



# Assistance For Kindergarten Teachers In Utilizing Hand Puppet Media Based On The Story Of Prophet Ayyub (As) To Strengthen Religious Character And Patience Attitude In Early Childhood At TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun

Aulia Tanzania<sup>\*1</sup>, Tiara Yunita<sup>2</sup>, Yolanda Mutiara<sup>3</sup>

STAI Ibnu Rusyd Kotabumi, Indonesia<sup>123</sup>

Submitted: 2025-11-30

Revised: 2025-12-24

Accepted: 2025-12-24

\*correspondence: tanzaniaaulia66@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*This community service activity was conducted at TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun to support teachers in optimizing the development of religious character and patience attitudes among early childhood learners. Based on initial observations, Islamic Religious Education learning activities were still dominated by oral storytelling without the support of interactive learning media, resulting in low student engagement and inconsistent displays of patience in daily activities. The purpose of this community service program was to provide training and assistance for kindergarten teachers in utilizing hand puppet media based on the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) as a tool for strengthening religious character and patience attitudes in children. The implementation method employed a participatory approach, including partner problem identification, teacher training, classroom implementation assistance, and activity evaluation. The results of the community service showed an improvement in teachers' skills and creativity in delivering religious character education. In addition, children demonstrated positive behavioral changes, such as increased patience while waiting for their turn, better emotional regulation, and habitual recitation of prayers before and after activities. This community service program had a positive impact on both teachers and students and can serve as an alternative model for character education in early childhood settings.*

**Keywords:** Community service; hand puppet; story of Prophet Ayyub; religious character; patience attitude; early childhood.

## ABSTRAK

Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini dilaksanakan di TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun untuk mendukung guru dalam mengoptimalkan pengembangan karakter religius dan sikap sabar di kalangan anak usia dini. Berdasarkan pengamatan awal, kegiatan pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam masih didominasi oleh bercerita lisan tanpa dukungan media pembelajaran interaktif, sehingga mengakibatkan rendahnya keterlibatan siswa dan kurangnya konsistensi dalam menunjukkan kesabaran dalam kegiatan sehari-hari. Tujuan program pengabdian masyarakat ini adalah untuk memberikan pelatihan dan bantuan kepada guru TK dalam memanfaatkan media wayang tangan berdasarkan kisah Nabi Ayyub (AS) sebagai alat untuk memperkuat karakter religius dan sikap sabar pada anak-anak. Metode pelaksanaannya menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif, termasuk identifikasi masalah mitra, pelatihan guru, bantuan pelaksanaan di kelas, dan evaluasi kegiatan. Hasil pengabdian masyarakat menunjukkan peningkatan keterampilan dan kreativitas guru dalam menyampaikan pendidikan karakter religius. Selain itu, anak-anak menunjukkan perubahan perilaku positif, seperti peningkatan kesabaran saat menunggu giliran, pengaturan emosi yang lebih baik, dan kebiasaan membaca doa sebelum dan sesudah kegiatan. Program pengabdian masyarakat ini memberikan dampak positif bagi guru dan siswa dan dapat menjadi model alternatif untuk pendidikan karakter di lingkungan pendidikan anak usia dini.

**Kata kunci:** Pelayanan masyarakat; wayang tangan; kisah Nabi Ayyub; karakter religius; sikap sabar; masa kanak-kanak awal.

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## INTRODUCTION

TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun is an early childhood education institution that plays an important role in instilling moral and religious values from an early age. Strengthening religious character and patience attitudes is a crucial aspect of kindergarten education, as it influences children's social-emotional development and the formation of positive daily behaviors.

Based on initial observations and discussions with teachers, Islamic Religious Education learning at TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun was still conducted in a simple and monotonous manner. Teachers commonly delivered stories of the prophets through oral narration without the support of engaging learning media. This condition caused children to become easily bored, lose focus, and struggle to internalize patience values effectively. These issues were reflected in children's behaviors, such as difficulty waiting for their turn, emotional outbursts during play, and exaggerated reactions when their desires were not fulfilled.

Furthermore, teachers faced limitations in developing and utilizing creative learning media suitable for early childhood characteristics. Early childhood learners require concrete, visual, and enjoyable learning experiences to better understand moral messages. Therefore, a community service program providing direct solutions through teacher training and mentoring in the use of religious-based learning media was necessary.

Hand puppet media based on the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) was selected because the story contains strong values of patience, steadfast faith, and exemplary behavior in facing life's challenges. Through this community service activity, teachers are expected to convey these values in an engaging, interactive, and developmentally appropriate manner.

Character education in early childhood must be delivered through approaches that are appropriate to children's developmental characteristics. According to Lickona (2013), character education should involve moral understanding, emotional engagement, and behavioral practice. In early childhood settings, these components can be effectively developed through storytelling activities supported by concrete learning media.

Furthermore, Bruner (1966) emphasizes that young children learn more effectively through enactive and iconic experiences before fully understanding symbolic concepts. Therefore, the use of hand puppet media in religious storytelling allows abstract values such as patience and perseverance to be presented in concrete and meaningful forms. This approach is particularly relevant in early childhood education, where learning through play and imagination plays a central role in moral and emotional development (Sujiono, 2013; Madyawati, 2015).

## METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION

This community service activity was carried out at TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun by involving teachers and students as program partners. The implementation adopted a participatory and collaborative approach to ensure active teacher involvement throughout all stages of the program.

The stages of implementation included:

1. Partner Problem Identification

Identification was conducted through observation and discussions with teachers to determine initial learning conditions, existing challenges, and partner needs related to religious character and patience education.

2. Teacher Training

Teachers received training on the use of hand puppet media based on the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS), including understanding patience values, storytelling techniques, voice intonation, and classroom management.

3. Assistance and Classroom Implementation

The community service team assisted teachers in implementing the hand puppet media directly in classroom learning activities. Teachers practiced storytelling using hand puppets, while the team provided guidance and feedback to optimize learning delivery.

4. Activity Evaluation

Evaluation was conducted through observation of children's behavioral changes and reflective discussions with teachers to assess the impact of the program.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Initial Condition of Community Partners

Religious character learning at TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun prior to the implementation of the community service program was still dominated by conventional approaches. Teachers delivered religious stories mainly through oral narration without the support of visual or interactive learning media. Such learning practices caused children to easily lose attention, show low enthusiasm during activities, and experience difficulties in understanding and internalizing moral messages optimally. This condition is in line with Sujiono (2013), who states that early childhood learners require concrete and enjoyable learning experiences for values to be effectively conveyed and understood.

Initial observations indicated that children's patience attitudes had not developed consistently during daily learning activities. Children often showed impatience while waiting for their turn, became easily disappointed during play, and expressed emotions excessively when their expectations were not fulfilled. According to Hurlock (1993), early childhood is a critical period for emotional and moral development; therefore, appropriate stimulation is required to help children regulate emotions and develop positive social behaviors.

Furthermore, this condition can also be explained through Piaget's cognitive development theory, which states that early childhood learners are in the preoperational stage, where thinking processes are still concrete and symbolic (Piaget, 1964). Consequently, learning activities that rely solely on verbal explanations are less effective in helping children understand abstract values such as patience and perseverance. Children require learning media that provide concrete representations so that moral messages can be more easily comprehended.

Teachers also expressed limitations in selecting and utilizing learning media that are simple, affordable, and appropriate to children's developmental characteristics. This situation indicates a gap between the needs of religious character learning and the availability of supporting learning media in the classroom. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that children's

development is strongly influenced by social interaction and the use of appropriate learning tools. Therefore, innovative learning media are needed to function as mediating tools in the learning process, enabling children to gradually understand and internalize patience values through continuous teacher guidance.

Thus, the problems faced by the community service partners are not only related to monotonous teaching methods but also to the limited availability of learning media capable of bridging abstract moral concepts into concrete, interactive, and meaningful learning experiences for early childhood learners (Madyawati, 2015; Musfiroh, 2017).

### Teacher Training Implementation

Teacher training was implemented as the initial phase of the community service program to improve teachers' pedagogical competence in delivering religious character education through interactive media. The training emphasized the importance of concrete and experience-based learning in early childhood education. This approach aligns with Bruner's theory, which states that children learn effectively through enactive and iconic stages before fully understanding symbolic representations (Bruner, 1966). Therefore, the use of hand puppet media provides meaningful learning experiences that support children's comprehension of moral values.

The training focused on the practical use of hand puppet media based on the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS). Teachers were trained in storytelling techniques, voice modulation, facial expressions, and interactive classroom strategies. This approach is consistent with Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory, which emphasizes that learning should accommodate various intelligences, particularly linguistic and interpersonal intelligences in early childhood. Storytelling activities using hand puppets allow children to engage emotionally and socially, making moral messages easier to understand and internalize (Gardner, 1999).

Furthermore, the training encouraged teachers to adopt a more child-centered learning approach. Through simulations and hands-on practice, teachers gained confidence and readiness to implement the media in classroom learning. This practice is in line with Erikson's psychosocial development theory, which highlights the importance of providing supportive learning environments during the initiative versus guilt stage in early childhood. By using engaging and supportive media, teachers help children develop positive initiative, emotional security, and patience in learning activities.



Figure 1. Storytelling learning technique training activities with Mujahidah Abung Pekurun Kindergarten teachers

## Classroom Assistance and Implementation

After the training program, classroom assistance was conducted to support teachers in implementing hand puppet media in the learning process. Teachers delivered the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) interactively, allowing children to observe character expressions, listen to dialogue, and become emotionally engaged with the storyline. This approach is consistent with Edgar Dale's (1969) Cone of Experience, which emphasizes that learning becomes more effective when learners are directly involved through concrete and visual experiences rather than merely receiving verbal explanations.

The implementation of hand puppet media was proven to increase children's attention and enthusiasm during storytelling activities. Children showed greater focus, actively responded to questions, and were more confident in expressing their opinions. This finding aligns with Gagné's (1985) view that attention is a crucial initial stage in the learning process. Attractive visual media, such as hand puppets, are able to stimulate children's attention, thereby facilitating the reception and understanding of moral values more optimally.

Furthermore, storytelling activities using hand puppets created a joyful and non-pressuring learning atmosphere. Children perceived the learning process as meaningful play rather than formal instruction. This is in line with Smilansky's (1968) perspective, which states that sociodramatic play plays an important role in the social and emotional development of early childhood. Through role-playing activities using puppets, children can express emotions, learn self-control, and imitate patient behavior as exemplified by the character in the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS).



Figure 2. Implications of Hand Puppet Media

## Impact on Teachers

The community service program resulted in significant positive changes among teachers. Teachers demonstrated improved creativity, confidence, and effectiveness in delivering religious character education. They became more capable of integrating moral values into storytelling activities and connecting the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) with children's real-life experiences, such as waiting patiently, sharing toys, and accepting simple disappointments during play activities.

This finding supports the view of Musfiroh (2017), who emphasizes that teachers play a crucial role as facilitators and role models in early childhood character education. By mastering creative learning media, teachers are better equipped to convey moral values in meaningful and contextual ways that can be easily understood and imitated by children.



In addition, the mentoring process can be explained through the perspective of Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun (2015), who argue that continuous professional development through training and mentoring enhances teachers' instructional quality. The assistance provided in this program encouraged teachers to become more reflective and innovative in classroom practices, thereby strengthening their motivation to continuously improve learning strategies that support children's character development.

### Impact on Children

Children showed noticeable and meaningful behavioral changes after participating in learning activities using hand puppet media. Observations indicated that children became more patient while waiting for their turn, demonstrated better emotional control, and were less likely to cry or become angry when facing challenges. In addition, children developed positive religious habits, such as reciting prayers before and after activities and expressing gratitude more frequently in their daily routines.

These behavioral changes are consistent with Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, which states that children acquire behaviors through observation and imitation of role models. The character of Prophet Ayyub (AS), vividly presented through hand puppet media, served as a positive and accessible role model for children. Through repeated exposure to the story and guided reflection facilitated by teachers, children were able to internalize the value of patience in ways that are appropriate to their developmental stage.

Furthermore, this finding aligns with Lickona's (2013) character education framework, which emphasizes that effective character education involves moral understanding, emotional engagement, and behavioral practice. The use of hand puppet media allowed these three components to be integrated simultaneously, enabling children not only to understand the concept of patience cognitively but also to experience it emotionally and practice it in real-life situations. Therefore, hand puppet-based storytelling proves to be an effective approach for fostering religious character and patience attitudes in early childhood settings.



Figure 3. PKM activities familiarize the children with storytelling-based learning methods at Kindergarten Mujahidah

The findings of this community service program indicate that hand puppet media based on the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) is highly effective in supporting religious character education in early childhood settings. The media successfully bridges abstract moral values – such as patience, perseverance, and faith – with concrete learning experiences that are easily understood by young children.

From a pedagogical perspective, the use of hand puppet media is consistent with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that children actively construct knowledge

through direct interaction and meaningful experiences (Fosnot, 2013). Through emotionally and socially engaging storytelling activities, children are encouraged to explore moral values actively, allowing deeper understanding and internalization of character traits.

Furthermore, the integration of religious storytelling with interactive media supports holistic child development, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. This finding aligns with the view of Sujiono (2013), who states that early childhood education should address all aspects of development in an integrated manner. In addition to benefiting children, this approach also enhances teachers' professional competence, creativity, and instructional confidence. Therefore, hand puppet media can be recommended as a practical, effective, and sustainable alternative for strengthening religious character and patience attitudes in early childhood education institutions, particularly within community service and educational empowerment programs.

## CONCLUSION

The community service program involving training and assistance for kindergarten teachers in utilizing hand puppet media based on the story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) had a positive impact on both teachers and students at TK Mujahidah Abung Pekurun. Teachers experienced increased skills and creativity in delivering religious character education, while children demonstrated improved patience attitudes and religious behaviors in daily activities. Hand puppet media can serve as an effective, enjoyable, and easily applicable alternative for character education in early childhood institutions.

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