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Article

Quranic Storytelling Approach as educational model to teach religious values in the Indonesian context

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe an approach that can be used in teaching values to children through religious storytelling. This Quranic storytelling approach was used as an educational model to enhance religious and moral values in children. A mixed method research paradigm was used, applying the techniques of observation, discussions in the form of storytelling, documentation search and parents' observations of the change in their children's attitude and behavior after each storytelling session. It was revealed that children were willing to listen to religious stories when being told. The storytelling sessions were planned to help children understand the religious and moral values, since these stories dealt with indicators like patience, humanity, calmness, and like, which helped them to maintain the righteous path. It was also revealed that through Quranic stories children learned to respect others because Quranic stories encouraged them to do good by obeying the Prophet (PBUH). The study concluded that Quranic storytelling approach in teaching can be easily practiced by teachers, hence becoming a useful teaching model in developing moral values in children. Since a behavioral change was observed in children after each storytelling sessions, it is established that Quranic storytelling approach enhances the understanding of religious and ethical values. It is recommended that teachers and institutions should apply this approach in inculcating Islamic values in children.

Keywords

Children Teaching and Learning • Nursery Education • Religious Values • Teaching Approaches • Teaching of Quran and Values Education

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Introduction

Children's intellectual development occurs rapidly (80%) at the age of 0-8 years (Black et al., 2017; National Academies of Sciences et al., 2016). Likewise, religious awareness develops quickly in this age group (Sugianto & Alim, 2018; Brzica, 2018; An et al., 2019; Bello & Steyn, 2019; Afonso & Silva, 2019). The age of 0-8 years is often touted as the "golden age" and very crucial in determining children's future potential (Richter et al., 2017). The Preamble of the Indonesian 1945 Constitution mandates the importance of developing the intellectual life of citizens. It becomes the national responsibility to instill, enhance, nurture, and improve the intellectual potential of all citizens through a systematic, programmed, and integrated approach. Early childhood education is one way for children to grow and develop, to lay the necessary foundation for development at the next level of education, of all aspects including physical, psychomotor, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual (Malihah, 2015).

The Prophet (PBUH) asserted, "if a child can distinguish left-right by the age of 7 years, teach him how to pray, and when he is ten years old, and does not want to pray, punish him." In Islam, prayer is a pillar of religion, so it must be established when the child is still young. The Prophet also emphasized on parents' religious education, who must not to be mal-educated. The Prophet says, "Every child is born in a state of nature, but his parents are the ones who nurture him, to become an individual." In other words, religious education must be imparted correctly {Nematollahi, 2019 #1794; Hagesæther, 2006 #1793}. The earlier religious values are instilled in children by parents the better is their growth in their lifetime. Several Quranic verses emphasize on teaching of values to children at early age, as this holy book guides those who fear Allah (Ashimi, 2019). The Quran is also the basis of the relationship between God and man and between man and man. One who follows the direction and guidance provided by the Quran is able to raise his children in a better way. Such attention from early stage of growth and development helps to build the human race (Kohlberg, 1976).

One of the effective teaching methods for cultivating religious and spiritual values among children is the Quranic Storytelling approach. Stories from the Quran are different from ordinary stories from other sources (Musa, 2010). Quranic stories consist of four unique characteristics: the aesthetic language, practical and universal content, scientifically proven truth and the dialog form of presentation dynamically and rationally (El-Hadary, 2008; Akin Arikan, 2019; Antoni et al., 2019; Adanali & Mete, 2019; Adell Carrasco et al., 2019; Bomani et al., 2019). Hence, Quranic stories stimulate the reader to think religiously (Avest & Bakker, 2009; Kittelmann Flensner, 2015; Csonka et al., 2018), and actively listen to what is teacher's narration.

There is a dearth of research studies on the development of Quranic storytelling approach for development of values in children at early age. This study is based on the fact that there is a lack of a good religious values teaching approach during early childhood in the Indonesian setting. Hence, this study focused on describing Quranic Storytelling as one of the ethical approaches in teaching values to children. Using the mixed method research paradigm, the study explored the Quranic Storytelling learning and teaching approach in the development of values among children at an early age. Following the research problem which aimed to describe and interpret the patterns of spiritual development among very young children in Indonesia, this is a case-based study, which applied grounded research approach (Hadley, 2017 #1792; Fernandez, 2020 #1791). It also used the common hermeneutic approach in the analysis of the findings (Ho, Chiang, & Leung, 2017; Kurnia, Linden, & Huang, 2019). To explore the substance of the Quranic Storytelling, a thematic study of the Quran was done (Ashimi, A.T. (2019). About implementing the storytelling Quranic learning approach, this study also took into account students' responses and expressions (Izzah & Rafli, 2019; Tabrani & Masbur, 2016). To examine the impact of the storytelling technique empirically, a survey was also included for parents or guardians in order to evaluate how storytelling approach impacted their children.

Literature Review

Developing Good Values in Children through Religious Stories

With the development of scientific knowledge, numerous subjects were introduced in schools, and primary education institutions. School curricula were categorized, giving way to specializations, among which one of the categories was religious education. According to Tracy (1922), religious education refers to the culture and training of one's intellect, emotions, and the will, such that people can function fully as enlightened human beings, bound with golden chains in Godly matters. Tracy (1922) perceives religious education as a field of specialization that teaches morals, introduces people to what is right and wrong, and helps create an understanding about the purpose of man's life. The religion is embedded in the quality of thinking, emotions, and personality which when integrated brings positive change, better direction and purpose of human life. This implies that religious education molds and prepares young generation into better citizens of the country who can communicate with ease at all the time. It is a process of nurturing essential meaning, which is symbolic, empirical, aesthetic, ethical, and synoptic. The school thus provides basic fundamental ideas for life and better living in society {Shoemith, 2020 #1790}.

The impact of religious education on human growth and development cannot be debated as it teaches human values of universal significance. If children are not taught values, there will be intellectual development without values (Oladipo, 2009). In other words, the world will have heartless intellectuals trained to work as if they were robots rather than humans. It is pointed out that even if robots can be taught morals and values, they will be different from those required by human beings, as robots will fail to learn real social and moral values (Coeckelbergh, 2020; Sugianto & Alim, 2018). Moreover, school teachers vary in their subject of specialization, religious education plays a unifying role in bringing them together despite their variations.

Though the term religious education is old and conventional, its implementation in most countries is new and contemporary. The curricular content of religious education is neither limited nor inadequate as it encompasses every aspect of human life Barnes (2014). It consists of 1) comparative and historical data 2) spiritual development of human faith and life 3) about God and creation and 4) teaching the holy book of a specific religion, such as the Quran. About the curricular content of religious education, Tracy (1922) pointed out that it must be developed and configured according to the needs of learners. It should be learners-oriented, with the intention of teaching good character and perfecting human personality. The religious education curriculum teaches fundamental ideas, intellectual virtues, and essential meanings of ethical educational values. It is operationally directed towards developing students into good citizens (Barnes, 2014). In Indonesia, too, religious education seeks to develop students' personalities, and spiritual development through religious education. Teaching Islamic culture to the Indonesians contributes to their positive moral development, and enhances the human potential (Asyafah, 2014; Halim, 2007).

The Indonesian constitution has established a national education system in which religious education occupies a critical and strategic position. It states that the education system should develop students' capabilities and shape a noble character, aimed at improving their potential to become such human beings who believe in and have faith in God, have good morality, knowledge, competence, creativity, independence, and who are healthy, democratic and responsible citizens (Mukri, Aji, & Yunus, 2016). However, the implementation has not been as good as stated in the constitution. In practical situations, religious and moral aspects are marginalized. The number of hours for religious education and teaching moral values is very minimal. It is therefore rightly argued that religious education is only cheered in the Indonesian national education curriculum, and not critically analyzed by secularists (Ansor, 2016).

In Indonesia, modern Islamic education has been in place for over three decades now. The country adopted two approaches to implement the current Islamic education system: first, the government declared Islamic founded education institutions to be part of the national education entities, and they were administered and paid for by the central government (Azra, 2018). Secondly, the Islamic education was standardized

following the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Azra, 2018). This was in line with the UNESCO declaration, which led to an agreement to develop an educational system based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (Aspin and Chapman, 2007). Islam is a religion that has complete and perfect teaching in itself. Islamic education through formal education in Indonesia however may not explain the completeness and perfection of the Islamic faith because religious education study hours are minimal, only 2 hours per week. In other Islamic countries like Pakistan, the religious education teaching hours are four times than that of Indonesia. Besides, other countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran have built half of their primary education's curriculum with religious values (Haghighi Irani, Chalak, & Heidari Tabrizi, 2020; Mahfud, 2019; Reid & Ali, 2020; Sharma, 2020). The curricula in these countries contain Islamic teachings and language courses as a medium to enrich religious education (ACEID, 1977).

Currently, there is an absence of religious education at early childhood and elementary levels all over the archipelago (Bickford John, Nolen Zarek, & Cougill Andrew, 2020; Boutte, 2012; Hollstein Matthew & Hawley Todd, 2019). There are no transparent methodologies, approaches, and models in the teaching of Islamic religious education at early stages. Intellectual development based on religious values is still wanting (Bartkowski, Xu, & Levin, 2008; Fisher, 2012). Religious education at an early age is crucial {Singer-Brodowski, 2019 #1787; Vlasov, 2017 #1786}. Teaching based on western approaches, technics, and methods, limits the teaching of religious values (Arti, 2018; Herdian, Nugroho, & Sumiati, 2020). If education at an early age is misdirected, the core curriculum is not substantive. It can be wrongly implemented in a way that is not appropriate to the development of children. Islam being a Godly chosen religion, with the Quran comprising 114 chapters {Maulana, 2019 #1795} there is need for the development of simplified teaching approaches that provide specified attention to students and help them learn and acquire the required knowledge during the teaching and learning process (Lawrie et al., 2017).

Teaching values to children through Quranic storytelling is vital because the Quran is a well-organized religious book. The Quran being an attractive book in recitation entices many, including children, to learn it. Studies have revealed that children tend to be attentive when told Quranic stories (Altintas, 2018; Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2018). Fictitious stories have also proven to be very popular with children of kindergarten age, teenagers, adults, and older people {Orr, 2020 #1789; Bitek, 2020 #1788}. The wisdom of the Quran lies in the fact that half of this holy book comprises stories and anecdotes (Sinaga, Daulay, & Lubis, 2020). This study will further take up this argument that storytelling is an effective method to teach values to students at their young age.

Methods

Design

This study used a mixed method paradigm with two steps. In the first step, the researcher conducted a desk research or analysis of previous literature to examine the impact of storytelling method on the effectiveness of Quranic Teachings. Moreover, this study also used a case-based approach to analyze respondents' observations through a thematic and content analysis of the qualitative data. Secondly, the researcher conducted a quantitative survey to examine student's attitudes and behaviors in the storytelling sessions and their effectiveness in shaping students behaviors.

Participants

The participants of this study comprised two groups:

- The first group was sampled to participate in storytelling sessions. The group comprised 15 students of ages 5 to 8. The rationale for selecting this sample was that children are most receptive and attentive towards story telling teaching mechanisms in this age group (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004; Miller & Pennycuff, 2008).
- The second group comprised respondents to the questionnaire that was designed to be filled by

parents/guardians one week after each of the two storytelling sessions. The objective of this tool was to gauge the behavioral impact of the storytelling sessions on students from an adult's viewpoint.

Data Sources

Data sources in both types of analysis were different. For the qualitative paradigm, there were two data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source consisted of direct observations of the researcher of students during storytelling sessions. The secondary data comprised information or knowledge obtained from documentations, books, research papers, Quranic teachings and other sources with research content (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Polkinghorne, 2005; Sutton & Austin, 2015). The secondary data helped in content and thematic derivations on the study topic. On the other hand, the quantitative paradigm consisted of data obtained from the students' parents which helped to understand the behavioral impact of the storytelling technique on young children to learn about Quranic or Islamic values.

Instruments

For the qualitative paradigm, the researchers themselves acted as a research instrument to observe each storytelling session. In addition, audio recordings and scribbling made by researchers about various behaviors of the participants during the storytelling sessions acted as a research instrument as well. For the quantitative analysis, the researchers designed a questionnaire for the parents of the participating students to be filled after one week of each of the storytelling session. This questionnaire is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Questionnaire for Quantitative Data Collection

Kindly Fill in the responses from 1-5 according to your observations about your child (1=Highly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Highly disagree)					
I have noticed an increase in the patience level of my child	1	2	3	4	5
I have noticed an increase in the state of calmness in my child	1	2	3	4	5
I have noticed an increase in the honesty value in my child	1	2	3	4	5
I have noticed that my child remembers the Quranic lessons in form of stories better than the traditionally taught ones	1	2	3	4	5
I have noticed an increase in role modeling tendency in my child	1	2	3	4	5
I have noticed that my child speaks differently, with more poise and calmness	1	2	3	4	5
I have noticed an increase in offering of prayers in my child	1	2	3	4	5
I have observed that my child's behavior towards others has improved	1	2	3	4	5

Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed by using simple content analysis and thematic based analysis method with a case based approach. To analyze parents' responses about their children, the questionnaire's data was analyzed using simple statistical procedures.

Findings and Discussion

Qualitative Findings:

Using the Quran in teaching requires extraction of stories through a thematic method, commonly known as *maudhu'i* method (Fikriawan, Kholiq, & Parangu, 2019). This method promotes thematic learning and teaching of the Quran. In most cases, Quranic stories are retold or repeated. The aim is to strengthen the faith by emphasizing and giving a deep understanding to readers and listeners (Lawrence & Paige, 2016). These Quranic stories are related to the most fundamental Islamic teachings like: God is the Most Supernatural Being, who cannot reveal Himself on earth; or the Almighty God does not confine His glory by Himself but spreads to His creatures, including the human race. All such findings are listed below.

Guidance of Human Race

Human beings are God's creatures, and they must worship Him alone (Safi, 2020). God cannot guide His creatures to worship Him, because He is unseen, but through appointed humans as His representatives on

earth (Barnes, 2014). These humans were taught the Religion by Allah, which He had not previously shared with His Angels (Safi, 2020). Hence, when God created Adam, God ordered the angels to bow before Adam, which they initially protested questioning the worthiness of the human race as God's representative on earth. Eventually, they all bowed down in recognition of Prophet Adam as the first Islamic caliphate. In contrast, the Satan refused to bow down to the Prophet Adam because he was arrogant and regarded himself more worthy than Adam (El-Hadary, 2008). As a result of this mundane act of disobedience to God, Satan was chased from the righteous realm, the paradise (Anwari, 2020). Since then, Satan has been misleading all humans (Ibrahim, Kamsani, & Champe, 2015). However, God assured His sincere servants to protect them from Satan (El-Hadary, 2008). That Satan will misguide the human race is justified by Allah, therefore, a majority of people follow the footsteps of Satan (Halim, 2007). The story of the creation of the Prophet Adam is very inspiring and dominant in the Quran, namely in the chapters like Al-Baqarah verses 30-34, Al-Hijr verses 28-40, Al-A'raf verses 11-18, Shad verses 71-83 and Al-Isra verses 61-62 (Azra, 2018; El-Hadary, 2008).

This story of Satan's rejection of the faith, refusal to bow down before Prophet Adam and becoming hostile to God's Prophets reminds readers and listeners of what befalls those who reject or are negligent to God's command (El-Hadary, 2008). These Quranic stories are found in: Ibrahim verse 13; Al-Baqarah verse 87; and Al-An'am verse 112). These stories narrate how Noah was rejected by his people (Quran 71:21-28) and Prophet Hud was not accepted as well (Al-A'raf:65-72). Prophet Muhammad, like the earlier prophets, was also rejected, denied and mocked (Al-An'am verses 33-34, Al-Hajj verses 42-44, Ar-Ra'd verse 32, Al-Hijr verse 11) (El-Hadary, 2008). These verses discuss and tell the story of Adam's creation and how angels were told to bow before Him and one angel, Iblis refused. There is an indication of faith in this story, where man is required to be obedient to His creator.

Teaching such values to children through Quranic storytelling is essential because the Quran is a well-organized religious book and can be easily understood. Teaching Islamic education contributes to positive moral development, and it is an essential aspect of enhancing human potential too (Asyafah, 2014; Halim, 2007). Some stories encourage humankind to follow the teachings of their ancestors (Az-Zuhruf verse 23; Saba' verse 34; Ar-Ra'd verse 43; Al-Hajj verses 42-44; Al-A'raf verses 65-66; Al-Mu'minun verse 24) (El-Hadary, 2008). Others show how people were surprised by Prophet's coming again (Al-A'raf verse 69; Shad verse 4; Al-Jin verse 7; Fathir verse 42) or how Satan despised the Prophet (Ibrahim verse 10; Al-Mu'minun verses 32-33) (El-Hadary, 2008).

The other subject of stories is religious monotheism, which encourages human beings to avoid *shirk* and engage in self *jihad* to subdue lust and desire, following the Prophet's teaching. These stories are described in the form of moral and educational narratives. For instance, there is the story of Jonah, the story of Noah, the story of Hud, the story of Abraham, the story of Al-Kahf, the story of Maryam, the story of Al-Anbiya, and the story of Luqman. Some of these stories are told in fragments or short story form or in the form of long letters. This is in line with Kohlberg (1976), who talks of moral development from human growth and development. However, religious stories rotate around the figure of a Prophet or Prophets and pious people who lived in those olden days. Still, their stories are relevant in today's day-to-day living.

The story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) has a chapter in the Quran. The Prophet, because he was handsome, attracted women. He was seduced by his employer Minister's wife. Although the opportunity was very open, he refused, and he was threatened with imprisonment if he did not want to serve his minister. But the Prophet preferred prison. After leaving prison, he was appointed by the King to become the State Treasurer. All his siblings would ask Yusuf for economic assistance, though they had earlier attempted to cast Yusuf away. Yusuf forgave his brothers. God also ordered Yusuf to marry the woman who had slandered him and thrown him into prison because it had made him not revengeful. Yusuf carried out God's command to marry Julaiha.

In the story of Prophet Luqman, as narrated in Quran chapter Al-Luqman verses 12-19, the prophet is a man of wisdom (El-Hadary, 2008) who teaches good and moral education to society. Luqman teaches children

not to be idolaters, must worship only Allah, and show their gratitude to their parents. Even if their parents are polytheists, Luqman taught children to remain devoted to parents in worldly affairs. He taught them not to be arrogant and discard despicable qualities.

Quranic Storytelling to teach values to children

These are evidence in a few studies that advocate developmental learning approaches, such as Joyce and Weil (1980); and {Maulana, 2019 #1795} which consider using themes as essential in teaching the Quran. The stories coined are based on thematic content and varying patterns and topics, such as stories range from Prophet Adam to God's last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In addition, there are narratives based on the Quran and its different verses dealing with moral behavior and personality. One such story is that of Ibrahim when he started to seek his creator.

The Quranic Al-An'am verses 74-79 guide how to read and understand the Quran in order to learn its meaning. One of the guiding principles is: Read the verses of the Qur'an related to a story. The kindergarten children are less likely to be able to grasp the reading of the Quran but based on the miracles of the Quran it is expected that kindergarten children who are still approaching the age of fitrah (holy, clean, not yet sinful and wrong) will get an abundance of fall (gift) and mercy from Allah. Therefore children do not need to follow the teacher's reading, just listening to it. Another guiding principle is to translate verses of the Qur'an related to a story. Reading a Quranic translation is adapted to the learning abilities and language development of kindergarten children. At this age, small children follow the interpretation only in the form of short sentences. In this process, the teacher first reads the translation, and children listen and repeat after them.

There is another guiding principle to explain the Quranic verses related to a story. There is a story of little Abraham looking for God. The verses explained how Ibrahim was amazed to see the stars thinking they were God. When the stars disappeared, Ibrahim did not like this. He turned to the moon and thought it was God, but in the morning, the moon and stars vanished with the sunrise. Ibrahim was happy to see the sun thinking the sun was his God. This is bigger, he said. In the afternoon, the sunlight decreased and disappeared in the night. Ibrahim finally freed himself from all that. He found the real God, who created the heavens and the earth. With such explanation, the teacher also takes a dialogical approach. The teacher may also insert questions for children to answer with the objective to evaluate whether they picked up the message of the Quranic story. The teacher may also measure the children's comprehension of any *Surah's* fragmented simplified content by asking questions.

Last, but not the least, another guiding principle is to ask students to give their feedback on a story to help understand their attitude. To the story of little Ibrahim looking for God, the feedback expected by kindergarten children is: (1) There is no deity in stars, the moon or the sun, as little Ibrahim finally realized; (2) The real God is the God who created the stars, the moon, the sun, the heavens, and the earth, and the whole universe; (3) The true God is Allah as His name is, and (4) There is only one God and no other God.

The Ideal Way of Learning and Teaching Quranic Values

Learning moral values through religion in school is dominated by the habit of praying and praising God. The children are taught the significance of praying five times a day; besides, they get accustomed to several other prayers in the class, namely: prayer before starting to study, prayer before entering the bathroom, prayer before and after eating, and prayer before leaving the house. They are also required to memorize short stories (verses), for instance, the curriculum requires children to memorize Surah an-Nas and al-Ikhlâs. The understanding of religion is provided through these verses. Every Friday, there is a special prayer at a scheduled time.

However, not every verse is filled with religious stories but the contents of a verse are adjusted to its theme and sub-themes. For instance, the Quran emphasizes on the theme of "Self" with the sub-theme "five senses" or "five senses created by God." The verses reveal that humans were given eyes by God with whom they could see; ears with whom they could hear; and like. The objectives of this story are: First, children are

amazed by the power of God; second, children are grateful for the gift of five senses from God. In another verse about Eid al-Adha, a unique theme of sacrifice was created. The story's contents are adapted to this particular theme of sacrifice. The story shows how Prophet Ibrahim loved his son Ismail. When Prophet Ibrahim was ordered by Allah to slaughter his beloved son, Prophet Ibrahim obeyed Allah's command. While he was sacrificing his son, Allah replaced Ismail with a goat. So what was slaughtered by Ibrahim was finally a goat, not his son Ismail. This story teaches the values of obedience and sacrifice as a mark of worship of God. Such stories have made possible to implement the Quranic Storytelling model in the UPI Kindergarten Lab School sampled for this study.

Story Telling Quranic Learning Approach

The stories in the Quran emphasize to show faith in Allah and obey the Prophet. The stories begin with the creation of the Prophet Adam as God's representative on earth and the first Prophet. God is referred to as 'Allah' or the Unseen, who does not show Himself on this earth. He wants His glory not to be confined to Himself but spread to the whole human race. Hence, all human beings ought to be generous, kind and willing to show faith to the God. All human beings are also required to pass varying tests in this world to manifest their eligibility to be worthy of receiving the God's beneficence. These tests are in different forms such as sadness and happiness, abundance and scarcity, health, and illness, etc. God also tests the humans in hardships like poverty, grief, loss, misfortune and like. God expects all human beings to pass such tests by demonstrating good virtues like patience, endurance, hope, perseverance, etc. Some of these tests scenarios and behavior expected are: (1) not to get desperate when in poverty or illness, not to express displeasure, not to complain, not to give up, and to live optimistically; (2) hopeful that a problematic situation to a believer speeds up the process of getting back to meet God; (3) if poor, man should endeavor to eliminate poverty, such as by improving his knowledge and skills; by still paying the rights of Allah and His Messenger and to other humans their rights (such as paying alms); and if tested with illness, trying to seek treatment; and (4) praying for living righteously and protecting from evil.

The human beings are also tested in abundance of health, happiness, wealth good fortune, and high-status. The test in such scenarios is to remain grateful to God and continue upholding the good and avoiding evil. When in good fortune, believers must remain humble. Other forms are (1) to acknowledge that all achievements are due to the will of God, not just your making; (2) accepting the mandate of being enriched or fortunate and take it as a bestowed gift from Allah; (3) fear Allah and fulfill the order that Allah has bestowed upon you with good fortune; and (4) accord the rights mandated by Allah like human rights in the form of zakat, sadaqah, and infaq, and endeavor to use wealth to advance goodness in the community, nation, and environment. The humans also should not use the wealth to boast, fulfill selfish or lustful desires.

When all humans can pass these tests, God guides them in the form of a straight religion (straight path) through his messengers. Because God is Al-Ghaib, the Unseen, He could not teach humans directly, so He appointed His messengers from the human race itself, namely the caliphate or Prophets. God's plan to make His caliphate on earth from the human race was protested by the Angels and Demons, however, they realized their mistakes and apologized. Based on such stories in the Quran the first creatures who were willing to bow down (obey) to the Messenger of Allah or the Khalifah fil ardh (God's representative in the world) were the angels; while the first creature who refused (reluctant to obey) to the Messenger of Allah was the devil (from the Jinn). Angels were willing to bow down to the Messenger of Allah because they realized that the Messenger of Allah was given Al-Asma or religious knowledge by Allah while the angels remained ignorant of it. The Devil or Satan, however, refused to obey the Messenger of Allah, as he arrogantly felt better than the Prophet.

Activities

The Quranic verses reveal the story of the creation of the first caliph, the Prophet Adam, and the reaction of the Angels. These verses are revealed in Al-Baqarah verses 30-34, Al-Hijr verses 28-40, and Al-

A'raf 11-18, Shad verses 71-83, 17 / Al-Isra verses 61-62, and Al-Kahfi verse 50. In this research study, there were activities in which participants were allowed to pass messages through storytelling to children. After the learners listened to the story, they would respond effectively. For these activities, such chapters and verses were chosen from the Quran which were perceived as excellent and exciting for children and taught them morals and values. It was established that children lacked a clear understanding of most Quranic terms. Having realized this, the researchers ensured that such difficult terms are replaced by simpler and easier ones so that students could quickly grasp the meaning of the stories. From the Quran, such words and phrases were chosen to explain the message: caliph, angels, devils, humans, making mischief on earth and spilling blood, always glorifying by praising and discussing Allah, the Prophet Adam, and prostrations. These activities were planned as a package for learning in nursery classes.

To achieve the learning objectives of this research, four (4) sessions of 15 minutes each were organized. Each session comprised of initial activities, core activities, and final activities. Some of the findings from these sessions are presented in the subsection below:

Phase one: Session 1

Initiating activity (5 minutes):

This activity was more of an apperception activity for children to know that (1) the Prophet Adam was the first Prophet 2) the Prophet Adam was a human, not angel nor Jinn; 3) angels are devout worshippers of God, and 4) Satan is an infidel.

Core activities (15 minutes): The teacher started the core learning by reciting Quran Al-Baqarah verse 30, and read the translation in a language that was easily understood by children, and finally told the story of the creation of the Prophet Adam as the first Prophet. It is said that the Angels protested at first that why the Messenger of God should be from the human race. The angels thought that humans are like to commit evil, but the Prophet Rasulullah was not a bad human, but the best human.

Last activity (5 minutes): The children were asked to summarize the results of the core activities, namely (1) God's plan to appoint the Messenger of God from the human race; (2) Angels protest because the human were likely to commit evil (3) according to the Angels, people who deserve to be Rasulullah are devout worshipers; (4) Angels are devout worshipers; therefore the Messenger of Allah should be from the Angels, not from humans; and (5) Allah confirms that His Messenger is the most devout man.

Phase two: Session 2

Initial activity (5 minutes): This activity was more of an apperception activity especially for children to know that: (1) As the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Adam was taught religion by God, which He did not teach to angels; (2) Realizing their stupidity, the Angels finally willing agreed to obey the Prophet Adam as the Messenger of Allah; (3) Iblis (Satan) was reluctant to follow the Messenger of Allah because he was arrogant and felt himself better than the Prophet Adam.

Core activities (15 minutes): The teacher started the core learning by reciting Quran 2 / Al-Baqarah verses 31-34, read the translation, and finally narrated that the Prophet Adam (Rasulullah) was taught religion, which had never been taught to the Angels or to Satan from the Jinn. Therefore, when asked about faith, angels could not answer it. Finally, the Prophet Adam explained the religion to the Angels. The angels realized that they did not know about the Science of Religion (the truth) and that the only one who knew it was the Messenger of Allah. Allah then ordered the Angels and Satan to obey the Messenger of Allah. All angels followed the Prophet Adam (as the first Prophet). The devil of the Jin race was reluctant to obey the Messenger of Allah. The devil was arrogant and felt himself better than the Prophet Adam. Therefore, Satan was condemned to the hell fire by Allah.

Last activity (5 minutes): The children were asked to summarize the results of the core activities, namely: (1) Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Adam, was taught religion by God, which he did not teach to the Angels; (2) Angels could not explain the truth of religion; (3) the Angels finally agreed to obey the Prophet

Adam as the Messenger of Allah; (4) Satan was reluctant to follow the Messenger of Allah because of his arrogance, feeling himself better than the Prophet Adam.

During the learning activities, the children showed great enthusiasm to pay attention and answer the questions raised by the teacher. Children easily caught the message of the story, namely: First, humans must emulate an angel who is willing to obey the Messenger of Allah, and second, humans must hate the devil because he does not want to follow the Messenger of Allah. The findings reveal that the case based action research at the validation stage of this model was successful. There was no need to do another round.

Quantitative Findings:

A questionnaire was distributed to the parents of all participants of this study through email after one week of each of the two meetings. The parents were instructed to mark indicators on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being lowest and 10 being highest) about their observation of changes in their children after storytelling sessions. The researchers calculated the averages of this score for each indicator and for each meeting. The purpose of doing so was to measure the impact of the storytelling sessions on students.

Table 1: *Score for Indicators after Session 1 and 2*

Values Observed	Patience	Honesty	Calmness	Spoken Difference	Attitude Towards Other	Attention To Prayers	Retention	Role Modeling Behavior
Session 1 Averaged Score	5	6	4	4	4	5	3	4
Session 2 Averaged Score	6	8	5	9	8	10	6	9

Table 1 summarizes each indicator’s score as presented after each storytelling session. For instance, the Patience indicator has an average score of 5 and 6 in both meetings respectively; honesty scored 6 and 8 respectively; calmness shows a score of 4 and 5 respectively; spoken differences than before are ranked to be having scores of 4 and 9 respectively; the Attitude and behavior towards others scored 4 and 8 respectively; Attention to Prayers was marked as 5 and 10 respectively; Retention abilities marked 3 and 6 respectively; and the Role modeling tendencies were found scoring 4 and 9 respectively.

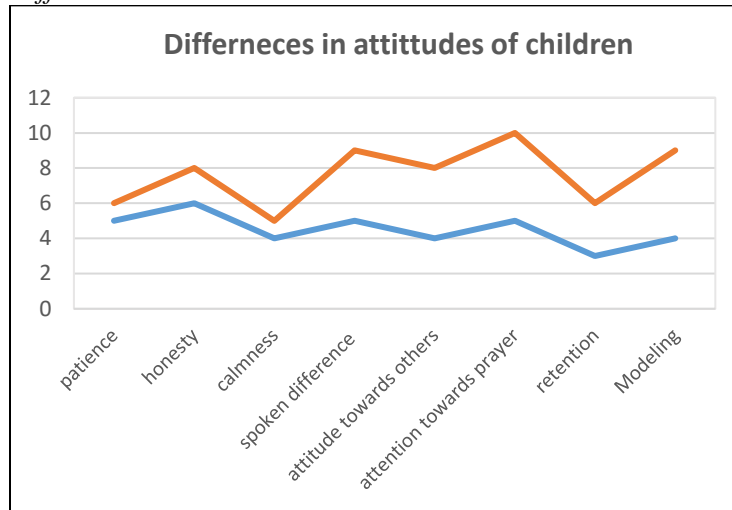
Table 2 shows the differences in the two score for each indicator after Session 2. It can clearly be seen from the comparison that the score improvement is positive for each of the indicators. Patience showed an improvement by 1 score, honesty by 2, calmness by 1, spoken difference by 5; attitude towards others by 4, prayer attention by 5, retention by 3 and modeling behavior by 5.

Table 2: *Score Improvement*

Values observed	Increase in practicing of values
Patience	1
Honesty	2
Calmness	1
Spoken difference	5
Attitude towards others	4
Attention towards prayer	5
Retention	3
Role modeling behavior	5

In Figure 1, the linear illustration shows that the red line (Meeting 2) has higher values for each indicator as compared to blue line (Meeting 1). The two lines do not intersect at any point. This shows that the score for second meeting is always higher than that of the first meeting. It can be hypothesized that more such meetings will lead to further improvement of these indicators of behavior in students.

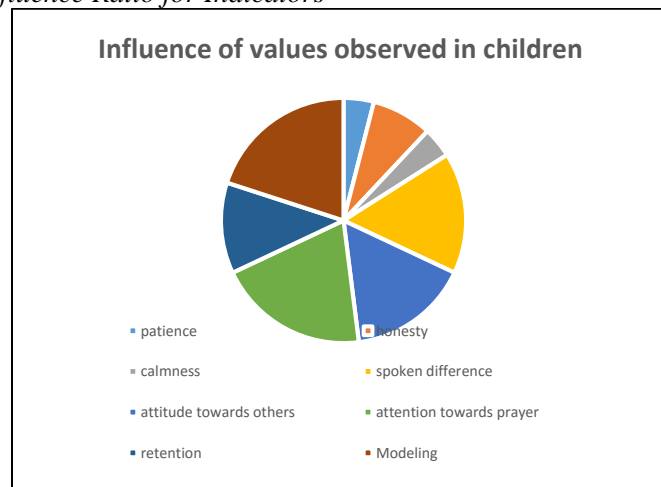
Figure 1: Mapping the Difference in Indicators



*Red line indicates Meeting 2 score; Blue line indicates Meeting 1 score

Figure 2 illustrates the percentages of the impact of each indicator. Each indicator is mapped to show its share of change. The highest change (20%) is observed in two indicators, namely, role modeling behavior and attention to prayers. The second position is shared by two indicators i.e. spoken difference and attitude towards others with 16% impact shown on each. Retention has shown a change or impact ratio of 12%, honesty of 8% and patience and calmness of 4% each.

Figure 2: Mapping the Influence Ratio for Indicators



Conclusion

This study analyzed whether the Quranic Storytelling learning model can be implemented in childhood education. It was built on the premise that small children love to listen to stories, which help to foster religious values among children at an early age. It was also believed that that nursery or kindergarten children can capture the message from these stories with ease and able to understand. The findings reveal that such stories are easily distinguished because the Quranic storytelling act is related to the fundamental act of religious teaching. The theological training of children can be made through storytelling as it will also develop critical thinking and creativity which is not the case when students habituate the Quran through mere recitations.

The study also found that storytelling technique helps in improving the behavioral indicators of

children. This technique is also seen helpful in increasing the attention that the children gave to their prayers. They also developed their Islamic role models who they heard about in the storytelling sessions. Moreover, the parents observed that their children spoke softer, were more polite and calm and showed respect and love towards others.

During class presentations, the events and terms in the Quran were taught as learning activities. The words in the Quran were replaced by more familiar terms for children to understand the message of the story. During the learning process, activities stimulated the students to enthusiastically learn, pay attention and answer the questions raised during classes.

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