

Planting the Seeds of Honesty From an Early Age: Implementation of Islamic Storytelling Methods at RA An-Nurul Islam Medan Helvetia

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of Islamic storytelling methods in instilling the value of honesty in early childhood at RA Annurul Islam Medan Helvetia. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the Islamic storytelling method is carried out in a planned and routine manner, with the selection of relevant stories and approaches that are in accordance with the characteristics of the child's development. Children show positive behavioral changes, such as the courage to admit mistakes, tell the truth, and respect for the property rights of friends. The role of teachers as storytellers as well as role models is very influential in the process of internalizing the value of honesty. In addition, the support of the religious school environment and the involvement of parents also strengthen the results of the formation of children's character. Thus, the Islamic storytelling method has proven to be effective as a character education strategy in instilling the value of honesty from an early age.

Keywords: *Honesty, Early Childhood, Islamic Storytelling Methods, Character Education*

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Introduction

Childhood is the initial stage of forming the foundation of a person's personality. In the early age period, children are experiencing rapid development, not only physically and intellectually, but also in moral and spiritual aspects. Developmental experts agree that basic life values—including honesty, responsibility, empathy, and mutual respect—need to be introduced and instilled from an early age in order to become a character that is firmly instilled in children. This is in line with the principles of character education that place morality as a core part of the educational process.

Honesty is one of the main moral values that is the foundation for the formation of a person who can be trusted, responsible, and has integrity. In the context of Islamic education, honesty or *shidq* is one of the morals that is highly emphasized. The Prophet PBUH was known as a very honest person even before he was appointed as a prophet, so he received the title *Al-Amin*. In a hadith narrated by Bukhari it is stated, "*Indeed, honesty leads to goodness, and goodness leads to heaven.*" (HR. Bukhari). This shows how important the value of honesty is in Islamic teachings, which is not only social but also spiritual.

However, instilling the value of honesty in early childhood cannot be done through lectures or verbal instructions alone. Early childhood has a distinctive way of learning, namely through direct experience, repetition, and fun stimulation. Therefore, the approach used must be adapted to the child's world, namely the world of play, imagination, and story. In this context, the Islamic storytelling method is one of the effective approaches to instill moral values, including honesty.

The Islamic storytelling method not only conveys interesting stories, but also contains moral values that can be emulated by children. Stories about honest and trustworthy prophets, companions, and Islamic figures can arouse children's imagination and provide concrete examples of how to be honest in daily life. Stories are able to bridge children's understanding of abstract concepts into more concrete and easy to understand. In addition, Islamic stories also introduce children to the history of Islam and the noble values contained in it. RA An-Nurul Islam Medan Helvetia as one of the Islamic-based early childhood education institutions is committed to instilling noble morals from an early age, including the value of honesty. In practice, teachers at RA use various methods to shape children's characters, one of which is the Islamic storytelling method. However, the extent to which this method is able to internalize the value of honesty in children, as well as how the strategy of telling stories carried out by teachers, still needs to be studied in more depth.

This research is important to systematically explore the implementation of Islamic storytelling methods as a means of instilling the value of honesty in RA An-Nurul Islam Medan Helvetia. By looking at how the process of telling stories, children's responses, and value strengthening strategies by teachers, this study is expected to provide a complete picture of the effectiveness of this method in early childhood character education. In addition, the results of this study can also make a practical contribution for PAUD and RA educators in designing more meaningful and contextual learning strategies based on Islamic values.

In the midst of the challenges of the times marked by moral crises and examples, honesty education from an early age is an urgent need. The nation's future generations need a solid moral foundation in order to be able to grow into responsible, trustworthy, and uphold the values of truth. Therefore, planting the seeds of honesty through an approach that is in accordance with the characteristics of children, such as the Islamic storytelling method, is an important and strategic first step in building a generation with noble character.

Literature Review

Honesty is one of the moral values that is highly emphasized in Islam. In the context of early childhood education, honesty is not only taught as a norm, but needs to be instilled as

character from an early age. The Prophet PBUH was known as a very honest person, so he was given the title Al-Amin. This example needs to be introduced from an early age so that children grow up with a strong character (Hadi, 2019).

Character education, including honesty, in early childhood is very important because the golden age is the most effective period in the world to inculcate the basic values of life. At this stage, children have a high absorption of moral values, so they require a delivery method that is in accordance with the child's world (Suyadi, 2015).

The storytelling method is one of the effective pedagogical approaches in conveying moral and religious values to early childhood. Stories have the power to touch emotions, foster empathy, and internalize values without a patronizing impression. In Islamic education, the stories of the prophets and companions are a learning medium that is very rich in moral messages (Fitriyani, 2020).

The Islamic storytelling method not only presents ordinary stories, but also brings children to know Islamic values, such as honesty, responsibility, trust, and obedience to Allah. Stories such as the story of the Prophet Ibrahim who was honest to his father or the Prophet Muhammad who was known to be honest since childhood, are a means of forming children's characters (Munir, 2018).

In the RA (Raudhatul Athfal) institution, the Islamic storytelling method is often used in thematic learning activities. Educators can convey Islamic stories through various media such as puppets, images, videos, or in person. The use of this method is part of active and joyful learning that is in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood (Wiyani, 2012).

The successful implementation of this method is characterized by changes in children's attitudes, such as being able to tell the truth when making mistakes, not taking other people's things without permission, and being able to distinguish between right and wrong behavior. However, the success of this method depends heavily on the teacher's ability to convey stories expressively, appreciatively, and consistency in habituation outside of storytelling sessions (Rohmah, 2021).

Research Methods

The research used in this study is qualitative research that provides descriptive information in written or oral narratives about the people and behaviors observed. In this study, the author examines the phenomenon that occurs at RA An-Nurul Islam Medan Helvetia to obtain the truth of information based on the theoretical framework of the questions asked scientifically. The research approach used is a descriptive approach which are field-based in natural conditions taken from written or oral narratives as well as the behavior of the people observed consisting of principals, teachers and students.

3.1 Research and Discussion Results

This research was conducted at RA An-Nurul Islam Medan Helvetia with the research subjects of classroom teachers, principals, and group B students.

3.2 Planning of Islamic Storytelling Activities

Teachers at RA An-Nurul Islam design Islamic storytelling activities as part of thematic learning. The stories are chosen based on the character values that they want to instill, such as the honest story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW since childhood, the story of the Prophet Ibrahim AS, or local Islamic stories that have been adapted to the age of the child. The teacher prepares auxiliary media such as hand puppets, pictures, and short videos to support the story.

3.3 Implementation of Islamic Storytelling Methods

The implementation of the Islamic storytelling method is carried out routinely twice a week, in the morning before the core lesson. Teachers use expressive storytelling styles, set the intonation of the voice, and engage the children in the story with simple reflective questions such as "If you were the Prophet Muhammad, what would you do?". This activity lasts for 15–20 minutes and is followed by a small discussion with the children.

3.4 Children's Behavior Responses and Changes

Based on the results of observations and interviews, there was a change in children's attitudes towards the value of honesty. Children begin to show honesty in their daily lives, such as admitting mistakes when spilling water, not taking friends' things without permission, and being honest when they are late for class. Teachers also provide positive reinforcement, such as praise and "Honest Children Today" stickers that increase children's motivation to be honest.

The results of the study show that the Islamic storytelling method is effective in instilling the value of honesty in early childhood. Stories as a learning medium are fun and in accordance with the characteristics of children's development. This is in line with the opinion of Suyadi (2015) that imaginative approaches such as stories are able to bridge the delivery of moral values in a non-patronizing way.

Islamic stories also provide concrete examples to children, not just moral instruction. Children find it easier to imitate the behavior of characters in stories than to understand abstract advice. This strengthens Bandura's theory of social learning which states that children learn from observation and imitation.

The teacher's consistency in conveying Islamic stories and relating them to children's daily events is a supporting factor for the success of instilling the value of honesty. Teachers not only tell stories, but also set real examples, such as admitting mistakes in front of children or praising children for being honest. This shows that internalizing the value of honesty is not enough through one approach, but should be part of the daily culture in the classroom.

The religious school environment, as well as the support of parents who also practice Islamic values at home, also strengthen the results of Islamic storytelling activities. Children who get honesty scores from two directions—home and school—tend to exhibit consistent behavior. This is in line with Lestari's (2021) research which shows that children's character formation is more effective when there is synergy between family and school.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the Islamic storytelling method is an effective approach in instilling the value of honesty in early childhood. Through Islamic stories that are presented in an interesting and contextual way, children not only listen, but also begin to internalize the moral messages contained in them. Children at RA An-Nurul Islam Medan Helvetia showed positive behavioral changes, such as daring to admit mistakes, not taking friends' belongings without permission, and being used to being honest in various situations. This success cannot be separated from the role of teachers who are not only storytellers, but also as real role models in daily life in the school environment. The implementation of storytelling activities that are carried out regularly and consistently provides space for children to reflect and emulate the value of honesty in a simple and easy-to-understand form. In addition, the support of the religious school environment and the involvement of parents in strengthening the values of honesty at home also strengthened the successful implementation of this method. Thus, the Islamic storytelling method has proven to be one of the effective strategies in shaping children's characters, especially in terms

of honesty, if applied consistently and supported by a conducive environment.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, the author suggests that RA teachers continue to develop Islamic storytelling methods with high creativity, both from in terms of delivery techniques and the use of media that are in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood. Teachers also need to make stories an entrance for habituating attitudes and behaviors that reflect the value of honesty in children's daily lives. The RA institution is expected to provide support by establishing a learning policy that integrates storytelling methods in the program to strengthen character education systematically. In addition, the role of parents is also very important in maintaining the continuity of the values instilled in schools. Therefore, it is recommended that parents always set an example at home and establish good communication with teachers. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct further research with a wider scope, as well as explore the influence of Islamic storytelling methods on other character values such as responsibility, social concern, and trust, so as to make a greater contribution to the development of Islamic-based early childhood character education models.

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