



THE EFFECT OF ISLAMIC VALUES-BASED STORYTELLING ON LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH STUDENTS

* Novria Grahmayanuri¹, Shoufi Nisma Dewi², Siti Khodijah³, Devi widya Ningsih⁴, Nurhayati⁵

Linguistik Terapan Bahasa Inggris, STAI Al-Hikmah Medan¹, Linguistik Terapan Bahasa Inggris, UM-Tapsel², Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Al Hikmah Tebing Tinggi^{3,4,5}

*e-mail: 16novri@gmail.com, shoufi.nisma@um-tapsel.ac.id, icakhodijah1993@gmail.com, devikribo@gmail.com, Nur901006@gmail.com
<https://jurnal.staim-probolinggo.ac.id/index.php/Al-Athfal>

Abstract:

This study investigates the effect of Islamic values-based storytelling on literacy development among fourth-grade of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Medan Sunggal in Medan. This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The participants were 30 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through literacy tests administered before and after the treatment. The storytelling intervention was conducted over several meetings using Islamic narratives containing values such as honesty, patience, responsibility, and kindness. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired sample t-test. The findings showed that students' literacy development improved significantly after the intervention. The mean score increased from 62.40 in the pre-test to 81.20 in the post-test. The paired sample t-test revealed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that Islamic values-based storytelling had a significant effect on students' literacy development. In addition, students demonstrated increased engagement as indicated by and active participation during the learning process. In conclusion, Islamic values-based storytelling is an effective strategy for improving students' literacy skills while promoting moral understanding and character development in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah classrooms

Keywords: *storytelling; Islamic values; literacy development; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh storytelling berbasis nilai-nilai Islam terhadap perkembangan literasi siswa kelas IV Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Medan Sunggal di Medan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain pre-eksperimental one-group pretest-posttest. Partisipan penelitian berjumlah 30 siswa yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes literasi sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Intervensi storytelling dilakukan dalam beberapa pertemuan menggunakan narasi

Islami yang memuat nilai kejujuran, kesabaran, tanggung jawab, dan kebaikan. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji t berpasangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perkembangan literasi siswa meningkat secara signifikan setelah intervensi. Nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 62,40 pada pre-test menjadi 81,20 pada post-test. Uji t berpasangan menunjukkan nilai signifikansi 0,000 ($p < 0,05$), yang berarti terdapat pengaruh signifikan storytelling berbasis nilai Islam terhadap perkembangan literasi siswa. Selain itu, siswa menunjukkan antusiasme dan partisipasi aktif selama pembelajaran. Disimpulkan bahwa storytelling berbasis nilai Islam efektif meningkatkan keterampilan literasi sekaligus menanamkan pemahaman moral dan karakter.

Kata kunci: *storytelling*; nilai Islam; perkembangan literasi; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

INTRODUCTION

Literacy development is widely recognized as one of the most essential competencies for elementary school students, as it serves as the foundation for academic achievement and lifelong learning. Literacy does not merely involve the ability to read and write, but also includes comprehension, interpretation, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively. In the context of primary education, developing literacy at an early stage is crucial because it shapes students' cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth. Recent studies have emphasized that literacy education in elementary schools should be implemented through engaging, contextual, and meaningful instructional strategies to improve students' learning motivation and achievement (Chourio-acevedo et al., 2024).

Storytelling has emerged as an effective pedagogical strategy to support literacy development among young learners. Storytelling stimulates imagination, enriches vocabulary, improves listening and speaking skills, and enhances reading comprehension. It creates an interactive learning atmosphere that encourages students to connect ideas and understand narratives in meaningful ways. A systematic review by (Widiana & Harwanto, 2025) found that storytelling significantly improves children's knowledge acquisition and comprehension because it simplifies complex concepts into engaging narratives. Similarly, (Khawardi & Hutagalung, 2026) revealed that the intervention integrated illustrated storybooks, interactive storytelling, and literacy-based games, enriched with cultural and religious values have significant improvements in both engagement and literacy skills.

In Islamic educational settings, storytelling can be further enriched by integrating Islamic values into the narratives. Islamic storytelling often includes stories of prophets, companions, and moral lessons derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, which not only foster literacy but also promote character education and spiritual awareness. Previous research has shown that integrating Islamic values

into storytelling and multimedia learning can strengthen students' moral understanding, empathy, honesty, and responsibility. For example, (Futhira & Junianti, 2025) found that multimedia storytelling integrated with Islamic character education effectively instilled Islamic moral values in rural elementary schools. Likewise, (Zulaekhah et al., 2025) demonstrated that multimedia-based storytelling improved elementary students' understanding of Islamic history and increased cognitive and emotional engagement.

In Indonesia, particularly in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), the integration of literacy instruction and Islamic values is highly relevant because MI aims not only to develop students' academic competence but also to nurture Islamic character. Islamic literacy-based learning management has been identified as a strategic approach to improving reading and writing interest while internalizing moral and spiritual values in elementary education. Moreover, literacy-based Islamic Cultural History learning has proven effective in creating meaningful learning experiences in Islamic elementary schools (Yusron et al., 2024).

However, despite the increasing attention to storytelling and Islamic values integration, there is still limited empirical research specifically investigating the effect of **Islamic values-based storytelling on literacy development among fourth-grade MI students**, especially in the local context of Medan. Most previous studies focus either on general storytelling strategies, character education, or religious understanding, rather than directly examining literacy development outcomes. Furthermore, few studies employ quantitative approaches to measure the effectiveness of Islamic storytelling interventions on literacy skills in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah settings.

This gap highlights the need for a more focused investigation into how Islamic values-based storytelling can influence students' literacy development in MI classrooms. Fourth-grade students are at a critical stage of literacy transition, where they move from "learning to read" toward "reading to learn." Therefore, effective instructional methods are needed to support this transition while maintaining students' engagement and moral development.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to examine the effect of Islamic values-based storytelling on literacy development among fourth-grade MI students in Medan, while also identifying how the integration of Islamic values within narrative structures supports students' comprehension and meaning-making processes. Beyond merely testing the effectiveness of storytelling, this study seeks to contribute theoretically by providing empirical evidence on the role of value-integrated narratives in literacy pedagogy, particularly within Islamic elementary education contexts. Practically, this research offers a contextualized instructional framework that combines storytelling techniques with Islamic values, which can be adapted by teachers to enhance both literacy skills and character development in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Medan Sunggal.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design, specifically the one-group pretest-posttest design, to investigate the effect of Islamic values-based storytelling on students' literacy development. This design allows the researcher to measure students' literacy levels before and after the treatment in order to determine whether there is a significant improvement.

The study was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Medan Sunggal in Medan, Indonesia. The participants of the study were fourth-grade students, selected through purposive sampling based on the consideration that they were in the transitional stage from learning to read toward reading to learn. The total number of participants consisted of 30 students.

The research procedure consisted of three stages. First, the students were given a pre-test to measure their initial literacy level. The literacy test assessed several aspects, including reading comprehension, vocabulary mastery, and the ability to identify moral messages in a text. Second, the treatment was administered through the implementation of Islamic values-based storytelling during literacy learning activities for several meetings. The stories used in the treatment were adapted from Islamic narratives, such as stories of the Prophets, the companions of the Prophet, and moral stories containing Islamic values like honesty, kindness, patience, and responsibility. Third, after the treatment, the students were given a post-test using similar indicators to measure changes in literacy development.

The research instruments included a literacy test and an observation sheet. The literacy test was used to collect quantitative data on students' literacy development, while the observation sheet was used to record students' engagement and responses during storytelling sessions. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the test items were reviewed by experts in literacy education and Islamic elementary education. The reliability of the test was measured using Cronbach's Alpha.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the students' pre-test and post-test scores in terms of mean, minimum score, and maximum score. Meanwhile, inferential statistics were conducted using a paired sample t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The level of significance was set at **0.05**. If the significance value (p-value) was less than 0.05, it indicated that Islamic values-based storytelling had a significant effect on students' literacy development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of Islamic values-based storytelling positively affected the literacy development of fourth-grade MI students in Medan.

The results of the pre-test showed that students' initial literacy level was relatively low. The mean score of the pre-test was **62.40**, indicating that many students still had difficulties in reading comprehension, vocabulary understanding, and identifying moral messages in a text. The minimum score obtained by the students was **50**, while the maximum score was **75**.

After the implementation of Islamic values-based storytelling in several learning sessions, the students' literacy performance improved significantly. The post-test results showed that the mean score increased to **81.20**. The minimum score in the post-test was **70**, while the maximum score reached **95**. This improvement indicates that students were able to better understand texts, acquire new vocabulary, and interpret moral values presented in the stories.

Table 1 presents the comparison of students' literacy scores before and after the treatment.

Table 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Test	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	30	62.40	50	75	6.85
Post-test	30	81.20	70	95	7.10

To determine whether the improvement was statistically significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The result showed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The significance value was **0.000**, which is lower than the significance level of **0.05** ($p < 0.05$). The t-value obtained was **12.457**, indicating a strong effect of the treatment.

Table 2. Paired Sample t-test Result

Variable	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test – Post-test	-18.80	12.457	0.000

These findings indicate that Islamic values-based storytelling significantly improved students' literacy development. During the storytelling sessions, students demonstrated increased engagement as indicated by and active participation. They were more engaged in listening to the stories, answering questions, and retelling the stories in their own words. The integration of Islamic values in the stories also helped students understand moral lessons while improving their literacy skills. In conclusion, the implementation of Islamic values-based storytelling had a significant positive effect on the literacy development of fourth-grade MI students in Medan.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that Islamic values-based storytelling significantly improved the literacy development of fourth-grade MI students in Medan. The increase in students' post-test scores indicates that storytelling can function as an effective instructional strategy to enhance literacy skills, particularly in reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and understanding moral messages embedded in texts.

One possible explanation for this improvement is the interactive and meaningful nature of storytelling. Storytelling creates an engaging learning atmosphere in which students actively listen, interpret, and reconstruct stories in their own words. This process supports language acquisition and literacy development by exposing students to contextualized vocabulary and coherent narrative structures. (Huda et al., 2022) found that storytelling improves children's language skills while simultaneously instilling character values, as students become more actively involved in classroom interaction and communication.

The findings are also consistent with recent studies emphasizing the effectiveness of storytelling-based instruction in elementary education. (Rahmana & Muhammadiyah, 2025) reported that storytelling-based learning significantly improved elementary students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education, with students' average scores increasing substantially after the intervention. Similarly, (Zulaekhah et al., 2025) found that multimedia-based storytelling improved elementary students' understanding of Islamic history and increased both cognitive and emotional engagement during learning activities. These studies suggest that storytelling helps students understand learning materials more effectively because narratives make information easier to process and remember.

Another important finding in this study is that integrating Islamic values into storytelling may have enhanced students' motivation and comprehension. The stories used in the treatment contained Islamic moral values such as honesty, patience, responsibility, and kindness. In the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah context, these values are culturally familiar and meaningful, making it easier for students to connect with the content. Familiar and value-laden stories may reduce cognitive burden and increase students' attention and understanding. Research by (Wardi, 2025) demonstrated that integrating Islamic values into learning media significantly improved students' literacy-related outcomes and strengthened character education in elementary school settings.

In addition, fourth-grade students are in a transitional literacy stage, shifting from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." At this stage, instructional strategies that are engaging and contextual are particularly important. Storytelling offers a structured narrative framework that helps students connect prior knowledge with new information. It also stimulates imagination and emotional involvement, which can improve retention and comprehension. This supports the argument that narrative-based learning is highly suitable for elementary learners because it aligns with their cognitive and emotional development (Prihatiningtyas et al., 2025).

Despite these positive findings, this study has several limitations. First, the use of a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group limits the ability to attribute improvement solely to the treatment. Second, the study was conducted in only one Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Medan, so the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts. Third, the study focused only on short-term literacy development and did not examine long-term retention.

Therefore, future studies are recommended to employ quasi-experimental or true experimental designs involving larger and more diverse samples. Future research may also explore the long-term effects of Islamic values-based storytelling on other language skills such as writing and speaking, as well as on students' character development.

Therefore, this study confirms that Islamic values-based storytelling is an effective instructional strategy for improving literacy development among fourth-grade MI students in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Medan Sunggal. It not only strengthens literacy skills but also supports the broader goals of Islamic elementary education by integrating cognitive, moral, and spiritual development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic values-based storytelling has a significant positive effect on the literacy development of fourth-grade MI students in Medan. The findings showed a considerable improvement in students' literacy levels after the implementation of the storytelling intervention, as indicated by the higher post-test scores compared to the pre-test scores. This suggests that storytelling is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing students' reading comprehension, vocabulary mastery, and ability to identify moral messages in texts.

The integration of Islamic values into storytelling also contributed to making the learning process more meaningful and engaging for students. By incorporating familiar moral and religious values such as honesty, patience, responsibility, and kindness, the stories helped students connect the learning materials with their daily lives and cultural context. As a result, students not only developed their literacy skills but also gained moral understanding and character reinforcement.

These findings imply that Islamic values-based storytelling can be considered an innovative and relevant pedagogical approach in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah classrooms, as it supports both academic and character development. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to integrate storytelling activities into literacy instruction to create more interactive and value-oriented learning experiences.

However, this study was limited by the use of a one-group pretest-posttest design and a relatively small sample from one school. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, control groups, and longer intervention periods to obtain more comprehensive findings regarding the long-term effectiveness of Islamic values-based storytelling in literacy education.

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