DEVELOPING COOPERATIVE CHARACTER TO CHILDREN THROUGH PROJECT APPROACH (PA)

*Khusnidar, Norazilawati Abdullah, Mazlina Che Mustafa
National Child Development Research Centre, Sultan Idris Education
University, Perak, Malaysia
*Email: khusnidar@gmail.com

Abstract
Early age is a very important period and often called '*The Golden Age*'. At this age, a good character should be really emphasized. There are various unique characters possessed by children and must be developed and accustomed by teachers, one of them is a cooperative character. This character is permissible applying in teaching and learning process. One approach can contribute to developing a cooperative character for children during school is through a Project Approach (PA) pioneered by Katz and Chard (2000) which consists of three phases. The first phase is the discussion about the topic to be chosen according to children interest, the aim of this phase also to know children's experience and prior knowledge. In the second phase, the teacher arranges opportunities for children to do fieldwork and meet experts to answer children's questions. On the other hand, in the last phase of this approach, they begin to make a final project and will be assessed and presented to other people, such as friends, teachers, school administrators or parents. While running all phases in this Approach, children will cooperate with friends, teachers, school administrators and also with their parents in providing tools and materials, giving ideas or anything for learning activities through the PA.
Keywords: Cooperative Character, Early Childhood, Project Approach (PA)

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education needs to be considered by various parties starting from families, schools, communities, and government. Every aspect contained in childhood must be developed thoroughly to improve academic and character abilities that will contribute to increasing children self-confidence. The age of four to six years is the most important age and also very sensitive in obtaining an education (Roza, 2012).

Early childhood education must be fostered in the right way because it is the foundation that will shape their identity in the future. Building character in early childhood is not easy, educators need maximum effort to realize positive characters such as increasing honesty, fairness, mutual respect, responsibility, mutual attention, communication, helping each other, cooperative and so on. The cooperative character is very important because of the teaching and learning process cannot work on its own without the cooperation with various parties, especially between children and children, teachers with children, children with parents or teachers with parents.

Efforts to build the cooperative character for early childhood can be done through the PA which consists of three phases (Katz & Chard, 2000). Phase one (project design/commencement), phase two (project development/investigation) and phase three (performance/exhibition/project display and assessment). Children will pass through various experiences when they enter each phase in the PA, including

answering, questioning, giving ideas, discussions, holding field work, conducting investigations, representation and exhibition of learning outcomes. These characteristics or elements are contained in the application of the PA.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Cooperative Character
Silvy, et al. (2017) state that behavior is a reflection of nature also called character. The character is an individual's behavior can be observed through a person's perspective, actions or attitudes. Attitude is a behavior or action reflects a character or character in a person. Every child has different characters due to differences of adults build and developed character towards them.

Applying cooperative character is very important to children in the early age of 0-8 years and will not be repeated during the development in the life of a human (Ketut, 2018). Cooperative character provided knowledge on how to feel, understanding and carrying out activities by working together to achieve a result or goal together (Rukiyati, et al., 2014). Building children's cooperative character increase their ability to interact with others, self-confidence, and familiarize them in interacting with new environments.

Silvy, et al. (2017) in her study of cooperative character education had formulated several cooperative character indicators adopted from four characters listed in the 2013 curriculum, including:
Confident character:
- Dare to present in front of the class
- Dare to argue, ask or answer questions
- Argue/do activities without hesitation

Polite:
- Say thank you after receiving help from others
- Use polite language when expressing opinions
- Use polite language when criticizing friends

Care:
- Showing gratitude
- Helping others who need help

Honest:
- Does not do plagiarism in doing each task
- Report data/information as it is
- Recognize self-mistake/self-shortcomings

Project Approach (PA)
Teaching and learning must be able to increase knowledge and develop children's character in accordance with their age, experience, culture, and environment. Learning through PA accustomed children to think more broadly and deeply because they may ask meaningful questions and increase their curiosity towards the world around them (Roessing & Chambers, 2011). Katz and Chard (2000) explained the implementation of PA provided the meaningful experience needed by children. This approach was already applied to the education system of several countries. Accordingly, Katz (1994, p. 1) states the PA is:

"A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation is usually undertaken by a small group of children within a class, sometimes by the whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teacher working with children". (Katz, 1994, p. 1)

From the above definition, we can learn that the PA is an in-depth investigation of a topic can be applied in groups, both small groups, and large groups or involve to the whole child in the classroom. However, this project also is carried out on an individual child. In the implementation of this project preferred to answer all questions from teachers, children, teachers and children questions on the topic.

In addition, Katz and Chard (2000) also stated that the project was a good story, which had a beginning, middle, and an end consisting of three phases of the project. Each phase of the PA contains three main elements of project work, there are content, process, and results. Structured PA can help teachers to develop appropriate activities for children's interests and participation in the chosen learning topic.

Phases in the Project Approach (PA)

There are three phases in the PA according to Helm and Katz (2001). First Phase, teacher and children discuss the topic to be taught. This conversation aims to find out their prior experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, the teacher began by making the web, asking children to ask the questions about everything they want to know about the topic throughout the project implementation. Children questions needed to find out their prior knowledge and experience and all questions will be recorded by the teacher. Every parent will be informed about all activities carried out in the teaching and learning process with this PA. Teachers always communicate with parents and convey everything related to the topic being taught to discuss it with children.

In the second phase, the teacher organizes fieldwork activities and provides opportunities for children to ask questions with experts. The resources provided to help children carrying out investigations can be real objects, the internet, books, and other investigative materials. In this phase, children will draw based on observation, building models, grouping, exploring, record and interrogating/examining a discovery in detail, guessing, discussing new experiences and knowledge.

In the third phase, the teacher organizes the event for children to share what is learned. They may help in telling their project stories to other people and may present it to other classes, visitors and parents. The teacher helps the children to choose the material to be shared, involves the children in the initial assessment and evaluates the project as a whole. The teacher also offers children imaginative ways of their new knowledge through the books, arts, paintings, three-dimensional models, stories, dramas and poems (Nur, 2018).

Characteristics of the Project Approach

Norazizah (2018), Noor (2018), Nur (2018) and Nursyazwani (2018) has explained five main characteristics must be present in learning through the PA are:

1. Discussion. Interaction during discussion usually occurs in the class between two children or a group of children (Helm & Beneke, 2003). Discussions involve children collaboration when doing activities without teacher direction and involvement (Chard, 2012). Children learn to communicate among others by asking questions, commenting on other friend ideas, needing additional information from teachers and friends (Helm, 2015).

2. Fieldwork. This activity usually took place outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers are expected to be more careful in considering the places to be visited close to the school. This factor is very important to ensure that all children participate and parents easy to get involved in while children doing activities in the field (Katz, 2003). Children will carry out investigation and explore on their own, such as conducting interviews with experts or employees, observing objects, materials or machines on the field to answer the questions that arise in their minds. This activity provides opportunities for them to obtain information from various sources such as experts, parents or the media.

3. Representation. Children begin to make representations of previous knowledge, various questions, and information obtained while doing a project. Teachers may provide support or assist the children to exchange experiences in various ways, such as painting, coloring, playing drama, making models, essays, notes, etc. (Mays, et al., 2011). Children are required to make representations at the end of the project to present learning outcomes on their own abilities.

4. Investigation. This process begins after children asking about something in accordance with their interests in an event or phenomenon. Project activities usually involve children to make observations, recording the data measured by translating them into graphs or schedules/tables (Helm & Katz, 2012).

5. Exhibition. All the works, knowledge or experiences of children are exhibited in the classroom to remind them of the process they have done. Exhibition of children's work such as reference books, materials, and tools for investigation, vocabulary lists are usually posted on bulletin boards, above the table or bookshelf (Katz, Chard & Kogan, 2014).

Building Cooperative Character through Project Approach (PA)

PA is one of the 'hands-on' activities that able to realize cooperative and interaction between teachers and children and also emphasizes children more actively during teaching and learning processes. PA supported the young children to build their experience in the class as a solid community. Children will expect to contribute to the whole group in different ways. In a cooperative setting through PA, children will work together to complete their project and achieve mutual goals (Katz & Chard, 2000).

There are various activities that children go through when the Project implemented, including exchanging opinions by discussing, doing fieldwork, investigation, representation/painting/drawing, exhibition/performance of the final project results (Katz & Chard, 2000). Various ways adults can do to help them, especially teachers to build children cooperative character through the educational process while they are in the school environment. The PA provides a solution for the teacher to facilitate and build children cooperative character. In carrying out activities through PA, children will gain experiences, increase in social competence and children cooperative character. Through implementing the main characteristics of the PA, the teacher can easily apply the cooperative character to children.

In teaching and learning through PA, the cooperative character is very important and must be applied as long as children listen to each other and talk together to achieve the goals. Children will listen and appreciate each idea to create togetherness in the classroom (Helm & Benneke, 2003).

The PA is usually carried out to solve a problem or answer children questions. The implementation took a long time and usually done in groups or doing it together. Nelva (2014) stated that PA is an interesting and structured learning process to find answers or solve problems together in a team or class by taking a long and predetermined time period. Duration for implementing PA requires four to five months for one topic to be run.

The development of cooperation character through PA can be done from the first phase to the third phase. In the first phase of implementation, a web for teacher and children must be made. The teacher needs to cooperate with children to find out their knowledge and experience. Children are expected to give responses and various questions to the teacher to know their interests before carrying out for investigations.

Cooperation in the second phase is intertwined with many people, including teacher, parent, expert, and others. The teacher cooperates with parents in conveying information about the tools and materials needed during the project activities. The involvement of children in seeking materials and tools outside of school hours with their parents will improve cooperative character and responsibility in children. Besides that, the teacher also asking parent helps to explain the initial concepts to children at home before carrying out for investigations, sometimes parents also become an expert in answering children questions. An expert may also be local people who have expertise in certain fields. Thus, the collaboration between children and experts will be established when asking questions or interviewing them.

Furthermore, in the third phase, children cooperate with teachers and friends in discussing the final results or projects that will be produced. After getting a decision, they design the model together, build a final project with their team, sharing the tools and materials, helping each other, and display the product together in front of the audiences. Children cooperate with parents to prepare the materials needed, school administrators to set or manage the place and guest or other classroom students to get input or assess their projects.

CONCLUSIONS
The development of cooperative character for early childhood can be applied at an early age through learning with PA. The PA provides rich experiences to children with a variety of activities. A cooperative character can be developed through various phases passed by children in the PA.

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