

Teachers' Perceptions of The Use of Hand Puppets as a Learning Media in Overcoming Disruptive Behavior in Indonesian Language Learning a First Grade at ABC Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Disruptive behavior among first-grade elementary school students in Indonesian language learning remains a persistent challenge in classroom management, largely attributed to monotonous instructional methods and the absence of engaging learning media. This study investigates teachers' perceptions of hand puppets as a learning medium for addressing disruptive behavior in first-grade Indonesian language classes at ABC Elementary School. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, the study engaged three first-grade teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered via semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation, and were subsequently analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model alongside thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the use of hand puppets effectively enhanced students' attentiveness, classroom participation, and emotional engagement, while simultaneously reducing disruptive behavioral incidents. Teachers reported marked improvements in overall classroom dynamics and expressed strong intentions to incorporate hand puppets into future instructional practice. This study concludes that hand puppets constitute a practical, accessible, and low-cost medium that supports both classroom management and interactive learning in early elementary education, particularly in schools with limited pedagogical resources.

Keywords: *Hand Puppets, Classroom Management, Indonesian Language Learning, Disruptive Behavior, Teacher Perception*

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INTRODUCTION

Disruptive behavior in lower elementary school grades constitutes a persistent and multifaceted challenge, as it disrupts the learning process, diminishes the concentration of other students, and impedes teachers' ability to maintain a conducive classroom environment. Observational data collected at ABC Elementary School revealed that first-grade students frequently engaged in off-task behaviors during Indonesian language lessons – including excessive talking, wandering around the classroom, and difficulty sustaining focus, particularly during story-listening and retelling tasks. This condition aligns with findings that lower-grade students, who are developmentally prone to boredom and distraction, require more intensive classroom management strategies and engaging instructional approaches to minimize disruptive behavior. If left unaddressed, such behavior not only undermines learning effectiveness but also negatively affects students' social-emotional development and the overall classroom atmosphere.

Research evidence suggests that the use of creative and concrete learning media, including hand puppets, can significantly enhance student engagement and attentiveness by providing a livelier and more enjoyable learning experience. Dale's Cone of Experience theory posits that concrete and visual learning experiences facilitate deeper comprehension and retention, thereby indicating that media such as hand puppets hold strong pedagogical

potential for supporting instruction in lower grades. Recent empirical studies on hand puppets and puppet-based activities further demonstrate their capacity to improve language skills, behavioral engagement, and emotional well-being through more interactive and affectively positive learning environments. Despite this evidence, many elementary schools – including ABC Elementary School – continue to underutilize such concrete media, thereby forfeiting opportunities to make Indonesian language learning more engaging while simultaneously managing disruptive behavior.

Disruptive Behavior and Teacher Pedagogical Competence

A critical problem identified in the field is the high prevalence of disruptive behavior among first-grade students during Indonesian language lessons, largely stemming from monotonous, media-deficient, and highly teacher-centered instruction. As a direct consequence, teachers frequently repeat explanations due to students' inattentiveness, valuable learning time is expended on behavioral management, and meaningful two-way interaction between teachers and students remains minimal. This is consistent with findings that the selection of unengaging methods and media diminishes learning motivation and encourages students to seek alternative activities – such as chatting or playing – thereby creating a less conducive learning atmosphere. From a classroom management perspective, reactive strategies that rely solely on reprimands or punishment have also been shown to be ineffective in producing long-term behavioral change. These challenges collectively underscore the urgent need for a proactive, enjoyable, and media-enriched instructional approach capable of redirecting students' energy toward constructive learning activities.

A secondary but equally significant root problem concerns the limited pedagogical competence of teachers, particularly in designing and utilizing creative learning media appropriate for the developmental characteristics of lower-grade students. At ABC Elementary School, several teachers hold non-PGSD backgrounds or possess only a senior high school diploma, resulting in insufficient knowledge of active learning strategies, classroom management techniques, and instructional media development. Previous research has established that teachers' educational backgrounds and their perceptions of learning media significantly influence their willingness and capacity to integrate innovative media into their instructional practice. Many teachers acknowledge the value of varied media yet persist in traditional approaches due to perceived skill deficits, unfamiliarity, or the view that creative media constitutes an unnecessary burden unrelated to behavioral management. Consequently, the challenge extends beyond student behavior to encompass how teachers interpret, select, and evaluate learning media as both a pedagogical and classroom management tool.

Within the context of Indonesian language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum – particularly in the domains of listening and retelling skills – first-grade students require concrete, visual, and interactive learning experiences to sustain engagement and prevent disruptive behavior. Hand puppets, as a concrete instructional medium, offer a multisensory combination of visual, verbal, and emotional stimuli that enable teachers to animate story characters, construct meaningful dialogue, and involve students directly in storytelling and role-playing activities. Prior research has demonstrated that hand puppets and puppet-based approaches can foster reading interest, speaking proficiency, and learner autonomy, while simultaneously cultivating a warmer and more participatory classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, storytelling-based instructional methods have been found effective in reducing a range of children's behavioral difficulties by harnessing the inherent appeal of puppet characters as positive stimuli that redirect behavior toward expected learning activities.

These findings align with Skinner's operant conditioning theory, which holds that behavior can be shaped through the systematic application of positive reinforcement and pleasant stimuli, thereby motivating students to sustain desired behavioral patterns. In this regard, hand puppets function not merely as attention-capturing tools, but also as natural facilitators of positive reinforcement through dialogue and teacher-student interaction.

However, the existing body of literature predominantly addresses academic outcomes — such as speaking proficiency or reading interest — while empirical discussions specifically examining the use of hand puppets to manage disruptive behavior in first-grade Indonesian language learning, from the teacher's experiential perspective, remain notably scarce. This constitutes a significant research gap that warrants investigation through studies foregrounding teachers' direct experiences in deploying hand puppets as an integrated instructional and behavioral management strategy.

Research Objectives and Novelty

This study aims to examine in depth how teachers perceive the use of hand puppets as a learning medium in addressing disruptive behavior among first-grade students in Indonesian language learning at ABC Elementary School. Empirically, it captures teachers' experiences across three temporal dimensions — before, during, and after using hand puppets — and explores their assessments of this medium's impact on student focus, classroom participation, and behavioral dynamics. The urgency of this study is grounded in the pressing need for creative, enjoyable, and concrete media-based classroom management strategies, particularly in schools characterized by limited teacher pedagogical competence and minimal adoption of innovative instructional media. Furthermore, the findings are intended to serve as an evidence-based reference for teacher professional development programs, particularly in the areas of instructional media selection and reflective pedagogical practice.

The novelty of this study lies in its simultaneous integration of three dimensions: the first-grade Indonesian language learning context, the deployment of hand puppets as a concrete instructional medium, and teachers' perceptions of this medium's effectiveness in reducing disruptive classroom behavior. Unlike prior studies that have largely concentrated on the effects of hand puppets on students' language competencies or reading motivation, this study positions teachers' perceptions as the central analytical lens, seeking to understand how direct instructional experience shapes their acceptance, continued use, and critical reflection on hand puppet media in authentic classroom settings. In doing so, this study offers a novel empirical contribution — a more holistic account of hand puppets as an instructional medium that simultaneously enriches Indonesian language learning and serves as an effective strategy for managing disruptive behavior in lower-grade elementary classrooms.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to systematically describe and interpret teachers' perceptions of hand puppets as a learning medium in addressing disruptive behavior among first-grade students in Indonesian language learning at ABC Elementary School. A qualitative design was selected because it enables researchers to explore the lived experiences, meanings, and perspectives of participants within their natural context, without experimental manipulation, thereby producing rich and contextually grounded descriptions. According to [Sugiyono \(2022\)](#), descriptive qualitative research emphasizes observing phenomena in their natural settings to understand the essence of participants' subjective experiences, while [Creswell & Poth \(2018\)](#) emphasized that descriptive designs are effective for describing social phenomena such as teachers' perceptions of learning media innovations. This approach also aligns with [Fadli \(2021\)](#), who stated that qualitative research aims to understand participants' thoughts and feelings more deeply than mere surface observation. The descriptive qualitative framework is therefore well-suited to the research objective of capturing teachers' reflective narratives across three temporal dimensions — before, during, and after using hand puppets — in their authentic instructional setting.

Participants and Sampling

The study population consisted of all three first-grade teachers at ABC Elementary School, each responsible for a class of approximately 20 students who routinely encountered disruptive behavior in Indonesian language learning. Given the small and bounded nature of the research site, a total population sampling strategy was employed, whereby all available participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected. The sample was drawn using purposive sampling, selecting participants based on specific criteria such as first-grade teaching experience and willingness to try hand puppets. This allowed the three teachers to fully engage in providing a comprehensive overview of their perceptions. This technique aligns with [Sugiyono \(2023\)](#), who defines purposive sampling as the conscious selection of the most informative participants in a qualitative context, and [Sudaryono \(2021\)](#), who emphasizes the relevance of the criteria to the research problem.

Participant profile data included age, gender, educational background (Bachelor's degree in Islamic Religious Education, Senior High School, Bachelor's degree in Religious Education), and teaching experience (2 years, 9 months, and 5 months), reflecting the diversity of pedagogical competencies at the private school. This demographic diversity was deliberately retained as it constitutes a significant analytical dimension of the study, as differences in educational background and experience directly relate to teachers' varying perceptions of instructional media. This total sample selection ensured data saturation and a full representation of the phenomenon at the research site.

Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

Data were collected through three complementary instruments to ensure methodological comprehensiveness and triangulation. The main data collection instruments included in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observation, and documentation in the form of photographs and videos of the learning process to enrich the primary data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using flexible question guides to explore teachers' perceptions in depth, while non-participant observations used a checklist of student and teacher behavior indicators and additional notes, as recommended by [Sugiyono \(2023\)](#), who emphasized direct interaction for authentic data.

The interview guide was structured around three thematic areas aligned with the research focus: (1) teachers' pre-implementation experiences and perceptions, (2) their in-practice observations of student behavioral and engagement changes, and (3) their post-implementation reflections and future intentions. Each interview session was recorded with participants' consent, subsequently transcribed verbatim, and returned to participants for member-checking to ensure accuracy. Classroom observations were conducted using a structured behavioral checklist to document observable indicators of disruptive and on-task behavior, supplementing the interview data with direct field evidence. Documentation, including photographs and video recordings of learning sessions, provided additional contextual material to validate and enrich the primary data. This technique ensured data triangulation by combining primary (interviews) and secondary (observation, documentation) sources to increase the validity and reliability of the findings, as per [\(Nurfajriani et al., 2024\)](#).

Data Analysis

Data analysis used the [Miles & Huberman \(1994\)](#) model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification, combined with thematic analysis by [Braun & Clarke \(2006\)](#) to identify thematic patterns from the interview and observation transcripts. During the data reduction phase, interview transcripts and observational notes were coded systematically to identify recurring concepts and categories relevant to the research question. In the data presentation phase, the reduced data were organized into three thematic categories reflecting the temporal framework of teachers' experiences: past, present, and future. The final phase involved drawing and verifying conclusions through cross-checking between data sources and informant confirmation. This approach is supported by

[Emzir \(2022\)](#), who stated that thematic analysis is effective for uncovering deep patterns in qualitative data. [Sudaryono \(2021\)](#) added that verification through triangulation ensures the accuracy of interpretations.

To strengthen credibility, the study applied investigator triangulation by involving two researchers in the coding and interpretation process, and data source triangulation by cross-referencing interview data with observational findings and documentation. Transferability was addressed through thick description of the research context and participant profiles, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to comparable settings.

Research Procedures

The research procedure began in April 2025 with a preliminary study phase consisting of initial observations at ABC Elementary School to confirm the phenomenon of disruptive behavior, followed by the preparation of interview instruments and observation sheets. During this phase, behavioral patterns were documented to establish a baseline understanding of classroom conditions prior to the introduction of hand puppets. Next, the researcher introduced hand puppets to teachers, facilitated implementation in Indonesian language learning, and conducted non-participant observations throughout the process to document teacher-student interactions. The introduction phase included a brief orientation session in which the researcher demonstrated the use of hand puppets to ensure that teachers understood the medium before applying it in their respective classrooms.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted post-implementation to explore teachers' perceptions, supplemented by visual documentation, as described by [Ridwan & Tungka \(2024\)](#) and [Ruslin et al. \(2022\)](#), who highlighted the flexibility of the interview flow. Data were then transcribed and analyzed iteratively using the [Miles & Huberman \(1994\)](#) model with triangulation for verification, ensuring credible and transferable findings. This procedure followed the principles of [Creswell & Poth \(2018\)](#) for simultaneous data collection and analysis cycles, and [Emzir \(2022\)](#) for systematic thematic data management. The study concluded with the preparation of a report that maintained participant confidentiality.

Research ethics are maintained through participant consent, anonymity, and data confidentiality. All participants were assigned alphanumeric codes (T 1A, T 1B, T 1C) to protect their identities throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting. Participant data are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Teacher data as a participant

Name	gender	Age	Education level	Field of study	Previous teaching experiences	Ears at this school
Participant 1A	Female	26 years old	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	Islamic Religious Education	Sundanese Language as a Subject	2 Years
Participant 1B	Female	19 years old	High School	-	Teaching Fiqh at the junior high school level In the Quran Village Islamic Boarding School	9 Months
Participant 1C	Female	24 years old	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	Islamic Religious Education	-	5 Months

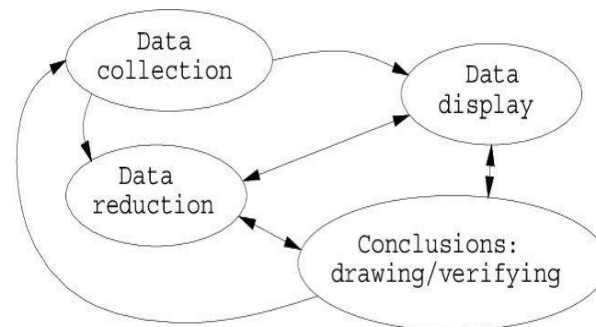


Figure 1. Data Analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section reveals the key findings of a study which explored teachers' perceptions about using hand puppets in minimizing student disruption in lower grades in elementary schools. The aim of this study is to identify teachers' perceptions about using basic media such as hand puppets based on their past, current, and anticipated experiences while implementing such media and their expectations in the future. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative research methodology which uses thematic analysis in gathering information. These results are thoroughly analyzed and grouped into three key themes based on teachers' experience time frames, which are prior use of hand puppets (past), after using the hand puppet (present), as well as in the future (future). From the overall data, it can be concluded that teachers view hand puppets as an effective and relevant tool for managing the classroom, especially in dealing with disruptive student behavior. This positive perception is based on teachers' direct experience with the use of this media and the noticeable changes in classroom dynamics.

Past Experiences: Before Using Hand Puppets

This theme describes how teachers anticipated the use of hand puppets as teaching aids before using them. During this period, educators faced various problems, especially related to disruptive student behavior, which often interfered with the teaching and learning process. In addition, educators have difficulty determining the appropriate teaching media, especially because some of them do not have teaching experience at the elementary school level or come from a non-elementary school background. Teachers more often used a lecture approach, wrote on the blackboard, or gave assignments without using various teaching aids. As a result, the classroom atmosphere becomes monotonous and uninteresting to students. This led to students becoming unfocused, talking among themselves, or disrupting their peers. Teachers face challenges in managing the classroom and maintaining student attention during lessons. This experience shows that before the introduction of hand puppets, teachers did not have alternative strategies that could create a fun learning atmosphere while effectively reducing disruptive behavior.

Student Behavior

Before using hand puppets, teachers described student behavior in class as difficult to control. Many students were unfocused, easily bored, and often disturbed their friends during the learning process. They seemed unenthusiastic about the material being taught, especially when the methods used were monotonous, such as lectures and writing on the board. One teacher said

"Previously, learning was mostly done through lectures, where I explained the material and then the students worked on exercises." (T 1C).

As a result, classroom interaction was one-way, with the teacher as the center of activity and the students as passive listeners. Teachers realized that communication was minimal because students were passive and did not engage in learning. As one teacher said,

"Before we used hand puppets, the children's interaction with the learning material was lacking. They were not very active, and most of them were inactive when we did not use teaching aids." (T 1B)

This resulted in a rigid and lifeless classroom atmosphere. Student participation in learning activities was also low, and two-way communication in the classroom was not developed optimally, causing the classroom atmosphere to become passive. Many of them were not interested in participating in learning activities and preferred to chat or play by themselves. Teachers find it difficult to maintain students' concentration because there is no media that can attract their attention. As one teacher said,

"Before using hand puppets, we often found that children were not conducive to learning, such as walking around and talking, because without teaching aids, the lessons were monotonous, so they looked for other activities." (T 1B)

This indicates that the lack of interesting media makes students more easily distracted and disruptive. On the other hand, students' emotional expressions also show obstacles. Some students appear shy, unconfident, or reluctant to express their opinions for fear of being wrong, as stated by the 1C teacher

"Usually, only the same students actively answer because there are still students who are shy to ask questions." (T 1C)

This shows that the classroom atmosphere before the use of learning media such as hand puppets did not fully support students' courage and comfort in expressing themselves.

Teacher Struggles

Before using hand puppets in teaching, first-grade teachers faced various challenges in classroom management. During the learning process, the classroom atmosphere was often not conducive to learning. Many students walked around the classroom, talked to their friends, or even shouted and joked excessively. This was expressed by one of the teachers

"Their disruptive behavior included disturbing their friends, chatting with their friends, and walking around the classroom." (T 1A)

Such behavior disrupted the learning process and caused teachers to constantly give warnings. In addition, the classroom atmosphere became difficult to control, especially when the teaching methods used were only lectures or writing on the blackboard, which students considered monotonous.

Teachers also feel that teaching is difficult because they have to explain the material repeatedly due to the students' lack of focus. This is reinforced by one of the teachers who said

"It's a bit difficult because I usually explain using the blackboard, but if the children are not focused, I have to explain repeatedly." (T 1B)

This kind of behavior disrupts the learning process and forces teachers to repeat the material so that students can understand. Without interesting teaching media, teachers find it difficult to maintain students' attention and keep the class conducive to learning. In addition, learning time is often interrupted because teachers have to calm down students who are noisy due to their disruptive behavior caused by monotonous learning. A teacher revealed

"Because the class was noisy and the students were not conducive, learning time was interrupted because I had to focus on calming the students down, so learning time was spent taking care of and calming the students rather than explaining the material" (T 1B)

This was also confirmed by teacher 1A, who stated that

"Learning time is interrupted because we have to focus on calming the students down. If the students aren't focused, how can the material be conveyed?" (T 1A)

When faced with disruptive student behavior, teachers usually give warnings first, and if the behavior continues, they will take further action such as giving additional assignments or other activities. As explained by one of the teachers

"If there are students who disrupt the lesson when it starts, I usually give them a warning once or twice, but if they continue, I punish them by asking

them questions." (T 1C)

Overall, this situation indicates that before the use of media such as hand puppets, teachers had difficulty creating a disciplined and conducive classroom atmosphere. Students' behavior that often disrupted the learning process, combined with teaching methods that were monotonous, made it difficult for teachers to maintain students' focus. Teachers not only had to deliver the material but also had to calm the class down constantly, which made the learning process feel heavy and ineffective. These issues show how important it is for teachers to have better classroom management skills and learning tools that can maximize student engagement.

Present Experience: After Using Hand Puppets

This theme reflects what teachers felt when they decided to use hand puppets in the learning process. Teachers began to notice real changes in student behavior and classroom atmosphere. It is estimated that the use of hand puppets is able to attract students' attention, trigger more active interaction, and enable teachers to teach in a more enjoyable and effective manner. After implementing this media, there was an increase in concentration in learning, higher motivation, and more positive emotional expressions in students. As students' interest and active participation in learning increased, teachers were no longer distracted by disruptive student behavior. In addition, the classroom atmosphere becomes more communicative and conducive. Teachers' perceptions of learning media also changed. They began to realize that simple media such as hand puppets could have a significant impact on learning. From this experience, teachers were inspired to create a more enjoyable learning environment and became more open to innovative approaches to teaching. This was a significant revelation for teachers in terms of their views on the use of learning media and classroom management.

Changes in Student Behavior

After using hand puppets in teaching, teachers described positive changes in student behavior. Students who were previously passive and easily distracted became more focused during learning activities using hand puppets. First, in the area of focus, students who were previously easily distracted and had difficulty paying attention to the material become more focused.

The hand puppets, with their cute and expressive characters, were found to naturally attract students' attention. One teacher said:

"The children are more interested when the lesson starts, so they are more focused." (T 1C)

Another teacher added that the use of hand puppets not only made students focus, but also helped them become more involved in the learning process

"What I feel when using these hand puppets is that students are more involved in the learning process. In terms of storytelling, the characters are also more realistic." (T 1A)

Second, there was an increase in student participation in class. Students who were initially passive and reluctant to speak began to show courage in responding to questions, presenting in front of the class, and showing high enthusiasm when interacting with the hand puppets. Teachers stated that:

"For me, these hand puppets can attract students' attention. Their reactions are also enthusiastic. Many students want to come forward to try telling stories using these hand puppets." (T 1C)

This change was also confirmed by other teachers who mentioned an increase in student involvement:

"Usually, only a few students actively answer questions in class, but after the introduction of hand puppets, there has been an increase in student involvement." (T 1A)

Third, in terms of emotional expression, the teacher observed a change in a more positive

direction. Students showed enthusiasm that not only affected themselves but also spread to their friends, making the classroom atmosphere more focused and conducive. Teachers said that:

"The change is visible in some children who are enthusiastic about watching the hand puppets, while other students want to invite them to chat, so the students who want to start a conversation also pay attention to this media." (T 1C)

This reflects that positive emotions such as curiosity and interest can help reduce disruptive behavior and encourage active social participation in the classroom. Overall, hand puppets not only serve as visual and verbal aids in learning but also create a more interactive, enjoyable, and emotionally oriented learning experience. These changes strengthen teachers' perceptions that creative approaches can be an effective solution in addressing disruptive behavior and improving student participation in the classroom.

Teacher reflection and class management

Teachers also felt significant changes in the way they managed their classes after using hand puppets. Whereas previously they often felt overwhelmed by student behavior that was difficult to control, now the classroom atmosphere is more enjoyable, interactive, and easier to manage. Hand puppets are considered capable of creating a more positive learning environment. One teacher said:

"In my opinion, after using these hand puppets, the learning atmosphere has become more enjoyable because the children can be more realistic in their learning." (T 1A)

Classroom management, which previously relied solely on reprimands or warnings, has now been replaced with more creative methods that prevent problems before they occur. Hand puppets have become an effective tool for attracting students' attention and keeping them focused throughout the lesson. Teachers feel that this media not only supports the delivery of material, but also strengthens their relationships with students. As expressed by one teacher:

"These hand puppets also increase interaction with students, and the puppets also make most students actively involved in the interaction." (T 1C)

Another teacher added that hand puppets make it easier to direct students when they start to get distracted by their surroundings:

"In my opinion, the advantage is that it is easier to attract children's attention when they are distracted by their surroundings, and it can make them actively interact." (T 1A)

In addition to helping build better social relationships with students, the experience of using hand puppets also has an impact on teachers' professional development. Teachers felt more confident and open to new methods after seeing the positive impact of this media for themselves. One teacher said

"The idea is very unique, because I think it can be a method for teaching material, since the research that was conducted is very helpful for teachers who need new learning media." (T 1A)

Another teacher also shared their positive reflections after trying to use hand puppets in teaching:

"My first impression after trying it was that using methods like hand puppets is very interesting." (T 1C)

Overall, this experience shows that the use of hand puppets as a solution offered by researchers not only helps teachers deal with disruptive student behavior, but also contributes to improving the quality of learning interactions, more effective classroom management, and teachers' confidence in carrying out their professional roles. This confidence arises because teachers feel the positive impact of the media provided, making them more confident, motivated, and open to more creative and varied learning methods in lower elementary school classrooms.

Future Experiences: Aspirations And Future Expectations

This theme describes teachers' views on the use of learning media in the future, after they have experienced the benefits of using hand puppets in the classroom. This experience has not only had a positive impact on students but has also changed the way teachers view teaching itself. Teachers have started to realize the importance of using media that suits students' characteristics, and there is a growing desire to continue exploring more creative and enjoyable teaching methods.

Teachers' Aspirations for Media Use

Most of the teachers interviewed expressed a desire to continue using hand puppets in the learning process in the future. This media is seen as capable of improving student focus, reducing disruptive behavior, and creating a more enjoyable and interactive learning atmosphere. Teachers consider this approach to be very effective, especially for students in lower grades who tend to need learning media that is visual, communicative, and emotionally appealing. The three teachers who participated in this research interview agreed that they would like to use hand puppets again if the subject matter allowed for it. This was confirmed by teacher 1B, who stated:

"To use hand puppets in the future, the answer is yes. Maybe later, if there are lessons or material that are suitable, I want to use hand puppets again, because from what I saw in the classroom, using media such as hand puppets was conducive and effective compared to learning without teaching tools as usual." (T 1B)

This statement reflects a change in teachers' mindsets towards learning media. Previously, teachers more often relied on traditional methods such as lectures or assigning tasks, but now they are becoming more open to innovations in media that are simple yet meaningful. Teachers realize that media such as hand puppets have great potential to improve the effectiveness of learning, especially in building student engagement and maintaining a conducive classroom atmosphere. Therefore, teachers hope that the use of hand puppets will not just be a temporary experiment in research, but can be implemented continuously as a learning strategy that supports a more lively, meaningful learning process that is in line with the needs of elementary school students.

Suggestions for Media Development

From their experience using hand puppets in teaching, teachers also provided simple feedback on the use of this media. One suggestion was the importance of practicing before using the puppets in class so that hand movements would not be stiff and could be more expressive. Teachers also suggested that the puppets should not be too large so that they could be used freely.

"In my opinion, use hand puppets that are not too big, so that they are easier and more flexible to use, and it takes some practice before using hand puppets so that the movements don't feel stiff" (T 1C)

In addition, other teachers also suggested using more flexible puppets, such as finger puppets or puppets with handles, so that it is easier to switch roles during learning.

"Maybe in the future we can use finger puppets or puppets with handles, so it will be easier and more flexible when changing roles" (T 1A).

Although the suggestions given by the teachers were still limited to technical aspects, such as the size of the puppets and the importance of practice before use, this shows that teachers are starting to pay attention to the success of media in learning. The experience of using hand puppets has provided them with new insights into the importance of preparation and skills in using teaching tools. In general, teachers hope that their positive experience in using hand puppets can be an example that innovation in learning does not have to be

expensive or complicated. Simple media designed to suit the characteristics of students can also be a simple solution in managing the classroom and improving the quality of learning interactions

Overall, the results from different time periods show significant changes in teachers' perceptions of the use of hand puppets as a learning medium in reducing disruptive behavior in students. Before using hand puppets, teachers used traditional methods and only delivered material through the blackboard. However, after implementing hand puppets and feeling the benefits, teachers became more open to using creative media such as hand puppets. First hand experience in applying this media has made teachers realize that even simple media can create more interactive, enjoyable, and effective learning in managing student behavior. This change in perception has even encouraged them to provide technical advice and express their desire to use this media continuously. The technical advice they provided included changing the size of the puppets and practicing hand movements before use, with the aim of optimizing the use of this media in the future

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, there was a significant change in the way teachers viewed the use of hand puppets as a learning medium to reduce disruptive behavior among first-grade students. Teachers' perceptions are very important in the learning process, because their views on learning media affect their ability to apply these media effectively. The way teachers respond to learning media also determines whether these media are able to achieve learning objectives, including managing disruptive student behavior. The majority of teachers in the field often use traditional teaching methods. They usually use a blackboard to explain the lesson material, then ask students to do exercises as their main assignment. This method is familiar to teachers, but it does not always respond to the challenges of managing classroom dynamics, especially disruptive student behavior. The factors influencing the selection of this method are not solely due to limited resources or facilities, but rather the difficulty teachers face in deciding on the appropriate and engaging learning media for students. This difficulty is closely related to the educational background of teachers who are not graduates of PGSD (Elementary School Teacher Education) or high school graduates. This causes teachers' perceptions of using creative and innovative learning media to be limited.

Ismail (2023) explains that teachers' experience and educational background strongly influence their ability to design creative media-based learning. Teachers with limited experience and non-educational backgrounds prefer to use familiar and easy-to-operate media, such as whiteboards. They choose these media because they feel comfortable with them and believe in their effectiveness, even though such media are less able to optimize student engagement during the learning process. Teachers prefer to stay in their comfort zone rather than try something new that may feel unfamiliar.

Teachers' first perception of hand puppets as a learning media is also influenced by their limited experience with this media. When first introduced in the Indonesian language learning process, teachers only viewed hand puppets as cute and visually appealing tools, without realizing that this media has great potential as an effective means of increasing student engagement while overcoming disruptive behavior in the classroom. This perception is created because teachers have never directly experienced the benefits of using hand puppets in the learning process. As a result, they only view this media as an additional tool that does not have a significant impact on classroom dynamics. This view is in line with Robbins & Judge's (2009) explanation that perception is the result of an individual's interpretation of their experiences and stimuli. Perception is dynamic and can change when individuals have new experiences that are different from before. Teachers who do not have direct experience with this creative media usually have a limited view of hand puppets, so they do not see their full potential, only based on their appearance or initial assumptions.

Dale's theory with the concept of Cone of Experience is relevant in explaining changes in teachers' perceptions. Dale (1946) explains that learning is most effective through concrete

experiences and real visualization. Hand puppets as a learning media provide concrete experiences that make lesson material more lively and easier for students to understand. At first, teachers only evaluated hand puppets from an attractive visual perspective, without considering their potential impact on student engagement and behavior in the classroom. Through direct experience in the Indonesian language teaching and learning process, teachers began to see and feel how hand puppets could trigger active student participation, improve communication, and foster their self-confidence. [Santy et al. \(2022\)](#) research also supports this finding by showing that the use of hand puppets can improve students' speaking skills while improving social interaction in the classroom. Seeing these positive results, teachers developed their perception, teachers have gained a better understanding of the benefits of using hand puppets as learning tools after seeing positive results. Previously, they only focused on the visual features of the puppets, but now they better understand how hand puppets can increase student engagement and facilitate the control of disruptive behavior.

The change in teachers' mindset towards the use of hand puppets made them interested in trying this new media. In addition, this change also made them better understand the importance of learning media in the teaching and learning process. After experiencing the benefits of hand puppets firsthand, teachers began to realize that this media is not only visually appealing, but also effective in increasing student participation, strengthening communication between teachers and students, and helping to manage the classroom atmosphere. From this experience, teachers not only use hand puppets as a learning medium, but also evaluate their previous teaching methods. Teachers also reflect on the use of hand puppets by providing feedback and expectations regarding the use of this media, such as adjustments to the shape and size of hand puppets in the future, as well as other adjustments so that this media can be used more optimally in the future. This shows that having a positive experience with creative media can widen teachers' perceptions of media, resulting in a better and more comprehensive understanding of its benefits. These results are in line with [Rukhani \(2020\)](#), who states that learning success is highly dependent on teachers' ability to manage the classroom. By having a positive perception of learning media and the ability to reflect on learning practices, teachers become more confident in managing the classroom, creating a good learning environment, and reducing disruptive student behavior. Direct experience using hand puppets not only changes teachers' perceptions of media, but also strengthens their skills in managing learning effectively.

Changes in teachers' perspectives can be understood from the point of view of learning psychology. The operant conditioning theory developed by [Skinner \(2014\)](#) is usually used to understand changes in student behavior, but its principles can also be applied to teachers. According to Skinner, people can experience changes in attitude and behavior when they receive reinforcement from direct experience. Before trying to use hand puppets, teachers did not feel the benefits, so they only saw hand puppets as visually appealing objects. After using hand puppets in the Indonesian language learning process, teachers began to see real results, such as increased student participation, decreased disruptive behavior, and the creation of a more comfortable and conducive classroom atmosphere. This positive experience functions as reinforcement, making teachers more confident that hand puppets are not only visually attractive objects, but also effective learning media.

In this study, even though the teacher only tried the hand puppets once, this experience was enough to show that the use of this media was very beneficial. The teacher began to understand hand puppets as an effective learning tool through direct evidence showing increased student interaction and participation, reduced disruptive behavior, and the creation of a more friendly classroom environment. This first experience was enough to change the way the teacher viewed the use of creative media in the classroom. The positive reinforcement they received from this direct experience was the key to changing their attitudes and opening up opportunities for them to be more open to accepting new learning media in the future. Teachers' perceptions of this media were created not only because they tried it, but also because they felt the positive results themselves, such as the class becoming more orderly,

students becoming more active, and the teaching and learning process becoming more enjoyable, so that students' disruptive behavior decreased. This real experience made teachers even more confident to continue using creative media such as hand puppets in learning in the future.

This change also shows how important it is to give teachers the opportunity to try new learning media as part of their professional development. Without direct experience, teachers tend to stick to familiar old methods, even though these methods are less effective in addressing classroom issues. By introducing creative media that is easy to operate and relevant to the subject matter being discussed, teachers not only gain new media, but also a means to learn and experiment in their classrooms. Training and support regarding the application of learning media is invaluable, especially for teachers who do not have a background in elementary school education. This also has a positive impact on student behavior control and the quality of student learning. With the right support, they can learn how to use media such as hand puppets effectively. Thus, teachers' knowledge is not limited to seeing media as mere visuals, but also as a means to design learning strategies that can create a positive learning environment, thereby reducing disruptive student behavior. Positive experiences in using hand puppets also open up opportunities for teachers to be inspired to increase their creativity in finding or using learning media. Choosing the right learning media also plays an important role in helping teachers make classes more enjoyable. This is in line with the opinion of [Antika et al. \(2023\)](#), who states that choosing methods and media that attract students' attention is very important because students tend not to be interested in learning if the media or methods used are not interesting.

This research clarifies why teachers' early narrow perceptions about creative learning media like hand puppets can shift for the better and become deeper once they experience using such media for real. These changes not only improved teachers' perceptions of learning media, but also helped change their approach in the classroom, making their teaching more creative and effective in dealing with difficult students. This finding highlights the importance of creative and interactive learning media in schools, especially elementary schools, as such media can create a more comfortable and enjoyable learning environment with better results.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that teachers' perceptions of hand puppets changed significantly following direct classroom implementation. Before implementation, first-grade teachers at ABC Elementary School relied on lecture-based methods that were insufficient for managing disruptive behavior during Indonesian language learning. Afterward, teachers reported improved student attentiveness, participation, and emotional engagement, alongside easier classroom management. Initially viewed as decorative props, hand puppets were subsequently recognized as tools for both instructional delivery and behavioral management. These changes align with Dale's Cone of Experience, suggesting that hands-on practice can foster professional attitudinal change even without formal pedagogical training. This finding highlights the potential of experiential media exploration as an accessible professional development strategy, particularly for teachers without PGSD qualifications working under the Merdeka Curriculum. Accordingly, in-service training should incorporate practical media exploration, guided implementation, and reflective discussion. However, the small, single-site sample and single-session implementation limit generalizability. Future research should involve larger, multi-site samples, mixed-methods approaches, and longitudinal observations to examine the sustainability of these changes across subjects and instructional contexts.

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