

INTEGRATING ROLE PLAY IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER VALUE AND COGNITIVE ACHIEVEMENT IN PRESCHOOL LEARNERS IN PAUD IT AL MANSYUR IN KOTABARU REGENCY, SOUTH KALIMANTAN

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the integration of role play in teaching Hadith to strengthen the character development of preschool learners. The study examines how role-playing activities can enhance the understanding of Islamic principles and the application of Hadith in real-life situations among preschool learners. Employing a quantitative experimental design, the study assesses the impact of incorporating role play into Islamic Studies on the character development of preschool learners at Paud IT Al Mansyur in Kotabaru Regency, South Kalimantan. The experiment involved two groups of preschool learners, each consisting of 10 participants. The experimental group engaged in role-playing scenarios designed to teach Hadith and key Islamic values such as self-esteem, empathy, honesty, love, affection, and social responsibility. The control group followed traditional teaching methods. Pre- and post-intervention assessments measured improvements in character traits. The results indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvement in character development compared to the control group. These findings suggest that integrating role play into Islamic Studies, particularly in teaching Hadith to preschoolers, is an effective pedagogical strategy for fostering holistic development, blending moral education with cognitive achievement in a synergistic manner.

Key words: *Innovative Approach, Role Play, Preschool Learners, Character Education.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki integrasi bermain peran dalam pengajaran Hadits untuk memperkuat pengembangan karakter anak-anak prasekolah. Studi ini meneliti bagaimana kegiatan bermain peran dapat meningkatkan pemahaman tentang prinsip-prinsip Islam dan penerapan Hadits dalam situasi kehidupan nyata di kalangan anak-anak prasekolah. Dengan menggunakan desain eksperimen kuantitatif, penelitian ini menilai dampak menggabungkan bermain peran dalam Studi Islam terhadap pengembangan karakter anak-anak prasekolah di Paud IT Al Mansyur di Kabupaten Kotabaru, Kalimantan Selatan. Eksperimen ini melibatkan dua kelompok anak-anak prasekolah, masing-masing terdiri dari 10 peserta. Kelompok eksperimen terlibat dalam skenario bermain peran yang dirancang untuk mengajarkan Hadits dan nilai-nilai Islam utama seperti harga diri, empati, kejujuran, cinta, kasih sayang, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Kelompok kontrol mengikuti metode pengajaran tradisional. Penilaian sebelum dan sesudah intervensi mengukur peningkatan dalam sifat-sifat karakter. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam pengembangan karakter dibandingkan dengan kelompok kontrol. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mengintegrasikan bermain peran dalam Studi Islam, khususnya dalam pengajaran Hadits kepada anak-anak prasekolah, adalah strategi pedagogis yang efektif untuk memupuk perkembangan holistik, menggabungkan pendidikan moral dengan pencapaian kognitif secara sinergis.

Keyword: *Pendekatan Inovatif, Bermain Peran, Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Karakter*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is important to recognize that the primary objectives of early childhood education in Islam are unique, focusing on the teaching of faith and ethics. Faith education involves instructing children in the declaration "laa ilaaha illa Allah," understanding what is lawful and unlawful, engaging in worship, loving the Prophet Muhammad and his family, reciting the Noble Qur'an and memorizing hadiths. Ethical education aims to make children aware of wrongdoings such as lying, theft, insults, and immorality. Muslim educators must instill these concepts of faith and ethics in children using any methods consistent with Qur'anic teachings and Prophetic guidance. Effective Islamic education requires a cooperative relationship between family, school, and society ('Ulwan, 2004),(Nudin, 2020) in (Irwansyah 2023). Therefore, teaching English to young Muslim learners (TEYL) should align, directly or indirectly, with the fundamental goals of introducing Islamic faith (tauhid) and Islamic ethics (akhlakul karimah). Achieving these goals necessitates fun activities that attract young children attention (Irlina, 2016).

Employing innovative teaching strategies is crucial to meet the diverse developmental needs of young children. Preschool education is essential as it lays the groundwork for character and cognitive development. Within Islamic education, the focus on character building is critical, aiming to instill fundamental values and morals from an early age. In Islamic studies and language education, adapting innovative instruction methods of successful teaching and learning is the provision of diverse activities by the teacher. This approach prevents the teaching process from becoming dull and monotonous.

Several methods for incorporating a variety of activities in teaching including listening, reading, speaking, and memorizing can help preschool and elementary level learners to learn actively. Engaging activities, such as drawing, singing, crafting, playing games, dancing, performing dramas, reading poems, watching videos or movies, can significantly benefit preschool and elementary level learners. (Irlina, 2023)(Sengkono, M.at.all,2019).

Role play has been shown to be an effective technique for developing speaking and listening skills in English language learners (Ishak & Aziz, 2022)(Raz, 1985)(Neupane, 2019). By immersing students in realistic scenarios and characters, role play allows them to practice and improve their communicative competence in a meaningful context. Furthermore, research indicates that role play can enhance students' motivation, confidence, and overall language proficiency.(Raz, 1985)

Integrating role play into Islamic studies can be a powerful approach for preschool learners. By having students act out scenarios from Islamic teachings, they can develop a deeper understanding of core values and principles. For example, students could role-play how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) interacted with his companions, or depict stories from the Quran that illustrate virtues such as honesty, compassion, and justice. This allows children to not only learn the content but

also embody the moral lessons, fostering stronger character development.(Guilfoyle & Mistry, 2013)(Raz, 1985)(Ishak & Aziz, 2022)(Negara, 2021).

This study was designed to Integrate cognitive development in with Islamic value in real life situation to build the character of Preschool Learners through Role Play. This activity aims to enhance children's understanding of the hadith they have memorized by integrating technology with motor skill development through interactive activities that may build their personal character and other aspects of children development need.

Role play is a powerful experiential learning method that can address both cognitive development in memorizing hadits by applying them in the real life situation with practicing the character education of Islamic value through interactive activities. By mimicking real-life situations and promoting active engagement, role play helps make abstract concepts more concrete for young children. In the context of Islamic Studies, role-playing activities can assist preschoolers in understanding and embodying key Islamic values such as self esteem, empathy, honesty, love and affection and social responsibility.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Islamic Education and Character Value

The primary objective of education is to cultivate the fullest potential within individuals while promoting, enhancing, and applying noble values or character in societal, national, and civic life. Education aims to enhance emotional regulation, tolerance, and openness while fostering values like honesty, loyalty, integrity, and trustworthiness. It emphasizes treating others with respect, responsibility, fairness, care, and compassion. Additionally, education seeks to cultivate practical skills, creativity, an innovative spirit, independence, confidence, wisdom, perseverance, resilience, orderliness, legal and rule awareness, discipline, peace, respect, courtesy, a willingness to help, generosity, and humility. These elements collectively form the objectives of character education. All of these aspects are the goals of character education (Azhar, 2013).

The objectives of Islamic education are twofold: (1) to cultivate devout individuals with an Islamic personality and mindset, and (2) to produce numerous capable scientists and experts who can elevate the nation to superpower status. Consequently, the Islamic education system aims to develop a generation that is God-fearing, intelligent, resilient, strong, morally upright, and responsible for the nation and country. This aligns with Indonesia's national educational goals, which focus on nurturing and developing well-rounded individuals. These individuals are characterized by their belief in Almighty God, noble character, knowledge,

skills, physical and psychological health, strength, and patriotism (Adilla, et al., 2020, p. 310), in (Irlina, 2023)

Islamic education, in particular, can fortify the character of the young learners. Building a strong character in young individuals should ideally begin before birth, starting when a couple decides to have a baby. However, this study focuses on preschool learners, specifically children aged 0-5 years, or those in playgroup and kindergarten, aged 3-6 years. Teaching Islam to preschool learners is crucial as this period is considered a golden age for character and personality development, marked by a significant growth in children's intelligence capacity, reaching 50%. During this stage, children require stimulation that fosters character formation and various dimensions of intelligence, including emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, kinesthetic, and artistic intelligence (Siswanto & Rifa'i, 2018, in Irlina, 2023).

According to the Ministry of Culture and Education in 2019, Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is the foundational formal educational institution for shaping the characteristics of the nation's future leaders. PAUD development is guided by the National Education System's regulations on Early Childhood Education, which outlines three pathways: formal, non-formal, and informal institutions for child development. These institutions focus on six areas: religion and morals, physical motor skills (gross and fine motor skills), cognitive skills (understanding and reacting to the environment), language, socio-emotional development, and art, as specified in the Ministry of Education's regulation number 137 in 2014. To achieve these goals, teachers must exemplify and demonstrate positive behavior to inspire and motivate their learners to emulate their attitudes. Noble morals practiced include love, sincerity, offering advice, being prudent in correcting mistakes, and gradually teaching and practicing knowledge (Adzim, 2021) in Irlina, 2023).

2.2. Method in Teaching Young Learners or Preschool learners

Teaching with love to preschool learners is one method derived from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PbUh), as narrated in hadiths by Bukhari and Muslim. Islam emphasizes the importance of loving one another and maintaining unity among Muslims. The Prophet likened believers' mutual love, compassion, and support to the interconnectedness of a single body, where if one part suffers, the whole body feels the pain.

Regarding the types of Islamic knowledge and skills essential for preschool learners, Mansur identifies three main areas: aqidah (creed), worship, and morals. Basic aqidah should

be instilled in children to form the foundation of their faith in the future. Activities to support this include reciting Allah's holy names, tasbih, istighfar, sholawat, and short prayers. Worship involves teaching children to be obedient servants of Allah, performing His commands, and avoiding His prohibitions. Moral education focuses on practices such as eating together, washing hands before meals, and reciting short prayers before and after eating (Mansur, 2005) in (Irlina, 2023).

To achieve the Islamic educational goal for preschool learners, a teacher needs appropriate method. one of the effective methods is Role Play. The role-playing learning model involves children acting either individually or in groups, collaborating and discussing to foster their independence and sense of responsibility. This method allows children to perform the roles of family members, follow household routines, and engage in activities within their environment (Islam, Ulama, & Dini, 2023) in (Wahyuni and Musayyadah, 2024). Through role-playing, children build self-confidence, develop emotional intelligence, appreciate their own and others' feelings, and understand their strengths and weaknesses (Heijnen, 2013 in The role-playing learning model involves children acting either individually or in groups, collaborating and discussing to foster their independence and sense of responsibility. This method allows children to perform the roles of family members, follow household routines, and engage in activities within their environment. Through role-playing, children build self-confidence, develop emotional intelligence, appreciate their own and others' feelings, and understand their strengths and weaknesses (Heijnen, 2013)) in (Wahyuni and Musayyadah, 2024).

Playing, in general, is a form of free self-expression that brings joy and significantly benefits young children's development Role-playing can instill positive character traits in children, helping them apply these traits in real-world situations. It enables children to socialize, express their feelings, and enhance their social-emotional skills, making them more skilled and creative. This practice not only helps children understand themselves but also teaches them to act as others, facilitating social interactions with peers and broader community members. As a learning method, role-playing offers children the opportunity to develop a character, enhancing their imagination and appreciation for the characteristics of the person or object they portray (Adlan Alif, 2020), (Novi Dyah Ayu Putri, 2023).) in (Wahyuni and Musayyadah, 2024).

3. METHOD

The researcher utilized an experimental research design to assess the impact of Role Play in Islamic Studies for Character Education and cognitive Development for Preschool Learners. According to Creswell (2012), experimentation is the preferred design for studies aiming for causal conclusions, particularly in educational innovation evaluations. True experimentation is the optimal and often the sole method for establishing causation due to its capability to control all confounding variables that might affect the relationship. This study was conducted at PAUD IT Al Mansyur Kotabaru Regency, South Kalimantan.

This study addresses a research question: “Are there statistically significant differences in character development between the experimental group using role play and the control group using traditional methods?” In this research, character education is defined by preschool learners' attitudes toward their peers during play. Islamic teaching is illustrated through how animals treat their friends and the recitation of hadiths, connecting them to real-life situations. Thus, the study tests the following hypothesis: H1: There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between students in the experimental group and those in the control group regarding their character education and cognitive development in memorizing and understanding hadiths.

a) Subjects of the Study

There were 20 preschool learners aged 4-6 years selected from PAUD IT Al Mansyur as the participants of this study. Also, two teachers as co-researchers. The ones that help the researcher to observe the activities of the preschool learners during the implementation of Role Play. The children were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group to ensure comparable baseline characteristics in terms of age, gender, and initial proficiency in both character traits. The participants divided into two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group, each comprising 10 participants.

b) Experimental Approach

Experimental Group engaged in role-playing activities designed to teach Hadith and key Islamic values (self-esteem, empathy, honesty, love, affection, social responsibility) while practicing three hadiths. These hadiths are, hadiths are: Hadith of affection, Prohibition of Cruelty to Animals Affectionate Retribution hadiths.

Control Group Followed traditional teaching methods without role play.

c) Procedure

Pre-Assessment: Both groups were assessed on character traits and cognitive development in memorizing hadiths before the intervention. Intervention: The experimental group participated in structured role-playing scenarios every Friday for 12 weeks, It was done for about 3 months, while the control group received conventional instruction. Post-Assessment: Both groups were re-assessed using the same metrics to evaluate changes in cognitive and character developments

d) Data Collection

Instruments: Standardized tests and observational checklists were used to measure character traits and cognitive development of hadiths as well. Pre- and Post-Tests: Administered to both groups to gauge initial levels and subsequent improvements.

e) Data Analysis

Statistical Methods: Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and inferential statistics (e.g., t-tests) were applied to compare the pre- and post-intervention scores of both groups.

Significance Level: The study set a significance level of $p < 0.05$ to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Finding

a) Process of story Development for Role Play

Due to a lack of role play in teaching Islamic education to preschool learners in Indonesian preschool learners syllabus, the researcher created an instructional role play through story to teach Islamic education, including prophet tradition. The story was about a hunter who try to shoot animals in the porest. The story dramatized to impart moral lessons from prophet tradition including Islamic ethics toward friends and prohibition of extravagance, prohibition of fornication, and prohibition of killing in Islam. It also teach key Islamic values such as self-esteem, empathy, honesty, love, affection, and social responsibility, while also practicing the hadiths memorization through social interaction. Applying the hadiths of compassion, the prohibition of anger, and the rewards of being compassionate in the form of stories involving various plants and animals in the forest as characters in the story. This is intended to build children's character through role play. These topics were aligned with the Paud IT Al Mansyur Islamic studies curriculum. Subject Matter Experts (an Islamic studies teacher and an Islamic study lecturer) evaluated the story of the role play regarding content quality, presentation style, and reusability. Their assessment indicated that the play had effective presentation style, and was reusable for classroom instruction. Consequently, this paper aims to summatively evaluate the role play's influence on Character Education and cognitive Development in memorizing hadiths for Preschool Learners of Al Mansyur in Kotabaru.

The study revealed significant differences between the experimental group, which engaged in role-playing activities, and the control group, which followed traditional teaching methods. . Character Development: Experimental Group: Demonstrated substantial improvement in key Islamic values such as self-esteem, empathy, honesty, love, affection, and social responsibility.

Control Group: Showed minimal changes in these character traits.

Statistical Analysis: The t-test results indicated that the experimental group's post-intervention scores were significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) in all measured character traits compared to the control group.

b) Cognitive development in memorizing hadits

Experimental Group: Showed marked improvements in memorizing hadits, particularly in connecting with the utterances relevant to the hadits in role-playing scenarios.

Control Group: Had negligible gains in their memorization.

Statistical Analysis: The experimental group's hadits memorization scores increased significantly ($p < 0.05$) from pre- to post-assessment, whereas the control group's scores remained relatively unchanged. These findings support the hypothesis that integrating role play into Islamic Studies can effectively enhance both cognitive and character development in preschool learners.

4.2. Discussion

The results of this study underscore the multifaceted benefits of using role play in early childhood education in an Islamic context.

1. Character Education:

Role-playing activities created immersive learning experiences that facilitated the internalization of Islamic values. The enactment of scenarios based on Hadith allowed children to practice and understand these principles in a practical and engaging manner. This aligns with the work of Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized the importance of social interaction in cognitive and moral development.

2. Holistic Development:

The dual focus on character education and cognitive development supports a more holistic approach to early childhood education. This integrated method aligns with recent pedagogical trends that emphasize the importance of developing multiple competencies simultaneously (Brown, 2007).

3. Pedagogical Implications:

Educators should consider incorporating role play method into their curricula to foster both moral and cognitive development in Islamic teaching. The interactive nature of role play not only engages young learners but also provides a platform for them to apply their learning in real-life situations, enhancing retention and understanding.

5. CONCLUSION

The study conclusively demonstrates that integrating role play into Islamic Studies significantly enhances both character development and cognitive development among preschool learners. The experimental group, which engaged in role-playing activities, showed

marked improvements in understanding and practicing Islamic values such as self-esteem, empathy, honesty, love, affection and social responsibility. It also help preschoolers to memorize hadits easily and attractively. The findings suggest that role play is an effective pedagogical tool that supports holistic development by blending moral education with cognitive achievement in PAUD IT Al Mansyur in Kotabaru Regency, South Kalimantan.

The interactive, engaging, and practical nature of role play makes it an ideal method for early childhood education, particularly in settings that aim to integrate moral and academic learning. Educators are encouraged to incorporate role play into their teaching practices to foster a more holistic and impactful educational experience for young children. Future research could explore the long-term effects of role play and its applicability across different cultural and educational contexts.

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