BUILDING CHARACTER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH ISLAMIC-BASED MEDIA FOR LEARNING

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Abstract: This research aims to explore and implement a learning approach for positive character development in early childhood. Through the development of learning media with Islamic values, this research to create a fun and educational learning environment for children. for children. The research method uses a qualitative approach with a case study as the as the main design. Data were collected through observation, interviews and analysis of analysis of documents related to the use of Islamic-based learning media. Islamic-based learning media. The research findings show that Islamic-based learning media in Islamic-based learning media in Yayasan Peduli Kasih (YPK) as an early childhood education institution consisting of RA, PG, and TPA, which consists of RA, PG and TPA, proved to be not only a supporting has proved to be not only a supportive tool, but also a key player in shaping the character of early childhood. The Foundation as a whole has succeeded in Islamic-based learning media holistically, not only for academic aspects, but also for shaping early childhood character, for academic aspects, but also for shaping Islamic attitudes and values. Therefore, the results of this study show that the Islamic-based educational media approach can be used as an effective model for early childhood character development. Islamic-based learning media can be used as an effective model for early childhood character development with positive implications that can be adopted by other early childhood education institutions other early childhood education institutions.

Keywords: Character Early Childhood; Learning Media; Islamic.

Introduction

Early childhood is a crucial period in shaping an individual's character (Zubaedi, 2013). The formation of character in early childhood is significant because the character developed during this time will influence behavior, attitudes, and habits in the future. A good character will help children become independent, responsible, ethical, and possess good social skills. Therefore, character formation in early childhood should be emphasized in the educational process.

Character education in early childhood can be conducted in various ways, one of which is through instructional media. Instructional media can be an effective tool in helping young children understand Islamic values and develop a strong and admirable character (Khadijah, 2015). Additionally, instructional media can assist young children in gaining a better understanding of Islamic values and daily life in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Instructional media is a set of tools (materials) that can be used to convey messages in the teaching process from the message carrier (teacher) to the message receiver (students) to achieve goals efficiently and effectively (Zazin & Zaim, 2020).

Islamic-based instructional media are crucial in building the character of young children. This type of instructional media can help young children understand religion in an enjoyable, interactive, and effective manner. Teachers play a crucial role in designing innovative instructional media to meet the needs of young children (Sitepu & Nasution, 2018). Through the use of

instructional media, teachers find it easier to teach subjects, and students find it easier to understand the lessons. In line with this explanation, Hardianto (2011) emphasizes that teachers can more easily deliver lessons using instructional media, and students will find it easier to comprehend what is being taught. Therefore, there is a need for more intensive efforts to create instructional media that is not only informative but also engaging so that young children are more involved in Islamic lessons. Furthermore, the use of Islamic-based instructional media should not only focus on theoretical understanding but also on how children apply Islamic values in their daily lives. Thus, children will not only gain theoretical understanding but also build their ability to apply these values more practically.

Based on the above exposition, the author is interested in researching this topic with the title "Building the Character of Early Childhood Through Islamic-Based Instructional Media." It is hoped that this research will provide a clear and in-depth overview of the use of Islamic-based instructional media in shaping the character of young children.

Literature Review

Instructional media plays a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process and has a positive impact on children's engagement in learning activities (Harfiani et al., 2020). Islamic-based instructional media are designed to assist teachers in implementing interactive and engaging learning that is suitable for the development of early childhood, particularly in this context, to shape the character of children from an early age. The primary goal of Islamic-based instructional media is to provide useful tools for educators to achieve learning objectives involving young children. Content that focuses on Islamic values, educational games, interesting Islamic stories, and activities that promote positive attitudes are some elements of this media design. Febiharsa & Djuniadi (2018) state that the use of instructional media that incorporates Islamic elements can enhance children's engagement in the learning process. It can also create a better learning environment for character building.

Instructional media, as described, also takes into account the diversity of learning styles or patterns of young children, as highlighted by Gardner in Jasmine (2017), the theory of multiple intelligences. This instructional media also considers various learning styles of young children. Teachers can adjust the learning according to each child's preferences and needs using various types of media, such as pictures, audio, and video. Islamic-based instructional media become flexible tools that can be adapted in this context to facilitate various teaching methods.

Fikri (2019), suggests that incorporating Islamic values into early childhood education can have a positive impact on cognitive and moral development. Mushlihah et al (2018), found that children participating in Islamic-based learning have better problem-solving abilities and higher levels of empathy. Therefore, Islamic-based instructional media are not just teaching tools but also contribute to shaping the character of young children.

The utilization of Islamic-based instructional media and supporting teachers in innovation require the support and training of teachers to strengthen the effective use of Islamic-based instructional media. Marwan et al (2019), state that teacher training to integrate Islamic values into education is a crucial factor for successful implementation. Thus, the role of Islamic-based instructional media in assisting the formation of the character of young children will be strengthened if schools, educational institutions, and the government collaborate to support, teach, and develop better content.

Method

The method used involves a descriptive qualitative approach with a field research method. This field research was conducted through direct observation and interviews with respondents at

TK Peduli Kasih, located on Jalan Tegal Sari Laut Dendang Percut Sei Tuan, Medan, North Sumatra. The research also adopts an inductive approach, meaning that the data obtained will serve as the basis for drawing conclusions. The population of this study consists of early childhood students within the environment of TK Peduli Kasih. The sample size was determined using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques in this research include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is carried out to observe the activities and behaviors of children when using Islamic-based instructional media. Interviews are conducted with teachers to gather information regarding their experiences in shaping the character of early childhood through Islamic-based instructional media. Documentation is performed to obtain information related to the educational programs used by the Islamic educational institution. The data collected are then analyzed using descriptive qualitative data analysis techniques. The analysis involves grouping, classification, and interpretation of the data. The results of the data analysis are then used to draw conclusions in the research.

Result and Discussion
Result

Based on the findings and research objectives agreed upon regarding the title "Building Early Childhood Character Through Islamic-Based Learning Media," it can be outlined as follows: The Care Foundation (YPK), consisting of RA, PG, and TPA, is an early childhood education institution based on Islam. Therefore, the Care Foundation has a vision not only to produce high-quality human resources but also to imbue them with Islamic values. Based on observations, documentation, and interviews related to "Islamic-Based Learning Media in Building the Character of Early Childhood" at the Care Foundation (YPK), it is revealed that the learning media not only serves as a supporting tool to assist students in learning but also plays a crucial role in shaping the character of early childhood.

According to the interview results with one of the teachers at the Care Foundation (YPK), Mrs. Rizka Rahma Dwinta, S.Pd., she acknowledged that the use of Islamic-based educational tools in the Care Foundation educational institution is crucial to achieving their goals. Furthermore, the support provided by the school principal, who involves teachers in collaborations with institutions such as universities in the form of training activities, seminars, and workshops related to media, can also contribute to optimizing the use of learning media. This is done because the Care Foundation realizes that successful implementation requires a deep understanding of Islamic values and creative abilities in designing engaging learning experiences.

One example of the use of Islamic-based media applied at the Care Foundation (YPK) can be seen in the following image:

Image 1: About Banners/Posters on the Correct and Good Way to Perform Ablution.

Furthermore, through interviews conducted with other teachers, it was found that the positive influence of Islamic-based learning media can be measured through changes in the behavior and responses of children. Children engaged in Islamic-based learning at YPK tend to show improvements in character aspects such as integrity, empathy, and honesty.

Based on observations, documentation, and interviews, it can be concluded that the importance of the teacher's role is also highlighted. In interviews, teachers at YPK are considered as primary agents in transferring Islamic values to children through learning media. YPK acknowledges that the readiness and understanding of teachers significantly affect the effectiveness of Islamic-based learning. The Care Foundation (YPK) has successfully implemented Islamic-based learning media holistically in shaping the character of early childhood. This approach is not only focused on academic aspects but also on the formation of Islamic attitudes and values expected to leave a lasting impact on children's lives from an early age. It was then found that YPK does not limit the use of Islamic-based learning media to religious aspects alone but also embraces the formation of good character and morals. This includes starting and ending lessons with prayers, maintaining order in learning, and so on, as seen in the image below:

Image 2: Child Praying Before Learning.   Image 3: Child Being Orderly During Learning.

The implementation of Islamic values is not limited to teaching and learning activities but extends to daily life aspects, such as cultivating a dress code that reflects Islamic attitudes. Thus, comprehensively, the Care Foundation (YPK) has successfully implemented Islamic-based learning media holistically in shaping the character of early childhood. This approach is not only focused on academic aspects but also on the formation of Islamic attitudes and values expected to leave a lasting impact on children's lives from an early age

Discussion

Islamic-based learning media is crucial in building the character of early childhood. By incorporating Islamic values into educational materials, such as Islamic stories, children's religious songs, and Islam-based activities, this can serve as a strong moral foundation for the growth of a child's character. Islamic-based learning media focuses on attractiveness and interactivity, enhancing children's participation in the learning process. By adding multimedia elements, such as images in posters, music, and videos, young children can more easily understand and develop Islamic concepts.

The importance of interactivity in Islamic-based learning media not only impacts the understanding of ideas but also enhances a child's involvement in the learning process. The learning process becomes more interesting and suitable for the development of early childhood

due to the diversity of multimedia components used. Suryandaru (2020), emphasizes that the use of multimedia in teaching and learning activities can increase students' motivation and make it easier for them to understand the lessons. Multimedia becomes one of the transformative strategies in the way of learning in this technological era, where teachers are expected to change conventional approaches into more modern learning methods so that students do not feel bored and remain motivated. Although some teachers may face difficulties in adapting to modern learning due to various factors.

Furthermore, Barovih et al. (2020), explain that children of the current generation, who are accustomed to technology in their daily lives, show that the use of technology is crucial and assists teachers in the learning process. This aims to prevent the learning environment from becoming monotonous and boring. Therefore, the implementation of Islamic-based learning media with a multimedia approach is not only relevant to current technological developments but also positively contributes to the effectiveness of learning, especially at the early childhood level.

Based on this discussion, it can be inferred that the research conducted on the Care Foundation (YPK) as one of the early childhood education institutions is significant not only for early childhood education as a whole but also for other early childhood education institutions. It can also be affirmed that Islamic-based educational media can serve as a useful model to strengthen a comprehensive learning approach that integrates character elements and Islamic values from the beginning.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of the research related to the development of early childhood character through Islamic-based learning media at the Care Foundation (YPK), an Early Childhood Education Institution consisting of RA, PG, and TPA, it can be concluded that this institution plays a highly significant role in achieving its vision. YPK aims not only to produce high-quality human resources but also to instill Islamic characteristics. Through observations, documentation, and interviews, Islamic-based learning media at YPK is proven to be not only a supporting tool but also a key player in shaping the character of early childhood. The importance of Islamic-based media is evident in the behavioral changes and positive responses of children in the formation of Islamic character from an early age. The role of teachers as primary agents in transferring Islamic values through learning media to children is also apparent. Awareness of the readiness and understanding of teachers as key factors in the effectiveness of Islamic-based learning is also emphasized through the support provided to teachers by the school principal through collaborations with other institutions. Thus, overall, YPK has successfully implemented holistic Islamic-based learning media, not only for academic aspects but also for shaping Islamic attitudes and values. Therefore, it can be illustrated that the findings of this research can serve as an effective model in the formation of early childhood character, with positive implications that can be adopted by other early childhood education institutions.

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