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IMPLEMENTATION OF STORYTELLING METHOD IN DEVELOPING EMPATHY IN EARLY CHILDREN AGED 5-6 YEARS

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Abstract

The background of this study focuses on the importance of developing empathy in early childhood as part of basic social skills. The method used in this study is qualitative research with a case study approach that aims to explore the implementation of the storytelling method in more depth. Data collection techniques used include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data sources for this study were teachers and children involved in storytelling activities at Bani Insan Rabukodo Kindergarten. The data obtained were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques with a descriptive approach to describe the process of implementing the storytelling method and its impact on the development of children's empathy. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the storytelling method at Bani Insan Rabukodo Kindergarten is effective in developing empathy in early childhood. Several activities carried out to support this process include selecting stories that are relevant to the development of empathy, interactive and participatory storytelling, the use of visual media and puppets, and role playing activities. All of these activities not only help children understand and feel the feelings of the characters in the story, but also improve their ability to show empathy towards others in everyday life.

Keywords: Story Method, Developing Empathy, Children Aged 5-6 Years

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A. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

At the stage of early childhood development, namely between the ages of 5 and 6 years, it is a very important period in forming various aspects of children's emotional, social, and cognitive abilities. At this age, children begin to learn about interpersonal relationships in understanding their own and others' feelings and developing their ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally (Rahmawati, 2015). On the other hand, they also begin to understand abstract concepts such as emotions, moral values, and the ability to empathize with others. Empathy itself is the ability to feel and understand the feelings of others and respond to them in a positive way (Ruslan, Ismatullah, Luthfiyah, Khairudin, 2024). This ability is very important to develop because empathy helps children interact harmoniously with their social environment, as well as form an attitude of tolerance and understanding of differences. One effective way to develop empathy in early childhood is through the storytelling method (Amrullah & Awalunisah, 2022).

The storytelling method is a technique that has been used since ancient times as a means of conveying messages, moral values and entertaining the audience (Syahru Ramadhan, Yayuk Kusumawati, Nurul Khatimah, Nurul Hikmatul Ma'wiah, Pinkan, Yumarna, 2024) . In the context of early childhood education, the storytelling method not only functions as a medium of entertainment, but also as a very effective means of developing children's empathy (Nurfazrina et al., 2020) . When listening to stories, children are given the opportunity to enter an imaginary world rich in emotional experiences. Children can feel the feelings of the characters in the story, both positive and negative, and this provides space for them to identify and understand the various feelings they may experience in everyday life (Ahmad et al., 2023) . Through stories, children can learn about other people's perspectives and how other people's feelings can be different from their own, which is an important foundation for the development of empathy (Pertiwi, 2020) .

Through the story method, children will also be taught about the consequences of actions and decisions taken by the characters in the story. This allows children to learn about the importance of considering the feelings of others when making decisions (Cucu Cahyati, Ahmadin, 2024) . Through stories, children can learn about various life situations that involve feelings, relationships between individuals and ways that can be used to resolve conflicts positively (Utami, 2019) . Thus, the storytelling method can stimulate children to think more deeply about their feelings and those of others and how they can respond in a good way. This is the essence of developing empathy in early childhood (Hanum, 2022) .

The storytelling method has many advantages, one of which is the ability to introduce various social situations that children may never have experienced directly (Ilham et al., 2024) . Children can learn how story characters interact with others, how they overcome problems or challenges related to how they show attention and concern for the feelings of others (Siregar et al., 2020) . In stories, children can also learn about values such as honesty, kindness and friendship, all of which contribute to the development of empathy. In addition, storytelling can create deep and touching experiences for children and can strengthen their understanding of emotions and social relationships (Fadlan, 2019) .

The use of storytelling methods in developing empathy in early childhood can also be seen in the context of activity-based learning. Stories told to children can be followed by discussion activities, *role-playing* or even creating their own stories (Izzati & Yulsofriend, 2020) . This activity not only makes children more active in the learning process, but also provides an opportunity for them to reflect on their own feelings and experiences and will learn about how to interact with their friends positively (Ramadhan, Ihlas, et al., 2024) . Thus, the storytelling method not only teaches empathy passively through stories, but also actively through direct experiences that involve children in the learning process (Wahyuni & Nasution, 2017) .

In its implementation, it is important to choose a story that is appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child. Stories that are too complex or irrelevant to the child's life experiences may not help them understand the feelings and situations in the story. Therefore, choosing the right story is crucial to achieving the goal of developing empathy in early childhood (Kusuma & Sutapa, 2020) . A good story is a story that can touch children's feelings, trigger their curiosity, and then invite them to think about human

relationships and how emotions influence actions (Ramadhan, Mutiara, et al., 2024) . To make the atmosphere in storytelling seem interesting, serious and meaningful, the ability, creativity and expertise of educators or parents are needed in conveying the story so that the substance of the story conveyed can be learned for everyday life (Sudarta, 2022) .

Educators or parents who tell the story also play an important role in this process. Emotional storytelling with appropriate facial expressions, voices, and body language can bring the story to life and help children feel the emotions in the story more. Interaction between educators and children when telling stories is also important to deepen children's understanding of feelings and empathy (Nurfazrina et al., 2020) . Educators who are able to provide reflective questions after the story is finished can help children analyze the feelings of the characters in the story and how those feelings influence their actions (Syahrul Ramadhan, 2024) . One of the challenges in developing empathy in early childhood is that this ability requires time and an ongoing process. Children at this age are still in the early stages of forming self-concept and relationships with others (Indanah & Yulisetyaningrum, 2019) . Therefore, developing empathy is not something that can be achieved in a short time, but requires a consistent and ongoing approach. The storytelling method provides an opportunity to introduce various feelings and social experiences gradually, so that children can gradually learn to understand and respond to other people's feelings in a positive way.

From the explanation above, it shows that the implementation of the storytelling method in developing empathy in early childhood aged 5-6 years is a very effective approach (Anhar & Ramadhan, 2024) . This method not only provides a deep emotional experience for children, but also allows them to learn about social relationships, feelings, and moral values that are important in everyday life (Madyawati, 2017) . Through stories, children can learn how to empathize with others and understand that other people's feelings are important and worthy of respect (Mahiratin et al., 2024) . Thus, the storytelling method is one of the most useful ways to shape the character and emotional intelligence of children at an early age in educational units as an effective vehicle for developing children's empathy, especially for children at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten.

At Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten, the application of storytelling methods in developing empathy in early childhood is carried out with a holistic and interactive approach. This school has a vision to educate children in a fun way and based on direct experience. In every learning activity, educators at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten try to include story elements that can attract children's attention, either through oral stories, pictures, or other visual media. Educators use illustrated stories that describe various feelings, such as happiness, sadness, fear or courage. These stories are usually chosen based on themes that are relevant to children's daily lives such as friendship, cooperation and honesty. By using various types of stories, children not only learn about the characters in the story, but are also invited to recognize their own feelings and those of others around them.

To make the storytelling process more interesting and in-depth, educators at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten do not only tell stories passively, but also involve children in various activities after the story is told. After listening to a story, children are invited to discuss the feelings of the characters in the story and how they would respond to the same situation. This is done in the form of questions and answers involving all children, so that

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they can share their thoughts and feelings with each other. Children are also given the opportunity to play the role of a character in the story through *role*-playing activities. This activity allows them to directly feel the feelings of the characters in the story and see the situation from someone else's perspective. This approach not only increases children's involvement in the storytelling process, but also helps them to better understand the emotions and actions associated with the story.

The application of storytelling methods in developing empathy in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten is very important to be researched and studied more deeply scientifically, because its success can make a major contribution in the formation of the character of early childhood children. At the early childhood education level, the development of empathy is one of the most crucial aspects in forming children who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good social and emotional abilities. Through this study, we can gain a deeper understanding of how storytelling can affect the development of empathy in children, as well as how to apply this method in a specific local context such as in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type. (Usman, 2020). Case study research was chosen because it can provide an in-depth picture of the implementation of the storytelling method in developing empathy in early childhood at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten. This study aims to understand in detail how the storytelling method is applied in this environment and its impact on the development of empathy in children aged 5-6 years. (Sugiono, 2015). With a qualitative approach, the data obtained will focus more on understanding the meaning, experience, and feelings felt by children, teachers, and parents related to storytelling activities and empathy development. This study also prioritizes in-depth analysis of the interaction between educators and children and how stories are used to stimulate empathy development. (Ramdhan, 2017).

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe the storytelling process in the classroom and the interaction between teachers and children during the activity. Interviews were conducted with teachers and parents of children to explore their perspectives on the influence of storytelling methods on children's empathy. (Sidiq & Choiri, 2018). Documentation in the form of notes on storytelling activities, discussion results, and children's work related to the stories they heard will be used as additional data. The data sources in this study consisted of teachers, children, and parents at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten. The research procedure began with preparation, data collection, and data analysis which were carried out in stages. (Helaluddin, 2015). The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, where the collected data is analyzed based on emerging themes such as feelings, empathy, and social interactions influenced by the story. (Luthfiyah, 2017).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

In the process of implementing the storytelling method that has been applied by teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten, several stages of implementation have been carried out, including starting from the planning, implementation and evaluation stages. In order for everything to run well and be measurable, everything must run systematically and produce the desired output. Based on the data and information that has been obtained by

researchers through the process of observation, interviews and documentation, here the researcher will describe the data on the effectiveness of the implementation of the storytelling method in developing empathy for early childhood aged 5-6 years at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten.

Table 1. Effectiveness of Storytelling Method in Developing Empathy in Children Aged 5-6

Observed Aspects	Before Implementation	After Implementation	Changes/Improvements
Understanding Emotions	Children still have difficulty recognizing and understanding their own emotions.	Children begin to be able to recognize and name their own feelings (happy, sad, angry, etc.).	Improving children's ability to understand and express their own feelings.
Listening Skills	Children often do not focus when friends or teachers are talking.	Children are more focused and listen to stories attentively.	Improve good listening skills in children.
Ability to Recognize Other People's Emotions	Children are less sensitive to their friends' feelings.	Children begin to recognize their friends' feelings through facial expressions or stories.	Children become more sensitive to the feelings and emotional states of others.
Involvement in Group Discussions	Children tend to be quiet or not actively participate in discussions.	Children are more active in discussing and sharing opinions about the stories they hear.	Increased involvement in group discussions, with sharing of feelings and opinions.
Ability to Demonstrate Empathy	Children still find it difficult to show empathy towards friends who are sad or in trouble.	Children begin to show concern and support when friends are in trouble.	Increased empathy, children are more caring and want to help friends in need.
Social Interaction with Friends	Children are more often involved in conflicts or do not understand their friends' feelings.	Children interact more positively, expressing support and understanding.	Improving the quality of social interactions between children, more harmonious.
Using Stories to Understand Emotions	There is no use of stories to introduce the values of empathy.	Children use stories to understand characters' feelings and relate them to their own experiences.	Effective stories are used as a tool to develop empathy, children understood the moral lessons from the story.

From the table above, it can be explained about the effectiveness of the application of the story method in developing empathy in children aged 5-6 years by carrying out several stages of the process including the planning, implementation and evaluation stages. All of these are carried out by teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten in order to maximize the potential possessed, especially in terms of emotional attitudes. Developing children's empathy can make children have good personalities to navigate a fairly complex life starting from an early age. To be clearer and more in-depth from the several stages that have been carried out by teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten as described in the table above, researchers need to explain comprehensively and in-depth through the analysis below.

In the planning stage, the implementation of the **storytelling method in developing empathy in early childhood** at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten was carried out with the aim of creating an atmosphere that allows children to develop their social and emotional abilities. Planning begins with the selection of story material that is relevant and appropriate for the child's age. The stories chosen contain various situations that describe emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, or fear, so that children can learn to recognize and understand feelings both in themselves and others. The stories chosen also have characters that can be role models for children in terms of empathy and concern for others. The story in question, for example, is about a child who helps his friend who is in trouble or about how the story character feels and overcomes feelings of sadness.

Further planning includes teaching strategies that will be applied during storytelling activities. As in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten, teachers plan for storytelling activities to be carried out interactively, where children are invited to participate by asking, answering, and discussing the story being told. This not only makes children more involved, but also gives them the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts. Teachers also plan the use of visual aids, such as pictures or puppets that can support children's understanding of the story and the feelings of the characters. The story material taken also focuses on moral values, such as caring, cooperation, and respecting the feelings of others.

The main goal of this plan is for children to develop empathy, not only by understanding their own feelings, but also by being aware of the feelings of others. To that end, each story chosen has been designed to trigger group discussion and shared reflection on how the characters in the story feel and interact. The plan also includes supporting activities such as role-playing, where children can express their feelings through actions or movements, and giving them the opportunity to see the world from another person's perspective. These are steps that have been designed to ensure that children not only listen to the story but also learn from it and apply the values learned in their daily lives.

For the implementation of the storytelling method in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten, it is carried out in a very interactive and in-depth manner **in accordance with the aim of developing empathy in early childhood**. At this stage, the teacher plays an important role in ensuring that the storytelling process can take place well and touch on emotional aspects that are relevant to child development. The teacher begins by reading the story with varying facial expressions and intonations to attract the children's attention and help them to feel the emotions in the story, including when telling a story about a child who feels sad because he lost his toy, the teacher uses facial expressions that show sadness so that children can more easily identify the feeling.

After the story is finished, the children are invited to discuss what they heard and felt. In this session, the teacher gives each child the opportunity to share their opinions or questions about the feelings of the characters in the story. This approach allows the teacher to dig deeper into the child's understanding of emotions and empathy. The implementation of the storytelling method also involves various visual aids such as pictures or dolls that depict characters in the story. With these aids, children can more easily associate the feelings they hear with more realistic visual expressions, namely the teacher can use dolls to demonstrate the characters in the story, and the children are asked to imitate the expressions or movements of the characters. This activity not only improves their understanding of the story, but also gives them the opportunity to express feelings through their bodies. In the activity, children are also given the opportunity to role-play, where they can become characters in the story and experience the situations experienced by the characters directly.

At the evaluation stage is an important stage in ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of the storytelling method in developing empathy in early childhood. In Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten, evaluations are carried out periodically to assess the

extent to which children have developed their empathy after participating in storytelling activities. Evaluation is carried out by observing changes in children's behavior during and after the storytelling session and through children's interactions in group discussions. The teacher records the children's responses to questions asked such as whether they can recognize their own and others' emotions in the story that has been told. If children can easily identify the feelings of the characters in the story and share their own feelings, it shows that this method is effective.

The evaluation also includes direct observation of children's social interactions outside of storytelling sessions. Teachers observe whether there is an increase in children's ability to show empathy in their daily lives, namely helping friends who are having trouble or providing emotional support when friends are feeling sad. If a child sees a friend crying because they have fallen, whether the child approaches and provides attention or support is a direct indicator of increased empathy gained through the storytelling method. This evaluation is important because it provides an overview of how the application of empathy values in children's real lives.

Although the implementation of the storytelling method at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten has shown many positive results, several challenges still arise during its implementation. One of the main challenges is the limited time available to complete the storytelling sessions in depth. Given that early childhood children have a shorter attention span, some storytelling sessions sometimes cannot run optimally because children begin to lose interest or feel bored. To overcome this, teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten adopted a more flexible approach by breaking long stories into several shorter sessions and inserting other activities that actively involve children, such as role-playing or drawing characters in the story. In this way, children remain involved in the learning process without feeling bored.

Overall, the implementation of the storytelling method at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten has had a significant positive impact in developing empathy in early childhood. After several storytelling sessions, the children showed a clear improvement in their ability to recognize and understand their own and others' feelings. Many children who previously could not express their feelings clearly are now more open and able to express their feelings in simple words. For example, after listening to a story about a child caring for a sick friend, several children spontaneously offered help to their friends who fell or looked sad. The children also showed more concern for their friends' feelings. They were more likely to share and cooperate in group activities. For example, when playing together, children who previously did not care much about friends who were having difficulties are now more likely to offer help or give attention when their friends are having difficulties in the game.

Discussion

The explanation above shows that the implementation of the story method is quite effective in developing empathy in children aged 5-6 years at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten. The achievement of the implementation of the story method cannot be separated from several forms of activities that have been carried out by teachers in implementing the story method as an effort to develop empathy in children aged 5-6 years at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten. From the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researcher will explain the form of implementation of the story method carried out by teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten to develop empathy in children aged 5-6 years, including the following:

1. Choosing Stories That Are Relevant to Children's Empathy Development

Teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten understand that choosing the right story is one of the main factors that can support the development of empathy in

early childhood. Therefore, in implementing the storytelling method, teachers choose stories that describe feelings and interactions between characters that require deep emotional understanding. This selection of stories is designed to introduce a variety of emotions such as happiness, sadness, fear, and anger and all feelings that children can identify in their daily lives. The stories chosen focus on universal themes such as friendship, helping each other, and sharing that can be examples for children to feel empathy for others. The stories are written in easy-to-understand language and situations that are close to their experiences.

The implementation of this story selection begins with a careful selection process by the teacher. The teacher chooses stories that are age-appropriate for the children and have clear moral values. One story that is often used is about two friends sharing food. In this story, a child shares his food with his hungry friend, and his friend feels very happy and grateful. The teacher chose this story because the situation in the story is easy for children to understand and they can immediately relate it to the act of sharing that is around them. Through this story, the teacher wants to teach the importance of caring for others and how a person's feelings can change depending on the actions we take towards them. Children who listen to this story can feel how happiness arises when someone feels appreciated and cared for.

To deepen understanding, teachers invite children to discuss the feelings of the characters in the story after telling the story. Discussions can give children the opportunity to talk and share their feelings so that they begin to identify and appreciate the feelings of others. This approach not only introduces the concept of empathy, but also gives children space to think about how their feelings can affect others, and how they can support each other. By using stories as a tool to introduce feelings and social interactions, children at Bani Insan Rabukodo Kindergarten begin to understand the importance of empathy in their relationships with others.

The implementation of the storytelling method in Bani Insan Rabukodo Kindergarten has so far been very effective in fostering a sense of caring and social awareness among children. Through stories that tell about kindness and empathy, teachers guide children to recognize the importance of being kind to others. In each storytelling session, teachers emphasize positive values such as sharing, helping, and supporting each other. One of the stories used is a story about a child who sees a friend who is less fortunate and decides to share his food. After telling the story, the teacher invites the children to discuss what they can do if they see a friend in need. Children are asked to think about actions they can take to help their friends, such as sharing toys or paying attention when a friend is sad.

Selecting relevant stories also helps children to more easily understand and identify their own and other people's feelings. Teachers choose stories that depict a variety of social situations, both pleasant and challenging, so that children can learn to recognize different feelings. Through these stories, children not only learn about the characters in the story, but also about themselves and others around them. For example, after listening to a story about a child who felt afraid to speak in front of the class, the teacher invites the children to talk about their feelings of fear and how they can overcome those fears.

Through stories, teachers at Bani Insan Rabukodo Kindergarten have succeeded in helping children understand that the feelings they experience are normal, and that these feelings can be understood and appreciated by others. Teachers encourage children to talk about their feelings, both positive and negative, in open group discussions. These discussions provide a space for children to express their feelings without fear of being judged so that they can learn to appreciate and accept the feelings of others. In this way, children begin to develop greater empathy skills which are important for their social and emotional development.

2. Storytelling With an Interactive and Participatory Approach

The implementation of the storytelling method in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten is carried out with an interactive and participatory approach to facilitate the development of empathy in children aged 5-6 years. Teachers do not only act as storytellers who tell stories, but also invite children to be directly involved in the storytelling process. This approach aims for children not only to be passive listeners, but also to actively participate in the story. Teachers often ask children open-ended questions during storytelling sessions to encourage them to think more deeply about the feelings experienced by the characters in the story and how they would act in similar situations. This allows children to feel and understand the feelings of others, then practice empathetic ways to respond to them.

One concrete example of the implementation of this approach can be seen in the storytelling activity about a child who is feeling sad because his friend does not invite him to play. During the story, the teacher not only conveys the storyline, but also stops at several points to ask the children. Through questions, children are invited to think about the child's feelings in the story and feel the situation. This process requires children to actively empathize, understand the character's emotions and find solutions that they can apply in their lives. This discussion also gives children the opportunity to share relevant personal experiences so that they can more easily connect the story to their real world.

In this interactive approach, the teacher also involves children in various activities that strengthen their understanding of the story and empathy. After listening to the story, children are invited to do group activities, where they play the roles of characters in the story. For example, in a story about sharing toys, the teacher invites children to play roles by being a friend who shares or a friend who receives help. Children are shown how sharing toys or helping each other can make them feel happy and appreciated. This role-play activity strengthens their understanding of how the feelings of the characters in the story can be experienced by them and how they can act with empathy towards others. In this way, they not only listen to the story, but also feel it directly through their own experiences.

In implementing interactive storytelling, teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten always create a fun and active atmosphere. Instead of relying solely on verbal narration, teachers use props such as pictures, puppets, and music to make the story more lively and interesting for children. After telling a story about a child who feels anxious, the teacher uses puppets to show the expressions of fear felt by the characters in the story. These puppets are then used to invite children to talk about their own feelings when they feel afraid or anxious. This gives children the opportunity to interact directly with the characters in the story and feel the same feelings. The teacher also invites children to describe what they would do if they were in a similar situation so that they can think about ways to respond with empathy. This technique not only deepens their understanding of emotions, but also improves their ability to show empathy in everyday life.

The interactive and participatory approach in this storytelling method has proven to be very effective in developing empathy in young children. Children not only listen to stories but they are also invited to play an active role in developing the story and finding solutions to the problems faced by the characters. In this activity they learn not only to recognize their own feelings, but also to understand and feel the feelings of others. This can be seen in their daily interactions where children more often show concern for their friends to offer help or share when their friends are in need. In addition,

they are also more sensitive to the feelings of others which is an important first step in building deeper empathy.

3. Using Visual Media and Puppets to Deepen Understanding

The use of visual media and puppets in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten is one of the important strategies implemented by teachers in developing empathy in early childhood. The use of these props is not only intended to attract children's attention, but also to deepen their understanding of emotions and relationships between characters in the story. Visual media such as pictures or illustrations of the story as well as puppets that represent characters in the story can help children recognize facial expressions and body movements that reflect the character's feelings. In this way, children are expected to be able to more easily understand the feelings in the story and can feel empathy for the feelings experienced by the characters in the story.

The implementation of the use of visual media in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten can be seen in storytelling activities that use pictures and picture cards. Every time the teacher tells a story, the teacher shows pictures that depict the main character's expression, including a happy, sad, angry, or scared face. When children see these pictures, they are encouraged to guess and discuss what feelings the characters in the story are experiencing. This activity not only introduces certain feelings, but also invites children to identify and understand the feelings of others in various situations. For example, after a story about a child who feels scared when he first goes to school, the teacher shows a picture of a character who looks anxious. The teacher then asks the children, "What can we do if our friend feels scared like this?" The children then discuss how they would help a friend who is scared by giving them support or encouragement.

In addition to using pictures, teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten also use puppets as storytelling aids. These puppets are used to depict characters in the story and give children more realistic visual expressions. Each puppet is given special characteristics that match the story being read, such as the clever Kancil puppet or the big and kind elephant puppet. These puppets are used to display facial expressions and body movements that depict the character's emotions when experiencing certain situations. In the story about sharing food, the puppet that is the main character will show a happy expression when he gets help from his friend. The teacher also asks the children to imitate the expression using puppets. That way, the children not only hear the story, but also feel it through the direct actions they do with the puppets.

The use of visual media and puppets provides space for children to be more active in the storytelling process. They are invited to play a direct role in the story by using puppets to describe the feelings of the characters being told. After telling the story, children are given the opportunity to play roles using puppets, so that they can directly feel the feelings experienced by the characters in the story. The application of this method is when telling stories about feelings of anger and how to overcome them. The teacher uses puppets to show excessive expressions of anger, then asks the children how they can help a friend who is angry. Children are invited to play roles with angry puppets and try to solve problems by talking or apologizing. This activity is very effective in teaching children how to manage their emotions and helping them understand how others feel.

The success of using visual media and puppets in developing empathy in children at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten can be seen in changes in their daily behavior. Children are increasingly able to recognize and express their own feelings, as well as understand the feelings of their friends. They are more sensitive to the feelings of others and tend to be more willing to help friends who are having difficulties or feeling sad. After telling a story about a child who feels lonely and is not invited to play, children in the class began to pay more attention to friends who are lonely or isolated. They more often invite friends to play together and show attention that shows that they

not only understand the story but can also apply the empathy lessons learned in their daily lives.

By using visual media and puppets, the teacher managed to make the story more lively and easier for children to understand. The use of these props helps children to more easily recognize and understand the feelings of the characters in the story, then makes it easier for them to connect the feelings of the characters with their own experiences. This shows that the approach involving visual media and puppets is very effective in deepening children's understanding of emotions and relationships between characters, then in building strong empathy skills at an early age.

4. Activities To Improve Social Empathy

Role-playing activities at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten are one of the most effective methods in increasing social empathy in early childhood. Teachers integrate this activity after each storytelling session, which aims to invite children to experience the role of the characters in the story directly. Role-playing provides an opportunity for children to enter the world of the story and bring to life the feelings and situations experienced by the characters in the story. Through this activity, children not only listen to and understand the emotions of the characters, but also feel them directly, which in turn improves their ability to understand and respond to the feelings of others.

After telling a story about a character who feels anxious or afraid, the teacher invites the children to role-play by taking the position of the character in the story. For example, in a story about a child who is afraid to speak in front of the class, the children are given the opportunity to play the role of the child who feels anxious. They are asked to show facial expressions and body language that reflect fear or anxiety. The teacher then asks the children, "How do you feel when you have to speak in front of your friends? What can you do to overcome your fear?" The children not only talk about their feelings, but they also practice ways to overcome feelings of fear by practicing speaking in front of their friends in turns. This activity not only increases children's awareness of their own feelings, but also helps them to empathize with friends who may feel the same way.

In the implementation of role-playing, the teacher also invites children to interact with their friends in various social roles. In the story about sharing food, children are invited to play two friends who share food with each other. Each child is asked to play the role of a friend who gives or receives help while practicing facial expressions and words that show gratitude or happiness. Through this role-playing, children can feel how important it is to share and how empathy arises when someone feels appreciated or cared for. This activity also helps children to practice social skills, such as speaking politely, saying thank you, and showing concern for others.

Role-playing activities at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten often involve more complex situations that test children's ability to respond to their friends' emotions. In a story about a friend who feels sad because he lost his toy, children are invited to play the role of a friend who tries to comfort or help the sad friend. Children are asked to think of words or actions that can comfort their friend. The teacher provides examples using puppets or other props and then asks the children to express their feelings verbally and non-verbally. This activity gives children the opportunity to show their empathy through real actions, which equips them with important social skills for their daily lives.

Through role-playing, children not only learn to recognize and respond to their friends' feelings, but also understand the importance of working together and supporting each other in various social situations. At Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten, role-playing is not just a game, but a means to build children's characters who are more caring, attentive, and empathetic to the feelings of others. This activity has been shown

to help children become more sensitive to the emotional states of their friends, as well as encourage them to act in a more positive and caring way. When children are given space to feel and express the feelings of the characters in the story, they become more open and ready to apply empathy in their daily social lives.

D. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of the storytelling method in Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten has proven effective in developing empathy in early childhood, especially children aged 5-6 years. Through various forms of activities such as selecting stories that are relevant to the development of empathy, storytelling with an interactive and participatory approach, the use of visual media and puppets, and role-playing activities, children not only listen to stories but are also directly involved in feeling and experiencing the feelings of the characters in the story. Teachers at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten consistently utilize these methods to introduce, open, and strengthen children's understanding of feelings and empathy which are very important for their social-emotional development.

Role-playing activities, in particular, have been shown to be very effective in enhancing children's social empathy. Children are encouraged to not only recognize their own feelings, but also respond to and understand the feelings of others in different social situations. This storytelling process involving direct interaction gives children the opportunity to explore emotions more deeply and practice empathy in a more real context. Overall, the implementation of interactive and fun storytelling methods at Bani Insan Rabakodo Kindergarten not only strengthens children's empathy abilities, but also helps them develop important social skills in their daily lives.

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