

# Lyrically Enlightened Learners: Fostering Values Formation through Character Building Songs

Rizamay Castor<sup>1</sup>, Erica Pagdato<sup>2</sup>, Nessie Panada<sup>3</sup>, Jalen B. Panaligan<sup>4</sup>

West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus, Calinog, Iloilo, Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to foster values formation among Grade 6 learners through the use of character-building songs, offering an innovative and effective approach to character education in intermediate schools. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) was conducted at Calinog Elementary School, located in Barangay Poblacion Ilaya, Calinog, Province of Iloilo, during the Academic Year 2024-2025. The research spanned two weeks, with two sessions held once a week from October to November 2024. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing interviews and responses to explore learners' thoughts and feelings about their experiences with the songs. The study participants included Grade 6 learners, their parents, the classroom teacher, and student-researchers. Learners were selected using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria, while parents were chosen through convenience sampling. To ensure confidentiality, code names were assigned to all participants. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and observations, and were analyzed using a thematic approach. The findings revealed that the values formation of Grade 6 learners before, during, and after the intervention was marked by challenges in exhibiting values, emotional engagement, and the enlightened young minds. The study concludes the use of character-building songs among Grade 6 learners facilitated a transformative process, helping them overcome challenges and develop a foundation for lifelong ethical decision-making. It is recommended that educators and policymakers should support creative, culturally relevant approaches and provide training to enhance the effectiveness of values formation.

**Keywords:** Character building, fostering, lyrically enlightened, values, formation, Songs

## INTRODUCTION

Values formation is a pivotal aspect of personal development, especially in education settings. Research indicates that school-based values formation can effectively instill positive values and character (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). However, during the first two months of the school year, teachers observed that many pupils required ongoing reinforcement to consistently practice Filipino values. Most learners needed gentle reminders to demonstrate the right values daily. Additionally, learners often mirrored behaviors observed in their environments, such as at home or within their communities, leading to inconsistent or conflicting values in their daily lives.

This inconsistency in applying appropriate values at home, coupled with environmental influences, posed challenges to pupils' character development. These observations aligned with the principles outlined in DepEd Order No. 39, series of 2016, known as the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA), which addressed students' needs and enhanced teaching strategies. Recognizing these challenges, the researchers aimed to identify solutions that met the needs of every learner and aligned with DepEd's Intermediate Outcomes. The study also conformed to the regional research agenda, focusing on teaching and learning-particularly curriculum analysis and the integration of values into the curriculum-as outlined in Regional Memorandum No. 329, Series of 2023.

In addressing these challenges, integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) theories provided a comprehensive framework to support values formation. SEL was defined as the process through which pupils acquired and applied knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and

collective goals, show empathy, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. This holistic approach complemented values education by fostering self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, which were essential for consistent values practice and character development (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020).

SEL theories such as social-cognitive theory emphasized the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their social environments, suggesting that pupils learned social and emotional skills through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. This aligned with the observation that learners mirrored behaviors from their surroundings, highlighting the importance of positive role models and supportive environments in values formation. Attachment theory further underscored the role of secure relationships in promoting emotional regulation and interpersonal skills, which were foundational for moral and values development (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020).

In this study, the use of character-building songs was presented as an innovative tool to foster values formation among Grade 6 learners. Anchored in Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development, which focused on cognitive processes involved in moral decision-making, this approach integrated SEL by encouraging creativity, discipline, ethical thinking, and emotional engagement through music. Research supported that singing songs with meaningful lyrics-built children's confidence, empathy, and character, making music a powerful medium for social-emotional and moral education.

By utilizing character-building songs, essential values such as respect, honesty, love, trust, empathy, compassion, and unity were conveyed through engaging lyrics and melodies. These songs encouraged pupils to reflect on their behavior, manage emotions, and make positive choices-core competencies emphasized in SEL frameworks.

Thus, this study aimed to foster values formation among Grade 6 learners through character-building songs, providing an effective and holistic approach to character education that integrated social-emotional learning theories within primary school curricula.

## METHODS

The study employed Participatory Action Research (PAR). According to MacDonald (2012), PAR is a qualitative research approach characterized as democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing. It enables the participation of all individuals, ensures equal worth, promotes freedom from restrictive conditions, and allows for the expression of each person's full potential. In PAR, participants who have an interest in the research actively work as co-researchers.

The participants were Grade 6 learners from Calinog Elementary School. One section was chosen out of seven based on two reasons: (1) the teacher noticed that learners in this group often misbehaved in class, and (2) the section was available during the study period. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. All learners in the chosen section were given equal opportunity to join the intervention. However, only selected individuals participated in the interview phase. Four male and four female students were chosen based on consistent participation in the intervention, willingness to be interviewed, and recommendation by the teacher based on observed behavior during the study. Additional data were obtained from reflective journals maintained by the participants.

A separate group of four parents of Grade 6 learners was selected through convenience sampling. The inclusion criteria required that the parent or guardian be responsible for a Grade 6 learner at Calinog Elementary School and could be a mother, father, grandparent, aunt, or uncle. The participation of parents in the interviews was significant in determining whether the intervention influenced their children's behavior at home. Student-researchers were also included as participants, and their observations before, during, and after the intervention provided valuable insights.

The intervention, which involved the use of character-building songs, was implemented at Calinog Elementary School every Tuesday and Thursday for two weeks-from October 27 and 29 to November 5 and 7, 2024-during the first quarter of the 2024-2025 school year. The intervention integrated character-building songs into the

Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao subject to foster values formation among learners, with each session lasting thirty minutes.

The intervention featured four songs-“Anak” by Freddie Aguilar, “Mapa” by SB19, “Hawak-Kamay” by Yeng Constantino, and “Batang-Bata Ka Pa” by Apo Hiking Society-selected for their relevance to values such as honesty, trust, love, respect, empathy, responsibility, and unity. The songs were chosen in consultation with the adviser to ensure age-appropriateness and alignment with lesson objectives. Criteria for song selection included alignment with school values, age and cultural relevance, a focus on character education, promotion of good manners, and comprehensible lyrics.

Implementation strategies included song selection, integration into lessons, student engagement, parental involvement, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The intervention followed these steps:

1. Introduction of Songs: Researchers introduced each song, providing background on the composition, artist, and cultural significance, and highlighting the themes and messages.
2. Playing the Song: Music videos were presented, and learners’ reactions and engagement were observed.
3. Guided Discussion: Learners participated in discussions, sharing insights and reflections on the songs’ messages and their personal experiences.
4. Activity Integration: Learners engaged in creative activities related to each song, such as drawing, constructing a "Chain of Hope," or creating a time capsule.
5. Reflective Journals: Journals were distributed for learners to record their thoughts and reflections, which were collected in subsequent sessions.

After the intervention, data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The interview guide was reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure validity. Reflective journals were also used to capture learners’ experiences during the intervention. Informed consent was obtained, and code names were used to protect participants’ identities.

The data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using an inductive thematic approach. The researchers began by thoroughly familiarizing themselves with the transcripts, noting initial ideas. Data were then systematically coded, with significant features labeled according to their relevance to the research questions. These codes were grouped into broader categories, from which themes were developed to capture key patterns and meanings. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the dataset. The final analysis presented these themes, supported by illustrative quotes from participants, providing rich and contextualized insights into the research topic.

To further ensure the credibility of the findings, interviews were conducted with the adviser, parents, and learners, allowing for the collection of multiple perspectives and verification of the consistency of the information gathered.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the analysis and interpretation of the study’s results.

### Grade 6 learners’ values formation before, during and after the intervention

Theme	Description	Evidence/s	Supporting Literature
Difficulty in Exhibiting Values	Learners struggled with practicing core values such as respect, honesty, empathy, love, and	Tina’s question about visitors showed curiosity but lack of respect; Clent shouted at classmates to be quiet, showing	Syapal et al. (2022) emphasize that character education should develop cognitive, affective, and

Formation (Before Intervention)	responsibility in daily interactions. Challenges included difficulty in self-regulation and responsible decision-making, affecting classroom harmony.	poor self-control; Ma'am Del noticed that the learners were misbehaving;	experiential values, but many students face challenges in internalizing these values, which manifest in everyday classroom behavior.
Emotional Engagement (During Intervention)	Learners developed strong emotional connections to the songs, which enhanced their understanding and appreciation of values. This aligns with global research showing that music education plays a vital role in fostering emotional and social development.	Ana noticed a friend crying and asked about the song's sadness; Tina reflected on her parents' hardships;  Ma'am Del observed that the learners were emotionally affected by the songs during the intervention;  Student-researchers observed that the learners became emotional during the intervention.	Campayo-Muñoz and Cabedo-Mas (2017) reviewed multiple studies demonstrating that active engagement with music supports the development of emotional skills, which promote well-being and enhance cognitive performance.  Akram et al. (2021) highlight the importance of teachers as role models and the use of storytelling and value-centered activities to nurture moral values effectively. Emotional engagement supports deeper learning of values.
Enlightened Young Minds (After Intervention)	The intervention helped learners recall and apply important values in daily life. Positive changes in attitudes and behaviors were observed both at school and at home, indicating that the values taught through the songs had been internalized. This outcome aligns with global research demonstrating the significant role of music education in values formation.	Tina and peers expressed learning from songs and recognized the importance of practicing values daily despite occasional misbehavior;  Ma'am Del noticed the changes in the behavior and attitudes of Grade 6 learners regarding the values targeted in the intervention. a. Learners show respect with their classmates in terms of speaking in a low voice rather than shouting when talking with each other. b. They learn to love, sharing and be kind with each other such instances by giving some food to someone who have nothing to eat specially during recess time and lunch time;  Rea, 32 years old, shared that her child became responsible and can do chores without being asked.	Eduadmin & Eduadmin (2023), Bhartiya (2023) – Values education fosters good manners, unity, and ethical decision-making.  Interventions designed to develop emotional intelligence through interactive music learning environments have shown significant improvements in students' abilities to perceive, understand, and manage emotions. Such programs promote teamwork, empathy, and emotional regulation, which are essential skills for collaborative musical performance and broader social functioning (Frontiers in Psychology, 2024; Kaschub, 2002).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The use of character-building songs among Grade 6 learners facilitated a transformative process, helping them overcome challenges and develop a foundation for lifelong ethical decision-making. Integrating music into values education engages learners emotionally and deepens their understanding of core values. Educators and policymakers should support creative, culturally relevant approaches and provide training to enhance the effectiveness of values formation. Ultimately, embedding character education through music nurtures responsible, empathetic individuals ready to face social and ethical challenges.

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