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Research Article

Stimulating Children in Enhancing Spirituality through the Exemplary Story of Ants

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ABSTRACT

It is important for Early Childhood to be stimulated by providing support in practising activities directly carried out by children in order to make it a religious experience. The purpose of stimulating Early Childhood is to increase Spirituality through the example of teachers and meaningful interactions about the beauty of diversity through exemplary stories. This research was conducted at Nurul Aulia Kindergarten Depok with a qualitative descriptive research method with a case study approach. The results of the study show that through the story of the example of ants and interactive dialogue, it is known that the implications of stories about theexample of ants in Early Childhood are very effective in building spiritual character and have an impact on the attitudes and behavior of children who have love for their religion, are able to identify problems and find solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam is a set of systems that comprehensively regulates the entire order of life and human life, Islam is not only a normative device that only speaks of monotheism and its eschatological dimensions, but Islam is a set of systems, rules and laws, so the Al-Quran is also an explanatory system of all macrocosmic and microcosmic systems. Islam not only regulates human existence and the universe but also regulates its derivation, the contents of the order in it because nature requires balance, humans need order, as social beings humans need interaction, humans need to understand the natural surroundings, humans need what we call Education. In a broader perspective, educating is a long-term activity, which is why the output of an education cannot be seen instantly. There is a long process and that process is integrated into an education.

Education is an activity carried out in order to form the character, morals, character and morality of a child. From this it is clear that education should not be uprooted from the basic roots of one's nature, namely spirituality. In Islamic Education, all aspects of life are needs that are needed by humankind, therefore the role of an educator is to provide an example to his students. Exemplary can come from behavior, customs, which is carried out by the educator himself as well as exemplary origin from the outside and it can come from the exemplary stories of warriors or prophets.

Al-Quran gives confirmation to all of us about a good example (uswatun hasanah). By making the Qur'an as the main pillar of Islamic education, education will always have a spiritual dimension. Every child is born into the world in a fitrah or holy state, it is the parents and the environment that shape their character, therefore the need for education for every child. Educating and teaching children is not an easy matter, educating and teaching children is a basic need and an obligation that must be met by parents (Mutuanisa Mahda, 2022)

In Abdul Majid's opinion that a person's quality of life is influenced by spirituality, and quality of life is a characteristic that is superior, meaningful and appropriate to meet all the needs and goals of human life including psychological, social and spiritual. Quality of life is closely related to one's physical and mental health. Good physical and mental health will lead to self-acceptance, good body image, positive feelings, respect for oneself and others, happiness, good spirituality, well-being, and positive interpersonal relationships. Every human being will experience

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changes in accordance with the process of growth and development. Development as in characteristic changes cannot be measured but can be observed through characteristics that are different from before. In child development, The environment influences or makes a source in their physical growth through many things that are the causal factors, the environment referred to here is the influence of parents, teachers and their surroundings. A good environment is one that is based on Islam. Ibnu Khaldun (2002) explains, a good environment is needed to produce good morals and good morals must emerge from oneself based on observations of surrounding factors that can influence living habits. This is supported by Langgulung (1987) who argued that the environment is capable of influencing a person's moral values. This shows that a positive environment can shape good morals and behavior in the development of children(Sulaiman et al., 2014).

Education truly reflects a "transfer of value" transferring the values, character, personality of students. this is an important thing that all of our educators should pay attention to, even at all levels of education. Education is more than just teaching, which can be said to be a process of transferring knowledge, transforming values, and forming personality with all the aspects it covers (Maziyah et al., 2019). L. Crow and A. Crow are of the view that transferring or moving thinking habits, feelings or work, knowledge or skills, from one learning situation to another is usually called the transfer of training to the learning outcomes (L. Crow, 1998). Actually, it can also happen from one subject to another or in real life outside of school. The growth period is an important time that must be of concern. Together with both teachers and parents, growth is defined as regular and regular change. All growth changes will help children in the process of achieving maturity. Children seem to experience changes in characteristics that are different from the previous stages of development. Children's growth is also seen from the perspective of changes in structure, views of changes and the behavior of the child itself. This is due to the function of diet, eating habits and the influence of the surrounding environment (Sulaiman et al., 2014).

National education functions to develop capabilities and shape dignified national character and civilization in the framework of educating the nation's life, which aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, be independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen. Education is an important part of human life that can never be abandoned(Liska et al., 2021). The development of multiple intelligences which is currently popular should always be colored by religious values, especially the Islamic religious approach, so that the spirit contained in the concept of multiple intelligences does not become something that loses meaning, due to being too influenced by secularistic philosophy (Abidin, 2017).

This is the main axis for the improvement of the national education system, related to several matters of the government's priority programs. In connection with this, the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizes that the learning process is based on character strengthening and is integrated within schools and outside schools so that education will be able to create a more competitive generation of young people who also have good quality character. Therefore, teaching good character to students is one of the efforts in carrying out and integrating character education in Indonesian schools by teachers (Keisha et al., 2018).

In this regard, it is important to note that both as teachers, as parents, as anyone, we must make ourselves good learners, as good learners, not just learning a lot from teachers, learning from books, or clever geniuses. They also can learn from the universe and even learn can learn from a chicken that incubates its eggs, fasting does not eat and drink does not go out anywhere for a few days in order to be able to have children which it hopes can also learn from other animals which are very popular in Al-Qur'an. Among them are small animal ants which are even special because they are enshrined in the Qur'an. This of course has a meaning that is not simple and that means that ants are not ordinary animals but ants are special insects.

Ants are insects belonging to the kingdom Animalia, phylum Arthropoda (the largest phylum in the animal world), class Insecta, family Formicidae, and the order Hymenoptera (derived from the Greek hyme which means "membrane" and pteron which means "wing".(Yunita, 2021). Ant colony are sometimes called "superorganisms" because of their colonies that form a unit. Ants are social insects which have more than 12,000 species spread in the world and dominate most of their lives in the tropics. (Sari et al., 2014). The 10,000 species of ants, 0.5% are pests in the house after cockroaches and mosquitoes in various countries, for example South Korea and Singapore. Ants are also known as insects that like groups (Rahman, 2014) and are social creatures like bees, wasps, and termites that are compact and work hard. Ants are also one of the eusocial insect groups, namely a social system that exists in the animal world, in which a caste system is found. The purpose of this caste is to control the existence of a population. In a sense, in a population there is no egoistic and cosmopolitan character(Febry Astuti & Herwina, 2014)

Among them is that ants are animals that have very high bonds of ukhuwah (brotherhood) between them, they have a complete social structure with their respective assigned tasks and always in carrying out their responsibilities use a collegial collective system, there is no egoistic or individual nature emerged from this ant character. If you see ants walking alone, of course they are very weak, but when they work together to form a colony, an ant colony can create a very powerful force. This is an important lesson how to value brotherhood, unity and mutual cooperation and mutual cooperation. Ants are also known as animals that have intelligence compared to other types of insects that have high brain cells in their heads. Because of that when the prophet Sulaiman and his army wanted to pass through the ant herd the queen ant ordered the entire colony to enter the nest so as not to be trampled by the feet of the troops of prophet Sulaiman. Research in the field of animal behavior or what is commonly referred to as animal behavior confirms that all the facts through existing discoveries that ants, like other creatures, have natural instincts that reflect intelligence, awareness, knowledge and feelings. With the existence of these properties, ants can recognize something, whether it is place, direction, time, and a person's personal figure Research in the field of animal behavior or what is commonly referred to as animal behavior confirms that all the facts through existing discoveries that ants, like other creatures, have natural instincts that reflect intelligence, awareness, knowledge and feelings. With the existence of these properties, ants can recognize something, whether it is place, direction, time, and a person's personal figure Research in the field of animal behavior or what is commonly referred to as animal behavior confirms that all the facts through existing discoveries that ants, like other creatures, have natural instincts that reflect intelligence, awareness, knowledge and feelings. With the existence of these properties, ants can recognize something, whether it is place, direction, time, and a person's personal figure(Yunita, 2021)

The exemplary character of ants who are intelligent, have a high sense of concern for each other, the nature of always working together and helping each other is what needs to be used as an example which is then translated in Education for students. This is very important considering that in providing stimulus or stimulation to students (in this case ECE) the values of life which include discipline, honesty, morality, character can be explained by the story telling method. Cameron (2001) explains that storytelling is an oral activity that is designed not only to be heard but also to be involved in it. Intensive eye contact between the teacher and students is absolutely necessary in this story telling so that natural communication is established between the teacher as a storyteller and his students as listeners, this will certainly have a big impact when compared to students listening to stories through films, tapes, recordings and the like. this is where the importance of the direct role of an educator in telling stories, giving exemplary examples that are full of spiritual content and easily accepted by students.

The story of the ant as an insect that is unique and full of privileges, also has high intelligence, has loyalty and dedication to its leader, has concern for others is a general description of the goal of education. In the perspective of the Qur'an, these animals have their own social systems, such as ants and bees, even language or ways of communication long before science finds research so that it is still being debated in the field of scientific research, until Allah gave the gift of Prophet Sulaiman the ability to understand and communicate with animals and jinns(Kaserun AS. Rahman, 2014). Education that is able to integrate elements of science or science with elements of religion so that education is not uprooted from its basic roots, namely spirituality because the best education is education that is full of spiritual values. Habisch and Bachmann (2016) strengthen with narratives from spiritual and religious traditions as points of reference for disciplinary management responsibility.

Spirituality is a personal expression of primary concern(Emmons, 2000). The spirituality that this learning wants to build is focused on three characters, namely patient character, respectful character and cooperation in solving problems. This is appropriate and refers to the 18 values in character education in Early Childhood according to what was conveyed by the Education Office in 2010. These 18 character values can be instilled in children through play activities. All forms of games played by children should include character values in them. This means that by playing, without realizing it, children can recognize and learn the values of the characters in the games they play(M. Fadillah, 2016)Character education is a form of education that must be introduced and instilled in children from an early age. This education teaches children to act and get used to doing good. Character education is very important because so far many children have attitudes far from commendable character values. There are children who like to lie, are lazy, are not creative, and do not care about social and environmental issues (M. Fadillah, 2016)

The Movement for Strengthening Character Education includes religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity values. Reading skills become a bridge for students to pick positive messages from reading and apply them in everyday life(Nuryati & Yuniawati, 2019). Education comes from the words learn and upbringing. Educating means nurturing and giving training (teaching, guidance, leadership) regarding morals and intelligence. Meanwhile, education is the result of educating. People who educate are called educators and people who are

educated are called learners, pupils, and students(Rizki Khullida, 2020). Education is a process that includes three dimensions, the individual, society or national community of the individual, and all the contents of reality, both material and spiritual which play a role in determining the nature, fate, form of humans and society. Education is a process that includes three dimensions, the individual, the community or the national community of the individual, and all the content of reality, both material and spiritual which plays a role in determining the nature, destiny, form of humans and society.(Maziyah et al., 2019).

Fairy tales usually contain stories that don't really happen, then develop the meaning of fairy tales metaphorically news or something else said by people who do not have factual truth is considered as a mere fairy tale, or as a fictional story(Widiono, 2020). Education through Story Telling with the theme of exemplary ants inspired by the Al-Qur'an An-Naml verses 18-19 which is applied to Early Childhood in Kindergarten Nurul Aulia Depok is intended to provide stimulation of spiritual character for children to make it easier in provide stimulation of character education. The spiritual character meant is that children like religious activities, are happy when invited to do worship such as praying, reading and memorizing short surahs in the Koran.The spiritual character in this study is the character in attitudes and daily behavior that reflects behavior taught in religious (Islamic) values, stories about animal characters that inspire ants with all their strengths are expected to provide stimulation to children to always behave in cooperation, mutual cooperation in doing something, have concern for friends and the environment, always enthusiastic when doing assignments given by the teacher and various other good character traits.

Basically we have many choices in developing and stimulating early childhood creativity, therefore we are required to always think creatively in using learning role models.(Budiarti, 2022)The use of storytelling media carried out at Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten is intended so that children do not get bored because basically children prefer fairy tales or stories conveyed by teachers, whether conveyed directly or delivered through digital media (Figure 1). (Budiarti, 2022)(videos and films of exemplary stories). Even if seen from the response and enthusiasm of the children, the use of film and other digital media is preferred by children when compared to using direct stories delivered by teachers. The introduction of digital technology in the form of video storytelling is also very important for young children, this is where teachers are also required to understand digital literacy.

From the description of reality above, the question arises how far is the effectiveness and efficiency of using storytelling in instilling spiritual character in children? What is the basis that can be used as a measure of the success of this form of storytelling stimulation at Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten?and what are the implications for inculcating spiritual character for Early Childhood-children implemented in Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten.



Figure 1. Introducing digital storytelling tools

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative investigative research design that has a substance explanation of the central phenomenon investigated in the research, the respondents in the research, and the research location(Creswell, 2014). This research was conducted for 3 months. The data collection method was carried out using observation techniques, interviews with several sources consisting of teachers, school principals, and parents of students at Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten and supported by documentation research that could assist this research. The data analysis in this study went through three stages referring to the theory of Miles and Huberman (1984), namely:

- Data reduction: Information obtained from the field will be summarized and structured, emphasizing the important points so that the data will be easier to verify.
- Data presentation, namely all data obtained will be analyzed using the theory previously described, sorted and grouped using problem boundaries.
- Conclusion: Drawing conclusions from data will be carried out continuously to get a verified conclusion. If stronger and more supportive evidence is found, the researcher will review the field notes, so as to form a firm conclusion(Rijali, 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Providing stimulation to Early Childhood is in order to prepare Early Childhood for growth and development, especially in facing the future, therefore basing a stimulation model that is in line with spiritual values and universal goodness is a must. Building the character of early childhood through the media is because children have good nature and their five senses are stimulated and developed towards moral behavior according to their nature.(Buddhiarti, 2018).

Exploring the contents of the Qur'an which contains exemplary stories can be a special attraction for children who really like stories. The uniqueness and magic of the stories told by the teacher in story telling can provide stimulation to spiritual and social values, namely about human behavior and the characters of everyday life, especially those related to God. Within the scope of education both at school and at home and in society it is very important to instill ethical values in students,

There is an assumption that in the current era, it is difficult for people to find figures that can be used as role models. At the same time, children should be concerned when children tend to choose public figures or figures who cannot set a good example, such as figures in soap operas, and an impromptu public figure who suddenly went viral on social media. This is what also contributes to the decline in the character of today's children. Character is a habit that has been imprinted in the soul of every individual and is difficult to get rid of. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, character is character; psychological characteristics, morals or character that distinguishes one person from another; character.

This understanding assumes that character is closely related to morals or character. That is, character can be interpreted as moral or ethical behavior(M. Fadillah, 2016). The value of character education is a characteristic of education in Indonesia, so that it will be very national, if it is increasingly recognized by society in general and the world of education in particular.(Iswantiningtyas & Wulansari, 2018). Character education aims to develop values that shape the nation's character, namely Pancasila, which includes: 1) Growing the potential of students to become human beings with a good heart, thinking and behaving, 2) Creating a nation with Pancasila character, 3) Developing the potential of citizens to have a confident attitude , nation and state and love humanity(Rahmawati, 2018)

The story of the ant and the prophet Sulaiman AS is an exemplary story that contains important lessons about intelligence, unity and mutual cooperation, social care and the ability to solve problems is a story that can be used as a medium in providing stimulation to character education in early childhood. Ants as insects have many features because of their special qualities that Allah immortalized them in the Al-Qur'an and even then they were also used as the name of one of the surahs in the Al-Qur'an, namely Surah An-Naml. When the prophet Sulayman and his army traveled it is mentioned in verses 18 -19.

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَآ أَتَوۡاْ عَلَىٰ وَادِ ٱلنَّمۡلِ قَالَتۡ نَمۡلَةٞ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّمۡلُ ٱدۡخُلُواْ مَسَٰكِنَكُمۡ لَا
يَحۡطِمَنَّكُمۡ سُلَيۡمَٰنُ وَجُنُودُهُۥ وَهُمۡ لَا يَشۡعُرُونَ ١٨ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكٗا مِّن قَوۡلِهَا وَقَالَ
رَبِّ أَوۡزِعۡنِيٓ أَنۡ أَشۡكُرَ نِعۡمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنۡعَمۡتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَيَّ وَأَنۡ أَعۡمَلَ صَٰلِحٗا
تَرۡضَىٰهُ وَأَدۡخِلۡنِي بِرَحۡمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ١٩

"Until they arrived at the ant valley, an ant said, Hi ants, enter into your nests so that you are not trampled by Solomon and his soldiers, while they are not aware." (18). "So he (Sulaiman) smiled and laughed because he heard the ant's words while praying: O God, give me inspiration to continue to be grateful for

your blessings that you have bestowed on me and to my two mothers and fathers and to do good deeds that you are pleased with and enter me with your grace into your pious servants." (19) (QS18-19).

The story in the Qur'an as mentioned above, actually cannot be separated from the process of inheriting the values contained therein, including educational values. Therefore, tracing educational values in a story in the Qur'an becomes important for humans intellectually oriented towards the formation of human character and ethics.(Himmah et al., 2020). The verse above informs in general about God's gift to Prophet Sulaiman, that is, he was awarded everything as a leader who can inspire the upholding of leadership values built on prophetic principles. Allah gathered for Solomon followers consisting of jinn, humans and birds. That is, Solomon can master and unite them in one big unit(Ar-Rifa'i;, 2014)



Figure 2. Storytelling activities directly by the teacher

The story of ants in the Qur'an provides extraordinary inspiration for us in an effort to build the attitude and character of our students (Figure 2). We can emulate the character of ants as animals that have many features, have intelligence, high social care attitudes, high unity and mutual cooperation, and always try to solve their own problems. This is certainly in line with what we always apply in our learning. One of the things mentioned as the specialty of ants is animals that have intelligence, does intelligence have anything to do with spirituality? or whether spirituality should be considered as intelligence depends on definition and criteria. Emmons (2000) tends to bring together various aspects of spirituality as well as various aspects of psychology (Emmons, 2000). The residue of the capacity to deal with existential issues can qualify as intelligence. What Emmons is doing as a whole makes sense by raising a lot of issues about spirituality, problem solving, the unifying potential of religions and so on, although of course this view still needs a lot of further investigation. Most of the world's normative concepts must develop roots in cultural and spiritual traditions. most of the world's normative concepts must develop roots in cultural and spiritual traditions(Habisch & Bachmann, 2016).

According to Adibah Sulaiman, parental assertiveness builds a mindset of religious attitude, humility, patience and enthusiasm in daily life with an Islamic environment will build the character of early childhood. The concept of meaningful early childhood education is the cultivation of independence from an early age, therefore every aspect of activity must be of high quality and comprehensive(Rohayati & Budiarti, 2022).

Table 1. Storytelling activities at Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten

Group Name	Number Students	Output	Description
Ant	20 Children	Children like the story and automatically understand and are able to simulate it in drama activities with the theme of exemplary ants	From the 20 children in the class, 3 children only listened but did not have any reaction
Bee	20 Children	Children can practice it in their daily activities	From the 20 children in one class group, as many as 11 children were able to practice it in everyday life
Hud-hud	20 Children	The children were very enthusiastic about listening to the teacher telling stories and occasionally some were enthusiastic about asking questions	From the 20 children in the class, 13 children were able to retell the storyline brought by the teacher.

Thus it is not just stimulating children to have intellectual intelligence, but also to have spiritual intelligence. This is what we often know as spiritual intelligence, priritual intelligence makes a person develop in balance, is able to explore his own potential and is also able to face all the challenges and problems he faces, forming an independent personality and having strong beliefs. Spiritual intelligence is able to guide him to become a person who is religious,

humanist, has high social sensitivity. In several research simulations that researchers conducted on students who were grouped into three class groups, namely the Hud-hud group.

From Table 1, it shows that more than 50% of the children are able to practice what is taught in the storytelling so that these results provide motivation for teachers at Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten to continue improvising and innovating character learning through storytelling. Indeed, it must be realized together that instilling character values in early childhood cannot be formed in a short time. Instilling character values requires education that must be carried out continuously or habituation in learning. Therefore, teachers or educators must be able to build positive habits by applying character values to early childhood. The spiritual character as exemplified in the story must be emphasized in learning before students are taught storytelling twice a week, namely Wednesday and Friday for 90 minutes. For Nurul Aulia Kindergarten Character education is a top priority before children are introduced to other sciences (science). Intellect must be in line with spirituality so that the spiritual soul is able to lead the way of intellectuality. The integration between thought and dhikr will form an ideal personality in welcoming the golden generation in the future. Intellect must be in line with spirituality so that the spiritual soul is able to lead the way of intellectuality. The integration between thought and dhikr will form an ideal personality in welcoming the golden generation in the future. Intellect must be in line with spirituality so that the spiritual soul is able to lead the way of intellectuality. The integration between thought and dhikr will form an ideal personality in welcoming the golden generation in the future.

Emulating the attitude and character of a person, public figure or other figure that reflects a character that has high educational value is a must for an educator in instilling high spiritual character in students. Early Childhood needs to be given a lot of positive stimulus, through the exemplary story of the ants in Surah An-Naml verses 18-19, which contains important ibrah (lessons) that must be learned and modeled especially for students. As an animal that has a special character, ants can be used as inspiration in giving important lessons to Early Childhood, especially in terms of discipline, social care, mutual cooperation and independence (the ability to solve their own problems).

4. CONCLUSION

From field research it can be concluded that providing stimulation to Early Childhood Character Education requires the creativity of a teacher and a school because a lesson about character is a lesson that is not instantaneous, takes time and must be done gradually and continuously. It can be concluded that efforts to stimulate the spiritual character of children through storytelling, especially through videos and films that elevate exemplary stories, are an effective way of growing spiritual character, an atmosphere that is not monotonous makes children really like it.

Based on the researcher's direct observation that spiritual character education with the theme of exemplary ants which was carried out at Early Childhood at Nurul Aulia Depok Kindergarten was felt to be very effective in being able to stimulate children to emulate the good nature and characters of the story so that it had an impact on children's spiritual behavior and character in everyday life such as love for Allah and His Messenger, skills in carrying out their responsibilities, concern for others and their environment and the nature of mutual cooperation.

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