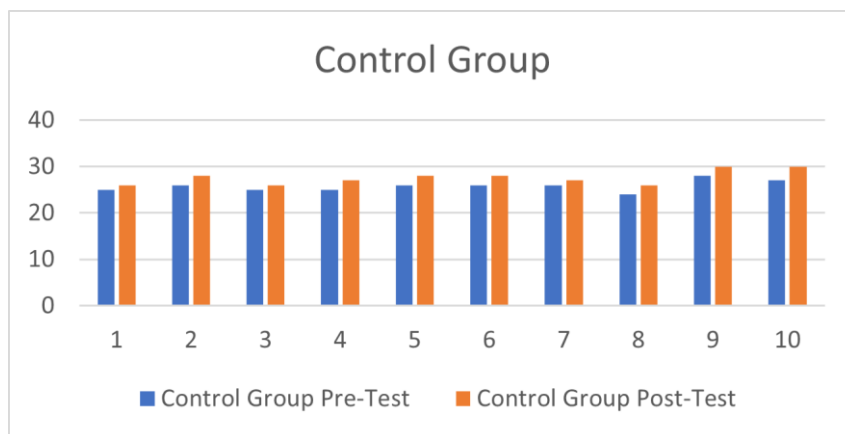


Figure 1. Pretest and Post-test Control Group

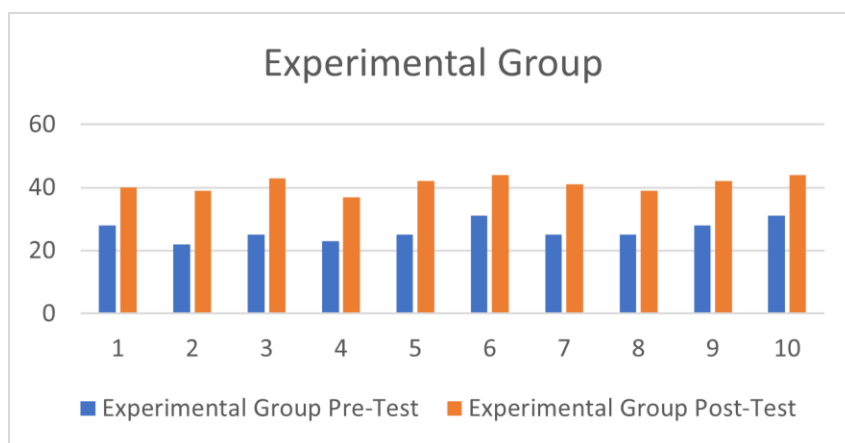


Figure 2. Pretest and Post-test Experimental Group



**Table 2.** Data Description

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	10	4	13	17	15.50	1.434	2.056
Post-Test Eksperiment	10	6	27	33	28.70	1.889	3.567
Pretest Control	10	2	15	17	16.10	.738	.544
Post-test Control	10	2	16	18	16.90	.876	.767
Valid N (listwise)	10						

The average difference in empathy behavior between the experimental and control classes can be seen in the table above. Based on these results, the average pretest score for the experimental class was 15.50, while the average pretest score for the control class was 16.10. Based on the pretest scores, there is an average difference between the two classes. To ensure that there is a significant difference in the children's empathic behavior scores, it can be seen in the post-test data, which gets an average value of 28.70 in the experimental class and 16.90 in the control class in this table from the mean value of the experimental and control post-test results. Thus, there is a significant average difference. As for the very significant mean difference between the experimental post-test and the control post-test, there is a mean of 28.70 in the experimental class and a mean of 16.10 in the control class. Before testing the hypothesis, it is necessary to perform a prerequisite test on the data distribution, such as a test of data normality. To show that both classes have normal data, the data normality test is performed. The results of the normality test are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Normality Test

Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk			
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	
Children's Empathic Behavior	Pretest Experiment	.336	10	.002	.791	10	.011
	Post-Test Eksperiment	.245	10	.092	.841	10	.045
	Pretest Control	.254	10	.067	.833	10	.036
	Post-test Control	.248	10	.087	.805	10	.017

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test calculation in Table 3, it can be concluded that the pretest score data is 0.011 in the experimental class and 0.036 in the control class. The post-test score data is 0.045 for the experimental class and 0.017 for the control class. As shown in the table above, it can be concluded that the pretest and post-test data are not normally distributed because the significance value is <0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis test was conducted using the Wilcoxon test and Mann-Whitney test, as the research data is not normally distributed.

Furthermore, the Wilcoxon test was conducted. From Table 4, it can be seen that the results of the data analysis show that the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value in the experimental class is 0.005. These results indicate that the p-value in both classes is <0.05, meaning that there is a significant effect on children's empathy behavior

in the two groups.

**Table 4.** Wilcoxon Test

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		
	Post-Test Eksperiment - Pre-Test Eksperiment	Post-Test Control - Pre-Test Control
Z	-2.820 <sup>b</sup>	-2.271 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.023

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks

The Mann-Whitney test in Table 5 shows that the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Since the “hypothesis was accepted,” it can be concluded that there is a change in children's empathy attitudes in the experimental class. Therefore, there is a difference in children's empathy behavior after the storytelling method using folklore was applied compared to children who were not given treatment (children learn as usual).

**Table 5.** Mann-Whitney Test

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
Children's Empathic Behavior	
Mann-Whitney U	.000
Wilcoxon W	55.000
Z	-3.819
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000 <sup>b</sup>

a. Grouping Variable: Class

b. Not corrected for ties

## Discussion

The study involved 20 children with very low empathy skills from Harapan Gandok Kindergarten and Bopkri Kricak Kindergarten in Yogyakarta. The sample was divided into two groups: 10 children in Group B at Harapan Gandok Kindergarten as the experimental class and ten children in Group B at Bopkri Kricak Kindergarten as the control class. Prior to the study, both groups were given pretests. After providing storytelling treatment using folklore six times in the experimental class and allowing the control class to learn as usual through activities such as reading, writing, singing, and sports, the researcher administered a post-test at the end of the study to the control group.

According to Carkhuff (in Hanggara, 2019), empathy is a core moral emotion that helps children understand the feelings of others. Empathy makes them sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, encouraging them to help people in distress or pain. Strong empathy encourages children to act right because they can see the distress of others, thus preventing them from taking actions that can hurt others. The ability to empathize is the ability to understand, tolerate, and pay attention to others. The same thing is also expressed by Mardliyah et al. (2020), who argue that for some students, empathy is understanding something from another

person's point of view, more abstract and challenging than most other social skills. Empathy makes children sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. It encourages children to help people in distress or pain and requires them to treat people well (Anam, 2020).

The research sample in the experimental class underwent a storytelling treatment using folklore for six days. Each day, the children were presented with different folktales, including Si Pitung, Keong Mas, Ship Island, Lake Toba and Samosir Island, Goldfish and Magic Tree, and Lutung Kasarung. After participating in storytelling activities using folklore, the children in Group B at Harapan Gandok Kindergarten experienced a significant increase in mean scores. Prior to the treatment, the experimental class had a pretest value of 15.50, which increased to 28.70 after the treatment. In the Bopkri Kricak Kindergarten group B, the mean value of the pretest and post-test did not change significantly. This is because the pretest value of the control class was 16.10, and the post-test value was 16.90. According to Daniel Goleman in his book *Emotional Intelligence* (in Tanfidiyah, 2019), the storytelling method is an effective way for teachers to foster and instill a sense of empathy in early childhood. Through folklore, children will experience an interesting and fun learning experience because they will be immersed in the lives of the characters of the story. This activity involves storytelling, which is the act of conveying messages and facts orally. Folklore has the advantage of shaping children's behavior, such as developing their ability to empathize with others through the behavior of the characters in the story. Additionally, folklore can provide children with an engaging and educational experience by immersing them in the lives of story characters (Putu, 2019). Folklore can be a fun learning medium (Hanafi, 2019).

After conducting the Wilcoxon test, the results showed that the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value in the experimental class was 0.005. This indicates a significant effect of the storytelling method using folklore on children's empathy behavior in group B of Harapan Gandok Kindergarten as the experimental class, with a p-value  $<0.05$ . Based on the results of hypothesis testing through the Wilcoxon test, it can be concluded that ( $H_a$ ) is accepted and ( $H_o$ ) is rejected because there are differences in children's empathy behavior from before and after being given the storytelling method using folklore. Iswahyudi (2023) identifies five factors that can promote empathy in kindergarten children in group B. These factors include gender, social, cognitive, and socioeconomic status. Of these five factors, cognitive factors have the greatest influence on the growth of children's empathy (Ndari, 2019). This factor gives children the ability to understand and respond to their friends' emotions (Denham, 2019). For example, if a friend is crying because they were teased by other friends, a child with strong cognitive empathy will feel sad and angry for their friend.

The Wilcoxon test also shows the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value in the control class of 0.023. According to Cingol (2021), based on the Wilcoxon test guidelines, the difference in empathy in the control class is also significant because it is  $<0.05$ .

Although the control class did not receive treatment in the form of folklore from researchers, several factors caused the level of empathy of BOPKRI Kricak Kindergarten children to significantly increase during the pretest compared to the post-test. Some of the additional factors that influence this include (1) The existence of daily activities at BOPKRI Kricak Kindergarten that can increase empathy in children, for example, teachers visiting children who are sick, (2) The existence of activities at home with parents or guardians that encourage children to empathize with others, for example, parents involving children in family activities, parents helping children understand when they see street children, older siblings setting examples of empathetic attitudes for their younger siblings, and others. (3) Children observe models around them and imitate their behavior. For example, when the researchers came to BOPKRI Kricak Kindergarten for the pre and post-tests, the children observed their teachers welcoming the researchers in a friendly manner. Likewise, the communication between the teacher and the researcher was very warm. Through these real-life examples, children will imitate these behaviors and increase their level of empathy. Based on the results of hypothesis testing through the Wilcoxon test, it can be concluded that ( $H_a$ ) is accepted and ( $H_o$ ) is rejected because there are differences in children's empathy behavior in the experimental class and the control class.

Based on the Mann-Whitney test results above, the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.000 was  $<0.05$ . Thus, the "hypothesis was accepted," indicating that it can be concluded that there was a change in children's empathy attitudes in the experimental class. It can be concluded that there is a difference in children's empathy behavior after the storytelling method using folklore is applied compared to children who are not given treatment (children learn as usual).

The results of the application of storytelling methods using folklore in children aged 5-6 years or group B can help develop children's empathetic attitudes. In the application of the storytelling method, using folklore can help researchers establish good communication between researchers and children. This method can attract children's attention and help them apply the values contained in the story to their daily lives (Salsabila, 2021). The results of the experiment conducted at Harapan Gandok Kindergarten show that the children in the experimental class exhibited significant changes in their empathetic behavior compared to the control class. It is important to note that the language used in the text has been revised to adhere to the desired characteristics of clear, objective, and value-neutral language. Precise word choice and grammatical correctness have been ensured. Additionally, the text has been restructured to ensure a logical flow of information with causal connections between statements while avoiding biased language and filler words. No new content has been added to the text. Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the use of the storytelling method with folklore has a positive impact on children's empathetic behavior. According to Sufiati (2021), children's empathetic behavior can be developed through storytelling activities using folklore. Folklore contains the values of empathy portrayed by the characters of the story, which can help children

understand and develop empathy. Additionally, involving the child in the story can also help them empathize with the characters, such as feeling sad if a good character is hurt (Setyami, 2022). The application of storytelling strategies is very important in children's education because it has the ability to foster children's imagination (Pulimeno, 2020).

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research that has been conducted, moral messages in stories told through storytelling strategies can stimulate children's imagination and foster empathy. Stories presented through storytelling can fill children's memories with various information, including life values and various points of view. The events in the story will enrich the child's experience so that they can be used as reference material for problem-solving or changing behavior. Memory is a place to store various information and plays a role in making decisions about behavioral responses that should be taken. By implementing storytelling strategies, children will not only enjoy the learning process but will also gain many benefits that support their cognitive and emotional development. The hypothesis test indicates that using folklore as a storytelling method has an effect on children's empathetic behavior. This is supported by the Wilcoxon test results, which showed that the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value in the experimental class was 0.005. These findings suggest that the p-value in both classes was  $<0.05$ , indicating a significant effect of using folklore as a storytelling method on children's empathetic behavior in both groups. Based on the above conclusions, teachers are advised to use this method to be included in the lesson plan so that children's empathetic behavior is increasingly nurtured. Furthermore, further researchers can utilize this research as a starting point for further research so that it can help schools deal with problems that children experience.

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