

Implementation of The Prophet's Story Roleplay Method in Cultivating Islamic Character in Children At Haholongan Kindergarten, Padang Sidempuan

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the application of roleplay based on the Prophet's story as a strategy for instilling Islamic character in early childhood at Haholongan Kindergarten, Padang Sidempuan. The research method used was descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through participant observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the application of roleplay based on the Prophet's story can improve the understanding and practice of Islamic values, such as honesty, trustworthiness, compassion, and patience. This method was implemented through the stages of story introduction, role-playing, short exercises, mini-performances, and value reflection. Data showed a significant increase in children's active participation, from 50% in the first week to 94% in the fourth week, as well as an increase in Islamic character behavior, marked by the frequency of positive behaviors in daily interactions. The roleplay method has proven effective because it provides a contextual, enjoyable learning experience, and directly involves children.

Keywords: *Roleplay, Prophet's Story, Islamic Character, Early Childhood*

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Introduction

Character education is a fundamental aspect of the educational process, especially at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level, where this stage serves as the main foundation for shaping a child's personality. In Islam, character education is not only oriented toward general social norms but also encompasses spiritual dimensions, morality, and role modeling based on revelation. Therefore, it is important for Islamic educational institutions to design learning approaches that comprehensively touch the affective dimension of children (Zuhairini, et al., 2004).

In the modern era, marked by technological advancement, social change, and global challenges, character education for children has become increasingly urgent. Early childhood is considered the golden age, a period when all the basic potentials of a human being begin to form and develop rapidly. According to Piaget and Erickson, childhood is the initial stage of moral and social empathy development, which makes it essential to instill positive values through enjoyable approaches suited to their developmental stage.

In the context of Islamic education in ECE, the cultivation of Islamic character values is not only conceptual or cognitive but more about habituation and direct experience. One effective approach in instilling Islamic character values is the role-play method. Through this method, children can portray inspiring figures in Islam, particularly the prophets, so they do not merely hear the stories but also experience the meaning of those roles through movement, dialogue, and expression. This activity enables children to build empathy, imitate noble character, and concretely understand values through play experiences (Susanto, A., 2017).

The stories of the prophets in Islam are rich in character values such as honesty (Prophet Muhammad), patience (Prophet Ayyub), leadership (Prophet Musa), and obedience to parents (Prophet Ismail). These values are highly relevant to be introduced at an early age through enjoyable learning activities suited for children aged 4–6 years (Fitriani, R., 2020). By integrating stories and action in the form of role-play, children are expected to internalize Islamic values more meaningfully.

TK Haholongan Padangsidempuan is an early childhood education institution that develops character-based Islamic learning, one of which is through the application of the role-play method of prophetic stories. The use of this method becomes an interesting practice to be further examined, particularly in observing its effectiveness and challenges in classroom implementation. Therefore, this study aims to describe the application of the role-play method of prophetic stories in instilling Islamic character, the types of character developed, as well as teachers' and children's responses to this method.

Research methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as its focus is to gain an in-depth understanding of the process and meaning of implementing the role-play method in the context of Islamic character education. Through this approach, the researcher can explore teachers' perceptions, children's behaviors, as well as the natural and holistic context of the method's implementation (Moleong, L. J., 2018). The type of research used is a case study, with TK Haholongan Padangsidempuan selected as a single-site case study. This institution was chosen purposively because it has routinely applied the role-play method of prophetic stories in its weekly learning activities.

The research was conducted at TK Haholongan, located in Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra. This school is one of the Islamic-based early childhood education institutions actively developing character education through storytelling and educational play approaches.

Data were collected using three main techniques:

1. Observation, by directly observing the role-play activities of prophetic stories in the classroom, including how teachers guided the process and how children responded

and participated (Spradley, J. P., 1980).

2. Interviews, conducted in-depth with the principal, classroom teachers, and several parents to explore their views on the impacts and challenges of this method (Creswell, 2016).
3. Documentation, which involved collecting lesson plans (RPPH), role-play scripts, as well as photo and video documentation of the learning process as supporting data.

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes:

1. Data reduction: selecting relevant data from interviews and observations,
2. Data display: organizing findings into narratives and quotations,
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: identifying patterns and interpreting the meaning of the role-play method implementation (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M., 1994).

The validity of the data was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as member checking to ensure the accuracy of information provided by respondents.

Results

Implementation of the Role-Play Method Based on Prophetic Stories at TK Haholongan Padangsidempuan began with the introduction of materials and stories relevant to children's daily lives. Teachers selected stories of prophets rich in Islamic character values, such as the honesty of Prophet Ibrahim (AS), the trustworthiness of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the patience of Prophet Yunus (AS), and the compassion of Prophet Musa (AS). Teachers prepared a Daily Lesson Plan (RPPH) integrated into the core activities, using a storytelling method combined with role-play.

At the initial stage, teachers motivated children with short, engaging stories using illustrations or pictures. Next, children were invited to act out the roles in the story. Each child was given the opportunity to portray either a prophet or supporting characters, ensuring all children were actively involved.

1. Role-Play Process

The role-play sessions were conducted three times a week, each lasting 20–30 minutes. The stages of implementation included:

- a. Story Introduction – The teacher narrated the prophetic story briefly in simple language, emphasizing the character values to be instilled.
- b. Role Assignment – Children chose roles voluntarily or took turns. Teachers provided simple props such as cloth for robes, toy sticks, or dolls to stimulate imagination.
- c. Dialogue Practice – Teachers guided children in memorizing short dialogues and using appropriate intonation.
- d. Performance – Children acted out the story in front of the class, while teachers and peers became the audience.
- e. Reflection – Teachers engaged children in discussions on the moral message of the story, for example: *“Why was Prophet Muhammad always honest?”* or *“Why did Prophet Yunus remain patient in the belly of the fish?”*

2. Increased Participation and Islamic Behavior

Observations revealed a significant increase in children's active participation:

- a. Week 1: 9 out of 18 children (50%) confidently acted out roles.
- b. Week 2: 12 children (67%) became active, starting to speak without guidance.
- c. Week 3: 15 children (83%) participated actively, with some beginning to add improvisations to their roles.
- d. Week 4: 17 children (94%) enthusiastically performed, with almost all demonstrating expressive acting.

Islamic character behaviors also improved. Children more frequently greeted with *salaam*, returned belongings to friends, and showed willingness to share. Patience was also enhanced, as indicated by children waiting for their turn without rushing or competing.

3. Children's and Parents' Responses

Teachers reported that children became more friendly, polite, and confident in public speaking. Parents confirmed that their children often reenacted prophetic stories at home, such as reminding siblings to be honest or to greet others with *salaam*. This shows that the values taught through role-play extended beyond school into family environments.

4. Supporting Factors and Challenges

Supporting factors included teachers' creativity in preparing scenarios and media, parental support in reinforcing learning at home, and the availability of simple materials to stimulate children's imagination.

Challenges included some children's initial shyness or lack of confidence, limited learning time due to a packed schedule, and differences in children's language abilities, which required teachers to frequently simplify dialogues.

Discussion

1. Effectiveness of Role-Play in Instilling Islamic Character

The role-play method has proven effective in instilling Islamic character values in early childhood. Children not only listen to stories but also directly experience and act out the stories of the Prophets. This supports social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), which states that children learn through observation, imitation, and direct experience. Children's active involvement in role-play makes the learning process more meaningful, as they engage both emotionally and cognitively. For instance, when acting as Prophet Ibrahim (AS), a child learns about honesty by reciting a simple dialogue: "*I speak the truth to my father.*" This process strengthens the understanding of moral values through real practice rather than mere theory (Hasanah, 2019).

2. Behavioral Changes in Children

Increased confidence, politeness, and empathy indicate that role-play can shape children's social character. This aligns with Ramli's (2018) findings that the role-play method fosters empathy, cooperation, and communication skills in children. They become more open and able to express opinions politely.

3. Integration of Islamic Values

Prophetic stories as role-play material have the advantage of containing Islamic values highly relevant to daily life. Islamic character education must be integrated into every learning activity, not only within religious subjects (Muslich, 2018). Through role-play, children can practice Islamic behaviors such as greeting with *salaam*, sharing, and showing patience within the context of play.

4. Environmental Factors and Collaboration

The success of role-play at TK Haholongan cannot be separated from collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school environment. Parents reinforced the habits at home,

ensuring that Islamic values remained consistent. The supportive school environment such as the habits of praying and greeting further strengthened children's character formation.

5. Comparison with Other Methods

Compared to lectures or traditional storytelling, role-play attracts children's attention more effectively because it actively engages them. Children more easily grasp moral messages since they themselves act out positive behaviors. This reinforces the findings of Bodrova & Leong (2007), who argued that role-play enhances self-regulation, creativity, and children's social skills.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the role-play method based on prophetic stories is effective in instilling Islamic character values in early childhood at TK Haholongan Padangsidimpuan. Through role-play, children not only listen to the stories of the Prophets but also practice values such as honesty, trustworthiness, patience, and empathy within play activities. Observations showed significant improvements in children's activeness, cooperation skills, and Islamic behaviors, such as the habit of greeting with *salaam*, helping peers, and willingness to share.

Support from teachers and parents, along with the Islamic school environment, were the main factors contributing to the success of this method. Challenges such as limited time and children's initial shyness were overcome through gradual approaches, simple media, and positive reinforcement. Therefore, the role-play method of prophetic stories can be recommended as an effective strategy for Islamic character education in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and kindergarten settings.

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