

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STORYTELLING METHOD IN
DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS OF PLAYGROUP
CHILDREN AT KB MUSLIMAT NU MASYITHOH KURIPAN KIDUL,
PEKALONGAN CITY**

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan metode storytelling dalam mengembangkan aspek sosial-emosional anak usia 3–4 tahun di KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul Kota Pekalongan. Storytelling dipilih karena memiliki potensi dalam menstimulasi kemampuan anak dalam mengenali, memahami, dan mengelola emosi serta menjalin hubungan sosial secara positif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari guru dan anak-anak di kelompok bermain. Teknik analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman; 1) Reduksi data, 2) Penyajian data, 3) Penarikan kesimpulan. Untuk meningkatkan keabsahan data, dilakukan triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode storytelling yang dilakukan secara rutin dan dikemas secara menarik mampu meningkatkan kemampuan sosial-emosional anak. Anak menjadi mampu menyesuaikan diri dengan lingkungan, aturan, dan norma yang berlaku; menunjukkan rasa percaya diri dan mengenali identitas diri; mampu mengungkapkan perasaan; serta menunjukkan sikap sosial seperti bekerja sama dan menghargai orang lain. Dengan demikian, storytelling terbukti menjadi metode pembelajaran yang efektif dalam mengembangkan aspek sosial-emosional anak usia dini.

Keywords: bercerita, sosial-emosional, anak usia dini

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the application of the storytelling method in developing the social-emotional aspects of children aged 3-4 years in KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul, Pekalongan City. Storytelling was chosen because it has the potential to stimulate children's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions and establish positive social relationships. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects consisted of teachers and children in the play group. Data

analysis techniques using the Miles and Huberman model: 1) Data reduction, 2) Data presentation, 3) Conclusion drawn. To increase the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques is carried out. The results of the study show that a storytelling method conducted regularly and packaged attractively can improve children's social-emotional skills. Children become able to adjust to the prevailing environment, rules, and norms; demonstrate confidence and recognize self-identity; able to express feelings; and show social attitudes such as cooperation and respect for others. Thus, storytelling has proven to be an effective learning method in developing the social-emotional aspects of early childhood.

Keywords: *storytelling, socio-emotional, early childhood*

INTRODUCTION

Children's social and emotional development has a crucial role in early childhood education because it affects how children interact with the social environment. Early childhood, especially in play groups, is at a critical phase where they learn to recognize and manage emotions and interact with their peers. According to Berk, (2018) The ability to understand and manage emotions is very important for children's social development because it will affect their interpersonal communication skills later in life. The relationship of early childhood education institutions in Indonesia is responsible for the formation of the basis of children's social and emotional development. However, based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020), there are still many institutions that have not fully implemented effective learning methods to support children's socio-emotional development.

This shows the need to develop learning strategies that are more oriented towards sociocognitive aspects. The storytelling method has proven to be an effective approach in developing the social-emotional aspects of children. Children can understand the emotions and social situations experienced by the characters in the story. Research by Zipes (2010:3) It shows that storytelling can increase children's empathy because they can feel and understand the feelings of the characters in the stories they hear. Although the benefits of storytelling have been proven, its application in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia, especially in the NU Muslimat environment, is still very limited.

Research by Sari, D.P. & Hidayati, N. (2021:45-58) found that the use of storytelling methods can improve children's social skills, but more research is needed to understand its impact in specific contexts. Learning activities in game groups are generally more focused on school development, while social-emotional development is often neglected. This can hinder children's ability to interact with peers and manage their emotions. Therefore, it is important to integrate methods for storytelling in daily learning activities.

The use of methods with narratives can make the children's learning process more entertaining and more interesting. A study by Marzuki, M., & Rahmawati, (2022:78-89) shows that children are more interested in learning through stories that contribute to the growth of their interest in learning. Storytelling also makes it easier for children to understand the emotions and social situations faced by the characters in the story. In addition, good social-emotional development can help students in the learning process.

Children who have good social and emotional skills tend to achieve better learning outcomes and build more positive social relationships (Denham, S. A., 2012). Therefore, it is important to create a learning environment that supports children's skill development. Jones, D. E., Brown, T. R., & Aber, (2013). Conducting research that shows that 3 programs aimed at improving children's social-emotional skills can reduce aggressive behavior and increase positive interactions. This suggests that social-emotional development is good for people and their social environment. KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul Pekalongan City is one of the institutions that has applied the storytelling method in its learning activities.

Based on the results of initial observations, it can be seen that the social-emotional development is good. Learning with the storytelling method is carried out once a week. At KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul is divided into 2 classes. Class A consists of 15 children, and Class B consists of 13 children. In the learning process, teachers are storytellers with students as listeners. Interestingly, the storytelling activities carried out are not only limited to the use of storybooks, but also use a variety of media, such as hand puppets and paper puppets. In addition, according to the principal of KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul, Mrs.

Kholishotu Ilahiyah, S.Pd.I. Learning using the storytelling method is one of the best learning approaches to help children acquire social-emotional skills. There is significant social-emotional development in most children, such as being able to follow instructions given by teachers, being able to play roles, beginning to show sharing behaviors, and being able to convey basic needs independently.

In the learning process, 4 teachers made their own stories in storytelling. Occasionally, teachers use media in storytelling, including picture story books and hand puppets, so that children do not get bored in listening to stories. After the learning process, children engage in social interaction and exchange stories. Some told fairy tales presented by teachers; Some told of their own personal experiences or fantasies. Based on this description, this study is expected to provide an in-depth picture of the application of the storytelling method in developing the social-emotional abilities of children in play groups, as well as a reference for educators in designing creative, interactive, and meaningful learning.

METHOD

This research is a type of field research with a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to deeply understand how the application of the storytelling method can affect the social-emotional development of children in the play group, so that the subjects in this study are teachers of play groups and children aged 3–4 years at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul, Pekalongan City. Teachers were chosen as subjects because they played a direct role in the implementation of storytelling, while children were the ones who experienced the impact of these activities. The selection of subjects is carried out purposively, namely based on the consideration that the informant has knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the process being researched. Therefore, the target in this study is the process of implementing the storytelling method and its impact on children's social-emotional development. The researcher observed how the teacher conveyed the story, the interaction between the teacher and the child, and the response and change in the child's social behavior after participating in the storytelling activity. The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself (*human instrument*), assisted by observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and

documentation notes. The researcher recorded directly in the field and documented the learning process with permission from the school. Then, related to data collection, it is carried out through: 1) Participatory observation of storytelling activities carried out by teachers. 2) In-depth interviews with teachers and principals to obtain information about the implementation and results of activities. 3) Documentation in the form of photos, videos, and diaries of learning activities. As a result, the data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model analysis technique, which includes three stages: 1) Data reduction, which is selecting and simplifying data from the field. 2) Presentation of data in the form of a descriptive narrative. 3) Drawing conclusions that are temporary until they are strengthened by other valid data. To improve the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques was carried out, namely, by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the storytelling method

The process of implementing the storytelling method takes place in three main stages: opening, core, and closing. In the opening stage, the teacher builds a fun and religious learning atmosphere by reading prayers, *asmaul husna*, and singing songs that are relevant to the learning theme. This activity helps children feel safe and ready to receive learning, as well as build emotional closeness with teachers and friends. The core activity stage is the core of learning. Teachers not only convey stories, but also use expressions, voice intonation, and dialogue that arouse children's imagination. Children are invited to get to know the characters, guess the course of the story, and respond to questions during the story. On March 8, 2025, the story with the theme of communication tools will be delivered with paper puppets and props in the form of laptops and legos. This story encourages children to understand the function of laptops in daily life, as well as foster cooperation when playing lego together. On March 17, 2025, the story with the theme of state attributes uses picture books, inviting children to get to know state symbols and foster a sense of pride as Indonesian citizens. Meanwhile, on April 19, 2025, the story of God's creation on earth was conveyed using finger puppets, which

explicitly conveyed a message of empathy, compassion, and appreciation for God's created living beings.

Each theme not only introduces new knowledge, but is also designed in harmony with the learning outcomes of the elements of identity, which include the ability to recognize self-identity, express feelings, adjust to norms, and display positive social attitudes. This shows that storytelling at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul is not just an entertaining activity, but is designed to strengthen the social-emotional character of children as a whole. In the closing stage, the teacher asked again about the content of the story as a form of reflection and reinforcement. Children retell or are asked to answer questions about the stories they have heard. This strategy provides space for children to reprocess information cognitively and emotionally, as well as train courage in expressing opinions. The closing was also carried out with prayers and homecoming preparation activities, creating a complete learning atmosphere from start to finish.

Of the 34 children, the majority showed good progress. This shows that storytelling is able to strengthen children's understanding of social norms and the ability to express feelings. Even children who are initially shy and tend to be passive show development in the courage to speak, recognize their emotions, and begin to show prosocial behaviors such as sharing toys and helping friends. These results support Goleman's (1995) theory that emotional intelligence can be developed through repetitive practice in a safe and supportive social context. Storytelling has proven to be a learning medium that is able to activate children's emotional and social functions at the same time.

2. Children's Social-Emotional Development at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul

The results of the research at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul show that the social-emotional development of children in the play group shows quite good progress in several main indicators, namely: the ability to adapt to the environment, show confidence and recognize self-identity, express feelings, and encourage positive social attitudes.

a. Self-adjustment to the prevailing environment, rules, and norms.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with classroom teachers, children at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul have shown significant development in terms of adaptability. Children begin to get used to daily activities at school, such as marching, participating in prayers together, answering teachers' greetings, and responding enthusiastically to instructions. Not only that, but they also begin to understand and practice simple social norms, such as asking for permission when they want to do something, sharing toys with friends, and respecting the queue rules while playing. The classroom teacher, Mrs. Lailatul Musiyam, said that although at first some children showed behaviors such as crying when their parents left them, refusing to participate in activities, or being reluctant to work together in groups, but through a consistent approach and the use of storytelling methods, children began to experience 75 positive changes. The stories conveyed by the teacher contained messages about discipline, rules, and how to behave in a social environment. Children learn from the characters in the story and reflect them in their daily behavior. These results strengthen the theory Hurlock (2002:229) which states that self-adjustment to the environment and social rules is an important part of children's social development. Children who are used to living routines and understanding norms will grow up to be more independent and responsible individuals.

b. Show confidence and recognize self-identity.

The increase in children's confidence can be seen from their courage to appear in front of the class, mention their own names, answer the teacher's questions, and even dare to play the role of a character in a story. Children seem enthusiastic when asked to express their opinions or personal experiences, even in simple language. This shows a growth in self-identity recognition as well as the ability to communicate thoughts verbally. Parents, as conveyed by Mrs. Munasifah, admitted that there was a change in attitude in their children after a few months of participating in storytelling activities. Children become more open, like to tell stories at home, and are more confident when interacting with family or peers. This reinforces the opinion Goleman (1995:43) which states that one of the main components of emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize oneself and foster

self-confidence. With a positive model of the story character, children feel that being brave, honest, and independent is something worth emulating.

c. Expressing feelings.

Children's ability to express feelings is one of the aspects that seems to develop during the application of the storytelling method. Children can not only say that they are happy or sad, but also begin to be able to name the reasons behind their feelings, such as *"I'm so sad that my doll was taken away"* or *"I'm glad that Mrs. Guru read the story."* The classroom teacher, Mrs. Wiwit Nur Widya, said that stories such as The Patient Tree or Si Kancil and the Flower Garden are very effective in helping children understand and convey emotions. Children can feel the sadness of the character when losing something or the joy of the character when meeting a friend. After the story is finished, the teacher invites the children to discuss which parts they like and how they feel about the characters. According to (Isbell, R., Sobol, J., Lindauer, L., & Lowrance (2004:157) Storytelling has a powerful effect on improving children's understanding of emotions because it involves imaginative and reflective experiences. In the context of learning, stories become a safe tool to explore emotions that are difficult to express directly. By listening and responding to stories, children learn to express themselves and begin to understand that emotions are natural and can be conveyed well.

d. Encourage positive social attitudes

The most prominent social indicator in this study is the emergence of prosocial attitudes, especially empathy, tolerance, and concern for living beings and the environment. In the storytelling activity with the theme "God's creation", children not only heard about the importance of caring for plants and loving animals, but were also invited to practice it directly. Children look happy when given activities to water plants, arrange a small garden in class, and even remind their friends not to step on flowers. The teacher explained that stories are a spark for children's social awareness. After listening to stories, they find it easier to understand the meaning of sharing, helping friends, and keeping the environment clean. This shows that storytelling plays a role as a cultural tool, as explained by Vygotsky, who states that children acquire social knowledge and skills through symbols, language, and social interactions provided by the environment. In this

case, storytelling is a medium of connection between cultural values (religious, social, and moral) and children's real behavior. Vygotsky also emphasized the importance of *scaffolding*, which is the assistance of adults in the child's proximal development zone. The teacher who tells the story acts as a facilitator who helps the child understand social values, then provides opportunities for the child to practice them in daily life. With this approach, children not only know "what's right", but also feel and experience those values firsthand, which then make them part of their attitudes and habits. The application of the storytelling method through various media at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul makes a good contribution to the achievement of early childhood social-emotional development. Children show improvements in several indicators of social-emotional development achievements, such as the ability to adapt to applicable rules, show confidence and recognize self-identity, express feelings, and encourage positive social attitudes.

This discussion answers the formulation of the main problem, namely that storytelling plays an important role in developing early childhood social-emotional skills. These findings were obtained through direct observation and in-depth interviews which were then interpreted based on the theory of social-emotional development. Storytelling activities not only convey messages, but also train children in social skills such as listening, understanding other people's perspectives, and regulating their emotions. Overall, storytelling is not only effective as a method to increase children's imagination and language, but also able to be a powerful medium in shaping positive social behavior. These findings reinforce the opinion Isbell, R., Sobol, J., Lindauer, L., & Lowrance, (2004:159) that storytelling is able to create deep emotional and social experiences for early childhood.

CONCLUSION

The application of the storytelling method has been proven to make a significant contribution in developing the social-emotional aspects of children aged 3–4 years at KB Muslimat NU Masyithoh Kuripan Kidul, Pekalongan City. Storytelling activities that are carried out regularly and packaged in an attractive way encourage children to adjust to the prevailing environment, rules, and norms; demonstrate confidence and recognize self-identity; able to express feelings; and

showing social attitudes such as cooperation and respect for others. Storytelling is an effective means of helping children recognize and manage emotions through fun and meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, storytelling can be used as the main strategy in learning in early childhood education, especially to achieve social-emotional development achievements. As a recommendation, teachers and PAUD institutions are expected to integrate storytelling activities in the daily curriculum with a variety of stories that are in accordance with the cultural context and age of the child. In addition, training for teachers on interesting and educational storytelling techniques needs to be improved to maximize the positive impact of this method on children's development.

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