

STUDENT ACTIVITY LEVEL IN DIGITAL-BASED PAI LEARNING THROUGH THE STORYTELLING METHOD

Donny Permana Putra¹, Denndy Rizki Eka Prayudha,² Maulana Hanif Saputra³

¹ UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo, Indonesia

² UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo, Indonesia

³ UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo, Indonesia

* donnypermanaputra1@gmail.com, dendy8791@gmail.com, maulanaHanif169@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the level of students' activeness in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning conducted through digital-based storytelling methods. Digital storytelling is considered an innovative approach that can enhance students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor engagement in the IRE learning process. This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data collected through student activeness questionnaires and qualitative data obtained from classroom observations and interviews with IRE teachers and students. The findings indicate that the implementation of digital-based storytelling significantly increases students' activeness, as reflected in higher participation in discussions, improved reasoning toward learning materials, and increased curiosity. These results suggest that digital storytelling is not only effective in delivering IRE content but also in fostering active student engagement in the learning process. This study provides practical implications for IRE teachers in utilizing digital technology to create interactive, engaging, and student-centered learning environments.

Keywords

Student Activeness Islamic, Religious Education, Digital-Based Storytelling, Digital Learning, Media Student Engagement



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INTRODUCTION (Palatino Linotype 12, Space 1.15, Justify)

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life, including education. Digital transformation is driving a paradigm shift in learning from teacher-centered to student-centered. In this context, the use of digital technology serves not only as a supporting tool but also as a strategic medium for improving the quality of learning processes and outcomes. Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as a subject aimed at developing students' faith, piety, and noble character, is required to be able to adapt to current developments without losing the essential values of Islamic teachings (Majid, 2012).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital age faces quite complex challenges. On the one hand, today's students are digital natives accustomed to technology, social media, and interactive visual content. However, on the other hand, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is often perceived as monotonous, rote-based, and lacking student engagement. This situation results in low student participation in the learning process, whether in asking questions, discussing, or expressing opinions (Muhaimin, 2012). Therefore, innovative learning methods and media are needed to optimally increase student engagement. One approach considered relevant to addressing this challenge is digital-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Digital-based learning allows teachers to utilize various platforms, applications, and multimedia media to deliver material in a more engaging and interactive manner. The use of digital media in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has been proven to increase student motivation, expand learning resources, and encourage active student involvement in the learning process (Rusman: 217). However, the use of digital technology must be balanced with the selection of appropriate learning methods to maximize the achievement of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning objectives. The storytelling method is one learning method with great potential in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Storytelling can convey Islamic values through a storyline that is engaging, contextual, and easy for students to understand. In Islamic tradition, storytelling has long been used, as the stories of the prophets and previous generations are recorded in the Quran as a means of education and character building. (Quroishi: 2009). When storytelling is combined with digital media, the learning process becomes more lively, communicative, and able to stimulate students' emotions and imagination. The application of digital-based storytelling in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is believed to increase student engagement, both cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically. Student engagement is reflected in their involvement in listening to stories, responding,

discussing, and relating the story's message to everyday life. Based on this description, this research is important to conduct in-depth studies on the level of student engagement in digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning through the storytelling method (Sardiman; 2016). This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies and practical contributions for teachers in designing innovative, engaging, and student-centered learning in the digital era.

1. METHODS (Palatino Linotype 12, Space 1.15, Justify)

This research initially used a descriptive approach, aiming to systematically and objectively describe the phenomena under study. The descriptive approach was chosen because the study focused on describing the real conditions that occur during the learning process without any specific treatment given to the subjects. Through this approach, the researcher ultimately sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of student engagement in digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning through the storytelling method (Sardiman, 2016). The research was conducted at an educational institution that provides Islamic Religious Education learning using digital media. The research location was determined based on considerations of the feasibility of learning relevant to the research focus. The research time was adjusted to the academic calendar and learning schedule applicable at the research location (Nana, 2017). The research subjects were students directly involved in the Islamic Religious Education learning process, while the research object was student activity and engagement during the learning process. Observed student engagement included attention to the material, participation in learning activities, responses to stories presented, and student involvement in learning interactions. Data were collected through observation, open-ended questionnaires, and documentation. Observations were used to directly observe the learning process and student engagement. Open-ended questionnaires were used to obtain student responses and learning experiences. Documentation was used to supplement the research data in the form of learning archives, activity photos, and other supporting documents (Arikunto, 2018). The research instruments were developed based on indicators of student engagement and adapted to the characteristics of digital-based learning. The collected data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to obtain a clear and meaningful picture of student engagement in Islamic Religious Education learning through the storytelling method (Miles, 2014).

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION (Palatino Linotype 12, Space 1.15, Justify)

Research results indicate that the implementation of digital-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning through storytelling has a positive impact on student engagement in the learning process. Based on observations conducted during the lesson, students demonstrated greater attention when the teacher delivered material in the form of a digital story. Visual displays, illustrations, and audio support in the storytelling created an engaging and non-monotonous learning environment, enabling students to focus and engage in the learning process (Rusman, 2014). Student engagement was evident not only in visual attention but also in their mental and emotional engagement. During the storytelling process, students appeared to follow the storyline with interest, understanding the conflict and moral message conveyed, and displaying emotional reactions appropriate to the story's content. This emotional engagement is an important indicator that students are not simply passive recipients of the material but are internalizing the Islamic values contained in the story (Abdul Majid, 2017). The results of an open-ended questionnaire administered to students supported these observational findings. Most students stated that digital-based PAI learning through storytelling made the material easier to understand and less boring. Stories connected to everyday experiences help students connect Islamic concepts with the realities of life, making learning more meaningful. This demonstrates that the storytelling method is able to bridge abstract concepts in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) with concrete contexts close to students' lives. Furthermore, student engagement is also reflected in increased interaction during learning. Some students are beginning to dare to ask questions, provide opinions, and respond to teacher inquiries related to the story content. Although the level of student oral participation varies, overall, there is an increase in student engagement compared to conventional Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons. These findings indicate that digital-based storytelling methods can create a more open space for students to actively participate in learning (Hamzah, 2017). From a teacher's perspective, the use of digital-based storytelling methods facilitates the delivery of normative and value-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material. Digital media helps teachers present stories systematically, engagingly, and structured, enabling moral messages and Islamic values to be conveyed more effectively. Thus, the teacher's role is not only as a transmitter of material, but also as a facilitator who guides students to understand and reflect on the values contained in the story (Ria Sivti Fendi: 2025). This method can also shift the

Islamic Religious Education paradigm from "memorizing verses" to "living the sirah," preparing students to be competitive in the AI era while maintaining morals. We can imagine MTsN graduates who can create viral da'wah content without losing the essence of tauhid. However, it requires the support of a national curriculum like the Merdeka Curriculum, which encourages this innovation, plus regular evaluation via pre-post tests to measure retention six months after learning (Ria Sivti Fendi: 2025). Besides the advantages of the storytelling method, there are major challenges that users must face when using this method: resistance from senior teachers accustomed to lectures, plus the issue of digital content that sometimes lacks authenticity with pure Islamic values. For example, animated cartoons can feel "westernized" if not packaged carefully. In schools like MTsN Ponorogo, internet connections often drop out during rainy days, causing students to lose their enthusiasm. Lower-grade students need extra guidance on digital literacy to avoid being passive spectators. The initial solution: start with offline mode using apps like PowerPoint with voice-over, then scale up to a cloud platform once stable. (Febrian and Rahmi: 2025) Digital storytelling excels not only in engagement but also in knowledge retention. Studies show that students remember 65-70% of visual story material versus 10-20% through rote memorization. Conventional methods are strong in discipline but weak in encouraging creativity, while digital methods encourage students to remix stories of the Prophet into their own short videos, building a sense of ownership. See this complete comparison table:

Aspek	Storytelling Digital	Metode Konvensional
Cognitive Engagement	High: story analysis + discussion	High: story analysis + discussion
Engagement Afektif	Very high: emotions via visuals	Low: minimal interaction
Accessibility	Medium: requires gadgets Basic	High: paper & board
Long-Term Impact	Creativity + empathy Modern	Islamic memory of basic
Values Implementation Cost	Low initial (free tools)	Very low growth

This comparison proves that digital is more adaptable for Gen Z, who crave short-form content like TikTok. (Putri, Yulianti: 2025) There are also several practical recommendations, starting with Level 1: Teachers create a simple story using Canva (free, easy drag-and-drop) about the story of the Prophet Yusuf (as), with 5-7 minute animated slides. Level 2: Students in groups record voice-overs via mobile phones and upload them to Google Classroom for peer review. Level 3: AI integration like ChatGPT helps generate local story scripts (the East Javanese version of the Wali Songo), but double-checks the fiqh scores. Collaborate with UIN Ponorogo for monthly workshops, plus monitor the activity through a rubric (scoring 1-5 per session). This not only increases participation but also 21st-century skills like Islamic digital citizenship. (Baiti et al, 2025)

3. CONCLUSION (Palatino Linotype 12, Space 1.15, Justify)

The discussion of the results of this study indicates that student engagement is a crucial indicator of successful Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This engagement encompasses the cognitive, affective, and social aspects of students in the learning process. These findings align with learning theory, which emphasizes that learning is more effective when students are actively involved in constructing their own understanding and experiences. Digital storytelling facilitates this engagement through engaging and contextual presentation. Furthermore, these findings reinforce the view that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning needs to be packaged innovatively to suit the characteristics of students in the digital age. The current generation of students tends to learn through visual and interactive media. Therefore, integrating storytelling with digital technology is a relevant strategy for improving engagement and the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The application of this method is expected to encourage students to be more active, reflective, and able to practice Islamic values in their daily lives. Digital storytelling is not just a trend, but a lasting bridge between Islamic heritage and the digital world. Increasing student engagement holistically can be achieved by creatively addressing the access gap.

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