

Introducing Wayang Art through Puppet-Making and Coloring Activities for MI Al-Islam Kepundungan Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the learning activities of introducing the art of puppetry to grade IV students of MI Al-Islam Kepundung through the activity of making and coloring puppets. The learning activity was carried out to increase students' understanding of traditional cultural arts, especially puppetry as Indonesia's cultural heritage. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach. The subjects of the study are IV students and teachers. This research highlights the learning process and the work of students. Data was obtained through observation, brief interviews, documentation, and then processed through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions to describe the course of learning and student creativity. With the stages, the teacher gave an introduction to the puppet character of the Pandawa Lima, and gave an explanation of the cultural values it contains. The results of the study show two learning processes, namely cultural introduction through stories and interactive dialogues, and the realization of students' creativity through real works. The teacher introduced the Pandawa Lima puppet shop and explained the cultural values it contains, then the activity continued with students starting to design puppet sketches according to their own imaginations, then coloring them freely. These two processes complement each other in producing a meaningful and immersive learning experience. The result of children's works is a unique, colorful, imaginative, symbolic, and entertaining creative way. In conclusion, the approach of introducing puppet art through making and coloring activities has proven to be effective in increasing creativity, understanding, and fostering students' love for local culture. This approach can be used as an alternative learning strategy in efforts to preserve traditional arts in elementary schools.

KEYWORDS

Puppets, culture, local, elementary students, education, creativity

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INTRODUCTION

Wayang is one of Indonesia's cultural heritage that is not only beautiful artistically, but also full of philosophical values and deep moral teachings. However, technological developments and the influence of modern culture have caused the younger generation's interest in traditional arts to decline. Many elementary school students are not familiar with the puppet characters and the cultural values contained in them. According to (Oktaviani, 2023) Art can improve children's mental well-being, help them express their feelings and emotions, and provide opportunities to create and collaborate. Therefore, creative and fun learning is needed so that the art of puppetry is still known and appreciated. One of the efforts that can be made is through the art of making and coloring puppets, which not only introduces traditional arts, but also trains fine art skills and develops students' imaginations. In this way, the preservation of local culture can be done through hands-on experiences that are interactive and engaging for children.

Wayang is a traditional art that was born and developed in the midst of Javanese society, this

is part of their life and culture. This art is not just a spectacle to entertain, but it is also loaded with profound philosophical messages. Each character in the puppet show is made with a unique shape and characteristics, adjusted to the character and traits that want to be depicted. Through the visualization of its characters, puppets become a medium rich in moral messages, cultural values, and life teachings (Tiyas, 2022). Wayang is one of Indonesia's cultural riches which in 2003 has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage. As a performing art that combines story, music, visuals, and moral values. Wayang has a high educational function, but as technology develops and lifestyle changes, the art of puppetry is increasingly marginalized from children's daily lives.

Fine arts education in elementary schools (SD) is an important part of the curriculum, because through this learning students are invited from an early age to develop character, train creativity, and develop aesthetic sensitivity. The educational process aims to help students to be able to adapt as best as possible to their environment. Basically, the growth and development of children is influenced by two interrelated things, namely the talent they have and the role of the environment that shapes and directs them (Sarinah & Azmi, 2019). Through fine art activities such as drawing, painting, coloring, making collages, and handicrafts. Students are invited to express their ideas, emotions, and experiences in creative visual form. Culture and art have a close relationship, especially in presenting values and aesthetics born from human expressions of nature. Beauty can be enjoyed through various senses, such as the eyes and ears, both in the form of visual works and sound performances. As creatures with an aesthetic sense, men are always driven to create art, ranging from simple forms to more complex works full of meaning. Each artwork reflects the culture, values, and perspective of the society that gave birth to it (Meilyani et al., 2023).

However, given the rapid development of technology and modern popular culture, dependence on technology sometimes makes students more socially isolated. As a result, their opportunities to interact directly with diverse cultures are reduced. This condition can lead to a lack of understanding of cultural values that are actually important to foster an attitude of respect for diversity (Rizki Ramdani et al., 2024). The existence of puppet art among children began to decline. The lack of direct interaction with traditional arts causes the younger generation to be less familiar with, and even tend to be unfamiliar with forms, characters, and stories in puppetry. For this reason, there needs to be a strategic effort in reintroducing the art of puppetry through a fun approach that is in accordance with the world of children.

Presenting puppets as a storytelling medium for early childhood is an important step to foster a love of one's own culture. By introducing puppets from childhood, the younger generation is expected to be able to get closer, understand, and appreciate the cultural richness as well as the creativity of their nation. This is very meaningful in shaping the nation's identity and ensuring that the process of cultural regeneration runs well. More than that, learning involving puppets can also instill cultural values and develop children's storytelling skills. Through this activity, children are encouraged to be more courageous in speaking, expressing themselves, and being confident when delivering stories, both to peers and parents. This skill not only helps them in the learning process, but is also very useful in daily life, especially to improve communication skills (Ulfa, 2018).

This activity has been implemented at SD MI AL-Islam Kepundung as part of learning fine arts based on local culture. Through the activity of making and coloring puppet characters, students are not only trained in fine motor skills and creative expression, but also introduced to the nation's cultural heritage in a contextual and fun way. Through free expression, students express their imaginations and ideas fully according to their own creativity, creating a carefree and inspiring working atmosphere (Deswanty et al., 2024). The integration of puppetry in learning at MI AL-Islam Kepundung is considered to have the potential to improve student order and enrich the learning experience. Many MI students feel that there is no learning about the arts yet, even though puppetry can be an interactive and fun medium. In addition, the generation's interest in puppets has decreased. Students of MI AL-Islam Kepundung have not had experience learning fine arts that introduce puppetry as a traditional culture, Most of the learning is less interesting and less interactive, and students become monotonous. Puppets are used as learning because they can strengthen understanding related to culture.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative description method, which is an approach that focuses on understanding and describing a social phenomenon or the learning process in depth, as it is, according to real conditions in the field. This approach was chosen because it is in line with the purpose of the research, which is to explore how the process of introducing puppet art to school students takes place through puppet making and coloring activities. This research does not focus on numbers or statistical measurements, but on the meaning, process, and direct experience of students while participating in the art activity. The qualitative approach provides an ideal foundation for this research, because it emphasizes meaning, creativity, and cultural context, because it is able to unravel and tell the story behind the wayang learning process in depth and personally. Said by (Wardani et al., 2024), The use of media such as puppetry can be a model of communicative and effective channels to educate and motivate as well as motivate. The case study strategy was chosen to dive deeply into the practice of learning and puppet creation at MI AL-Islam Kepundung, so that it can provide a comprehensive picture contextually. The research was carried out on July 20 - August 2024.

The research subjects in this article are conducted by teachers and students. Teachers as companions who accompany puppet learning, as well as students who are actively involved in making puppet works. The objectives include the learning process, such as teaching methods, stages of creation, and class interaction, as well as students' work in the form of puppet media. Data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. Interviews with teachers and students were conducted to explore their views, experiences, motivations, and challenges they faced in learning puppets. Participatory observation in the classroom, where the researcher also observed the interaction of the padar during the process of making puppet works. Documentation contains photographs, field notes, and students' physical work as complementary data that enriches contextual understanding. The data analysis technique is carried out inductively by building themes and interpretations of descriptive data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis process follows steps such as data encoding, thematic grouping, and interpretation of meaning in the context of culture and pedagogy.

During the activity, the researcher was actively involved and observed the participation, creativity, and enthusiasm of the students in participating in the activity. Fine arts have an important role in stimulating early childhood development. Through drawing, coloring, dancing, or singing activities, children not only express themselves, but also train the right brain function that plays a role in creativity. The visual experience they gain in strengthening memory as well as improving concentration and perseverance, especially when they focus in a crowded environment. Art activities also support fine motor development and problem-solving skills, as children learn to face challenges creatively. In addition, art helps shape children's emotional intelligence, helps them recognize, express, and manage emotions, and builds empathy and social skills. With it, art plays an important role as an important means that supports children's overall growth and development (Kiraniawati Telaumbanua & Berkati Bu'ulolo, 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

MI Al-Islam Kepundung is a private school located in Kepundung Village, Reban District, Batang Regency, Central Java. This school was established on January 12, 2015 based on the Establishment Decree Number 142 of 2015 under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. Currently, the school's operations are led by Mr. Fatkhurohman, S.Pd.I. In 2018, MI Al-Islam Kepundung successfully achieved B accreditation through the Accreditation Decree Number. 044/BANSM-JTG/SK/X/2018 dated October 16, 2018. MI Al-Islam Kepundung focuses on the formation of noble character, through learning based on Islamic values, so that students become individuals of faith and piety.

The results of observations and documentation show that the use of wayang kreasi as a learning medium significantly increases student enthusiasm. Once the media was introduced, students seemed

to be actively involved. Children experiment with making puppet forms, and propose creative ideas in the creation and staging process of their work. Wayang kreasi media can increase children's creativity, communication, and student collaboration as well as introduce local wisdom values (Endah, Cicillia, 2023). The learning outcome data shows that puppet media is not only a tool to produce new learning processes, but also able to facilitate a deeper understanding of the material while stimulating students' memory. For example, in research (Hasiyah, 2025), learning completeness increased from 66.67% to 93.33% after using puppet media, this indicates extraordinary effectiveness in internalizing the theme 2 Unity in Differences. All shivas are involved in the stage of making puppet works, starting from the design of the characters, the making of sketches, the coloring process, the process of assembling the puppets, to the last process, namely the puppet exhibition which is carried out in the school hall. Their works display creative variants, thus strengthening their learning experience because they do not just receive material, but also produce learning content. stringing puppets, to the last process, which is a puppet exhibition held in the school hall.

Discussion

Learning using puppet media can create a participatory and culturally meaningful learning space. Students are required to be active in the process of making puppets, they can not only learn the content of the learning material but can also build emotional relationships with moral values so that it is easier for teachers to convey moral messages during the learning process. Supported by the presentation of the Yuliatin et al. (2025), Character education helps children grow into individuals with integrity, ethics, and are ready to make a positive contribution to society. Cultural integration through creative media such as puppetry is particularly relevant in the constellation of modern education that relies on 21st-century skills. Creativity, collaboration, and local values are important content. This method also offers a concrete alternative to overcome textual learning that tends to be passive and boring.

Several challenges arise, such as limited learning time, teachers' skills in making puppets, and material resources. Kusumawati et al. (2024) Explaining that in the learning process, teachers still tend to be dominant, while students listen more without interacting or discussing much. This comes up with a solution, namely the need for collaboration between teachers and students between classes to facilitate the creative process without sacrificing the essence of learning. Khusna et al. (2025) conveyed that the cultural heritage of the archipelago is a priceless treasure that is inherited in a sustainable manner, including art, traditions, languages, customs, and belief systems. In the realm of education, the culture-based curriculum is an important bridge to instill cultural roots in the younger generation while maintaining national identity. This research fills the gap about how the cultural learning process and students' work unite with each other. These results can serve as a basis for teachers and curriculum developers to design culture-based learning with systematic creative and reflective components.

From an interview conducted on July 20, 2024 with Mr. Fatkhurohman S.Pd.I, as a teacher and homeroom teacher of 4th grade MI Al-Islam Kepundung, information was obtained about the learning process of making puppets at the school. Here are the main points of the interview results:

1. Educational Objectives

Teacher's Answer:

"The activity of making puppets can train children's fine motor skills system, introduce traditional art heritage to students, can build an emotional relationship with moral values so that it makes it easier for teachers to convey moral messages during the learning process."

2. Learning Process

Teacher's Answer:

"Starting from the introduction of the types of puppets and their characters, I took the Pandawa Lima puppet to become an introduction to puppet characters to children. Then continued by giving a briefing to students to be able to make a sketch of the puppet on paper according to their respective ideas, after that direct the students to start coloring the puppet using colored pencils or crayons, after finishing I told the students how to string the picture into a puppet".

3. Student Response and Enthusiasm

Teacher's Answer:

"Most students are enthusiastic about this kind of learning process, because they are free to express their skills and the material that teachers teach students is well received".

4. Obstacles Faced by Students

Teacher's Answer:

"The difficulty is usually during the cutting process on the puppet characters they make, sometimes in parts that they think are difficult to reach, they can tear the paper unintentionally and make the puppet not good".

5. Methods and Media Used

Teacher's Answer:

"I use the process of direct practice in front of the children, from the beginning of the introduction of what puppetry is, who are the puppet figures, how the process of making it is step by step. I prefer to explain directly rather than through video, because children can focus more on paying attention directly than watching through videos".



Figure 1. MI Al-Islam Kepundung (Source: Author, 2025)



Figure 2. Interviews and Observations with teachers (Source: Author, 2025)



Figure 3. The process of making Wayang (Source: Author, 2025)



Figure 4. The process of evaluating students' work (Source: Author, 2025)





Figure 5. Students explain their work (Source: Author, 2025)



Figure 6. Exhibition of works (Source: Author, 2025)

Table 1. Student Work

No	Student Name	Works	Class	Reasons for Creating Works
1	Muhammad Raka Pratama		4	Want to draw a view of his house.
2	Fajar Nugraha		4	Drawing mountain scenery.

3 Moch Fauzi



4 Drawing the Indonesian flag

5 Salsabilla Putri



4 Drawing a view from the back of the house

6 Citra Aisyah



4 Drawing rice fields and mountains

CONCLUSION

This research using a qualitative descriptive approach succeeded in presenting an authentic picture of the experience of MI Al-Islam Kepundung students in puppet learning. One of the efforts to anticipate complex problems among students is to instill character education through puppet creation, because puppets reflect human nature and character, good or bad. There are two series of learning activities that run naturally and complement each other.

First, when the teacher introduced the puppet character of the Pandawa Lima and cultural values dialogically, it was evident that the students showed high enthusiasm, cheerful-looking faces, sparkling eyes, and some made statements spontaneously, reflecting deep emotional and cognitive involvement. Second, when students express their understanding through making and coloring puppets, there is a carefree creative atmosphere, students seem engrossed in drawing flora characters or imaginative figures according to their imagination, with full focus and happiness that is clearly

visible.

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