

Character Based on Multicultural and Local Wisdom in Early Childhood: The Construction of a Research Instrument

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to confirm the construct of the multicultural and local wisdom character research instrument of early childhood. Respondents were 430 early children. Data analysis using the CFA approach. The results showed that the four conceptual dimensions of character were empirically proven to group into four dimensions. Each dimension is corrected for sub dimensions and indicators based on the loading factor score criteria, cronbach alpha reliability, rho-A score, composite reliability > 0.70 , average variance extracted > 0.50 . There are 29 indicators that meet valid, reliable criteria and fit model.

Key words: *multicultural and local wisdom, character, early childhood, research instrument.*

Introduction

The multicultural and multi-ethnic condition of Indonesia requires educational institutions to be able to develop children so that they have ethnic literacy and are tolerant of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity that exists arises from various aspects of life, such as religion, ethnicity, ancestry, socioeconomic conditions, and stages of power. Implementing multicultural character based education requires an appropriate, effective and participatory strategy involving all components

of education. There is a need for greater government support for multicultural education in the field of policy implementation (Watkins, Lean, & Noble, 2016).

In implementing multicultural-based character education and local wisdom, we not only reassemble the values of unity and nationality in the current era of globalisation, but also try to redefine the sense of nationality itself in the face of clashes between various social-cultural, economic and political factors in the world. In other words, through implementation of this multicultural education, it is expected that all forms of discrimination (Janakiraman, Watson, Watson, & Bawa, 2019), violence (Au, 2017), and injustice that are largely motivated by cultural differences such as differences in religion, race, ethnicity, language, abilities, gender, age and socio-economic class can be minimized. In order to achieve the objectives of multicultural education, it is necessary to have the role and support of teachers / teaching staff, educational institutions, and other educational policy makers, especially in the application of curriculum with multicultural and local wisdom approaches.

Teachers and educational institutions (schools) play an important role in applying the principles of multicultural education at all levels of education (Olur & Oguz, 2019). In addition, teachers need to understand the concept of multicultural education in a global perspective so that the values contained in this education can be taught as well as practiced in front of students. Consequently it is hoped that through the development of multicultural education these students will more easily understand the lessons and increase their awareness so as to help them always behave in a humanistic, pluralist and democratic manner. Multicultural education can be achieved when implemented into classrooms (Villegas, 2019). In the end the students are expected to become a “multicultural generation” ready in the future to face the conditions of society, the state and the world that are difficult to predict with discipline, caring humanism, upholding morality, honesty in daily behavior and applying democratic values, justice and humanity. Implementing multicultural-based character education and local wisdom in schools requires an appropriate strategy. The accuracy of the strategies selected will provide optimal results in forming students with character. Thus efforts to develop character education models as a strategy for implementing multicultural character education are very important.

Multicultural and local wisdom character includes four character dimensions that will be instilled and developed for early childhood students. The four dimensions are character dimensions related to the relationship of divinity, self, others, and the environment. The dimension of the character of the divinity relationship is the attitude or behavior of early childhood in carrying out God's commands and

prohibitions in daily life. Humans are beings who are aware of God (Wach, 1984). The beliefs held, morals, and worship according to religious teachings are aspects that exist in the divine dimension. The relationship between moral conduct, right belief, and worship is a religious criterion. A strong belief in divinity will shape the character and life of early childhood. In student's early childhood the process of religious development is still receptive. His religious experience includes forms of thought, forms of action, and forms of fellowship (Wach, 1984). The relationship of the divine dimension shown will provide self-identity, give new status, and moral development or support (O'dea, 1966).

The dimension of the character of the relationship with oneself is the attitude and behavior of early childhood students towards themselves. Every child grows as an intelligent, good, and capable individual responsible for the development of his own life. Individuals actually develop their character and intelligence (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). For example students must be able to develop a responsible and independent character. Responsibility is the attitude and behavior to carry out their duties and obligations as they should. Independence is the attitude and behavior of early childhood that is not easy to depend on others in completing tasks.

The dimension of the character of relationships with others is the attitudes and behavior of early childhood students towards others. No one is great without the help of others (Thompson, 2005). Relationships with others, for example, respect for others and being polite to fellow people. Students who value others are students whose attitudes and actions respect the weaknesses or strengths of others. Courtesy is a subtle and good quality in early childhood students from the point of view of language or behavior to others. Very open attitude is needed to be able to build communication with others. Having a communicative attitude means being willing to communicate and discuss with other people or colleagues.

The dimension of the character of the relationship with the environment is the attitudes and behavior of early childhood students towards the environment in which they are. The family environment, the school environment, and the community environment are places where young children interact. Caring for the environment is the attitude and behavior that does not damage the surrounding natural environment. Social care is the attitude and action of giving assistance to others. Friendliness is an action that shows a sense of fun hanging out and working with others.

In the development of multicultural and local wisdom character there are various kinds of variations in the determination of the character values to be developed in schools. The character value is contained in four character dimensions. Character values that have been developed in early childhood students

in kindergarten need to be assessed. Character is part of the affective domain. Assessment in the affective domain is obtained through measurement or observation. One instrument that can be used in assessing the character of every child is a questionnaire. Based on the description above, the purpose of this study is to construct an instrument of multicultural and local wisdom character assessment of early childhood that fulfills valid and reliable criteria.

Problem of Research

In the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0, it is very important to introduce character education based on multicultural values and local wisdom in early childhood character values have long played a role in philosophical conversation, that is, since Plato placed good character at the top in the hierarchy of values (Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980). Good character includes three components, namely moral knowledge, moral feelings and moral actions (Lickona, 1991). Character is a concept that shows determination and consistency between the behavior and opinions of individuals which is a match between attitudes and behavior (Çağatay, 2009). Character traits are long-lasting patterns of behavior that can be generalized as personality characteristics (Diggs & Akos, 2016). Meanwhile, Khoury (2017) states that character is associated with positive behavior or virtues. Thus character education is a form of strengthening the value of goodness and is done from early childhood.

Early childhood character based on multicultural values and local wisdom should ideally begin before the stage of basic education through formal education such as in kindergarten (TK), *raudhatul athfal* (Islamic early childhood education) (RA), and other similar forms. Characters that are formed or developed from an early age will produce strength of character as an adult. With the strength of character it will not be easy to experience degradation or crisis of character (Harun, Jaedun, Sudaryanti, & Manaf, 2020).

The problem in this research is the lack of implementation of multi-cultural character education based on local wisdom in kindergarten and the lack of availability of evaluation instruments (for assessment and measurements) of early childhood character in aspects of: (1) character in relation to oneself; (2) character in relation to divinity; (3) character in relation to others; (4) and character in relation to the environment.

Research Focus

The focus of this research is to confirm the dimensions, subdimensions, and indicators of early childhood multicultural and local wisdom character and pro-

duce valid and reliable early-age character assessment instruments. Valid can be defined as to what extent conclusions from certain assessment results can be made accurately (Mahrens & Lehman, 1991). Reliability can be interpreted as consistency or stability of assessment results (Reynolds, Livingston, & Willson, 2010).

Methodology of Research

General Background of Research

This study aims to confirm dimensions, subdimensions and indicators of multicultural and local wisdom in early childhood, produce a valid and reliable instrument to measure early childhood character and report the stages of development of the instrument. The stages of instrument development use the procedure suggested by (Mccoach, Gable, & Madura, 2013)

Sampel of Research

Research sites in Indonesia, Central Java Province, specifically the Surakarta Residency and the Kedu Residency. The subjects of the study were 430 children (3 years old until 5 years old), spread across 24 kindergartens from 7 districts in 4 regency / city, namely Magelang City and Surakarta City, and Magelang Regency and Sukoharjo Regency in Central Java Province as summarized in Table (1).

Table 1. Location data and number of research respondents

Region	Regency / City			
Districts	Magelang regency	Magelang city	Surakarta City	Sukoharjo regency
Srumbung	120	0	0	0
Magelang selatan	0	119	0	0
Laweyan	0	0	81	0
Banjarsari	0	0	19	0
Baki	0	0	0	62
Grogol	0	0	0	14
Mojolaban	0	0	0	15
Σ Child	120	119	100	91

Instrument and Procedures

The main instrument in data collection is a questionnaire with a Likert scale (*never, ever, sometimes, and always*). There are 53 statement items. Character in relation to divinity consists of four sub-variables, namely (T1) belief / creed; (T2) diligently worshiping; (T3) willingness to act; (T4) the value of manners / morals; Character in relation to oneself consists of four sub-variables, namely; (D1) honesty; (D2) discipline; (D3) responsibility; (D4) independence. Character in relation to others consists of four sub-variables, namely (S1) aware of the rights and obligations of self and others (S2) Complying with legal and customary rules; (S3) respecting the work and achievements of others; (S4) Being polite other people. Character in relation to the environment consists of four sub-variables, namely (L1) national spirit; (L2) love of the motherland; (L3) friendly / communicative; (L4) caring about the environment.

The instrument development procedure uses the stages suggested by (McCoach, Gable, & Madura, 2013) which are modified into 12 steps, namely: (1) instrument specifications; (2) reviewing existing instruments; (3) construct description and initial concept definition; (4) component specifications of the construct; (5) development of the final concept definition for each component; (6) establishing operational definitions; (7) choosing a scale and determining indicators; (8) making and attaching items to components / constructs; (9) examine instrument items; (10) making a prototype version of the instrument; and (11) instrument trials.

At the time of testing the instrument required the role of teachers who teach in kindergarten (TK). Early childhood students have not been able to fill in the instruments created because of the limitations in reading and understanding the contents of the statement items. It is the teacher who knows the good attitudes and behavior of students while at school, so in filling out the instruments the teacher has a role in filling it. Every teacher who teaches in kindergarten is given the responsibility to assess each student based on the instrument. The teacher in filling out the instruments is assisted by the filling instructions that have been provided

Data Analysis

The steps of data analysis follow the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedur to select indicators, subdimensions, from the conceptual dimension of theoretical multicultural and local wisdom character with the help of *Smart-PLS software version 3.0* and *LISREL version 8.50*.

Results of Research

Multicultural and local wisdom character in the early childhood have four dimensions namely divinity, oneself, others, and environment. The divinity dimension has 4 subdimensions, which are belief, worship, sincerity, and the value of manners / morals.

Table 2. Validity and reliability of the conceptual dimension of Divinity

Score factor loading		
Indicator	T1	T4
T11	0.816	
T12	0.827	
T13	0.784	
T41		0.806
T42		0.906
T43		0.889
Discriminant validity		
Subdimension	T1	T4
T1 (Belief)	0.809	
T4 (The value of manners / morals)	0.512	0.868
Reliability		
Criteria	T1	T4
Cronbach's Alpha	0.737	0.837
rho_A	0.74	0.865
Composite Reliability	0.85	0.901
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.655	0.753

The divinity dimension has 4 subdimensions. Each subdimension has 3 indicators. Based on the CFA analysis, the ones who qualify to be subdimensions of the divinity dimension are T1 (Belief) and T4 (The value of manners / morals) because they have a loading factor score, Cronbach's alpha reliability, rho-A score, composite reliability > 0.70, AVE > 0.50 and root AVE curve is greater than the correlation score between constructs (Discriminant Validity) as in Table (2).

The oneself dimension has 4 subdimensions, which are honest, disciplined, responsibility, and independence. Each subdimension has 3 indicators. Based on the CFA analysis, those who fulfill the requirements to become subdimensions of the self dimension are D3 (Responsibility) and D4 (Independence) because they

have a loading factor score, Cronbach alpha reliability, rho-A score, composite reliability > 0.70 , AVE > 0.50 and root AVE curve is greater than the correlation score between constructs (Discriminant Validity) as in Table (3).

Table 3. Validity and reliability of the conceptual dimension of self

Score factor loading		
Indicator	D3	D4
D31	0.797	
D32	0.861	
D33	0.871	
D41		0.848
D42		0.838
D43		0.850
Discriminant validity		
Subdimension	D3	D4
D3 (Responsibility)	0.844	
D4 (Independence)	0.626	0.845
Reliability		
Criteria	D3	D4
Cronbach's Alpha	0.797	0.801
rho_A	0.801	0.802
Composite Reliability	0.881	0.882
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.712	0.714

Table 4. Validity and reliability of conceptual dimension of others

Score factor loading		
Indicator	S3	S4
S31	0.849	
S32	0.836	
S33	0.875	
S41		0.843
S42		0.843
S43		0.765
S44		0.727

Discriminant validity		
Subdimension	S3	S4
S3 (Respecting the work and achievements of others)	0.853	
S4(Be polite to fellow people)	0.689	0.796
Reliability		
Criteria	S3	S4
Cronbach's Alpha	0.813	0.806
rho_A	0.816	0.813
Composite Reliability	0.889	0.873
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.728	0.634

The dimension of doing good to others has 4 subdimensions, namely aware of the rights and obligations of self and others; comply with legal and customary rules; respecting the work and achievements of others; and be polite to fellow people. Each subdimension has 3 indicators, except S4 has 4 indicators. Based on the CFA analysis, those who fulfill the requirements to b subdimensions of good behavioral dimensions towards others are S3 (Respecting the work and achievements of others) and S4 (Be polite to fellow people) because they have a loading factor score, Cronbach alpha reliability, rho-A score, composite reliability > 0.70 , AVE > 0.50 and the AVE roots of the quadrature are greater than the correlation score between constructs (Discriminant Validity) as in Table (4).

Table 5. Validity and reliability of conceptual dimension of environment

Indicator	Score factor loading		
	L1	L3	L4
L12	0.820		
L13	0.886		
L14	0.910		
L15	0.838		
L31		0.817	
L32		0.806	
L33		0.837	
L41			0.881
L42			0.910
L43			0.744

Discriminant validity			
Subdimension	L1	L3	L4
L1 (Nationality)	0.864		
L3 (Friendly)	0.556	0.820	
L4 (Care)	0.521	0.560	0.848
Reliability			
Criteria	L1	L3	L4
Cronbach's Alpha	0.887	0.759	0.800
rho_A	0.894	0.771	0.804
Composite Reliability	0.922	0.860	0.884
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.747	0.672	0.719

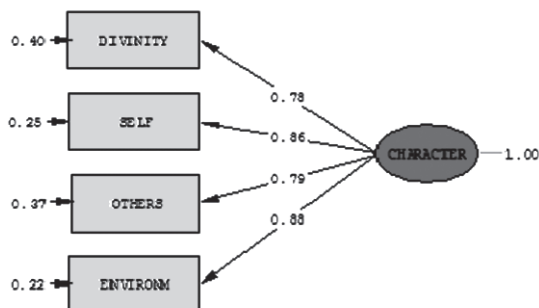
The dimension character in relation to the environment has 4 subdimensions, namely the spirit of nationalism, love of the motherland, being friendly with anyone, and caring for the environment. Each subdimension has 3 indicators, except L1 has 5 indicators. Based on the CFA analysis, those who qualify to be a subdimension of good behavioral dimensions to the environment are L1 (National spirit), L3 (Friendly), and L4 (Care) because they have a loading factor score, Cronbach's alpha reliability, rho-A score, composite reliability > 0.70, AVE > 0.50 and the square root of the Kuradrat AVE is greater than the correlation score between constructs (Discriminant Validity) as in Table (5).

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the conceptual dimension of multicultural and local wisdom character still has four dimensions, but with the changing dimensions as inTable (6).

Table 6. Dimensions and subdimensions after the CFA process

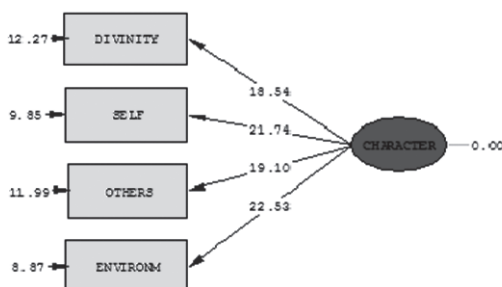
Dimension	Subdimension		Σ Indicator
	Beginning	Becomes	
Divinity	T1, T2, T3, T4	T1, T4	3, 3.
Self	D1, D2, D3, D4	D3, D4	3, 3.
Others	S1, S2, S3, S4	S3, S4	3, 4.
Environment	L1, L2, L3, L4	L1, L3, L4	4, 3, 3.

The four dimensions formed are tested for goodnes of fit of a model that can be assessed based on fit criteria. The results of testing a hypothetical model of an instrument for evaluating multicultural and local wisdom character for early childhood are presented in Figure (1) and Figure (2).



Chi-Square=0.51, df=2, P-value=0.77366, RMSEA=0.000

Figure 1. Path diagram of first order loading factor values



Chi-Square=0.51, df=2, P-value=0.77366, RMSEA=0.000

Figure 2. Path diagram of First order T-value

The four dimensions of multicultural and local wisdom character for early childhood have a factor loading value > 0.5 and have a T-value > 1.96 . Independence value AIC = 1055.48, model AIC = 16.51, saturated AIC = 20.00, independence CAIC = 1075.73, CAIC model = 57.02, saturated CAIC = 70.64, normed fit index (NFI) = 1.00, non-normed fit index (NNFI) = 1.00, parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) = 0.33, comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.00, incremental fit index (IFI) = 1.00, relative fit index (RFI) = 1.00, critical N (CN) = 7779.10, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.00091, standardized RMR = 0.0033, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 1.00, adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 1.00, and Parsimony

Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) = 0.20. The construct of multicultural character education for early childhood fulfills the fit model criteria with chi-square values $< 2df$; p -value > 0.5 ; Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 , and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) > 90 .

Discussion

The main purpose of this article is to confirm the dimensions, subdimensions and indicators of multicultural and local wisdom character of early childhood and produce valid and reliable early childhood character instruments. The conceptual dimension of the divinity obtained indicators that meet the criteria for loading factors, namely T11, T12, T13, T41, D42 and D43. The T1 (Belief) dimension is constructed from indicators T1, T2, T3 with a factor loading score from 0.784 to 0.827. Whereas the T4 (The value of manners / morals) subdimension is constructed from indicators D41, D42, D43 with a factor loading score of 0.806 to 0.906. The T1 and T4 dimensions have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients 0.737 to 0.837. Thus, the divine dimension has two valid and reliable subdimensions. The dimension of the instrument is said to be reliable if Cronbach's Alpha coefficient > 0.7 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2010). It can be concluded that one's self-belief and divinity meet valid and reliable criteria. In addition, the divine dimension (religius) is very important for every child (Shek, 2012). While Shek & Zhu (2018) stated that moral competence and spirituality affect behavior development. Many experts argue that spirituality is an important source of resilience, an asset in dealing with negative life experiences, and can help children overcome the difficulties and problems of life in an adaptive way (Koenig, 2010). There are several ways to develop spirituality in children, namely strategies: (1) understanding various forms of religion and spirituality through various media, including print and non-print media; (2) enhanced understanding is important as far as religious and spiritual beliefs are concerned; and (3) active reflection and experience are important processes in developing spirituality (Shek, 2012).

The conceptual dimensions of self obtained indicators that meet the criteria for loading factors are D31, D32, D33, D41, D42 and D43. The D3 dimension (Responsibility) is constructed from indicators D31, D32, D33 with a loading factor score from 0.797 to 0.871. Whereas the D4 (*Independence*) subdimension is constructed from indicators D41, D42, D43 with a factor loading score of 0.838 to 0.850. The D3 and D4 dimensions have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients from 0.797 to 0.801. Thus, self-dimension has two valid and reliable subdimensions.

The results of this study are in line with the results of previous studies (Harun, Jaedun, Sudaryanti, & Manaf, 2020). Responsibility and independence are knowing *mora* values possessed by early childhood students. With the value of responsibility implanted in school, a child feels obliged to follow the rules and see the rules in total. A child who has responsibility and is independent shows his moral competence. Moral competence includes responsibility for personal choice and responsibility to serve others (Martin & Austin, 2010).

The conceptual dimensions of others obtained indicators that meet the criteria for loading factors namely S31, S32, S33, S41, S42, S43 and S44. The S3 (Respecting the work and achievements of others) dimension is constructed from indicators S31, S32, S33 with a factor loading score from 0.836 to 0.875. The S4 (Be polite to fellow people) dimension is constructed from indicators S41, S42, S43, S44 with a factor loading score of 0.727 to 0.843. The dimensions of S3 and S4 have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients 0.806 to 0.813. Thus, fellow dimensions have two valid and reliable subdimensions. Doing good to others or social care is very important to be developed in early childhood, in which there is moral knowledge, good moral feelings and moral actions (Lickona, 1991; Komalasari, Abdulkarim, & Saripudin, 2018).

Conceptual dimensions of the environment obtained by indicators that meet the criteria for loading factors are L12, L13, L14, L15, L31, L32, L33, L41, L42 and L43. The L1 (Nationality) dimension is constructed from indicators L12, L13, L14, L15 with a factor loading score from 0.820 to 0.910. The L3 (Friendly) dimension is constructed from indicators L31, L32, L33 with a factor loading score of 0.806 to 0.837. The L4 (Care) dimension is constructed from indicators L41, L42, L43 with a loading factor score of 0.744 to 0.910. The L1, L3 and D4 dimensions have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients 0.759 to 0.887. Thus, environmental dimensions have three valid and reliable subdimensions. The dimensions of doing good among humans and the environment meet valid criteria (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2010).

Based on the four dimensions obtained, the goodness of fit test results obtained that the construct model of the instrument meets the fit model criteria. Chi square value = 0.51 with $df = 2$, p -value = 0.773, RMSEA = 0.000, and GFI = 1.00. According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (2010) there are three criteria for goodness of fit namely absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimony fit indices. The instrument construction is made to meet the absolute fit indices. An instrument that meets the fit model means that the structural equation in the path diagram can explain the covariance relationship between variables and their dimensions.

Comparison of the four dimensional constructs, namely the dimension of the character of the relationship with the environment has the greatest effect produced in the implementation of multicultural and local wisdom character compared to other character dimensions. This is known from the t-value generated at 22.53. The dimensions of the character of the relationship with oneself have a greater influence compared to the dimensions of relationships others and divinity. The resulting t-value is 21.74. The dimension of the character of relationships with others has a greater influence than the dimension of divinity. The t-value obtained is 19.10. While the dimensions of the relationship with divinity have the smallest influence. The resulting t-value is 18.54. Thus in the implementation of early childhood character in kindergarten (TK) all dimensions of character have been embedded and developed in early childhood students.

Dimensions, subdimensions, and indicators developed can be used in the assessment of the character of early childhood. The teacher has the responsibility for student assessment (Zhang, 2003), so teachers must have the competence to manage the multicultural education environment properly (Olur & Oguz, 2019). Multicultural character education are forms of strengthening the character of early childhood. Long-lasting patterns of behavior that can be generalized into personality characteristics (Diggs & Akos, 2016). The implementation of multicultural education is expected to eliminate forms of discrimination (Janakiraman, Watson, Watson, & Bawa, 2019) and violence (Au, 2017).

Conclusions

Based on the construction process of the research instrument, it is known that the conceptual dimension of multicultural and local wisdom character still has four dimensions, namely divinity, self, others, and the environment. The four conceptual dimensions are proven empirically clustered into four dimensions. Each dimension was corrected for subdimensions and items based on the loading factor score criteria, Cronbach alpha reliability, rho-A score, composite reliability > 0.70 , Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.50 and the square root of the square of the AVE is greater than the correlation score between constructs. A total of 29 indicators were produced that met the valid dan reliable criteria. The dimension of the character of the divinity relationship has 6 indicators which are divided into two subdimensions, namely belief (T1) and the value of manners / morals (T2). The dimension of the character of the relationship with oneself has 6 indicators which are divided into two subdimensions, namely responsibility (D3) and

independence (D4). The dimension of the character of relationships with fellow humans has 7 indicators which are divided into two subdimensions, namely respect (S3) and courtesy to others (S4). The potential character of the relationship to the environment has 10 indicators which are divided into three subdimensions, namely the spirit of nationality (L1), friendship with anyone (L3), and care for the environment (L4). The results of the goodness of fit test of a multicultural character education construct model of early childhood meet the absolute fit model criteria with a chi-square value $< 2df$; $p\text{-value} > 0.5$; Root Mean Square of Error Approximation < 0.08 , and Goodness of Fit Index > 90 . Dimensions of the character of the relationship with the environment have the greatest effect generated in the implementation of multicultural character education compared to other character dimensions.

The concept of an early childhood character kindergarten can provide comprehensive information for principals and teachers. From the use of these instruments it can be seen that the dominant dimension of character is formed in early childhood so that it can be done to strengthen a more integrated character education. The resulting instrument also fulfills valid and reliable criteria.

Suggestions for further researchers who want to use multicultural and local wisdom character assessment instruments for early childhood should be conducted trials on a broader scale so that they can produce better quality assessment instruments. The construct model should be developed further in making software so as to facilitate evaluators in the tabulation process and find out the results of the assessment quickly.

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