

## DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' CHARACTER IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LESSONS

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### Abstract:

*Integration of technology in Islamic religious education, especially through digital storytelling in improving the character of students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Islamic Religious Education subjects. Digital storytelling, which incorporates multimedia elements such as images, text, and audio, increases student engagement and helps internalize Islamic values. Previous studies have focused more on the use of storytelling for moral development and learning outcomes, leaving a gap in understanding their role through digital media for character building. This research aims to investigate how digital storytelling can improve students' Islamic character in PAI subjects. The research method uses a literature study approach by analyzing relevant primary and secondary literature in the last ten years. The findings show that digital storytelling not only supports effective learning but also contributes significantly to character formation. This approach creates a more interactive and contextual learning environment, bridging the gap between traditional teaching methods and the integration of modern technology. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of teacher training in designing digital storytelling-based learning, in order to encourage relevant Islamic education in the modern era.*

**Keywords:** digital storytelling; Islamic character; Islamic education.

### Abstrak:

Integrasi teknologi dalam pendidikan agama Islam, khususnya melalui digital storytelling dalam meningkatkan karakter siswa di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. Digital storytelling, yang menggabungkan elemen multimedia seperti gambar, teks, dan audio, meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dan membantu internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam. Studi sebelumnya lebih berfokus pada penggunaan storytelling untuk pengembangan moral dan hasil belajar, meninggalkan celah dalam pemahaman perannya melalui media digital untuk pembentukan karakter. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana digital storytelling dapat meningkatkan karakter Islami siswa pada mata pelajaran PAI. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan studi pustaka dengan menganalisis literatur primer dan sekunder relevan dalam sepuluh tahun terakhir. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa digital storytelling tidak hanya mendukung pembelajaran yang efektif tetapi juga berkontribusi signifikan dalam pembentukan karakter. Pendekatan ini menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dan kontekstual, menjembatani kesenjangan antara metode pengajaran tradisional dan integrasi teknologi modern. Implikasi penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pelatihan guru dalam merancang pembelajaran berbasis digital storytelling, guna mendorong pendidikan Islam yang relevan di era modern.

**Kata Kunci:** digital storytelling; karakter Islami; pendidikan agama Islam

## INTRODUCTION

Technology has permeated nearly every aspect of our lives, and Islamic education is no exception. It has also enriched the methods of teaching Islamic education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. One notable example is digital storytelling. Digital storytelling refers to stories created with the aid of computers, combining images, text, sound effects, music, and voice narration to convey specific narratives (Najla et al., 2022). This approach is not only more engaging for students but also instills character in them, helping them to better understand Islamic concepts. By integrating multimedia elements, digital storytelling makes learning more interactive and meaningful, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation for religious teachings among students.

The current phenomenon observed is the lack of character development among children. Many children still bully their peers, are dishonest, lack empathy and responsibility, use foul language, and do not maintain cleanliness. Previous literature reviews have examined character improvement through Islamic education, character formation through Islamic education, the implementation of storytelling methods to enhance students' learning outcomes, and digital storytelling to improve students' character in elementary schools within the Merdeka curriculum. This article discusses the use of digital storytelling to enhance students' character in the Islamic Education subject.

This issue highlights the need for a method that can improve students' character in the Islamic Education subject, one of which is through the use of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is commonly used as a mental therapy tool, in teaching and learning processes, and as a form of documentation for a community or institution. Digital storytelling is also an effective and efficient learning medium because its content, which includes images, sounds, and other multimedia elements, can be selected by the creator of the media. Digital storytelling can be applied to various learning styles, increase students' interest in learning, focus attention on the learning objectives to be achieved, and motivate students to be active both in offline and online classes. Digital storytelling can visualize content and help students identify objects that require teaching aids (Najla et al., 2022). This Digital Storytelling media not only makes students interested in the ongoing learning process but also fosters good communication between the teacher and the students. (Julianingsih & Krisnawati, 2020)

A number of studies in the past decade have highlighted the role of digital storytelling in education. Robin (2016) stated that digital storytelling is a powerful technological tool to support teaching, enhance student engagement, and help them understand the material more deeply. Furthermore, research by Smeda et al. (2014) demonstrates the effectiveness of digital storytelling in creating a more interactive learning environment, particularly in the development of 21st-century skills such as collaboration and creativity. In the context of Islamic education, Julianingsih and Krisnawati (2020) found that the use of digital storytelling increases students' attention to moral values and strengthens the interaction between teachers and students. This approach has proven to be effective in integrating multimedia, such as images, sounds, and text, to provide a more comprehensive learning experience, making it a relevant solution for building a strong Islamic character in Islamic Education (PAI) learning.

This study holds high urgency considering the need for an innovative approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) that not only focuses on conceptual understanding but also on the holistic development of students' Islamic character. Unlike previous studies such as Robin (2016), which primarily highlighted the technological and design aspects of digital storytelling, or Julianingsih and Krisnawati (2020), who emphasized its impact on student interaction and attention, this research offers a specific contribution by integrating digital storytelling as a strategic method for building Islamic character based on the values of *rahmatan lil alamin*. Furthermore, this study not only assesses the effectiveness of digital storytelling in enhancing learning outcomes but also explores its role in shaping student character, such as honesty, empathy, and responsibility. The significance of this research lies in its potential to bridge the gap between the use of technology in education and the internalization of moral values through an approach that aligns with the needs of the 21st century. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for PAI teachers in creating more meaningful and contextual learning experiences at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

This study aims to understand how digital storytelling can help enhance the Islamic character of students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in the subject of PAI amidst the changing times that bring new challenges, such as the advancement of technology and shifts in the way children learn. The digital storytelling-based learning method becomes a more engaging and meaningful way to bring students closer to Islamic values

## METHOD

This study employs a library research method to explore the role of digital storytelling in shaping the Islamic character of students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The research process begins with the collection of data from various primary and secondary literatures, including books, scholarly journals, articles, and other relevant documents related to the

topics of digital storytelling, Islamic education, and character development. These data sources are accessed through online databases such as Google Scholar, Publish or Perish, and digital libraries, with a focus on literature from the past ten years to ensure the relevance of the research.

This study analyzes key concepts related to digital storytelling and its relationship with Islamic character education. The procedure involves identifying core themes in the literature, such as digital media design, the application of technology in learning, and the evaluation of its impact on students' Islamic character. All data are analyzed in depth using content analysis techniques, which allow the researcher to identify patterns, categories, and relationships between the findings of previous studies and the objectives of this research.

The researcher actively participates as a data analyst, with validation conducted through source triangulation, that is, by comparing data from various literature sources to ensure consistency and accuracy of the information. The results of this analysis are then systematically organized to develop a conceptual framework that links digital storytelling technology with the strengthening of Islamic character in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Digital Storytelling

Storytelling is the art of conveying real or fictional stories, which can be accompanied by images, text, audio, or even video. Serrat (2018) defines storytelling as a portrayal of life that encompasses personal experiences, ideas, beliefs, and life lessons through stories

Digital storytelling refers to short stories based on technology, typically accompanied by text, illustrations, and sound, presented over a few minutes. This form of digital storytelling is commonly used for mental therapy, the teaching and learning process, as well as a means of documentation for a community or institution.

Storytelling is one of the ways humans convey information. George W. Burns mentions the power of storytelling, which includes: 1. Fostering discipline. 2. Awakening emotions. 3. Providing inspiration. 4. Creating change. 5. Generating mental and physical energy. 6. Healing. The habit of storytelling has existed since the time of our ancestors. For example, a mother's effort to lull her child to sleep is often done through storytelling. Storytelling is not just about narrating what is on our minds, but it is akin to transferring or sharing the contents of our thoughts with others.(Fadillah & Dini2, 2021)

Ketika mendengar cerita, seseorang akan memfungsikan indera penglihat dan pendengarnya. Sinyal dari indera akan ditangkap otak sehingga mempengaruhi emosi pendengar. Mereka akan menangis apabila cerita tersebut sedih, dan akan tertawa apabila dianggap lucu. Adapun jika cerita tersebut berisi pengalaman menyenangkan, membuat pendengar ingin mencobanya atau menirunya. Disinilah peran cerita dapat mempengaruhi emosi pendengarnya.(Fadillah & Dini2, 2021) sehingga dapat meningkatkan karakter siswa.

Digital storytelling is an interactive medium that presents content such as moving images, videos, animations, and audio that respond to user actions. Interactive media can be found in formats such as interactive videos, social media, YouTube channels, and others. Digital storytelling media can make students feel more comfortable in the learning process (Anwar & Ramadani, 2021). Digital storytelling can be considered an effective and efficient learning medium because it presents specific points in the material, and its content, which includes images, sound, and other multimedia elements, can be selected by the creator of the media (Fortinasari et al., 2022).

## **2. Character**

Character refers to distinctive values of goodness (knowing the value of goodness, willing to do good, living a good life, and having a positive impact on the environment) that are ingrained in a person and manifested in their behavior. Character coherently radiates from the results of intellectual development, emotional growth, physical training, as well as feeling and willpower of an individual or a group of people. Morality or character in Islam is the primary goal of education. This can be seen in several hadiths of the Prophet that explain the importance of moral education, one of which is the following hadith: 'Teach your children goodness, and educate them.

The discussion on the basic understanding between ethics and character above suggests the substance of the same meaning, which is the issue of human morality; concerning the knowledge of good values, which should be possessed by an individual and reflected in their behavior and actions. This behavior is the result of self-awareness. A person who possesses good values within their soul and can apply them in daily life is referred to as a person of ethics or character.(Ainiyah, 2013).

## **3. The Purpose of Islamic Religious Education**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays an important role in shaping students' religious character, which reflects Islamic religious values in their attitudes, behavior, and daily actions. Below is a description of how PAI can shape students' religious character. Islamic Religious Education aims to shape individuals who are faithful, morally virtuous, and cultured, as well as to build a dignified society. This foundation refers to the principles of Islam in shaping an individual's personality and morals (Mahmudi, 2019)

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as an educational process aims to develop students' abilities to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings in daily life. The educational process helps students in their self-development, which involves the development of all their potential and personal characteristics toward a positive direction, beneficial both for themselves and their environment. (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

According to Muhammad Natsir, Islamic Religious Education is an educational process aimed at creating individuals who are obedient to Allah SWT, possess good morals, and are able to perform worship and engage in social interactions in accordance with Islamic teachings. (Rani & Rahman, 2024). The main objective of PAI (Islamic Religious Education) is the formation of students' personality, which is reflected in their behavior and mindset in daily life.

### **Discussion**

When using storytelling, there are several factors that can support the process and make it engaging for the audience, including eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, voice, speed, and visual aids. These factors influence the learning experience and process. Both internal factors, such as students' characteristics, and external factors, such as the learning environment, also affect learning outcomes. (Rani & Rahman, 2024)

The implementation of teaching is the process of learning taking place in the classroom, which is the core activity of an educational institution. The implementation includes: the teacher entering the classroom with teaching aids or media such as a laptop and projector, the teacher preparing the classroom conditions to ensure it is ready for learning, the teacher stating the learning objectives outlined in the Teaching Module, and the teacher directly explaining the learning material to students using the storytelling method, paying attention to eye contact, facial expressions, vocal emphasis, and body movements clearly in line with the animation video. At this stage, for the effective implementation of the storytelling method, it is essential to follow the plan that has been prepared from the beginning, namely by using the appropriate syntax of the storytelling method in accordance with the Teaching Module and Learning Objectives.

For children, receiving messages without feeling indoctrinated is very important because they find it easier to understand and emulate real-life examples rather than direct advice. Providing examples of good and bad behavior through stories is one of the most effective ways to teach these values. Storytelling is not just about conveying a tale, but also involves the art of narration with clear and engaging intonation, which makes the story more memorable and captivating. The story being told must carry specific values and have an educational purpose. (Rani & Rahman, 2024)



The experiences children gain through stories will influence their future lives. A well-delivered story can provide positive and meaningful experiences that will then be implemented in their daily lives. Children's behavior can be shaped through the messages contained in the story, which often carry high moral and social values. Thus, storytelling is not only a tool for entertainment but also a means of conveying Islamic Religious Education lessons that are effective in enhancing character.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that digital storytelling is effective in enhancing students' character in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). By integrating multimedia elements such as images, audio, and text, this method is able to engage students more deeply, making it easier for them to internalize character values.

The logical consequence of these findings is the need for the broader implementation and development of digital storytelling in Islamic education. This includes not only its application as a teaching strategy but also the adaptation of its content to ensure relevance to the diverse contextual needs of students.

From an educational practice perspective, this study emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with the skills to design and deliver digital storytelling content effectively. Future research could explore the long-term impact of this method on students' behavior and academic performance, as well as its applicability across various educational contexts. These findings have great potential to advance Islamic education by integrating it into the 21st-century learning paradigm, which not only fosters intellectual development but also strengthens students' character and spirituality.

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