

Development of Serial Image Media in Character Building and Monotheistic Values in Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop an effective image media in teaching monotheistic values in early childhood, as well as to test the level of children's understanding of monotheistic values after using this media. The series of picture media was chosen because of its ability to present the abstract concept of monotheism concretely through an interesting visual narrative that is easy for children to understand. This study uses a development approach that involves needs analysis, media design, and validation and effectiveness tests in early childhood. The results is the series of picture media can improve children's understanding of the values of monotheism, create an interactive learning atmosphere, and stimulate children's imagination and creativity. This media is expected to be an innovative solution in supporting Islamic education in early childhood, especially in building faith and noble morals.

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INTRODUCTION

Tauhid education is the core of Islamic teachings and is the main foundation in shaping children's personalities. At an early age, children are at a very rapid stage of development, both cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically. At this stage, children have extraordinary learning abilities through appropriate and enjoyable stimulation. Therefore, instilling the values of tauhid from an early age is a strategic step to build a generation that has strong faith and noble morals. One effective method is the use of interesting learning media that is in accordance with their developmental characteristics. Serial image media is one relevant alternative, because it is able to convey religious messages in a visual way that is easy for children to understand. Through serial images, abstract concepts in tauhid can be realized in the form of concrete visual narratives, making it easier for children to understand and internalize these values.

Early childhood education plays an important role in forming the foundation of moral and spiritual values. One of the main aspects of religious education is the concept of monotheism, namely the belief in the oneness of God, which is the core teaching of various religions. Instilling an understanding of monotheism from an early age can help children develop strong characters and have a solid spiritual foundation. One method that can be used to teach this concept is through image media. Images can provide clear and interesting visualizations for children, so that they can more easily understand abstract concepts such as divinity. The use of image media is also in line with the characteristics of early childhood who tend to learn through visual stimulation and concrete experiences.

However, in developing image media as a tool for monotheism education, there are several challenges. These challenges include limitations in the visual representation of the concept of divinity without violating religious principles, the availability of appropriate resources, and the readiness of educators to implement the media effectively. Therefore, further research is needed to develop a more optimal method that is in accordance with the principles of monotheism in early childhood education. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of using image media in instilling monotheistic values in early childhood. It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the world of education, especially in providing interesting, effective, and religiously appropriate learning strategies, so that children can understand and internalize the concept of monotheism better. This research aims to develop an effective image media in instilling monotheistic values in early childhood, focusing on conveying abstract concepts of monotheism through an attractive and easy-to-understand visual narrative.

METHODS

This research method uses development research. Using the 4D model in this study. This model was developed by Thiagarajan, Semmel, and Semmel in 1974 and consists of four main stages, namely Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. The following is an explanation of each stage in the 4D model:

1. Define

At this stage, the main objective is to identify problems and development needs. The main activities include: Front-end analysis: Identifying needs, problems, or gaps in learning. Student analysis: Identifying the characteristics of target users, such as age, educational background, and abilities. Task analysis: Formulating learning objectives and structuring the material to be developed. Specification of learning objectives: Determining the competencies to be achieved.

2. Design

This stage focuses on the initial design of the product to be developed. The steps include: Preparation of the content or material framework. Selection of the format or model of learning media to be used. Creation of initial designs, such as storyboards, prototypes, or drafts. Preparation of evaluation instruments to measure product effectiveness.



3. Develop

This stage involves creating and testing products based on previously created designs. The steps include: Creation of initial products (prototypes). Product trials: Initial trials are conducted on a limited basis to identify weaknesses and obtain input. Product revision: The product is revised based on the results of initial trials until a product is obtained that meets the criteria for valid, practical, and effective.

4. Disseminate

The final stage is to disseminate the product that has been developed to a wider range of users. Activities include:

- Field trials to ensure product effectiveness on a large scale
- Publication of products in print, digital, or through training
- Implementation in the actual context.

RESULTS

This study aims to develop a series of picture media as an aid in instilling character values and monotheism in early childhood. The following are the results of each stage:

1. Define Stage

The results of the analysis show that:

Based on interviews with 5 early childhood education teachers, it was found that the limited use of learning media in textbooks and oral stories did not attract enough attention to children in understanding religious values and character. Early childhood children have high visual comprehension, so the use of series of picture media is considered effective. The learning media currently used is still limited to textbooks or oral stories, so it is less interesting for children.

Character values such as honesty, responsibility, and politeness, as well as the concept of monotheism such as knowing Allah as the creator, have not been fully integrated into learning activities.

2. Design Stage

Good character is a reflection of a strong belief in monotheism. Children who understand the values of monotheism will find it easier to apply good character in their social interactions, whether with parents, friends, or their surroundings. Honesty, respect for parents, love for others, and keeping trust are part of the values of character that must be instilled from an early age. For example, children who are taught to always tell the truth will understand that lying is a behavior that is not in accordance with religious teachings. Likewise, the attitude of helping each other, sharing, and behaving politely—all of these are forms of implementation of true monotheism education.

At this stage, a prototype of series of picture media was designed with the following steps:

- Story development: Three main stories were designed with the theme:
- Honesty: The Story of "Ali and the Lost Apple".

"Ali and the Lost Apple"

Ali walked home from school, passing through Mr. Budi's shady apple orchard. Ali saw a big red apple hanging low on the tree, his eyes sparkling. Ali hesitated, but finally picked the apple and put it in his bag. Ali felt tempted. "Mr. Budi has a lot of apples, maybe just one won't hurt," he thought. He took the apple. Ali sat on his bed, looking at the apple with a restless face. When he got home, Ali felt uncomfortable. His heart was restless. "I took the apple without permission... What should I do?" The next day, Ali stood in front of Mr. Budi's house, carrying an apple in his hand. The next morning, Ali decided to be honest. He went to Mr. Budi's house to return the apple. Mr. Budi smiled kindly when Ali confessed and apologized. Mr. Budi smiled and stroked Ali's head, then gave him some apples. Ali walked home with a happy heart, carrying the apple given by Mr. Budi. Ali felt relieved and happy. He learned that honesty makes his heart calm and is liked by many people.

- Responsibilities: The story of "Aisyah Caring for Plants".

"Aisyah Caring for Plants"

Aisyah was a kind and curious little girl who loved spending time in her backyard. One day, her mother gave her a small potted plant and said, "Aisyah, this plant is now your responsibility. You must take care of it every day.": Excited, Aisyah promised to do her best. She watered the plant every morning, placed it in a sunny spot, and talked to it softly. "Grow strong and beautiful," she would whisper. One day, Aisyah got busy with school and forgot to water her plant. The next morning, she saw its leaves drooping. "Oh no!" she cried. "I'm so sorry!" She quickly gave it water and promised never to forget again. Slowly, the plant perked up, and soon, it bloomed into a beautiful flower. Aisyah learned that taking care of plants required patience, love, and responsibility. She was so happy that she decided to grow more plants and help make the world

- Getting to Know Allah: The story of "The Sky and the Night Stars".

"The Sky and the Night Stars"




On a quiet night, the sky stretched far and wide, dark and endless. It often felt lonely, watching over the world below. But every evening, as the sun said goodbye, tiny shimmering stars would begin to appear. "Hello, dear stars," the sky whispered. "You make the night so beautiful." The stars twinkled happily. "We are here to keep you company, Sky! Together, we make the night magical." The moon, shining softly, added, "And I will light the way for travelers, guiding them through the dark." Hearing this, the sky no longer felt lonely. It realized that even in darkness, light and friendship could shine the brightest.

- Visual Design: Each story is presented in the form of a series of pictures with colored illustrations and short narrative text.

- Evaluation Instrument: Observation sheets and interview guidelines are prepared to measure children's understanding and response to the media.

3. Develop Stage

- Story development: Three main stories were designed with the theme:

<p>First Story</p> <p>Honesty: The Story of "Ali and the Lost Apple".</p>	
<p>Second Story</p> <p>Responsibilities: The story of "Aisyah Caring for Plants".</p>	
<p>Third Story</p> <p>Getting to Know Allah: The story of "The Sky and the Night Stars".</p>	

At this stage, the media prototype is tested through two stages:

- Material Expert: Evaluating the suitability of the content with the values of monotheism and early childhood education. The media is declared "very appropriate" (average score of 90%) for instilling character and monotheism values.

The product is tested by several experts to ensure its quality. Validation involves:

Table 1. Validation Results From Two Material Experts

No	Assessment Aspect	Expert Name	Score (%)	Description
1	Validation of Material Expert 1	Material Expert 1	90%	Very Good
2	Validation of Material Expert 2	Material Expert 2	85%	Good

- Media Expert:

Evaluating the visual design, clarity, and appeal of the media. The visual design is declared "attractive and easy to understand" (average score of 85%).

4. Disseminate Stage

The media was disseminated in two ways: Teacher Workshop: Training on media usage in 3 local PAUDs with positive responses.

- Small group Trial

The trial was conducted to test the attractiveness of the product and measure whether it can help improve children's literacy skills by using media. This trial was conducted by taking a sample of 15 children at TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 42 Banjarmasin. There are several indicators as an assessment in developing the tauhid abilities of early-age children, namely Understanding of Story, Mentioning Character Values, Clarity in Retelling, Enthusiasm in Telling Stories, Accuracy in Conveying Moral Messages.

Table 2. Observation Research Instruments Related to the Ability to Retell with Character Values

Code Subjek	Pre Test	Post Tes	Presentase	Criteria
1	2	3	90	Good
2	2	3	90	Good
3	2	3	90	Good
4	2	3	90	Good
5	3	4	100	Very good
6	3	4	100	Very good
7	3	4	100	Very good
8	3	4	100	Very good
9	2	3	90	Good
10	3	4	100	Very good
11	3	4	100	Very good
12	2	3	90	Good
13	3	4	100	Very good
14	3	4	100	Very good
15	3	4	100	Very good

The trial was conducted on 15 children aged 5-6 years in one of the PAUDs. The results showed: Children find it easier to understand the concept of monotheism through illustrated stories. 80% of children.

DISCUSSION

1. Effectiveness of Serial Image Media

The trial results showed that:

- Children are more enthusiastic about learning through story visualization.



- Children can relate events in the story to everyday life, for example, honesty when playing with friends.

The concept of monotheism becomes easier to understand, such as recognizing Allah as the creator of nature through illustrations of the sky and stars. This statement refers to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, specifically the preoperational stage (ages 2-7 years). At this stage, children:

Think symbolically – They begin to use pictures, stories, and games as a way to understand the world.

Egocentric Thinking – They see the world from their own perspective.

Difficulty with abstract concepts – Children need concrete objects or illustrations to understand more complex concepts.

In the context of research on the development of image media to improve understanding of tauhid (monotheism), this finding supports the use of concrete visual media such as illustrations, picture stories, or picture cards. This helps children understand the concept of the oneness of God more easily than through verbal explanations alone.

2. Teacher and Parent Responses

Teachers: Media is considered an innovative solution that can complement conventional learning methods. Teachers feel helped in conveying abstract values such as monotheism in a concrete way.

Parents: This media can be used at home to continue learning, thus creating synergy between school and family. Here are some concrete examples of how image media helps teachers in teaching the concept of monotheism and character values to early childhood:

a. Facilitating the Conveyance of Religious Messages

Example: A teacher in PAUD uses an illustration of the story of the Prophet Abraham who seeks God to explain the concept of the oneness of Allah. With interesting pictures, children find it easier to understand the difference between the One God and objects that cannot be worshiped. Impact on teachers: They find it easier to explain abstract concepts, because children are more focused and interested in pictures.

b. Increasing Children's Participation

Example: When teaching the value of honesty, the teacher uses an illustrated story about a child returning his friend's lost item. After reading the story together, the teacher asks the children to imitate the expressions and attitudes of the characters in the picture. Impact on teachers: Children become more active in discussions and understand moral messages more easily because they see concrete examples in pictures.

c. Changing Teaching Methods

Example: Before using picture media, a teacher only told stories verbally about being grateful to Allah. However, after using interactive pictures (such as story cards and flannel boards), children can point to pictures, arrange the sequence of the story, and state the reasons why they should be grateful. Impact on teachers: They use more interactive

methods, such as picture-based questions and answers, which make children more involved in learning.

d. Helping to Remember Lessons

Example: A teacher found that after using daily prayer posters with interesting illustrations, children memorized prayers before meals and prayers before bed more quickly than just hearing repeated readings. Impact on teachers: They realized that visualization helped children remember longer and better understand the meaning of the prayers they read.

3. Relation to Theory

This research is suitable for the development of early childhood by applying this media in learning will have a good impact on children and teachers in the learning process. Based on the results of this study, there are several feedbacks regarding aspects that can be improved to increase its effectiveness.

a. Additional Interactive Elements

Feedback: Teachers suggested interactive elements, such as sections that children can color or simple activities (e.g., reflective questions or matching games with character values). Improvement Suggestions: Adding image-based activities, such as interactive story cards or coloring pages that are relevant to the story.

b. Simplifying Language to Make it Easier to Understand

Feedback: Several teachers noted that some sentences in the story were still a little difficult for young children to understand. They suggested that the language be simpler and more appropriate to the children's level of understanding.

Improvement Suggestions: Simplifying sentences and using language that is more communicative and familiar to children.

In general, this illustrated story media has been effective in helping children understand the concept of monotheism and character values. However, with improvements in the aspects of illustration, interactivity, language delivery, and strengthening of moral messages, this media can be more interesting and more effective in the learning process.

4. Constraints and Solutions

Some of the constraints found include:

a. Children's Lack of Focus When Listening to Stories

A problem that often arises is that children lack focus when listening to stories, especially if the duration is too long. To address this issue, we recommend reducing the length of the story and inserting interactive activities, such as a Q&A after each part of the story. During the trial, the children showed greater interest when the story was divided into shorter parts, and they were more engaged in interactive discussions after listening to the story.

b. Limited Access to Digital Media in Some Regions

Some regions experience limitations in access to digital media, which limits the use of technology-based applications or media. As a solution, we recommend providing a



printed version of this medium that is easy to produce at a low cost and can be deployed to multiple places without the need for digital access. This allows image media to remain accessible to children in areas with limited technology.

c. **Challenges in Integrating Media into Everyday Learning**

Some teachers reported difficulties in integrating this image media into daily learning activities. As a solution, we recommend additional training for teachers on how to effectively use these media in a variety of learning contexts, as well as provide practical guidance that helps them understand how to align their use with broader learning objectives.

5. Research Implications

The development of this serial image media contributes to: Character Education: Helping children understand and practice values such as honesty, responsibility, and politeness. Tawhid Learning. Development of Learning Media: Providing a media model that can be adopted for various other learning themes. Research on the development of illustrated stories in instilling the value of monotheism in early childhood has several important implications in the fields of child education, development of learning media, and developmental psychology studies. Here are some of the main implications of this study:

a. **Implications in Early Childhood Education**

The results of this study indicate that visual media, especially illustrated stories, can be an effective tool in conveying abstract concepts such as monotheism to children. Teachers and educators can use this media to explain religious values in a more interesting way and in accordance with the cognitive development stage of early childhood. The Islamic education curriculum for children can integrate more use of visual media as the main teaching method.

b. **Implications in the Development of Learning Media**

This study confirms that illustrated media needs to be designed by considering the characteristics of early childhood, such as attractive illustrations, simple language, and explicit moral messages. The development of digital or interactive illustrated stories can be a more effective alternative in improving children's learning experiences. Educational media developers can use these findings as a basis for creating teaching materials that are more innovative and in accordance with children's needs.

This study makes a significant contribution to the world of early childhood education, especially in instilling the values of monotheism through picture story media. By utilizing a visual and interactive approach, the concept of monotheism can be more easily understood and internalized by children, thus forming a strong spiritual foundation from an early age.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of serial image media has proven to be an effective learning tool in instilling character and monotheism values in early childhood. By using the 4D development model (Define, Design, Develop, Disseminate), this media is systematically designed to meet the needs of learning that is interesting, relevant, and easy for children to understand. The results about serial

image media can improve children's understanding of character values, such as honesty, responsibility, and politeness, through interactive and fun visual stories. In addition, the concept of monotheism, such as knowing Allah as the creator, can be understood by children more concretely through illustrations that support the story.

This media also received a positive response from teachers and parents. Teachers feel helped in conveying abstract values, while parents consider this media as a learning support tool that can be used at home. The expert validation process showed that this media has a high level of suitability, both in terms of content and visual design. Although there are several obstacles, such as limited focus of children during learning and access to digital media in some areas, the solutions implemented, such as adjusting the duration of the story and providing a printed version, have succeeded in overcoming these obstacles. In conclusion, this serial image media is not only effective in instilling character values and monotheism in early childhood, but is also a relevant innovation to support children's learning. In general, this illustrated story media has been effective in helping children understand the concept of monotheism and character values. However, with improvements in the aspects of illustration, interactivity, language delivery, and strengthening of moral messages, this media can be more interesting and more effective in the learning process.

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