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Implementation of Digital-Based Storytelling Learning Method in Enhancing Students' Learning Motivation in Islamic Religious Education at the Elementary School Level

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the implementation of digital storytelling in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at the elementary school level. The study employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings indicated that digital storytelling, implemented through animated videos and audiovisual media, effectively increased students' attention, participation, enthusiasm, and learning motivation. Students became more actively engaged in learning activities and classroom discussions and demonstrated better understanding of the learning materials. This was because digital storytelling presented learning content in a visual, contextual, and engaging manner, facilitating students' comprehension and maintaining their learning focus. The study concludes that digital storytelling is an effective approach for enhancing students' motivation and engagement in IRE learning. The findings imply that integrating digital storytelling into classroom instruction can support more interactive, meaningful, and student-centered learning experiences that are aligned with the characteristics of learners in the digital era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in fostering students' faith, piety, and noble character. However, the implementation of IRE learning at the elementary school level still faces several challenges, including low student learning motivation, limited participation in classroom activities, and the continued use of less varied instructional methods that make learning less engaging. These conditions may lead to lower student involvement and hinder the achievement of learning objectives as well as students' understanding of IRE materials. Therefore, innovative learning approaches are needed to create more engaging, interactive, and meaningful learning experiences that are aligned with the characteristics of learners in the digital era. One alternative approach is digital storytelling, which integrates storytelling activities with digital technology through the use of audiovisual media and animated videos. This approach enables learning materials to be presented in a more visual, contextual, and meaningful manner, thereby increasing students' attention, engagement, and learning motivation. Based on these considerations, this study aims to describe the implementation of digital storytelling in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education at the elementary school level (Puspitasari et al., 2025; Maijuana et al., 2025).

Storytelling is an instructional strategy that utilizes narratives as a medium for conveying information, moral values, and learning content to students. In the educational context, storytelling has been proven to enhance students' attention, comprehension, and engagement throughout the learning process. Previous studies have demonstrated that digital storytelling provides significant benefits in the learning process. It has been shown to improve students' comprehension, communication skills, and classroom engagement through the use of contextual narratives (Hartati & Mulyasari, 2021; Purnomo et al., 2025; Kurniawan, 2021; Rahiem, 2021). However, their study focused primarily on conventional storytelling and did not examine the integration of digital technology or its impact on students' learning motivation. Consequently, the findings cannot fully explain how digital storytelling influences motivation in technology-supported learning environments.

Furthermore, Kaptan & Cakir (2025) found that digital storytelling enhanced students' engagement, conceptual understanding, creativity, and digital literacy. Nevertheless, their research mainly emphasized cognitive learning outcomes and digital competencies, while the motivational dimension received limited attention. In addition, the study was conducted in a general educational context rather than in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), making its findings less applicable to religious learning contexts at the elementary school level.

Similarly, Puspitasari et al., (2025) concluded that digital storytelling creates enjoyable and effective learning experiences by integrating multimedia elements into classroom instruction. Despite these valuable findings, their study discussed digital storytelling from a broad educational perspective without specifically investigating its implementation in Islamic Religious Education or exploring how the integration of Islamic values within digital narratives contributes to students' learning motivation.

Based on the review of previous studies, it can be concluded that although digital storytelling has been widely recognized as an innovative instructional approach, there are still several research gaps. Previous studies have predominantly focused on learning outcomes, engagement, creativity, and digital literacy, while limited attention has been given to students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education at the elementary school level. Moreover, the integration of Islamic values within digital storytelling has not been sufficiently explored. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the implementation of

digital storytelling in Islamic Religious Education and examining how Digital Islamic Storytelling enhances students' learning motivation while simultaneously supporting the internalization of Islamic values.

The rapid development of digital technology has led to the emergence of innovative learning approaches, including digital storytelling, which integrates text, images, audio, video, and animation in the delivery of narratives. However, most of these studies have primarily focused on the impact of digital storytelling on learning outcomes and students' skills, while research specifically examining its role in enhancing learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education at the elementary school level remains relatively limited.

Based on the existing literature, previous studies have demonstrated various benefits of digital storytelling in the learning process. However, prior research remains limited in examining the implementation of digital storytelling as a method for enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at the elementary school level. Although previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving student engagement, learning outcomes, and digital literacy, several research gaps remain. First, most previous studies were conducted in general education contexts or focused on language learning and character education rather than Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Second, existing studies have predominantly examined the impact of digital storytelling on cognitive achievement, speaking skills, or learning interest, while limited attention has been given to students' learning motivation as a comprehensive construct in IRE. Third, previous research generally emphasized the use of digital media itself without exploring how Islamic values are systematically integrated into digital narratives to support both motivational and character development.

This study differs from previous research in several important aspects. Unlike earlier studies that mainly investigated learning outcomes or technology adoption, the present study focuses on the implementation process of Digital Islamic Storytelling in Islamic Religious Education to enhance elementary students' learning motivation through an in-depth qualitative case study. The study examines not only students' motivational changes but also the stages of implementation, teachers' instructional strategies, students' responses, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the integration of Islamic values throughout the storytelling process. Therefore, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Digital Islamic Storytelling functions as a pedagogical approach that simultaneously enhances learning motivation and facilitates the internalization of Islamic values in elementary school classrooms.

Furthermore, the characteristics of IRE content, which emphasize knowledge acquisition, attitude formation, and the application of Islamic values in daily life, require instructional approaches that are both engaging and aligned with technological advancements. Therefore, this study aims to describe the implementation of digital storytelling and analyze its role in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education learning at the elementary school level.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design because the primary objective was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of digital storytelling in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it enables researchers to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions within their natural educational setting rather than measuring variables quantitatively. Through this approach, the study was

able to capture the instructional process, students' responses, teachers' strategies, and contextual factors influencing the implementation of digital storytelling. Consequently, the qualitative method provided comprehensive and meaningful insights into how digital storytelling contributes to students' learning motivation in elementary school Islamic Religious Education (IRE) among fourth-grade elementary school students.

The research participants consisted of an IRE teacher, fourth-grade students, and the school principal, who were purposively selected based on their involvement in the learning process. The study focused on the implementation of digital storytelling, students' responses to the learning activities, and the changes in learning motivation that emerged throughout the instructional process.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine the learning process and students' activities during classroom instruction. Interviews were carried out with the IRE teacher, students, and the school principal to obtain in-depth information regarding the implementation of digital storytelling. Documentation was used to complement the research data, including photographs of learning activities, instructional materials, and other supporting documents.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by (Saunders et al., 2023) which consists of three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The first stage, data reduction, involved organizing, selecting, simplifying, and coding the raw data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. During this process, the researcher transcribed the interview recordings, reviewed field notes, and identified meaningful information related to the implementation of digital storytelling, students' learning motivation, teacher strategies, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors. Irrelevant information that did not address the research objectives was excluded, while similar responses were grouped into emerging categories and themes.

The second stage, data display, was conducted by systematically organizing the reduced data into descriptive narratives and thematic matrices. The data were presented according to the research focus, including the implementation stages of digital storytelling, students' responses, changes in learning motivation, and factors influencing the learning process. This organized presentation enabled the researcher to compare findings across different data sources and identify patterns and relationships among the emerging themes.

The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, involved interpreting the identified patterns to formulate research findings and conclusions. The conclusions were continuously verified throughout the research process by comparing information obtained from classroom observations, interviews with teachers, students, and the school principal, as well as supporting documentation. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and technique triangulation were employed to ensure the consistency and credibility of the collected data. Through this iterative analytical process, the findings accurately reflected the implementation of digital storytelling in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education at the elementary school level.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Implementation of Digital Storytelling in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The research findings indicate that the teacher formulated learning objectives, selected instructional materials, determined the storyline, and prepared digital media in the form of Islamic animated videos before the learning activities were conducted. Based on the interview results, the teacher considered the characteristics of elementary school students, who tend

to be more interested in learning experiences that combine visual, auditory, and narrative elements. These preparations were intended to ensure that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials could be delivered in a more engaging and comprehensible manner for students. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by (Rahiem, 2021) which explains that digital storytelling can integrate various multimedia elements, making learning more effective and better aligned with the characteristics of learners in the digital era.

The improvement in students' learning motivation occurred because digital media were able to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment. The presentation of learning materials through stories delivered in the form of animated videos helped students understand the content more easily and reduced feelings of boredom during the learning process. This finding is consistent with learning motivation theory, which suggests that an attractive learning environment can stimulate students' interest, enthusiasm, and willingness to learn (Adam et al., 2025).

The findings of this study are consistent with those of (Rahiem, 2021) who explained that digital storytelling is an instructional approach that integrates narrative elements with digital technology to create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience. According to Rahiem (2021), the effectiveness of digital storytelling is highly dependent on the quality of the planning process, particularly in determining the story content, selecting appropriate media, and ensuring alignment between learning objectives and students' characteristics. Therefore, careful and systematic planning is a crucial factor in supporting the successful implementation of digital storytelling in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning.

3.2. Enhancing Students' Learning Motivation through Digital Storytelling

The findings revealed that the implementation of digital storytelling had a positive influence on students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Based on the results of observations and interviews, students demonstrated increased attention throughout the learning process, became more active in responding to the teacher's questions, and showed greater enthusiasm for participating in classroom activities compared to when instruction was conducted using the conventional lecture method. These findings indicate that the use of digital media combined with storytelling was able to create a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment, thereby encouraging students' active involvement in the learning process.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted Puspitasari et al., (2025) which reported that digital storytelling is an effective instructional medium for enhancing students' learning motivation because it presents information in an engaging, interactive, and learner-centered manner that aligns with the characteristics of students in the digital era.

The enhancement of learning motivation was reflected not only in students' increased participation during classroom activities but also in the development of greater curiosity toward the learning materials. Based on the interview findings, students reported that they found it easier to understand the content when it was presented through digital storytelling because the material was not delivered solely through verbal explanations but was also supported by visual, auditory, and illustrative elements that facilitated comprehension. The presence of these multimedia components enabled students to gain a more concrete and meaningful learning experience.

The findings of this study support those of (Cahyanti & Nuroh, 2023) who argued that digital storytelling can enhance student engagement through the integration of images, audio, and narratives that strengthen students' attention and interest throughout the learning process. By providing a multimodal learning experience, digital storytelling contributes to a more effective and motivating learning environment for students.

The enhancement of learning motivation was also influenced by the ability of digital storytelling to foster students' emotional engagement with the learning materials. Stories presented through digital media provided learning experiences that were more closely connected to students' daily lives, enabling them to understand the meaning and messages embedded in the instructional content more deeply. This emotional engagement played a significant role in increasing students' interest in learning, as they were not merely receiving information but were also affectively involved in the learning process.

The findings of this study also support the results reported by Puspitasari et al., (2025) who argued that digital storytelling can enhance students' learning motivation by integrating visual, auditory, and narrative elements into a comprehensive learning experience. Through the use of digital media, students are not merely passive recipients of information but become actively engaged in the learning process. Therefore, digital storytelling can serve as an effective instructional strategy for enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning (Puspitasari et al., 2025).

3.3 Research Novelty in the Implementation of Digital Storytelling in Islamic Religious Education.

The findings revealed that the successful implementation of digital storytelling in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) was influenced not only by the use of digital technology as an instructional medium but also by the integration of Islamic values embedded within the narratives. Students not only demonstrated increased learning motivation, attention, and participation throughout the learning process but also developed a deeper understanding of the moral messages and religious values conveyed in the stories. These findings suggest that digital storytelling serves a broader function than merely acting as a learning medium; it also functions as a means of internalizing Islamic values that support students' character development.

This result is consistent with previous studies indicating that digital storytelling based on Islamic content can enhance student engagement, collaboration, and learning effectiveness through the delivery of learning materials in a more contextualized and meaningful manner (Militansina, 2023). Therefore, the integration of Islamic values into digital storytelling contributes not only to cognitive and motivational outcomes but also to the development of students' moral and religious character.

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The concept of Digital Islamic Storytelling identified in this study complements previous research, which has primarily focused on technological aspects and student engagement. The

findings demonstrate that the integration of religious values into digital narratives can strengthen students' learning motivation while simultaneously helping them understand and apply Islamic values in their daily lives. Therefore, this instructional model has the potential to become an innovative approach to Islamic Religious Education (IRE), addressing the learning needs and characteristics of students in the digital era (Puspitasari et al., 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of Digital Islamic Storytelling in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at the elementary school level contributes positively to enhancing students' learning motivation. The integration of digital media, storytelling, and Islamic values creates a more engaging, interactive, and meaningful learning environment that encourages students' attention, participation, enthusiasm, and understanding of learning materials. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of Digital Islamic Storytelling is determined not only by the use of digital technology but also by teachers' instructional strategies and the integration of Islamic values into the learning process. Therefore, this study contributes theoretically by enriching the literature on digital storytelling through the concept of Digital Islamic Storytelling as an instructional approach that integrates digital technology, narrative-based learning, and Islamic character education. Practically, the findings provide empirical evidence that may assist teachers in designing more innovative, student-centered, and value-oriented learning experiences in Islamic Religious Education.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single elementary school using a qualitative case study approach with a limited number of participants, which may restrict the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. In addition, this study focused on exploring the implementation process and students' learning motivation without examining its effectiveness through quantitative measurement or investigating other educational outcomes. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader research settings, larger and more diverse participants, and mixed-method or experimental designs to further examine the effectiveness of Digital Islamic Storytelling on students' academic achievement, critical thinking, digital literacy, and character development across different educational contexts.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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