TSAQAFATUNA
Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam

p-ISSN: 2654 -5322
e-ISSN:2654 - 5330
DOI: https://doi.org/10.54213/tsaqafatuna.v8i1.908

Tsaqafatuna: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan
Vol. 8, No. 2, Oktober 2026

Prophetic Storytelling as a Maternal Strategy in Cultivating Noble Character among Second-Grade Children

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis praktik storytelling kisah para Nabi sebagai strategi maternal dalam menanamkan karakter mulia pada anak di lingkungan keluarga. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus pada lima ibu dan lima anak kelas II MI NU Trimulyo yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi nonpartisipan, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi teknik, sumber, dan waktu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan storytelling kisah para Nabi terbukti efektif dalam menanamkan nilai akhlak mulia pada anak. Pelaksanaan melalui pemilihan konten dan media yang sesuai dengan perkembangan usia anak. Penggunaan pendekatan multimodal, mengkombinasikan media konvensional dan digital. Hambatan berupa kondisi fisik dan emosional anak, lingkungan yang tidak kondusif, kehawatiran distraksi dan akses media digital berbayar. Solusi yang dilakukan dengan mengondisikan anak dan lingkungan, penyesuaian durasi, waktu, variasi dan kontrol media digital, memanfaatkan sumber alternatif, serta penguatan interaksi langsung. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada efektivitas storytelling berbasis keluarga sebagai pendidikan akhlak mulia yang bersifat adaptif, transformatif, komunikatif, reflektif, dan kontekstual. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan melibatkan latar belakang subjek pada keluarga muslim yang lebih beragam, objek penelitian yang berbeda, menggunakan desain longitudinal, dan menggunakan pendekatan campuranmetodologis, maupun pengakuan atas keterbatasan penelitian.
Kata Kunci: Metode storytelling; Kisah para Nabi; Strategi ibu; Akhlak Mulia; Pendidikan Keluarga.

Abstract

This study analyzes storytelling about the Prophets as a maternal strategy to instill noble character in children within the family. It uses a qualitative case study method involving five mothers and five second-grade students at MI NU Trimulyo, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was ensured by triangulating techniques, sources, and time. The results show that storytelling about the Prophets effectively instills noble moral values in children. Implementation involves selecting content and media suitable for the children's developmental stage. A multimodal approach combines conventional and digital media. Challenges include children's physical and emotional conditions, an unconducive environment, concerns about distractions, and access to paid digital media. Solutions include creating a supportive environment, adjusting the duration, timing, variety, and control of digital media, using alternative sources, and strengthening direct interaction. The study's novelty lies in demonstrating the effectiveness of family-based storytelling to teach noble moral values that are adaptive, transformative, communicative, reflective, and contextual. Future research should involve a more diverse range of Muslim families, different research objects, a longitudinal design, and a mixed-methods approach.
Keywords: Storytelling Method; Stories of the Prophets; Maternal Strategy; Noble Character; Family Education.

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Introduction

The early stages of elementary school are a critical period in a child's character development because, at this stage, values, habits, and behavioral patterns begin to take root more firmly and influence subsequent stages of development. In the context of second-grade students, it is important to instill fundamental character traits such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and empathy (Yuliani et al., 2024). This is because these values play a role in children's academic and social development (Sofyan & Saputra, 2022). Therefore, character development in children must be carried out consistently, both in school and at home (Ramly et al., 2026).

Schools play a vital role in reinforcing character values through the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and school culture. Teachers serve as role models and facilitators in forming students' character (Wasehudin et al., 2024). However, character development is not solely the responsibility of teachers at school. Collaboration among parents and schools is essential in fostering Islamic character in children from an early age (Nudin, 2020).

The role of parents in the educational process within the family is an inescapable necessity. The family serves as the child's primary educational environment. Within the family, parents have the obligation to provide for their children's basic needs, such as food, shelter, education, social development, ethics, and personality development(Nurhadi, 2020). In Islamic education, parents are obligated to instill faith in their children, educate them in worship, and instill noble moral values (Pitrotussaadah et al., 2023). However, various findings in the field indicate that the family's role as the primary educational institution has not yet been fully realized (Syahbudin et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that parenting styles strongly influence the formation of a child's character (Şahin, 2023).

The role of mothers is also crucial within the family. Mothers interact most frequently with their children, especially during early childhood (Robi'ah & Hidayat, 2023). In Islam, mothers bear a significant responsibility for raising a generation that is faithful, physically and spiritually healthy, and of noble character. Mothers play a vital role in ensuring their children's nutritional needs are met and their physical development is supported. Islam also emphasizes the importance of a mother's role in educating children, particularly regarding religion and moral character (Mokhtar et al., 2025).

A method mothers can use to instill noble moral values in their children is storytelling. The literature indicates that the storytelling method has been proven effective in helping students internalize moral behavior based on specific ethical values contained in stories (Halimah et al., 2020). Additionally, storytelling contributes to the development of children's social and emotional awareness (Veronica et al., 2026). In the academic realm, storytelling has an impact on improving students' academic achievement (Kaptan & Cakir, 2025), their motivation to learn (Jiyane, 2026), digital literacy (Maureen et al., 2020), language skills, and vocabulary development in children (Bin Jwair, 2023), and even critical

thinking skills (O'Reilly et al., 2025). Studies examining teachers' perspectives confirm that storytelling is a powerful method for instilling noble moral values (Al-Hawamleh, 2019). The effectiveness of storytelling can be enhanced through the use of interactive digital media (Marzuki et al., 2025). One of the most important sources for storytelling is the stories of the Prophets found in the Qur'an. These stories have been shown to encourage self-reflection, moral excellence, and practical guidance for daily life (Akrim & Gunawan, 2021; Bin Muhammad Yusoff, 2023).

Previous studies have extensively examined the effectiveness of storytelling in instilling character in children. However, these studies have primarily focused on both formal and non-formal educational institutions. Starting with studies on preschool-aged children (Ervina et al., 2025; Halimah et al., 2020; Rahiem et al., 2020; Rahiem, 2021; Suyadi, 2019), to studies on elementary school students (Holidi et al., 2021; Matamit et al., 2020), and studies on middle school students (Hanifah et al., 2024). These include studies on the application of storytelling in non-formal Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) (Mahfudz & Muslimin, 2025) and Quranic study centers (TPQ) (Multahada, 2018). There is a gap in previous research in the form of a lack of empirical evidence regarding the application of storytelling as a character education method within the family environment, specifically the use of storytelling by mothers to instill character in their children at home.

Based on initial observations, the internalization of noble moral values among second-grade students at MI NU Trimulyo is achieved through collaboration among the school, teachers, and parents. This partnership is reflected in moral education activities conducted both at school and at home, such as storytelling about the Prophets, which serves as a method for instilling moral values within the family environment. This study aims to fill this research gap by exploring how mothers use storytelling to instill character in their children at home (a study of mothers of second-grade students at MI NU Trimulyo). The objectives of this study are to describe and analyze the instillation of noble moral values in children through storytelling about the Prophets, along with the challenges encountered and the solutions implemented to overcome them.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. The case study design was chosen because this research examines a specific phenomenon, namely the storytelling practices used by the mothers of second-grade students at MI NU Trimulyo to instill noble character within the family environment. The scope of this study is limited to a specific group of participants, a specific grade level, the school environment, and storytelling practices based on the stories of the Prophets. Thus, the unit of analysis in this study is not the school as an institution, nor is it the general synergy between home and school, rather, it focuses specifically on the storytelling practices carried out by mothers

within the family environment as a strategy for teaching moral values to second-grade students.

This design allows the researcher to explore the meanings, experiences, strategies, challenges, and solutions encountered by mothers when using the stories of the Prophets to instill noble moral values in their children. The research focuses on how mothers select stories of the Prophets, convey moral messages, use storytelling media, respond to their children's reactions, and relate the story's content to the children's behavior in daily life.

The participants in this study consisted of five mother-child pairs from second-grade students at MI NU Trimulyo. Mothers served as the primary informants because they directly engage in storytelling practices and are involved in their children's moral education at home. The criteria for participants in this study included being a mother of a second-grade student at MI NU Trimulyo who actively and consistently tells stories about the Prophets to her child for at least one year, and being a member of the millennial generation. The children served as subjects of observation and as sources of triangulation through their responses during the storytelling process, their daily moral behaviors as reported by their mothers, and available records of the children's development.

Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Each mother was interviewed twice, with a one-week interval between the first and second interviews. This interval was used to assess the consistency of the information provided by each informant. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and focused on the mothers' storytelling practices, including frequency, duration, timing, storytelling techniques, use of media, moral values emphasized, children's responses, obstacles, and the solutions employed by the mothers.

Non-participant observation was conducted to observe the storytelling process without the researcher's direct involvement in the activity. Since it was not feasible for the researcher to conduct participant observation during storytelling sessions held in the evening in a natural setting, in this case, the researcher employed two alternative methods: first, by utilizing remote communication tools, and second, by asking the mothers to take turns conducting storytelling sessions in the morning and afternoon so that the researcher could observe them directly. The focus of the observation included the interaction between mothers and children, the context of the storytelling sessions, the media used, the children's attention and responses, and how the mothers emphasized moral lessons within the stories. Documentation was used to support the data from interviews and observations. The documents analyzed included the storytelling media used by the mothers, children's developmental records, and other relevant documents available in the field.

Before data collection began, the researcher explained the research objectives, the types of data being collected, and the voluntary nature of participation. The mothers gave their consent to participate in the interview and observation process. Since the children involved were still minors, consent was obtained from the mothers as their legal guardians. The identities of all

participants were protected using codes: Informant 1 through Informant 5 for the mothers and Children 1 through Children 5 for the children during observation recording.

The research data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected, coded, and grouped the data based on the research focus, such as the frequency of storytelling, the selected stories of the Prophets, the moral values instilled, storytelling strategies, children's responses, challenges, and solutions. During the data presentation stage, the researcher organized the data into thematic descriptions and a comparison matrix among informants. In the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher identified patterns, similarities, differences, and key findings related to prophetic storytelling as a strategy mothers use to instill noble moral values in their children.

Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation, source triangulation, and temporal triangulation. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from mothers, observed children's responses, and supporting documents. Temporal triangulation was conducted by interviewing each informant twice at different times, with a one-week interval, to assess the consistency of the information.

Additionally, member checking, peer debriefing, and an audit trail to strengthen the credibility of the data. Member checking was conducted immediately after the interview by restating key points of informants' responses after interviews and requesting confirmation, correction, or additional information. Peer debriefing was conducted through research team discussions to review interview results, coding decisions, emerging themes, and interpretations. An audit trail was maintained by preserving interview transcripts, observation notes, supporting documents, coding records, and analytical memos. These procedures ensured transparency, traceability, and alignment with research objectives throughout the data analysis process.

Result and Discussion

Implementation

The implementation of *storytelling* about the Prophets within families demonstrates that mothers act as the primary educators responsible for instilling noble moral values in children. The findings indicate that the maternal role encompasses not only reading stories aloud but also selecting appropriate stories, creating a conducive atmosphere, utilizing various media, reinforcing values, and facilitating opportunities for reflection.

The frequency with which mothers engage in storytelling to instill noble moral values within the family is adaptable and not governed by a formal schedule. This adaptability depends on the children's circumstances and the availability of time. Observations indicate that storytelling takes place at least

two or three times per week. Interview data reveal diverse patterns, ranging from two or three times weekly to nearly daily sessions when circumstances permit. Informants 1 and 2 stated that this activity is conducted "fairly often," although there is no fixed schedule because it is "adjusted to when the child is receptive or in the right mood." Informant 2 noted that this flexibility is particularly evident during vacations or weekends. Informants 3 and 4 reported a more defined frequency of "two or three times a week," or more, depending on the situation and the child's condition. Informant 5 indicated that storytelling is conducted "often, almost every day if possible."

The duration of *storytelling* sessions within families generally ranges from fifteen to thirty minutes. This timeframe reflects mothers' awareness of children's limited attention spans. Sessions that are too long risk boring the child, while those that are too brief may hinder effective communication of moral messages. Informants consistently reported that storytelling sessions typically last between 15 and 30 minutes.

The duration of storytelling is also influenced by the length and complexity of the story, the child's response, and the media used. With a proportionate duration, the internalization of moral values is considered more effective without diminishing the child's interest in the story. Interview findings indicate that the duration of storytelling:

> "*Depends on the length of the story, the complexity of the story, the children's responses, and the supporting media used*" (Informant 5)

This finding reaffirms that the primary objective of storytelling is to convey moral values in a meaningful manner, rather than simply extending the duration of the activity.

The timing of storytelling sessions is based on considerations of the child's physical and psychological readiness. Most informants stated that this activity is more often conducted in the evening or before bedtime. According to Informant 2, this time is chosen "so that the child can focus on listening." The evening, particularly before bedtime, is chosen because the child has already finished main activities, such as school, religious study, play, and homework. Informant 4 noted that at night, "the body wants to rest and is no longer thinking about other activities."While Informant 5 added that storytelling takes place "after the child has finished their homework and studying." In addition to the evening, storytelling also occurs at other convenient times, such as on weekends or holidays when there is free time. On weekends, families have a more relaxed schedule, allowing storytelling to take place in a more laid-back manner.

Tabel 1. Table Frequency, Duration, and Timing of Prophetic Storytelling Practices.

Informant	Frequency	Duration	Typical Timing
Informant 1	Conducted fairly frequently, without a fixed schedule,	Approximately 15–30 minutes	Conducted flexibly, depending on the child's condition and

Informant	Frequency	Duration	Typical Timing
	depending on the child's readiness		the mother's availability
Informant 2	Conducted fairly frequently, particularly on weekends and holidays	Flexible, depending on the length of the story, the discussion, and the media used	Usually conducted in the evening or before bedtime
Informant 3	Conducted approximately two or three times a week, or more frequently during holidays	Approximately 15 minutes	Conducted flexibly, depending on the child's condition and available family time
Informant 4	Conducted approximately two or three times a week, depending on holidays and the child's condition	Approximately 20–30 minutes	Usually conducted at night
Informant 5	Conducted frequently, almost every day whenever possible	Flexible, depending on the length and complexity of the story, the child's response, and the media used	Usually conducted at night after the child has completed homework and studying

Instilling noble moral values through storytelling about the Prophets in Islamic religious education at home begins with careful planning. Mothers determine themes, choose stories, prepare resources, and select content before sharing it with their children. In this context, mothers not only recount historical accounts of the Prophets but also guide children's moral development through stories tailored to their developmental stages. The literature indicates that using stories of the Prophets helps children understand moral values deeply and apply them in daily life (Aqool, 2022).

Findings indicate that the selection of stories in storytelling about the Prophets is based on the suitability of the story's content to the child's developmental stage. None of the mothers chose stories at random; instead, they first assessed whether the plot, language, conflicts, and messages in the story could be understood by the child. According to the interview results:

"*Not everything that's available is age-appropriate for a child's development*" (informant 5).

This consideration is important because not all available religious material, especially in digital spaces, is suitable for children's cognitive and emotional development. This includes stories of the Prophets that contain religious events, moral conflicts, and exemplary values, not all of which are age-appropriate for children. This is also consistent with the literature, indicating that not all widely circulated stories are age-appropriate for children (Suyadi, 2019).

The content selection made by mothers is also based on the specific moral values they wish to instill. The interview results show that:

> "*By selecting stories that clearly convey specific character traits we wish to instill. For example, stories that contain noble moral values such as diligence in worship, discipline, honesty, independence, mutual cooperation, and responsibility. After that, the stories are reviewed first to see whether the children can understand them or not*" (informant 2).

These findings indicate that mothers take a critical, selective approach when screening content before presenting it to their children, highlighting their careful content choices.

The use of a sequential narrative is also considered important for building children's moral understanding. Interview results show that:

> "*Stories are more often selected in sequence according to their source, with the goal of enabling children to understand the story sequentially*" (informant 2).

Presenting the stories of the Prophets in sequence helps children understand the relationships between characters, events, actions, cause and effect, character development, and moral messages in a coherent manner. The storytelling sequence is not cut short to focus only on the most dramatic or popular parts but is structured to follow the progression of the characters' lives.

Observation results show that mothers first ensure their children are ready for storytelling, followed by creating a calm environment free from distractions such as noise or anything that might divert the children's attention. Interview results also indicate that all informants follow similar practices.

The findings from the observations show that the initial stage of storytelling begins with presenting a brief synopsis of the story. This is also supported by the interview results, which explain that storytelling begins with:

> "*Providing a brief overview of the story to be told, such as an introduction to the characters, as well as a description of the setting, atmosphere, time, and expressions*" (informant 5)

The stage of introducing the characters, setting, atmosphere, and core of the story aims to help children understand the story's framework before the main part begins. This strategy is important because the stories of the Prophets often contain contexts such as places, events, and situations that are not yet fully familiar to children. Mothers play a role in translating these contexts into language and experiences that are closer to the children's world.

Research findings on the storytelling techniques used by mothers indicate a variety of delivery strategies tailored to the children's needs. Generally, there are two common techniques: the mother as a narrator and the mother as a facilitator. When acting as a narrator, the mother tells the stories of the Prophets directly with the help of books, pictures, or other supporting media. When using videos or apps that already include narrated audio, the mother primarily acts as a facilitator who accompanies, explains, and guides the child's attention.

A notable technique is the use of digital and visual media to support the stories. Informant 1 explained that storytelling is done by "using apps or videos," and if the media lacks audio, she "narrates the story herself, using supporting illustrations from pictures or cartoon videos, to make the child more enthusiastic." Informant 2 employed a similar approach, explaining that when

using narrated videos, "the video is played in segments," and the child is still accompanied, while "receiving more in depth explanations." This finding confirms that digital media cannot replace the mother's role but serves as a tool to enhance story delivery and help children visualize the stories of the Prophets.

This flexibility in roles demonstrates mothers' ability to adapt their storytelling strategies to the media being used. This indicates that the storytelling techniques employed by mothers are adaptive and not limited to verbal reading of stories.

The findings show that mothers use a multimodal approach in storytelling. This approach involves a combination of intonation, facial expressions, gestures, and vocal variations to maintain children's engagement during storytelling. The mothers stated:

> "*By emphasizing intonation and adjusting facial expressions when reaching certain messages or events, the atmosphere becomes more intense*" (informant 3).

A similar point was made by informant 2, who said that:

> "*By varying the voice, sometimes softer and sometimes more serious, children do not get bored and can better understand the story*" (Informant 2).

Informant 4 added in more detail that in sections containing moral values intended to be instilled:

> "*In specific sections directly related to the moral values intended to be instilled, emphasis is placed by slowing down the intonation or raising the pitch during important parts. For example, emphasizing certain words and providing more detailed storytelling*" (informant 4).

These findings show a multimodal approach through dramatization that serves to make the story more vivid and engaging. Empirical literature identifies best practices in storytelling as including repetition, concrete examples, explanations, dramatization, and adaptation of stories. Dramatization, achieved through facial expressions, body language, props, and technology, facilitates children's understanding of moral values within the narrative. Segmenting stories also aids children's comprehension and focus. Effective storytelling techniques are those that adapt the narrative to the child's level of understanding (Rahiem et al., 2020).

The storytelling technique identified here also involves dividing the story into shorter segments while still presenting it in a coherent sequence. This division helps children follow the story's plot step by step and reduces the risk of boredom. At the end of each section, the mother can pause briefly to explain, ask questions, or relate events in the story to the child's own experiences. Through this interactive approach, the child is positioned as an active participant who helps build an understanding of the moral values in the story.

Research findings indicate that in storytelling, mothers use a combination of print and digital media. Print media includes picture books for children featuring stories of the Prophets as well as coloring books. Digital media includes illustrations, animated videos, storytelling apps, and easily accessible online resources. The use of these various media helps children visualize the characters,

settings, atmospheres, and events in the story. With the aid of these media, abstract stories become more concrete and engaging.

Interview results revealed that the mothers used a combination of various supporting materials, including both print media, such as coloring books and picture storybooks, and digital media such as images, animated videos, and apps. Informant 3 also utilized "books and the internet, picture storybooks, and engaging animated videos." Informant 2 expressed a similar view, utilizing "printed books, digital books, videos, images, and other media that support the story so that children can illustrate the story's content." Informant 5 combined several media, as mentioned earlier, with the addition of "coloring materials." Meanwhile, Informants 1 and 4 both used the same media as the other informants, supplemented by "storytelling apps available on the Play Store."

The results of observations and documentation show that the media used consist of print media, such as picture storybooks, combined with digital media, such as illustrations, storytelling applications featuring stories of the Prophets (such as Kabi, Qur'an Stories, and Kina), as well as animated videos of the Prophet's biography (Sirah Nabawiyah) and other animations such as Omar and Hana. These apps and videos were used only as supplementary media in the storytelling process, not as the primary data sources for this study. The names of the apps and videos are mentioned to illustrate the variety of media used by mothers, not as a form of commercial promotion or endorsement of specific products. Furthermore, this study does not reproduce, distribute, or analyze the copyrighted content of these apps and videos beyond observing their use as storytelling aids within the family setting.

In children's storytelling, imagination plays a crucial role because it helps children form concrete mental images of characters, events, and moral messages. Children do not merely listen to stories but also hone their thinking skills. Virtues instilled, such as honesty, patience, discipline, responsibility, and empathy, become easier to understand because they are presented as concrete events rather than abstract definitions.

These findings are supported by studies demonstrating the effectiveness of various media in storytelling, such as picture books (Martati et al., 2025; Yumna et al., 2024), video media, which is becoming increasingly effective (Zhou et al., 2025), and storytelling apps (Nordin et al., 2025).

Based on these findings, print and digital media are two complementary tools, not mutually exclusive alternatives. Print media continues to play a vital role in maintaining the depth of the storytelling experience. Picture books allow children to engage with the story at a slower, more focused pace and give mothers greater flexibility to control the story's tempo. The use of digital media in storytelling does not replace the mother's role as the primary educator in the family. Digital media primarily serves as a tool to capture children's attention, enrich illustrations, and support understanding of the story's plot. Mothers, as facilitators, continue to accompany their children when videos or apps are used, particularly by emphasizing key points and providing additional explanations for specific sections.

The use of visual and digital media in storytelling reinforces the multimodal approach to character education. Children receive messages through auditory and visual channels, including images, colors, movement, and character expressions. The study's findings are consistent with the multimodal approach, which posits that meaning arises from the integration of multiple communication modes. In storytelling, vocal elements such as intonation, volume, tempo, tone, and pauses shape meaning, rhythm, and atmosphere, while nonverbal elements like gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions enhance the message through visual media. The multimodal approach highlights that storytelling quality depends not only on content but also on the narrator's ability to integrate these elements effectively (Ma & Hashemifardnia, 2026).

The use of simple language and the presentation of the story's context are key elements of storytelling. The mothers explained that storytelling must use language that is simple and easy for children to understand. A mother added that:

> "*It is necessary to provide explanations for words that children do not yet understand, with the aim of enriching their vocabulary*" (informant 5).

Mothers must be able to adapt their word choice, sentence structure, and story explanations to the child's language abilities. This adaptation is necessary because some terms in the stories of the Prophets may not be familiar to children. When a child encounters a word they do not understand, the mother provides an explanation using simpler language. In this regard, the storytelling practiced by mothers also aims to enrich children's vocabulary. This is supported by studies showing that storytelling is effective in improving language skills by enhancing children's vocabulary comprehension (Bin Jwair, 2023).

Observational findings indicate that storytelling is conducted in a communicative, interactive, and reflective manner. The mother asks questions, gives the child opportunities to respond, encourages the child to ask questions, establishes cause and effect relationships, provides examples, and summarizes the story's content and the message it conveys. The mother instills noble moral values through storytelling about the Prophets by emphasizing examples related to daily life. The goal is for children not only to hear the narrative but also to understand the Prophets' exemplary conduct and be able to relate it to their daily lives. Overall, the mothers explained that the emphasis on moral values is achieved by linking them directly to examples from the children's lives.

Tabel 2. Reflective Interaction Patterns in Prophetic Storytelling

Prophetic Story Episode	Mother's Reflective Question	Child's Response	Moral Value
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was known as *al-Amīn*, the trustworthy	What should you do if you find something that belongs to your friend?	The child answered that the item should be returned to its owner. The child then asked, "Prophet Muhammad never lied, did he, Mom?"	Honesty and trustworthiness

Prophetic Story Episode	Mother's Reflective Question	Child's Response	Moral Value
The story of Prophet Sulaiman (PBUH) and the ants	Is it acceptable to hurt small animals merely for amusement?	The child answered, "No, because the animal would suffer, and Allah might be displeased."	Empathy toward other living beings
Prophet Ayyub (PBUH) remained patient while facing illness and hardship	What should you do when you experience difficulty in completing an assignment?	The child answered that one should remain patient, continue making an effort, and pray to Allah.	Patience, perseverance, and reliance on Allah
Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) forgave his brothers	What should you do when a friend apologizes to you?	The child answered that the friend should be forgiven and that the wrongdoing should not be repaid.	Forgiveness and emotional self-control
Prophet Ismail (PBUH) was devoted to and helped his parents	What should you do when your parents ask for help?	The child answered that one should help willingly, avoid complaining, and speak politely.	Filial devotion, obedience, and courtesy

Additionally, interview results highlight the need for certain activities during and after storytelling:

"*For the values that need to be instilled, emphasis is placed on specific parts. After the story, the values or messages in the story are emphasized, then linked to daily life, followed by a discussion*" (Informant 5).

The findings show that all mothers give their children the opportunity to comment, ask questions, and engage, which is important for maintaining focus and ensuring the children's understanding. The interview results indicate that:

"*During and after the story, the child is asked questions. If the child doesn't ask a question, then the mother prompts them with a question*" (Informant 2).

Through the child's answers, the mother can gauge the extent of the child's understanding of the story's content and the values conveyed. Interview findings indicate that:

"*If the child's answer is not quite right, it must be explained again using examples closer to the child's own life*" (Informant 2).

Informant 4 also added:

"When answering a child's questions, one should strive to prompt the child to ask follow up questions until the child truly understands" (Informant 4).

In addition, providing prompts also serves to develop children's critical and moral thinking skills.

"*By asking children to make predictions about what happened before or after an event, giving them the opportunity to respond, allowing them to ask questions, and exploring cause and effect relationships, we help children think before they act*" (Informant 5)

This strategy fosters children's critical understanding of the consequences of certain behaviors. Providing prompts is also used to maintain children's attention and reinforce the religious dimension in instilling moral values.

Interview results indicate that when using the app, the mother acts as a facilitator:

> "*The app already includes quizzes; children are given the opportunity to answer the available quizzes, and then additional questions are posed, or they are allowed to ask their own*" (Informant 1).

This finding suggests that digital media can support the process of providing stimuli, but maternal guidance remains necessary so that children do not merely answer questions but truly understand the moral significance of the stories. This finding is supported by studies in which the stories of the Prophets are presented by actively and interactively engaging children, for example, through discussions and reflective questions to facilitate their understanding. An interactive approach enhances children's cognitive understanding, affective attitudes, and social skills (Akrim & Gunawan, 2021).

Challenges and Solutions

Based on the data analysis conducted, the main challenges in implementing storytelling about the Prophets are the children's physical and emotional challenges. Emotional challenges stem from the children's emotional state, which is still developing and unstable, leading to mood swings and a tendency to get bored easily. Informant 1 mentioned "rapid mood swings in young children." Informant 2 added that "children get bored easily if they only listen to stories without the aid of various digital media." To overcome these challenges, the mothers employed various adaptive strategies by using a combination of visual and digital media. The informants utilized a variety of print and digital media. The goal was to increase the children's enthusiasm and motivation.

Another challenge identified is that children's focus and attention are easily distracted by environmental disturbances or other activities. The interview results show that:

> "*Children sometimes lack focus because they are easily distracted by other things*" (Informant 1).

Furthermore, according to the mothers, factors that could potentially disrupt children's focus and attention include:

> "*Games, entertainment, loud noises, or other things that distract the children*" (Informant 4).

To address these challenges, mothers use a combination of media formats. Additionally, they ensure that children are prepared to listen by selecting an appropriate time and creating a conducive environment, minimizing potential distractions.

In addition to the child's emotional barriers, the findings indicate the presence of physical barriers in the form of fatigue after the child has completed their daily activities. The mother explained that:

"*Sometimes the child feels tired after a full day of activities at school, Quran study, tutoring, and doing homework*" (Informant 5).

The solution when the child is too tired for storytelling is to postpone it and reschedule for another time. These findings underscore that the success of storytelling depends not only on the story's content but also on the child's physical and emotional readiness.

Another challenge identified was time constraints. Interview results revealed:

"*difficulty in finding time for storytelling amidst a busy daily schedule and limited remaining energy*" (Informant 2).

Strategies employed included keeping story durations short and dividing stories into several parts while still presenting them in a coherent sequence.

The findings indicate that despite time constraints, mothers still make an effort to set aside time for storytelling. Mothers are aware that instilling noble moral values in their children is one of their obligations.

"*By making an effort to set aside time to consistently engage in storytelling, because that is part of a mother's role in raising her children"* (Informant 5).

Additionally, the use of digital media presents new challenges, such as limited access to storytelling apps. Interview findings explain that "

"*not everything on the app is accessible for free; you have to access premium apps, which require a paid subscription*".

The solutions adopted include taking advantage of limited free access, using alternative sources, or subscribing if necessary.

Another challenge related to digital media is concern over the impact of children's dependence on devices. Interview results show that:

"*Digital media is indeed engaging and offers flexibility and visually appealing content. However, there is concern that children will become addicted to gadgets if left to use them continuously; digital media offers indulgent animations, which may result in children losing interest in using printed books*" (Informant 5).

For this reason, the mother implements a strategy of limiting and supervising digital media use to storytelling only, while continuing to encourage her child to use print media such as picture books or coloring books, so that a balance between digital and print media is maintained and the storytelling experience becomes more meaningful.

Tabel 3. Mapping of Barriers and Solutions in Storytelling on the Stories of the Prophets

Type of Barrier	Form of Barrier	Solutions Implemented by Mothers
Emotional barrier	Children's moods tend to change easily, and they become bored quickly.	Using various printed, visual, and digital media.
Physical barrier	Children feel tired after school, Qur'an recitation activities, tutoring, or completing assignments.	Postponing storytelling and conducting it at another time.

Focus and environmental barrier	Children are easily distracted by games, entertainment, noise, or other activities.	Choosing an appropriate time and creating a conducive atmosphere.
Time barrier	Mothers have daily responsibilities and limited energy.	Shortening the duration of storytelling by dividing the story into several parts.
Digital access barrier	Not all application-based content can be accessed free of charge.	Utilizing free features, seeking alternative sources, or subscribing only when necessary.
Concern about gadget dependency	Mothers are concerned about the risk of children becoming overly dependent on digital media.	Limiting gadget use while continuing to use illustrated storybooks or printed media.

The table indicates that mothers do not rely on a single strategy in addressing the barriers encountered during storytelling activities. Each barrier is addressed through strategies that are adjusted to the child's condition and the family context.

The barriers to storytelling identified in this study differ from those frequently reported in the context of educational institutions. In the school setting, barriers to storytelling are generally related to limited supporting media, teachers' storytelling skills, teachers' difficulty in transforming abstract material into concrete stories, and a lack of parental support (Hanum, 2022). Meanwhile, the findings of this study indicate that storytelling in a family context is more influenced by the child's physical and emotional readiness, the mother's availability, the home environment, and guidelines for digital media use.

Conclusion

This study found that storytelling about the prophets serves as an effective maternal strategy for instilling noble character in children within the family environment. Mothers not only read the stories aloud but also select age-appropriate tales, prepare materials, manage the timing, use simple language, and emphasize moral values relevant to daily life. Storytelling takes place flexibly, typically two to three times a week, lasting about fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on the child's physical and emotional readiness. The strategies employed include intonation, facial expressions, gestures, print media, digital media, reflective questions, discussions, and reinforcing values after the story ends. The moral values instilled include honesty, discipline, responsibility, patience, independence, compassion, and perseverance in religious practice. The main challenges stem from the child's mood swings, limited attention span, fatigue, time constraints, access to digital media, and concerns about gadget dependency, all of which are addressed through time adjustments, media selection, parental guidance, restrictions on digital use, and breaking the story into shorter segments.

This study makes an important contribution to the development of Islamic Religious Education research, particularly regarding family-based character education practices. Conceptually, this study reaffirms the mother's role as the primary educator, acting as a planner, narrator, facilitator, evaluator, and reinforcer of moral values in her child's life. Methodologically, the use of a qualitative case study approach allows for an in-depth exploration of mothers' experiences through interviews, observations, and documentation. Theoretically, these findings expand the limited empirical evidence on Islamic education within the family context, particularly storytelling, which has traditionally been situated primarily in schools, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), or non-formal educational institutions. This study also demonstrates that digital media can

support the internalization of Islamic values as long as its use remains under a mother's supervision and does not replace the educational relationship within the family. Thus, storytelling about the Prophets can be understood as an adaptive, transformative, communicative, reflective, and contextual religious education practice in shaping the moral character of elementary school-aged children.

This study has limitations regarding the scope of the population, the number of informants, and the focus of the study, which is still limited to the experiences of five mothers and five second-grade students at MI NU Trimulyo. The qualitative nature of the research strengthens these findings as a deep understanding of the practice of moral internalization by mothers using the storytelling method of the Prophets' stories within the family environment. The data also rely on family practices observed within a limited context, so the long-term dynamics of changes in children's moral character cannot yet be broadly generalized. Future research should involve a more diverse group of informants, with broader family backgrounds or different contexts, to enable a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between family education and school education. Future studies could also employ longitudinal designs or mixed-methods approaches to assess the consistency of storytelling practices and their long-term impact on children's moral development.

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