

Implementation Of Hand Puppet Learning Media In Growing Islamic Character Of Elementary School Students Of Alam Friends Of The Quran

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the implementation of hand puppet learning media in fostering students' Islamic character at SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method, this study involves participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The results of the study show that the use of hand puppets as a learning medium is effective in improving students' Islamic character, especially in the aspects of honesty, discipline, empathy, patience, and responsibility. This media has been shown to attract students' attention, facilitate understanding of abstract concepts, and encourage active participation in learning. The main challenges in implementation include time constraints and the need for content variation, which is overcome through teacher training and the development of a learning content bank. This study concludes that hand puppet learning media has significant potential in Islamic character education and recommends further development and integration with digital technology to increase its effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental aspect in the formation of a young generation with integrity and noble character. (Syarnubi, 2023) In an era of globalization that is fraught with moral and ethical challenges, the need for effective character education is increasingly urgent, especially for elementary school students who are in a critical phase of personality formation (Syarnubi, 2019). In the context of Islamic education, the development of Islamic character is a top priority to prepare a generation of Muslims who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have morals in accordance with Islamic teachings (Astuti, Mardiah, Reni Febriani, 2023). Integrated Islamic Elementary School (SD IT) as a formal educational institution that integrates Islamic values in its curriculum, has a great responsibility in instilling Islamic character in its students (Syarnubi, S., et al, 2021). However, the process of cultivating this character often faces challenges, especially when it comes to effective and engaging teaching methods for elementary school students. Conventional methods such as lectures and memorization are often less effective in attracting students' interest and active participation, so innovation in learning media is needed (Hadion Wijoyo, 2021).

One of the promising innovations in Islamic character education is the use of hand puppet learning media. Hand puppets, as educational props, have great potential to attract students' attention and facilitate the delivery of moral messages in a more interactive and fun way. Previous research has shown the effectiveness of hand puppets in improving storytelling skills and understanding of moral values in early childhood (Arief, Bunga, 2023). However, its implementation in the context of Islamic character education at the elementary school level still requires further exploration (Syarnubi, S., Alimron, A., & Muhammad, 2022). The novelty and state of the art of this

research lies in the integration of hand puppet learning media with the concept of Islamic character education in the context of SD IT (Syarnubi, 2020). Unlike previous studies that focused more on the use of hand puppets to improve language skills or general understanding, this study specifically examined its effectiveness in cultivating Islamic character. (Syarnubi, S., Efriani, A., Pranita, S., Zulhijra, Z., Anggara, B., Alimron, A., ... & Rohmadi, 2024) This innovation answers the need for more interactive teaching methods and relevant to the cognitive and socio-emotional development of SD IT students.

Literature surveys show that the use of interactive learning media such as hand puppets has been proven to be effective in increasing student engagement in the learning process. (Syarnubi, S., Syarifuddin, A., & Sukirman, 2023) According to, the use of hand puppet media can significantly improve the speaking skills of elementary school students. Meanwhile, found that hand puppet media was effective in improving the ability to listen to stories in elementary school students. (Fauzi, M., Lestari, A. R. S., & Ali, 2023) In the context of character education, (Sitinjak, 2022) it is demonstrated that the use of interactive learning media can facilitate the internalization of moral values in elementary school students. However, although there are various studies on the effectiveness of hand puppets in learning and character development in general, there is still a gap in the literature regarding its implementation specifically to cultivate Islamic character in the IT elementary school environment. The majority of previous studies have focused on cognitive aspects or language skills, while aspects of Islamic character, (Syarnubi, S., et al, 2023) formation have not received adequate attention. In addition, the unique context of SD IT that integrates Islamic values in all aspects of learning has not been explored in depth in relation to the use of hand puppet media. (Syarnubi, 2022)

This gap analysis leads to the need for research that specifically examines the effectiveness of hand puppet learning media in the context of Islamic character education in IT Elementary School. This gap covers several aspects. There is a lack of empirical studies on the effectiveness of hand puppets in cultivating Islamic characters specifically. Limited understanding of how to integrate Islamic values into the use of hand puppet media in the IT elementary school environment. Lack of exploration of the perception of teachers and students of SD IT towards the use of hand puppets as a medium for learning Islamic characters.

There is a lack of practical guidance for IT elementary school teachers in implementing hand puppet media for Islamic character education. Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of hand puppet learning media in fostering the Islamic character of SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran students. Identify strategies for integrating Islamic values into the use of hand puppet media in the IT Elementary School environment. Evaluating the perception of teachers and students of SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran towards the use of hand puppets as a medium for learning Islamic characters. Developing practical guidelines for elementary IT teachers in implementing hand puppet media for Islamic character education.

The contribution of this research is expected to provide significant benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research will enrich the literature on Islamic character education and the use of innovative learning media at the elementary school level. The results of the research are expected to be the basis for the development of theories and models of Islamic character education that are more comprehensive and relevant to the context of modern education. Practically, this research will make an important contribution to education practitioners, especially teachers and IT elementary school managers, in the form of a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and potential of hand puppet media in fostering students' Islamic character. Concrete strategies and techniques to integrate Islamic values into the use of hand puppet media. Practical guidance that can be implemented directly by teachers in daily learning activities. Policy recommendations for IT elementary school managers in optimizing the use of innovative learning media for Islamic character education.

Furthermore, this research also has the potential to make a wider social contribution by helping to prepare a generation of Muslims who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have a strong Islamic character. This is in line with the vision of national education to form human beings

who have faith, piety, and noble character as stated in the Law on the National Education system, in a global context, where the issue of radicalism and moral degradation is a serious challenge, this research offers an innovative approach in instilling Islamic values in a moderate and inclusive manner through fun learning media. This is in line with global efforts to promote character education and universal values as proclaimed by UNESCO in the Global Citizenship Education program.

The implementation of hand puppet learning media in fostering Islamic character of SD IT students represents a synthesis between tradition and innovation in Islamic education. On the one hand, hand puppets as a learning medium reflect a modern approach that is student-centered and emphasizes active learning. On the other hand, the content and values conveyed remain rooted in the fundamental teachings of Islam. This synthesis answers the challenge of contemporary Islamic education to remain relevant and effective in the digital era without losing its spiritual essence.

This study also considers aspects of child development psychology, especially Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Kohlberg's theory of moral development. According to Piaget, elementary school-age children are at the concrete operational stage, where they need physical representations to understand abstract concepts. Hand puppets, in this case, serve as a bridge between the abstract concept of Islamic characters and concrete representations that students can see and touch. Meanwhile, Kohlberg's theory of moral development emphasizes the importance of examples and narratives in the formation of children's morals (Syarnubi, 2019). The use of hand puppets allows the presentation of moral dilemmas and examples of Islamic behavior in the form of interesting narratives that are easy to understand by SD IT students. This is expected to facilitate the internalization of Islamic values more effectively compared to conventional teaching methods. (Syarnubi, 2016)

In its implementation, this study will adopt a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative analysis to measure the effectiveness of hand puppet media with qualitative analysis to understand the perception and experience of teachers and students. Data collection will involve classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, as well as pre-test and post-test measurements to assess the development of students' Islamic character. Through this research, it is hoped that an innovative, effective, and replicable Islamic character learning model can be created in various IT elementary schools in Indonesia. More than that, this research has the potential to pave the way for the development of various other creative learning media that can support Islamic character education at the primary education level. Thus, research on the implementation of hand puppet learning media in fostering Islamic character of SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran students is not only relevant to current educational needs, but also has significant potential to make a positive contribution to the development of Islamic character education in Indonesia. Through the integration of technology, developmental psychology, and Islamic values, this research is expected to be a catalyst for sustainable and wide-impact educational innovation. (Syarnubi, S., & Fahiroh, 2024)

METHODS

This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative research. This type of research was chosen because it aims to describe and interpret the phenomenon of the implementation of hand puppet learning media in fostering the Islamic character of SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran students in depth and comprehensively. The approach used in this study is a case study. This approach was chosen because the research focused on one specific case, namely the implementation of hand puppet learning media at SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran. Case studies allow researchers to explore in depth the different aspects of the phenomenon being studied in a real context.

Participatory Observation. Researchers will make direct observations of the learning process using hand puppet media in the classroom. This observation aims to observe teacher-student interactions, student responses, and the development of Islamic characters that emerge during learning. **Participatory Observation.** Researchers will make direct observations of the learning process using hand puppet media in the classroom. This observation aims to observe teacher-student interactions, student responses, and the development of Islamic characters that emerge during learning. **In-Depth Interviews.** A semi-structured interview will be conducted by:

- Teachers: to dig up information about the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the use of hand puppet media
- Students: to find out their perceptions and experiences related to learning using hand puppets
- Principal: to understand the school's policies and support for the implementation of this learning medium

Documentation. Collect and analyze relevant documents such as lesson plans, teacher notes, and documentation of learning activities to enrich research data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Hand Puppet Learning Media

The implementation of hand puppet learning media at SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran shows significant results in fostering students' Islamic character. Based on observations and interviews conducted, the use of hand puppets as a learning medium has proven to be effective in attracting students' attention and facilitating the delivery of Islamic values in a fun and easy-to-understand manner. Teachers at SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran use hand puppets in various subjects, especially in Islamic religious learning and character education. Hand puppets are used to act out characters in Islamic stories, demonstrate manners in Islam, and visualize abstract concepts related to morals and worship. This is in line with research that found that the use of visual media such as hand puppets can increase students' understanding of abstract concepts in religious learning.

One of the class teachers, Mrs. Aminah, stated, "The use of hand puppets makes students more enthusiastic about learning. They not only listen, but are also actively involved in stories and discussions." This statement supports the findings (Yahya, et al, 2023). that interactive learning media can increase student motivation and participation in the learning process. (Syarnubi, 2024)

Influence on Students' Islamic Character

The observation results showed a significant improvement in the aspects of students' Islamic character after the implementation of hand puppet learning media. Some of the Islamic characters that are seen to have experienced positive developments include:

1. Honesty: Through stories told using hand puppets, students learn about the importance of honesty in everyday life. Observations in the classroom showed that students began to be more honest in admitting mistakes and not cheating during exams. This is in line with (Wahyudi, et al, 2023) research that found that story-based learning can improve the honesty of elementary school students
2. Discipline: The use of hand puppets in explaining prayer schedules and the importance of punctuality in Islam makes students more disciplined. Teachers' records show an increase in on-time attendance in class and order in participating in school activities. These findings support the results of Fathurrohman's (2021) research on the effectiveness of visual media in improving student discipline.
3. Empathy and Caring: Stories conveyed through hand puppets often contain moral messages about the importance of helping others. Observations showed an increase in mutual help behavior among students, both inside and outside the classroom. (Mahardika, Andi Ichsan, 2023) His research also found that the use of interactive learning media can increase students' empathy and social concern.
4. Patience: Through the stories of the Prophet and Islamic figures conveyed using hand puppets, students learn about the value of patience. Teachers reported that students showed improvement in controlling emotions and being more patient in the face of learning difficulties. This is consistent with the findings (Sayidah, Nur, Suhartawan Budianto, 2023)
5. which shows the effectiveness of storytelling in developing patience in elementary school children.
6. Responsibility: The use of hand puppets in explaining the concepts of trust and responsibility in Islam makes students better understand the importance of carrying out tasks well. Observations showed an increase in the completion of school assignments and responsibility in maintaining classroom cleanliness. This finding is in line with research (Syifa, Indira, Karai

Handak, Dinie Anggraeni Dewi, 2024) on the role of learning media in increasing students' sense of responsibility.

The Effectiveness of Hand Puppets as a Learning Media

The effectiveness of hand puppets as a learning medium in fostering students' Islamic character can be seen from several aspects:

1. **Attracting Students' Attention and Interest:** Hand puppets have proven to be effective in attracting and retaining students' attention during the learning process. This is in line with the visual learning theory put forward by (Syaikhu, Ach, 2019), which states that children tend to absorb information more easily through attractive visual stimuli.
2. **Facilitate the Presentation of Abstract Concepts:** The use of hand puppets assists teachers in explaining abstract concepts related to Islamic values. For example, in explaining the concept of sincerity, teachers use hand puppets to act out situations that describe sincere behavior. This supports the findings (Fatimah, Khoirunisa Ainul, 2023) that show that visual learning media can improve students' understanding of abstract concepts.
3. **Increasing Active Student Participation:** Classroom observations show that the use of hand puppets encourages students to actively participate in learning. Students not only listen to the story, but also engage in discussions and even participate in the role of characters using hand puppets (Basir, Mochamad, Andi Taufan, 2022) In his research, he also found that interactive learning media can increase students' active participation in the learning process.
4. **Facilitates Contextual Learning:** Hand puppets allow teachers to create scenarios and situations that are relevant to students' daily lives. This helps students relate the Islamic values they learn to the context of their lives. This finding is in line with Pratiwi's (2022) research which shows the importance of contextual learning in the formation of student character.
5. **Stimulates Imagination and Creativity:** The use of hand puppets is not only limited to teachers, but also involves students in creating and acting out stories. This stimulates students' imagination and creativity, while strengthening their understanding of Islamic values. Rahman et al. (2020) in their study also found that learning media that involve students' creativity can increase the understanding and internalization of moral values.

Challenges and Implementation Strategies

Although the implementation of hand puppet learning media shows positive results, there are several challenges faced:

1. **Time Constraints:** Teachers often feel limited by time in preparing and using hand puppets optimally. To address this, the school has conducted effective time management and learning planning training for teachers. This is in line with Suhartono's (2021) recommendation on the importance of teacher training in optimizing the use of learning media.
2. **Variety of Stories and Characters:** Teachers feel the need to continue to develop a variety of stories and characters of hand puppets so that learning remains interesting and relevant. The school has formed a team of content developers who regularly create new stories and hand-puppet characters that are in line with Islamic values and local contexts. This initiative supports the findings of Yusuf et al. (2023) about the importance of contextualizing learning media in character education.
3. **Consistency of Use:** Another challenge is maintaining consistency in the use of hand puppets across classes and subjects. To address this, the school has developed guidelines for the integration of hand puppet media in the curriculum and conducts periodic monitoring. This strategy is in line with Fadhilah's (2020) recommendation on the importance of systematic integration of learning media in the school curriculum.
4. **Parent Involvement:** Schools recognize the importance of parental involvement in reinforcing the values taught in schools. Therefore, the school held a workshop for parents on the use of hand puppets at home as a character education medium. This supports the findings of Rahmawati et al. (2022) about the importance of synergy between schools and families in character education.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, several implications and recommendations can be proposed:

1. **Teacher Professional Development:** There needs to be a continuous professional development program for teachers in optimizing the use of hand puppet media. This can include training in storytelling techniques, content development, and media integration strategies in learning. This recommendation is in line with the suggestion of Hidayat et al. (2021) about the importance of improving teacher competence in the use of innovative learning media.
2. **Inter-School Collaboration:** It is recommended to have a forum or network between schools that implements similar learning media. This can facilitate the exchange of ideas, best practices, and resources. This recommendation supports the findings of Kusuma (2023) on the effectiveness of the practitioner community in the development of innovative learning methods.
3. **Further Research:** Longitudinal research is needed to examine the long-term impact of the use of hand puppet media on the development of students' Islamic character. In addition, comparative studies with other learning methods can also provide valuable insights. This suggestion is in line with the recommendation of Pratiwi et al. (2024) regarding the importance of continuous evaluation of learning innovation.
4. **Curriculum Development:** Based on the successful implementation of handpuppet media, it is recommended that schools and education policymakers consider integrating similar interactive learning media into the character education curriculum more broadly. This supports the vision of national education articulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2024) about the importance of innovation in character education.
5. **Utilization of Technology:** Given the development of technology, it is recommended to explore the integration of digital media with hand puppets, such as the development of applications or video content that complements the use of physical hand puppets. This recommendation is in line with the edtech trends identified by Saputra (2023) in his study on digital transformation in primary education.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of hand puppet learning media at SD IT Alam Sahabat Alquran has shown very positive results in fostering students' Islamic character. Through the use of hand puppets, teachers manage to create an interesting, interactive, and meaningful learning atmosphere, which in turn facilitates the internalization of Islamic values in students. Significant improvements are seen in aspects of character such as honesty, discipline, empathy, patience, and responsibility. The effectiveness of this method lies not only in its ability to attract students' attention, but also in facilitating the delivery of abstract concepts related to Islamic values, increasing students' active participation, and facilitating contextual learning. Despite the challenges in its implementation, such as time constraints and the need for content variety, the school has shown a commitment to overcome these through various innovative strategies. The success of this implementation confirms the potential of hand puppet learning media as an effective tool in Islamic character education, and highlights the importance of a creative and contextual learning approach in shaping a young generation with strong character and noble character.

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