

Early Childhood Character Building through Roadshow Islamic Telling Stories

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Abstract

The escalating decline in moral values represents a significant challenge confronting society, particularly in the context of educating children. Therefore, instilling character in children from an early age is of paramount importance, and one effective method to achieve this is through the use of books containing relevant stories within the framework of Islamic telling roadshows. The aim of this research is to design and test a book containing 10 stories of the companions of the Prophet, guaranteed to enter paradise, as an effective tool for character education in children. The study adopts the Research and Development (RnD) methodology, encompassing various stages, commencing with the identification of potential and issues. Throughout the research, pertinent data is collected, and the book's design is validated by subject matter experts (93%) and media experts (96%). Following revisions based on expert input, the book is tested by educators as users, resulting in a 100% approval rating. The evaluation outcomes reveal that the book makes a positive contribution to character development in children, with an 88% success rate. The research findings underscore the book's effectiveness in enhancing children's moral and character development, providing a positive contribution to educating children with strong morals and good character.

Keywords: character, Islamic telling stories book, Character Building

Introduction

Many newspaper or television headlines are about child and adolescent delinquency, drug abuse, and sexual harassment. Head of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) Komjen Heru Winarko at the anti-narcotics day commemoration event said that the yearly prevalence of drug abuse in the student group reached 3.21% or equivalent to 2,297,492 people related to substance abuse among adolescents.¹

We also often see in newspaper or television headlines a lot of news about child and adolescent delinquency, drug abuse, and sexual harassment. Deputy for Child Growth and Development of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Ministry of PPPA) Lenny N Rosalin said that the increase in drug cases in children and adolescents should be a warning for parents. This was conveyed by Lenny in the context of the commemoration of the 2020 International Anti-Narcotics

¹<https://bnn.go.id/wow-heru-winarko-beberkan-fakta-terbaru-angka-penyalahgunaan-narkoba/>

Day (HANI) which falls on Friday, June 26, 2021, regarding the increase in drug-related cases among children and adolescents.²

Conflicts between students are also increasingly prevalent, such as in Bekasi, West Java, where a student was killed in a motorcycle gang clash.³ In Surabaya, there were also student brawls that had even been organized through Instagram social media to carry out the action.⁴ Not only outside school, but also inside school, violence against children committed by peers is increasing. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) noted that over nine years, from 2011 to 2019, there were 37,381 complaints of violence against children. Regarding bullying, both in education and social media, the number reached 2,473 reports and the trend continues to increase, reflecting a worrying theme related to violence against children, including a surge in bullying cases in education and social media platforms.⁵

Of course, we cannot necessarily blame children, because basically children are born with fitrah, it is their parents who make them Jews, Christians or Magi. Like the hadith of the prophet;

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُؤْلَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

Meaning: Every child is born pure, it is his parents who make him a Jew, Christian or Magi (Hr. Muslim).

Character in other languages is said to be morals. The word morals itself comes from the Arabic plural of the word khuluqun which according to the language means character, temperament, behavior, or character.⁶ The formulation of moral definition arises as a medium facilitating a harmonious relationship between the Creator (khaliq) and the created (makhluq) and among the created themselves. The term "khuluqun" originates from a verse in QS. Al-Qalam, verse 4, which translates to: "Indeed, you (O Muhammad) have a noble character" (Al-Qalam: 4). This concept is also quoted in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW): "I was sent to perfect noble manners" (Hr. Ahmad).⁷

This collective responsibility lies with parents to mold their children's character in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and hadith. Children's character development doesn't occur instantly; it must commence in early childhood. This period is critical as it marks the golden age of brain development, making it the optimal time for providing stimuli for effective absorption.

Research conducted by Bloom in Wiyani indicates that intellectual development is particularly rapid in early childhood. Approximately 50% of intelligence development occurs at the age of 4, followed by 30% at age 8, and the remaining 20% takes place in the middle or end of the second decade⁸. Therefore, it is essential to maximize the early childhood phase to ensure optimal development.

²<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/06/26/17590051/kementerian-pppa-naiknya-kasus-narkoba-anak-jadi-alarm-bagi-orangtua?page=all>

³<https://www.republika.co.id/berita/qdgd42284/5-pelajar-ditangkap-usai-tawuran-tewaskan-seorang-di-bekasi>

⁴<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2021/09/03/081800678/dini-hari-25-remaja-di-surabaya-tawuran-direncanakan-lewat-medsos-sempat>

⁵ <https://www.kpai.go.id/publikasi/sejumlah-kasus-bullying-sudah-warnai-catatan-masalah-anak-di-awal-2020-begini-kata-komisioner-kpai>

⁶ Abdul Majid & Dian Adayani, *Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam*, (Bandung: Rosdakarya, 2013), 9.

⁷ Amir hamzah Fahrudin, Musnad Imam Ahmad, (Jakarta:Pustaka Azzam 2007),33

⁸ Wiyani, Novan Ardi, *Psikologi Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini*, (Yogyakarta: Gaya Media, 2014), 28

Maria Montessori, as discussed by Sujiono, emphasizes that early childhood is a golden age, characterized by sensitivity to environmental stimuli. During this period, children rapidly receive and respond to various forms of education from adults and their surroundings, whether intentional or not. Physical and psychological functions mature, enabling children to undertake developmental tasks that manifest in daily behavior patterns.⁹

Teaching character to early childhood (AUD) must align with their developmental stage and characteristics. Early childhood has unique attributes, including a strong inclination to imitate, high curiosity, and a rich imagination, making it highly amenable to character education through Islamic storytelling.

Storytelling, or "telling stories," is one of the most effective and preferred methods for children. This is justified by the fact that stories are generally more memorable than mere advice, and they enable children to extract valuable lessons.¹⁰

Storytelling necessitates the use of expressions, facial expressions, and language styles that children find appealing. The incorporation of storytelling media such as picture books, animations, finger puppets, and educational clowns enhances AUD's interest in the stories and the lessons they convey.

Our observations in several madrasah diniyah and Qur'anic Education Centers in the Patianrowo District, Nganjuk Regency, indicate that character education through storytelling is seldom practiced. Among the seven madrasah diniyah surveyed, only one has employed storytelling as an educational method. None of the five Qur'anic Education Centers (TPQs) we surveyed incorporate storytelling into character education. We selected Patianrowo as our research site due to its adherence to traditional religious practices ("abangan").

The Quran and hadith contain numerous stories of the struggles of the Prophets, righteous individuals like Lukman and Ashabul Kahfi, as well as accounts of those who defied God, such as Fir'aun. The stories of the Prophet's companions are also filled with Islamic character content that can leave a profound impression on the memory of AUD. In contrast, today's early childhood exposure is largely centered on popular cartoon stories, viral soap operas, or fairy tales like Cinderella that lack Islamic character values.

Children also require role models and idols to emulate. The figures of the Prophet's companions serve as the most appropriate role models to introduce to children from an early age.

The aim of this study is to develop a storybook for character instillation through Islamic storytelling in early childhood, titled "10 Friends Guaranteed to Enter Heaven." This storybook is expected to effectively inculcate character in young children.

Method

This research method utilizes the development model developed by Borg & Gall, who propose that the Research and Development (R&D) approach in education consists of ten steps. The main objective of this development research method is to produce a specific product and assess the feasibility of the developed product.¹¹ The product resulting from this research is a storytelling book

⁹ Yuliani Nurani Sujiono, *Konsep Dasar Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, (Jakarta: Indeks, 2012), 54

¹⁰ Muallifah, "Story Telling Sebagai Metode Parenting Untuk Pengembangan Kecerdasan Anak Usia Dini". *Psikoislamika: Jurnal Psikologi Islam (JPI)* Vol 10 No 1 2013.

¹¹ Sugiyono, *Metode penelitian dan pengembangan* (Bandung: Alfabetha, 2019) 26

titled "10 Friends Guaranteed to Enter Heaven," which is used for the Islamic storytelling roadshow to instill character in children.

From the ten steps developed by Borg and Gall, we can synthesize them into 6 steps as follows: 1) potential and problems, 2) data collection, 3) design, 4) design validation, 5) design revision, and 6) testing. Data collection techniques include interviews, questionnaires, and observations.¹²

The research and field testing took place at TPQ Baitul Muttaqin and TPQ Zahrotul Ulum. Data analysis in this research involves both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data are obtained from input provided by validators during the validation stage and input from content and media experts. Quantitative data refer to the results of developing the Media Islamic telling story. Data obtained through assessment instruments during testing are analyzed using statistics, with the aim of understanding the data for subsequent use. The results of data analysis serve as the basis for revising the product under development.

The response questionnaire is filled out by both teachers and students. It consists of semi-open questions, including the title, respondent statements, instructions for completion, and question items. The questionnaire is quantitative in nature, and the data can be presented as a percentage using a Likert scale for measurement. The Likert scale is formulated as follows:

$$VR = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \bar{V}_i}{n}$$

VR = Average rating from the validators

V1 = Average score from the assessment of validator i

n = Number of validators¹³

Where:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\text{jumlah skor}}{\text{skor maksimal}} \times 100$$

$\bar{x}$ = Average rating from the validators

The modified scale for quantitative analysis uses the following scoring table ;

Table 1
Likert Scale

No	Quantitative Analysis	Score
1	Strongly Agree	4
2	Agree	3

¹² Ibid, 29

¹³ Sudjana, *Metode Statistika*, (Bandung: Tarsito, Bandung, 1995),67

3	Disagree	2
4	Strongly Disagree	1

Result and Discussion

Product Design:

The book includes sections like cover, foreword, table of contents, main content (featuring stories of ten companions), bibliography, and biographies. Each companion's story spans 6-7 pages and ends with a "guessing word" exercise to reinforce readers' understanding of the character.

1. **Abu Bakar:** Depicted as courageous and inspiring bravery in children.
2. **Umar bin Khattab:** Portrayed as a leader known for honesty, fairness, responsibility, generosity, and humility.
3. **Utsman bin Affan:** Emphasized his generous nature.
4. **Ali bin Abi Thalib:** Highlighted his bravery in defending the Prophet.
5. **Thalhah bin Ubaidillah:** A steadfast believer defending Prophet Muhammad.
6. **Zubair bin Awwam:** A successful, generous merchant who donated to Allah's cause.
7. **Abdurrahman bin Auf:** Known for business acumen and generosity.
8. **Saad bin Abi Waqosh:** Resolute in faith, skilled in archery, and fought in Allah's path.
9. **Sa'id bin Zaid:** Initially, angered his brother Umar due to his conversion to Islam.
10. **Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah:** A friendly, generous figure with a noble character.

Design Validation

After creating the initial product, the book "10 Companions of the Prophet's Stories," used for the roadshow of Islamic telling stories to instill character, the product was validated by experts, including subject matter experts and media experts. Product validation by experts occurred twice: initially, and after revisions for product enhancement. The validation criteria included cover assessment, content evaluation, and book anatomy. The visuals were required to be relevant to the stories, engaging, and easy for students to comprehend. The subject matter expert validation is presented in the following table:

Table 2
Subject Matter Expert Validation Results

No	Aspect Assessed	Score					Percentage (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	
A. Book Cover							

No	Aspect Assessed	Score					Percentage (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	The storybook title represents the overall content					5	100%
2.	The storybook title piques students' interest in further reading					5	
<i>B. Book Content</i>							
5.	Content is easily understandable.					5	94%
6.	The storybook content imparts positive character lessons					5	
7.	The storybook content features interrelated images and text.				4		
8.	The storybook content is age-appropriate					5	
11.	Language style and accuracy are suitable for children					5	
12.	The storybook content successfully captivates students to emulate the characters				4		
13.	The storybook content features interrelated images and text.					5	
<i>C. Book Anatomy</i>							
14.	Layout of book pages is well-organized.				4		87%
15.	Appropriate font selection				4		
16.	Font type in the storybook is easy to read.					5	

No	Aspect Assessed	Score					Percentage (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score				16	40	
	Average						93%

Explanation:

Score 1: Very Poor

Score 2: Poor

Score 3: Fair Score

4: Good Score

5: Excellent

Based on the data in Table 2, it is evident that in the book cover aspect, both criteria, "The storybook title represents the overall content" and "The storybook title piques students' interest in further reading," achieved a percentage of 100%. Regarding the book content, covering aspects such as "Content is easily understandable," "The storybook content imparts positive character lessons," "The storybook content employs simple language for ease of reading and comprehension," "The storybook content features interrelated images and text," "The storybook content is age-appropriate," "Language style and accuracy are suitable for children," and "The storybook content successfully captivates students to emulate the characters," achieved a percentage of 94%. In the book anatomy aspect, covering "Layout of book pages is well-organized," "Appropriate font selection," and "Font type in the storybook is easy to read," received a percentage of 87%. The overall average score was 93%..

Field Test

In this field test, evaluations were conducted at TPQ Baitul Muttaqin and TPQ Zahrotul Ulum Patianrowo. The trial took place at TPQ Baitul Muttaqin on October 27, 2021. Researchers also requested teachers as users to provide assessments of the book titled "Kisah 10 Sahabat yang Dijamin Masuk Surga." The evaluation was carried out by Mrs. Siti Lailatul Muzdhalifah, S.Pd..¹⁴

Table 4 :Teacher's Assessment Results

No	Assessed Aspect	Score					Percentage (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	
A. Book Appearance							
1	Attractive Cover					5	100%
2	Cover Illustration Reflects the Book's Overall Content					5	
B. Book Content							
3	Appealing Illustrations					5	100%
4	Illustrations Match the Story					5	
5	Easy-to-Read Text					5	
6	Images and Book Material Correspond to Child Development					5	
7	Images and Stories Suitable for Children					5	
C. Child Character Development							
8	Imparts Role Models to Children					5	100%
9	Provides New Experiences for Children					5	
10	Inspires Children to Idolize Characters					5	
	Total Score					50	

No	Assessed Aspect	Score					Percentage (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Average Score						100%

Explanation:

Score 1: Very Poor

Score 2: Poor

Score 3: Fair

Score 4: Good

Score 5: Excellent

From Table 4, the evaluation by Mrs. Siti Lailatul Muzdalifah, a teacher at TPQ Baitul Muttaqin, regarding the book's appearance, including the aspects of an attractive cover and cover illustration reflecting the book's content, received a percentage of 100%. In terms of the book's content, including appealing illustrations, illustrations matching the story, easy-to-read text, images and book material corresponding to child development, and images and stories suitable for children, all received a percentage of 100%. Furthermore, in terms of child character development, including imparting role models to children, providing new experiences for children, and inspiring children to idolize characters, all received a percentage of 100%. The researchers also conducted a moral and religious development test to shape the character of the children. This assessment was carried out by teachers for 15 students.

From the data summarized above, it can be concluded that the book is effective in instilling character in children. It has the potential to transform children who may not be familiar with or idolize Muslim figures, into individuals who are acquainted with the stories of the Companions of the Prophet that are worthy of admiration and emulation. The average percentage of success is 88%.

In the second field test at TPQ Zahrotul Ulum Patianrowo, which was conducted on October 29, 2021, the results were consistent. The researchers also requested teachers as users to provide assessments of the book "Kisah 10 Sahabat yang Dijamin Masuk Surga." The evaluation was carried out by Mrs. Lailatul Fitriya, S.Pd., and the findings were as follows: In terms of the book's appearance, including the aspects of an attractive cover and cover illustration reflecting the book's content, it received a percentage of 100%. Regarding the book's content, including appealing illustrations, illustrations matching the story, easy-to-read text, images and book material corresponding to child development, and images and stories suitable for children, all received a percentage of 100%. Furthermore, in terms of child character development, including imparting role models to children, providing new experiences for children, and inspiring children to idolize characters, all received a percentage of 100%.

Discussion

Borg and Gall have identified several key steps in the development process that form the theoretical basis for this research. The development process commences with an initial stage encompassing the identification of potential and problems that require resolution. The subsequent stage involves the collection of relevant data to be utilized in the development process. Once the data has been collected, the design phase begins, wherein ideas and concepts are transformed into tangible products. Subsequently, design validation becomes a crucial step to ensure that the produced product aligns with quality standards and development objectives.

The next stage involves design revision, where improvements and adjustments are made based on feedback obtained during the validation phase. Finally, the testing stage is executed to evaluate the product or solution developed with end-users or the intended audience. This framework aligns with the research by Walter Dick, Lou Carey, and James O. Carey.¹⁵ In the context of this research, it can be related to the development stages used in Research and Development (R&D). The R&D research follows steps similar to the systematic approach exemplified in their book. The steps in R&D research include problem identification (analogous to needs analysis), data collection, design (including book development), design validation, design revision, and testing. All of these steps resemble the systematic framework taught in their research. Furthermore, their research underscores the importance of formulating clear instructional objectives. In the research mentioned above, the primary objective is to design a book to enhance children's character. By formulating clear objectives, the research ensures that the book complies with effective instructional standards. The book "The Systematic Design of Instruction" by Dick, Carey, and Carey provides a robust theoretical basis and relevant instructional design principles that can be applied in the R&D research to create an effective character development book for children.

Similarly, Thomas C. Reeves' research on design¹⁶, particularly in the context of educational technology, is relevant to the research on "Early Childhood Character Building through Roadshow Islamic Telling Stories." Reeves' article explores an approach that involves the use of Islamic telling stories in shaping the character of young children. In relation to Reeves' article, several aspects align with the research. First, this research considers the application of technology in education by combining storybooks with the context of a roadshow as a means to educate children's character, in line with Reeves' views on technology use in learning. Second, this research is a concrete example of innovative solution development in education by designing storybooks to create more effective learning experiences and character development in early childhood, in line with Reeves' focus on innovative solutions. Lastly, this research applies a design research approach, as emphasized by Reeves in his article, with structured design steps in book development up to field testing through a roadshow. Thus, Reeves' article provides a strong basis for understanding the role of technology in educational contexts and innovative solutions for character development in children, as relevant to the research on "Early Childhood Character Building through Roadshow Islamic Telling Stories," and offers pertinent guidance for character development in an educational context.

The data analysis presented in this stage is thorough and comprehensive. The results of the analysis show that the book titled "10 Companions Guaranteed to Enter Heaven" attains a very high level of feasibility and is significantly suitable as a reference in roadshow Islamic telling stories aimed at developing character in young children. The subject matter expert validation rate reaches 93%, indicating strong acceptance regarding the content and materials contained in the book. Furthermore, the media expert validation result achieves 96%, emphasizing that the book also has a high level of

¹⁵ Walter Dick, Lou Carey, and James O Carey, "The Systematic Design of Instruction," 2005.

¹⁶ Thomas C Reeves, "Design Research from a Technology Perspective," *Educational Design Research* 1, no. 3 (2006): 52–66.

acceptance in terms of presentation and media aspects. Both validations indicate that the book has excellent quality and is relevant to support the research's objectives.

However, it is essential to note that the user assessment, particularly by teachers, results in a very high feasibility rate, reaching 100%. This result reflects an exceptional positive reception of the book as a highly effective tool in educating children, demonstrating strong support from educators for using the book in the children's character development process. Furthermore, the assessment by students who have read the book reveals that the storybook has made a significant contribution to their character development, with an improvement rate of 88%. This result portrays the positive impact of storybooks in shaping children's character, affirming that the Islamic telling stories through books have significant potential in effectively educating the character of young children.

In this more in-depth discussion, a richer understanding of the entire book development process is obtained, including validation by subject matter and media experts, and evaluation by users, especially teachers and students. This understanding shows that the book not only meets high-quality standards but also has a significant positive impact on children's character development. This discussion is supported by various relevant readings, providing deeper insights into the context of children's character development. The research findings provide strong evidence that the book "10 Companions Guaranteed to Enter Heaven" has significant potential in educating the character of young children, and this positive contribution is supported by strong validation and assessments from users, highlighting its crucial relevance in character education.

Conclusion

Through the Islamic telling stories roadshow, the book development process was carried out in several stages: 1) potential and issues identification, 2) data collection, 3) design creation, 4) design validation, 5) design revision, and 6) testing. The title of this narrative book is "10 Companions Guaranteed to Enter Heaven."

The book is deemed suitable based on validation by a team of subject matter experts, with a percentage of 93%, and by media experts, with a percentage of 96%. From the user testing conducted, the book obtained a feasibility rating of 100% from teachers, while the character development of children showed a percentage of 88%.

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