Storytelling Method in Instilling the Value of Tolerance and Mutual Respect in Ra Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the use of the storytelling method as a means of instilling the value of tolerance and mutual respect in early childhood at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan. This method was chosen because it corresponds to the characteristics of early childhood cognitive and affective development, which tends to learn imaginatively and emotionally. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data was collected through observation of learning activities, interviews with teachers, and documentation of children's activities. The results of the study show that storytelling that is carried out regularly and contextually is able to instill the values of tolerance and mutual respect effectively. The teacher uses Islamic stories, local fairy tales, and stories of exemplary figures as story material. Children show behavioral changes such as accepting disagreements, not being easily angry when playing, and respecting friends with different habits. This proves that storytelling is a relevant method in shaping children's social character from an early age.

Keywords: Storytelling, Value Tolerance, Mutual Respect, Early Childhood

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Introduction

Early childhood education (PAUD) is an important foundation in shaping children's personality, character, and mindset in the future. During this period, children experience rapid cognitive, social-emotional, and moral development, which is referred to as the golden age in individual growth and development (Santrock, 2011). Therefore, efforts to instill basic values such as tolerance and mutual respect need to be started from an early age, because these values will be inherent and shape children's social attitudes in dealing with diversity.

Indonesia as a country rich in ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity needs strong and sustainable character education efforts. In the midst of the dynamics of globalization, the unfiltered flow of information often touches the realm of early childhood through digital media, social environments, and even through family parenting. This can give rise to potential social conflicts rooted in a lack of understanding of the value of tolerance and mutual respect for differences (Tilaar, 2002). Therefore, an educational approach that touches on affective aspects and values is important to be applied in PAUD institutions.

One of the effective learning approaches in instilling moral values is the storytelling method. Storytelling is a method of conveying messages through stories that are narrative, imaginative, and touch on the emotional aspects of children (Ellis, 2010). Stories provide space for children to imagine events, understand the characters' characters, and absorb moral messages conveyed indirectly. In this case, stories are a means to instill life values such as respecting others, cooperating, respecting differences, and avoiding conflict or violence (Wright et al., 2013).

Research shows that the storytelling method is able to increase empathy and social understanding in early childhood. Isbell et al. (2004) found that storytelling not only improves children's language skills, but also enriches their moral and social insights through emotional engagement in stories. Children who are exposed to stories with tolerance values tend to show more friendly, open, and respectful behavior of others. This is supported by the findings of Nurul and Widodo (2018) who stated that storytelling is effective in conveying character values in kindergartens in Indonesia.

At RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan, an early childhood education institution in an area with a high level of ethnic diversity, storytelling methods have begun to be integrated into daily learning activities. However, the extent to which this method contributes to forming the value of tolerance and mutual respect in children still needs to be explored further academically. This study aims to fill this gap through an in-depth observation of the story-based learning practices carried out by teachers and their impact on children's behavior.

Furthermore, this approach is also in line with constructivist principles that emphasize that children build their own knowledge through social interaction and concrete experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Stories as a learning tool are not only conveying information, but also forming the cognitive structure and thinking scheme of children towards life values. Teachers play the role of facilitators who guide children in understanding the meaning of stories and relate them to their real lives (Nurgiyantoro, 2013).

Thus, this research is important to be conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the storytelling method as a value learning strategy in the PAUD environment, especially in the context of instilling the value of tolerance and mutual respect. In addition to making a theoretical contribution to the character education literature, the results of this research are also expected to be a practical guide for early childhood educators in designing and implementing value-based learning in a contextual manner.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study, which aims to explore in depth how the storytelling method is used in the process of instilling the value of tolerance and mutual

respect in early childhood at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a thorough understanding of the social and cultural context in which these values are instilled (Creswell, 2012). The research was carried out at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan, an early childhood education institution in North Sumatra with a diverse background of students who are quite diverse socially and culturally. The research subjects consisted of: Classroom teachers who use the storytelling method in teaching and learning activities, group B students (ages 5–6 years), school principals, and parents as triangulative informants. The selection of subjects was carried out by purposive sampling, which is based on their direct involvement in the learning process and instilling character values (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through three main techniques: Participatory Observation The researcher was directly involved in the learning activities in the classroom to observe the storytelling process, the child's response to the story, and the social interaction that emerged. Observations were carried out with observation sheet guidelines developed based on indicators of tolerance values and mutual respect (Sugiyono, 2019). Semi-Structured Interviews interviews are conducted with teachers, principals, and parents of students to obtain in-depth information about storytelling practices, value learning goals, and changes in children's behavior. Interviews are flexibly designed to allow for the exploration of the informant's personal narrative (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The document documentation study analyzed includes the daily learning implementation plan (RPPH), story media used, teacher reflection notes, and photo/video documentation of learning activities.

Data was analyzed using an interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1994) which includes: Data Reduction, the process of selecting and simplifying data from interviews, observations, and documentation to focus on matters relevant to the research objectives. Data Presentation, data is presented in the form of narrative descriptives, matrices, and direct quotes to facilitate interpretation and interpretation of meaning. Drawing Conclusions and Verification, Conclusions are drawn inductively based on the patterns that appear in the data. The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques.

Research Results and Discussion
4.1 Research Results

The observation results showed that the storytelling method was carried out on a scheduled basis at RA Al Rizky, at least twice a week. Storytelling is carried out by classroom teachers with a duration of 10–15 minutes per session, using various auxiliary media such as hand puppets, illustration drawings, and expressive voice intonation. The stories conveyed consisted of prophetic stories, Islamic fairy tales, folklore, and children's daily life stories. Examples of stories that are often used include:

a) *The story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH who was patient with his neighbors who hated him*.
b) *The story of two friends who have different opinions but still help each other*.
c) *Local fairy tales such as "Crying Stone" that teach respect to parents*.
   The teacher not only reads the story, but also inserts open-ended questions to the child, such as:

"*How do you feel if your friend has a different opinion*?", or "*Is it okay to make fun of a friend who speaks differently*?"

Inserting open-ended questions proved that students understood the story conveyed by the teacher.

4.1.1 Children's Responses to Stories Containing Tolerance Values

From class observations and teacher interviews, information was obtained that the children were very enthusiastic during the storytelling session. They begin to exhibit behaviors that reflect tolerance values, including:

a) Accept the differences of friends in the game, such as who is the leader or who takes the first turn.
b) It's not easy to get angry when you're bullied, but to reprimand with words like "I don't like it if you're like that, let's play nice".
c) Appreciate friends who are physically or intellectually different, such as friends from other areas who have just moved into their class.

The teacher also noted that children who used to like to pick friends, after several storytelling sessions, began to want to play in more diverse groups.

4.1.2 School Environment Support for the Implementation of Storytelling

The school provides support in the form of providing Islamic storybooks and social ethics that are appropriate for the child's age. Teacher training in interesting and effective storytelling techniques. Integration of story themes into weekly learning themes, such as "Myself", "Environment", "My Country", and "My Family".

4.2 Discussion
4.2.1 Storytelling as a Value Education Media in Early Childhood

Storytelling has the power to convey values in an unpatronizing and contextual way. In early childhood, their thinking skills are still concrete, so the delivery of value through stories is much easier to understand than direct explanations that are abstract. Through characters, conflicts, and settlements in stories, children can learn how to deal with differences and respond to social situations ethically.

According to Ellis and Brewster, storytelling can improve the understanding of values through imaginative and affective processes, where children can empathize with the character and imitate his behavior. (Ellis, G., & Brewster, J. 2002). Stories become a bridge between children's experiences and moral messages that teachers want to instill.

4.2.2 Instilling the Value of Tolerance Through the Representation of Characters in Stories

Characters in the story such as friends who disagree but still help each other, or children who are patient in the face of ridicule, provide concrete examples of tolerance. This is in line with the modelling-based approach to value learning, where children tend to imitate the positive attitudes they observe, either directly or through stories.

In Islam itself, the Qur'an uses the method of stories to educate the people, such as in the story of the Prophet Yusuf, the Prophet Moses, or Ashabul Kahfi. This method is called qasas, and it is an effective means of conveying wisdom and life lessons. (Department of Religion. 2005)

4.2.3 The Relevance of Storytelling to Children's Stages of Moral Development

According to Lawrence Kohlberg's moral theory, early childhood is at a pre-conventional stage, where their understanding of good and evil is still external—based on adult consequences or reactions. (Kohlberg, L. 1984) Therefore, stories that contain moral conflict and a fair settlement can help children understand that good actions bring good, and bad actions bring consequences.

When children listen to stories about people who forgive or respect others despite being different, they slowly form an understanding that tolerance is an act that is socially and spiritually valued.

4.2.4 The Role of Teachers in Strengthening Values through Discussion After Stories

Teachers have a key role as facilitators of value learning. Storytelling is not just reading stories, but must be followed by collective reflection. In practice at RA Al Rizky, the teacher always ends the story with questions that invite discussion, such as:

"*What did you learn from the character of the story?"*

"How would you behave if you were in that character's position?"

According to Bandura, value learning will be more effective if children not only listen, but also invited to internalize through reflection and social discussion. (Bandura, A.1977) Teachers who actively guide this process will reinforce the impact of stories on changes in children's behavior.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is a very effective approach in instilling the value of tolerance and mutual respect in early childhood at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan. Through stories that are told regularly and contextually, children can understand the meaning of differences, respect others, and foster empathy for others.

Stories that contain moral messages and Islamic values are a means that children can easily understand, because they are conveyed through characters, plots, and conflicts that are close to their world. In addition, the discussions held after the storytelling session strengthened children's understanding of the values conveyed, as well as trained them to express their opinions and listen to the views of their friends.

Teachers play a central role in this process, not only as storytellers but also as facilitators of values and real role models. Storytelling has been proven to help children show behavioral changes that reflect tolerance and mutual respect in daily social interactions, both when playing and learning together.

Thus, storytelling can be recommended as a strategic method in early childhood character education, especially in forming harmonious social attitudes based on Islamic values.

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