

---

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STORYTELLING METHOD IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Amnur Muhammad Ariya Nugroho<sup>1</sup>, Meriyati<sup>2</sup>, Fitriani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Raden Intan State Islamic University Lampung, Indonesia

Contributor Email: [amnurariya@gmail.com](mailto:amnurariya@gmail.com)

### Abstrak

---

Penelitian ini membahas implementasi metode storytelling dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di tingkat Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) sebagai pendekatan yang menghadirkan suasana belajar yang lebih hidup, interaktif, dan bermakna. Melalui penyampaian kisah yang mendalam, siswa tidak hanya memahami konsep agama secara kognitif, tetapi juga merasakan maknanya secara emosional dan afektif. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMA Negeri 2 Gadingrejo dengan partisipan 2 guru PAI dan 64 siswa kelas XI. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode storytelling mampu meningkatkan minat belajar, memperdalam pemahaman terhadap nilai-nilai keislaman, serta menumbuhkan karakter religius siswa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Selain itu, interaksi antara guru dan siswa menjadi lebih dekat dan terbuka, sehingga menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang inklusif dan membangun kedekatan emosional. Meskipun demikian, terdapat beberapa tantangan seperti keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran serta kemampuan guru dalam menyusun dan menyampaikan cerita yang relevan dengan konteks kehidupan siswa. Secara keseluruhan, penggunaan metode storytelling memberikan kontribusi positif dalam menciptakan proses pembelajaran PAI yang inspiratif, reflektif, dan berorientasi pada pembentukan akhlak. Metode ini juga mendukung pendekatan pembelajaran kontekstual dengan mengaitkan materi ajar dengan realitas kehidupan siswa, sehingga nilai-nilai keagamaan dapat diterapkan secara nyata dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

**Kata Kunci:** *Storytelling*, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Nilai Moral, Pembelajaran Kontekstual.

---

### Abstract

---

This study examines the implementation of the storytelling method in Islamic Religious Education instruction at the high school level as an approach that creates a more lively, interactive, and meaningful learning environment. Through the presentation of meaningful stories, students not only understand religious concepts cognitively but also experience their significance emotionally and affectively. The

research approach used is descriptive qualitative, employing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Gadingrejo with 2 PAI teachers and 64 eleventh-grade students as participants. The results of the study indicate that the storytelling method is effective in increasing students' interest in learning, deepening their understanding of Islamic values, and fostering religious character in students' daily lives. Additionally, the interaction between teachers and students became closer and more open, creating an inclusive learning environment and fostering emotional closeness. However, there were several challenges, such as limited class time and teachers' ability to develop and deliver stories relevant to the students' life contexts. Overall, the use of the storytelling method contributed positively to the creation of an inspiring, reflective, and character-focused Islamic Education learning process. This method also supports a contextual learning approach by linking the curriculum to students' real-life experiences, so that religious values can be applied in practical ways in their daily lives.

**Keywords:** Storytelling, Islamic Religious Education, Moral Values, Contextual Learning

---

## A. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping the character and competence of a nation's human resources. Within Islamic education, the learning process is directed not only toward intellectual mastery but also toward cultivating noble character grounded in Islamic values (Listiani et al., 2024). Islamic Religious Education (abbreviated in Bahasa as PAI) in senior high schools, therefore, carries particular importance, as it is expected to produce students who are not only academically capable but also possess strong moral integrity (Sukino, 2013). In practice, however, the implementation of PAI instruction at the senior high school level continues to face several persistent challenges, most notably students' limited interest and engagement in the learning process (Nabihasnah et al., 2025). This problem is closely linked to the continued reliance on monotonous, one-directional teaching methods, which tend to leave students bored and unmotivated (Wariunsora & Hukubun, 2025). The lecture method that has long dominated PAI classrooms, while useful for transmitting information, often fails to engage students' affective and emotional dimensions, precisely the dimensions most relevant to the formation of religious character.

To address this gap, educators are encouraged to adopt learning methods that are more engaging, contextual, and emotionally meaningful. The storytelling method is considered a promising approach for PAI instruction (Hatmiah, 2025), as it uses narrative to convey moral and religious messages in a vivid and memorable way (Indrajit et al., 2024). This is not an entirely new idea within Islamic education: the Qur'an itself contains numerous accounts of the prophets and earlier communities, presented precisely to impart lessons and wisdom (Rosilawati & Khairawati, 2013). Building on this tradition, storytelling has been shown to enhance students' concentration, engagement, and retention of material, while also fostering closer and more open teacher-student interaction (Muhammad & Mukhid, 2023). More

recently, the method has also developed into digital storytelling, which combines narrative with video, animation, and other digital media to enrich the learning experience for a generation accustomed to digital culture (Satriani, 2019; Sumarsih & Wirdati, 2022). Across educational levels, storytelling has been reported to produce positive outcomes from instilling foundational values among elementary school students (Fauziah et al., 2024) to addressing more complex moral and social issues relevant to adolescents at the senior high school level.

Despite this growing body of evidence on the benefits of storytelling, existing studies remain limited in two respects. First, much of the research has focused on elementary or lower-secondary settings, with comparatively little attention to how the method is implemented in day-to-day practice at the senior high school level, where students face more complex moral and social challenges. Second, prior studies have generally treated storytelling as a single, generic method, without closely examining how individual teachers with different experiences and pedagogical orientations translate the method into classroom practice, and with what consequences for students' responses and value internalization. These gaps leave open the question of how the storytelling method actually functions, including its strengths, weaknesses, and mechanisms of impact, when implemented by different teachers within the same school context.

This study addresses these gaps by providing an in-depth, comparative, qualitative account of how two PAI teachers with different levels of experience and pedagogical styles implement the storytelling method in senior high school classrooms. Its novelty lies in, first, the comparative lens applied to two teachers' planning and delivery practices within a single school, and second, the identification of specific mechanisms of character identification, contextual transfer, and collective reflection through which storytelling contributes to students' internalization of religious values. By doing so, this study offers a more concrete and operational understanding of storytelling implementation than studies that treat the method only as a general pedagogical recommendation.

Based on this background, the present study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do PAI teachers at SMAN 2 Gadingrejo plan and implement the storytelling method in the classroom? (2) How do students respond cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally to the storytelling method? (3) What religious values are internalized through storytelling, and through what mechanisms does this internalization occur? (4) What strengths and weaknesses characterize the implementation of the storytelling method in this context?

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) describe and compare how two PAI teachers plan and deliver storytelling-based lessons; (2) analyze students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to the method; (3) identify the religious values instilled and the mechanisms through which value internalization occurs; and (4) critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of storytelling implementation in order to inform more effective and reflective PAI instruction at the senior high school level.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine in depth how the storytelling method is implemented in PAI instruction at SMAN 2 Gadingrejo. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to capture teachers' and students'

experiences, perceptions, and classroom interactions as they naturally occur, while the descriptive design enables a detailed account of storytelling practices, student responses, and the process of value internalization (Moleong, 2018). Concretely, this approach was operationalized through four steps: (1) selecting a research site and informants through purposive sampling; (2) collecting data through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation over a two-week period; (3) organizing and reducing the data using the Miles and Huberman interactive model; and (4) triangulating findings across data sources to ensure their credibility (Moleong, 2018).

The research was conducted at SMAN 2 Gadingrejo, Lampung, selected through purposive sampling because two of its three PAI teachers had experience applying the storytelling method and were willing to be observed over an extended period. The research participants consisted of two PAI teachers, Ms. Arum Chandrawati and Ms. Feri Septiana, and 64 eleventh-grade students from the classes they taught. The two teachers served as key informants, providing their perspectives on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of storytelling-based instruction (Lubis, 2021). The 64 students served as the source of data on student responses to the method; from this group, four students were selected as in-depth interview informants based on diversity in gender, academic achievement, and level of classroom engagement. Data collection combined primary data from teachers' and students' accounts gathered through interviews and secondary data, such as syllabi, lesson plans, and teaching materials (Yusuf, 2017), and was carried out over a two-week period to ensure sufficient depth.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation (Moleong, 2018). Observations focused on eight PAI lessons, four from each teacher, covering how the teachers delivered stories, including their expressions, intonation, and use of media, and how students responded both verbally and non-verbally. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both teachers and the four student informants to explore their experiences, understanding of the material, and perceptions of the storytelling method. Documentation included syllabi, lesson plans, learning media, and evaluation notes, used to supplement the observation and interview data.

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model (in Moleong, 2018), comprising three stages: data reduction to select relevant information, data presentation in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, and diagrams, and conclusion drawing, verified through triangulation across the observation, interview, and documentation data.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Research Site and Initial Conditions**

SMAN 2 Gadingrejo is a public senior high school established in 2009, located in Gadingrejo Subdistrict, Pringsewu Regency, Lampung Province, and accredited A, as summarized in Table 1. For the 2024/2025 academic year, the school had 838 students in 31–32 classes and 38 teaching staff, including three PAI teachers. Two of these teachers, Ms. Feri Septiana (six years of teaching experience) and Ms. Arum Chandrawati (eleven years of teaching experience), were the main subjects of this study.

**Table 1. Brief Profile of SMAN 2 Gadingrejo**

Category	Description
School name	SMAN 2 Gadingrejo
Status	State (Negeri)
Accreditation	A
Established	2009
Location	Pringsewu, Lampung
Number of students	838
Number of teachers	38
PAI teachers	3

Prior to the implementation of storytelling, PAI learning at SMAN 2 Gadingrejo was dominated by lecture-based teaching, in which teachers delivered material verbally while students took notes and completed assignments, resulting in largely one-directional interaction (Habibati, 2017). Initial observations conducted in December 2025 indicated low student engagement: of 32 randomly observed students, only about seven actively participated through questions or responses, while the majority remained passive. One PAI teacher acknowledged this pattern, noting that limited class time made it difficult to explore alternative methods despite awareness that students often became bored with lecture-based instruction. This condition prompted two of the three PAI teachers to begin experimenting with storytelling; one teacher reported that even a single spontaneous story noticeably increased students' attention, which motivated a more systematic adoption of the method in subsequent lessons.

## 2. Planning of Storytelling-Based Instruction

Based on lesson plan documents and interviews with both teachers, both had carried out reasonably structured planning, though with notable differences in approach, as summarized in Table 2. Ms. Arum, drawing on her extensive teaching experience, tends to select stories intuitively, favoring narratives she knows well, such as those about the Prophet's companions, because she can deliver them more vividly. As she explained, "If we ourselves aren't moved by the stories we tell, how can the students possibly be moved?" Ms. Feri, in contrast, follows a more systematic, literature-based approach: her lesson plans specify not only the stories to be used but also the intended values, reflective questions, and indicators of success. As she put it, "I always ask myself what value I want students to take home after hearing this story."

**Table 2. Comparison of Instructional Planning Approaches**

<b>Planning Aspect</b>	<b>Ms. Arum</b>	<b>Ms. Feri</b>
Story selection	Based on intuition and experience	Based on relevance of the values to be instilled
Story source	Prophet's biography and companions' stories	Prophet's stories and contemporary Islamic stories
Supporting media	Rarely used	Illustrations and historical maps
Time allocation	30–40 minutes/session	25–35 minutes/session

These differences indicate that the effectiveness of storytelling depends heavily on the quality and specificity of teachers' preparation, particularly in selecting relevant stories and planning post-story reflection activities (Hamzah, 2017).

The contrast summarized in Table 2 is not merely a matter of personal style; it reflects two different underlying logics of lesson design. Ms. Arum's planning can be characterized as experience-driven, in which the selection of a story is guided primarily by the teacher's own emotional familiarity with the material and by tacit knowledge accumulated over more than a decade of teaching. This logic relies heavily on the teacher's internalized sense of which stories "work" in the classroom, an intuition that is difficult to formalize but that nonetheless functions as a form of pedagogical expertise (Hasian, 2026). Ms. Feri's planning, by contrast, follows an objective-driven logic, in which the starting point is not the story itself but the value to be instilled, with the story selected afterward as a vehicle for that value. Both logics have their own coherence, and neither can be regarded as inherently superior; rather, they represent two complementary entry points into the same instructional goal.

This distinction also has implications for how flexible each approach is when circumstances change. Because Ms. Arum's planning is anchored in a repertoire of stories she knows intimately, she can adapt her delivery relatively easily to the mood of a particular class or to unexpected events during the lesson, since the underlying material remains the same even as the framing shifts. Ms. Feri's planning, being more tightly coupled to specific values and reflective questions, leaves less room for spontaneous adjustment but compensates with greater predictability: both she and her students generally know in advance what kind of discussion will follow a given story. In practice, these two forms of flexibility, improvisational versus structural, appear to serve different but equally legitimate pedagogical purposes.

Time allocation, as shown in Table 2, further illustrates this difference. Ms. Arum's longer storytelling segments (30–40 minutes) leave comparatively less room for follow-up activities, but this is partly offset by the depth of emotional engagement her delivery achieves within the storytelling segment itself. Ms. Feri's shorter storytelling segments (25–35 minutes) are designed to leave space for the visual and interactive elements that follow, such as map-based discussion or structured questioning. Neither time allocation is, by itself, more effective; what matters is the internal coherence between the time allocated to storytelling and the activities that are meant to follow it. Where this coherence breaks down, as will be discussed further in

relation to reflection time in the next section, the intended benefits of storytelling are most at risk of being lost.

### **3. Implementation of Storytelling in the Classroom**

Observation of the eight lessons (four per teacher) revealed a generally consistent structure, context building, storytelling, and reflection although execution differed between teachers. Ms. Arum's delivery was marked by strong verbal expressiveness: varied intonation, dramatic pacing, and direct dialogue that brought characters to life, as seen when she voiced Bilal bin Rabah's steadfast declaration of faith under torture, prompting visible contemplation among students. Ms. Feri relied more on visual and interactive techniques, using projected illustrations, historical maps, and a progression of factual-to-reflective questions, an approach that proved effective for visually oriented learners.

A key finding across both classes was that post-story reflection arguably the core mechanism for value internalization often received insufficient time. Of the eight sessions observed, only four (two per teacher) included reflection segments longer than 15 minutes; in the remaining sessions, reflection was brief or omitted due to time pressure, illustrating a tension between curriculum coverage demands and the methodological requirements of storytelling.

Both teachers reported substantial preparation effort outside class. Ms. Arum described rehearsing stories at home before delivering them, reflecting her view of storytelling as a skill that requires deliberate practice. Ms. Feri, lacking ready-made visual materials for many PAI topics, created some illustrations herself using a mobile application. One technical disruption was also observed: in one of Ms. Feri's sessions, a projector failure interrupted the story and visibly reduced student engagement, highlighting a vulnerability of media-dependent delivery. Ms. Arum's voice-based approach proved more resilient to such disruptions, continuing smoothly even through a brief power outage. These observations suggest that verbal and visual delivery strategies carry complementary strengths and risks, and that teacher training in storytelling would benefit from addressing both modes (De Vega, 2024).

Beyond the contrast between verbal and visual delivery, the observation data also point to a more subtle dimension of implementation: the pacing of the storytelling segment itself. Across the eight sessions observed, both teachers tended to slow their pace noticeably at moments identified in advance as emotionally or morally significant for instance, the moment of Bilal bin Rabah's declaration of faith under torture, or the moment in the story of Prophet Musa where patience is tested. This deliberate slowing functioned as an implicit cue to students that something important was being communicated, even before any explicit reflective question was posed (Huda & Ikhsan, 2024). In effect, pacing operated as a form of non-verbal scaffolding that prepared students for the reflective discussion that, ideally, would follow.

The classroom observations also revealed differences in how the two teachers managed students' spontaneous reactions during the storytelling segment itself. In Ms. Arum's sessions, students occasionally reacted audibly through brief exclamations, sighs, or murmured comments at dramatic turning points in the story. Ms. Arum generally allowed these reactions to occur without interruption, treating them as part of the storytelling experience rather than as disruptions to be managed. In Ms. Feri's sessions, by contrast, spontaneous reactions were less

frequent, but when they did occur, Ms. Feri tended to acknowledge them briefly before continuing, for example by nodding or making eye contact with the student who reacted. Both approaches appear to validate students' emotional responses, but they do so through different means: Ms. Arum through an atmosphere that implicitly permits expression, and Ms. Feri through more explicit, individualized acknowledgment.

Another aspect worth noting is the role of classroom seating and physical space in shaping engagement during storytelling. In both classes, students seated closer to the front tended to display more visible engagement leaning forward, maintaining eye contact with the teacher than students seated further back, a pattern that became more pronounced during longer storytelling segments. This raises a practical consideration for the implementation of storytelling as a method (Listiani et al., 2024). Unlike lecture-based instruction, where the relevant content can often be conveyed effectively through written notes regardless of seating position, storytelling appears to rely more heavily on visual and auditory proximity to the teacher. This suggests that classroom arrangement may be a relevant, if often overlooked, factor in maximizing the effectiveness of storytelling-based instruction.

Finally, it is worth situating the technical disruption experienced in Ms. Feri's class the projector failure described earlier within a broader pattern observed across the two weeks of fieldwork. Although this was the only major technical failure recorded, minor technical issues (such as delays in loading images, or difficulty finding a suitable map on short notice) were observed in three of the four sessions in which Ms. Feri used projected visual media (De Vega, 2024). While none of these minor issues caused the same visible drop in engagement as the major failure, they collectively suggest that visual-media-dependent storytelling carries an ongoing, low-level burden of technical preparation that is not required for voice-based storytelling. This does not diminish the pedagogical value of visual media, but it does suggest that schools seeking to support storytelling-based PAI instruction may need to consider not only training but also the reliability of supporting infrastructure.

#### **4. Student Responses to Storytelling**

Data from observations and interviews with the four student informants indicate a generally positive reception of the storytelling method. All four students reported positive or very positive impressions, and most expressed a wish for the method to be used more often, suggesting that storytelling addresses students' psychological and emotional needs in ways conventional lectures do not.

One eleventh-grade student, Arif Muhammad (interviewed on 18 April 2026), noted that stories were easier to remember than lecture content, recalling specific details of Bilal's story "to this day." This points to the long-term retention benefits associated with narrative-based learning. Observations also identified three recurring emotional responses: deep engagement, characterized by quiet, focused attention during emotionally significant moments such as Ms. Arum's narration of the martyrs' sacrifices; empathetic responses, reflected in facial expressions mirroring the characters' emotions; and inspirational responses, expressed as intentions to emulate or avoid certain characters' behavior during post-story discussion.

Three of the four students interviewed spontaneously connected the stories to their own behavior. One student described how the story of Prophet Musa's patience with Pharaoh helped

her forgive a friend who had wronged her, illustrating the mechanism of value transfer through character identification (Herlina et al., 2022). Further analysis identified four factors shaping the quality of students' responses: first, the teacher's delivery style, with students responding more emotionally to Ms. Arum's sessions but finding Ms. Feri's sessions clearer in conveying values; second, the relevance of the story to students' lived experience; third, opportunities to actively respond, whether through questions, comments, or brief dramatization; and fourth, a supportive classroom atmosphere in which students felt safe expressing emotional responses (Pristalinda, 2025).

It is also useful to consider how students' responses evolved across the two-week observation period, rather than treating each session as an isolated event. In the earliest sessions observed, students' verbal participation during post-story discussion was relatively limited, with most responses confined to short, factual answers to the teacher's questions. By the later sessions, however, students particularly in Ms. Feri's class began to volunteer comments that went beyond the immediate content of the story, drawing connections to earlier stories discussed in previous sessions. This pattern suggests that the benefits of storytelling may not be fully realized within a single session, but may instead accumulate as students become more familiar with the format and more confident in articulating their reflections, an observation that has implications for how the method's effectiveness should be assessed over time (Ervin et al., 2025).

The four student informants also differed in how they articulated the perceived value of storytelling, and these differences offer additional insight into the diversity of students' engagement with the method. One student emphasized the cognitive benefit of narrative structure for memory, as noted earlier in relation to exam preparation. Another student emphasized the emotional and reflective dimension, describing how a particular story prompted her to reconsider her own behavior toward a friend. A third student, while generally positive, noted that some stories felt "too familiar" having been heard in similar form during earlier schooling and suggested that newer or less commonly told stories might sustain interest more effectively over time. This last observation, while based on a single student's perspective, points to a potential risk of diminishing novelty if the pool of stories used in PAI instruction remains narrow, and suggests that variety in story selection may be an important consideration for sustaining the method's impact across a full academic year.

Taken together, the four factors identified as shaping the quality of students' responses—delivery style, relevance to lived experience, opportunities to respond, and classroom atmosphere—do not operate independently of one another but interact in practice. For example, a story that is highly relevant to students' lived experience (the second factor) appears to generate more spontaneous opportunities for student response (the third factor), which in turn is more likely to occur in a classroom atmosphere where students feel safe to speak (the fourth factor). This suggests that these four factors should not be understood as a checklist of independent conditions to be satisfied separately, but as mutually reinforcing elements of a single classroom climate that either supports or constrains the internalization process that storytelling is intended to facilitate.

### 5. Religious Values Internalized Through Storytelling

Analysis of the story materials used across the eight sessions, triangulated with interview data (Sukino, 2013), identified a consistent set of religious values instilled through storytelling, summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. Religious Values Instilled through Storytelling**

No	Value Dimension	Specific Value	Story Used	Intensity
1	Akidah	Tauhid	Story of Ibrahim AS and the idols	High
2	Akidah	Obedience	Story of Musa AS fleeing Pharaoh	High
3	Akhlak	Patience and fortitude	Story of Bilal bin Rabah	Very high
4	Akhlak	Honesty	Story of Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq	Medium
5	Akhlak	Mutual help	Story of the Ansar and Muhajirin	Medium
6	Akhlak	Response to oppression	Story of Ammar bin Yasir	Medium
7	Worship	Consistency in prayer	Story of Mush'ab bin Umair	Low
8	Social	Islamic brotherhood	Story of Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah)	High

Two patterns stand out in Table 3. First, moral values (akhlak) dominated the story material, accounting for six of the eight sessions, reflecting both teachers' view that moral lessons are most naturally conveyed through narrative. Second, patience (sabar) received particular emphasis, functioning almost as a signature value of storytelling at this school, plausibly reflecting students' need for emotional resilience amid academic and social pressures. By contrast, values related to ritual worship, such as prayer and fasting, received comparatively little attention, a gap that Ms. Feri herself identified as an area for improvement.

Beyond identifying which values were conveyed, this study's analysis of the learning process identified three mechanisms through which storytelling contributed to value internalization. First, identification with characters: students positioned themselves in relation to the characters' choices, expressing a wish to emulate Bilal's steadfastness or avoid Abu Jahal's arrogance, thereby creating intrinsic motivation to adopt or avoid certain behaviors (Hatmiah, 2025; Suryadinata et al., 2025). Second, contextual transfer: effective teachers consistently bridged characters' situations with students' real-life circumstances, a technique comparable to what Sabarudin (2022) is described as contextual bridging, making religious values feel applicable rather than abstract. Third, collective reflection: post-story group discussions allowed students to verify and reinforce their understanding through peers' perspectives,

consolidating individual internalization into a shared, normative understanding of the values taught.

The three mechanisms identified above, character identification, contextual transfer, and collective reflection, are presented in Table 3 and the surrounding discussion as analytically distinct, but in practice, they were rarely observed in isolation. In most sessions, a single story activated more than one mechanism simultaneously, though typically one mechanism was more prominent than the others, depending on how the teacher framed the story (Ramadhan, 2021). For instance, when Ms. Arum recounted the story of Bilal bin Rabah, character identification appeared to be the dominant mechanism, as reflected in students' explicit statements that they wanted to emulate Bilal's steadfastness. When Ms. Feri used the story of the Ansar and Muhajirin to discuss mutual help, contextual transfer appeared more prominent, as the post-story discussion focused less on the historical figures themselves and more on parallel situations of helping classmates in the present day. This suggests that the relative weight of each mechanism may depend not only on the story chosen but also on how the teacher frames the post-story discussion, an aspect of pedagogical practice that could be made more deliberate if teachers were made aware of these mechanisms explicitly.

The pattern observed in Table 3, in which moral values (*akhlak*) dominate and ritual-worship values receive comparatively little attention, also has implications for which of the three internalization mechanisms are most frequently activated in practice. Stories centered on *akhlak*, such as patience, honesty, or mutual help, lend themselves readily to character identification and contextual transfer because they typically involve a protagonist facing a recognizable social or moral dilemma with which students can identify (Sabarudin, 2022). Stories related to ritual worship, such as the story of Mush'ab bin Umair and consistency in prayer, are structurally different: they often center on a character's relationship with religious obligation itself, rather than on an interpersonal dilemma, and may therefore be less amenable to the kind of contextual transfer observed in *akhlak*-focused stories. If this is the case, the relative neglect of worship-related values noted earlier may not be simply a matter of teachers' planning choices, but may also reflect a structural challenge in adapting certain categories of religious narrative to the mechanisms through which storytelling appears to operate most effectively. This possibility does not excuse the gap identified by Ms. Feri, but it does suggest that addressing it may require not only allocating more time to worship-related stories, but also developing new framing techniques for example, focusing reflective questions on a character's inner experience of devotion rather than solely on the character's external actions so that such stories can engage the same mechanisms of identification and transfer observed for *akhlak*-related material (Damayanti, 2023).

Finally, the collective reflection mechanism deserves further comment in light of the time constraints discussed in the previous section. Because collective reflection depends on group discussion following the storytelling segment, it is the mechanism most directly affected when reflection time is shortened or omitted. In the four sessions where reflection exceeded 15 minutes, students' comments during discussion frequently built on one another, one student's observation prompting another student to offer a related or contrasting view, producing the kind of group normative consensus described earlier. In sessions where reflection was brief, discussion tended to consist of isolated responses to the teacher's questions, with little

interaction among students. This contrast suggests that collective reflection is not simply a matter of allocating "enough" time in the abstract, but requires a minimum duration sufficient for an initial round of individual responses to give rise to genuine peer-to-peer exchange, a threshold that, based on the sessions observed, appears to lie somewhere beyond the brief, teacher-question-and-individual-answer format that characterizes shortened reflection segments.

## 6. Connecting Findings with Theory and Practice

The findings above can be interpreted in relation to existing theory and to the strengths and weaknesses of storytelling implementation observed in this study.

Both teachers demonstrated genuine commitment to storytelling, reflected in their efforts, whether through rehearsal, intuitive story selection, or self-made visual materials to deliver meaningful lessons, and student responses were overwhelmingly positive, indicating that storytelling meets students' psychological need for engaging, emotionally resonant learning (Rosilawati & Khairawati, 2013). However, three weaknesses limit its current implementation. First, planning is less systematic for a single teacher, which risks producing inconsistent learning experiences across sessions. Second, reflection sessions, which are central to value internalization, are frequently shortened or omitted due to time constraints. Third, no evaluation instrument currently exists to measure the internalization of affective and religious values, making it difficult to systematically assess the method's long-term impact.

These findings are consistent with Listiani et al. (2024) those who argue that narratives possess a distinctive capacity to build emotional connections that strengthen the learning process. The three mechanisms identified in this study, character identification, contextual transfer, and collective reflection, also correspond closely to the modeling, emotional rehearsal, and meaning-construction processes described by N.Huda & Ikhsan (2024), lending support to the relevance of these mechanisms within PAI instruction in Indonesian senior high schools.

Beyond confirming that storytelling is broadly effective, these findings carry several specific implications for PAI instruction. The dominance of akhlak-related stories and the relative neglect of worship-related themes indicate that teachers may need more deliberate planning to ensure that storytelling covers the full range of PAI material, rather than only the themes that lend themselves most easily to narrative. The finding that reflection sessions are often compressed suggests that the structure of schedules, rather than teachers' willingness alone, may need to be adjusted if storytelling is to realize its full potential for value internalization. The complementary strengths of verbal delivery, as practiced by Ms. Arum, and visual delivery, as practiced by Ms. Feri, further suggest that teacher training in storytelling should address both modes rather than treating storytelling as a single uniform technique. Finally, the absence of evaluation instruments for affective outcomes points to a broader gap in PAI assessment practice, one that aligns with Rahmana (2025) the critique of the mismatch between PAI's holistic aims and evaluation practices that remain largely cognitively oriented.

The findings of this study also invite reflection on the relationship between teacher experience and pedagogical style observed in the comparison between Ms. Arum and Ms. Feri. It might be tempting to interpret Ms. Arum's more intuitive, experience-driven approach as simply a function of her longer tenure, implying that newer teachers must necessarily rely on

more systematic, literature-based planning until they have accumulated sufficient experience. However, the data from this study do not straightforwardly support a developmental narrative in which one style is a precursor to the other. Rather, the two styles appear to draw on different kinds of teacher capital, accumulated narrative repertoire in Ms. Arum's case, and structured pedagogical planning skills in Ms. Feri's case, both of which could, in principle, be cultivated through different forms of professional development from early in a teacher's career. This reframing suggests that teacher training programs in storytelling should not assume that systematic planning is merely a stepping stone toward intuitive mastery, but should instead recognize both as legitimate and complementary professional competencies worth developing in parallel.

The complementary strengths and limitations of verbal and visual delivery identified in this study also resonate with the broader literature on digital storytelling (Satriani, 2019; Sumarsih & Wirdati, 2022), though with an important qualification. That literature tends to frame the incorporation of visual and digital media primarily as an enhancement of storytelling, making it more engaging for a generation accustomed to digital culture. The findings of this study suggest a more conditional picture: visual media enhanced engagement when it functioned reliably, but its failure (as in the projector incident) had a more disruptive effect on the lesson than would be expected from simply removing an enhancement, because students had, in effect, been primed to expect a visual accompaniment to the story. This suggests that the integration of digital or visual elements into storytelling-based PAI instruction should be accompanied by contingency planning, for example, a brief verbal description prepared in advance for situations where visual media becomes unavailable so that the absence of media does not itself become a disruption to the lesson's flow.

The uneven distribution of value domains observed in Table 3 and the possible structural explanation discussed earlier also have implications for how PAI curricula might be structured if storytelling is adopted more broadly. If certain categories of religious value are indeed less amenable to the mechanisms by which storytelling operates most effectively, then a curriculum that relies on storytelling as its primary method risks systematically underemphasizing those categories, not because teachers consider them less important, but because the method itself offers less natural traction for them. This points toward a complementary rather than wholesale model of curriculum design, in which storytelling is used where it is most effective, particularly for akhlak-related material, while other methods (Sabarudin, 2022), potentially including more traditional approaches such as guided recitation or structured practice, continue to play a role in domains such as ritual worship where storytelling's comparative advantage appears less clear. Such a model would differ from approaches that treat storytelling as a general replacement for lecture-based instruction across all PAI content.

Finally, the temporal pattern observed in students' responses, greater spontaneous engagement in later sessions compared to earlier ones, suggests that evaluations of storytelling's effectiveness based on single-session observations may understate its cumulative impact (Rahmana, 2025). If, as this study's data suggest, students become more practiced at the kind of reflective discussion that storytelling invites, then the absence of a formal evaluation instrument for affective internalization (identified earlier as a key limitation) becomes even more consequential: without such an instrument, schools have no means of distinguishing

between a method that produces modest but stable engagement from the outset and one that produces a cumulative trajectory of increasing engagement over a semester or academic year. Future evaluation efforts would therefore benefit from a longitudinal design that captures such trajectories, rather than relying solely on cross-sectional assessments at a single point in time.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Based on a qualitative analysis of classroom practice, this study found that the storytelling method, as implemented by two PAI teachers at SMAN 2 Gadingrejo, contributes positively to students' interest, understanding, and internalization of Islamic values, primarily through three mechanisms: character identification, contextual transfer, and collective reflection. These mechanisms confirm that storytelling functions not merely as a delivery technique for moral lessons, but as a dialogic process through which students actively construct and internalize religious values in relation to their own lived experience. At the same time, the method's effectiveness is constrained by uneven systematic planning between teachers, insufficient time allocated for reflection, and the absence of instruments to evaluate affective outcomes.

For PAI teachers, these findings suggest that maximizing the benefits of storytelling requires deliberate planning that combines verbal and visual delivery, explicit scheduling of post-story reflection, and attention to value domains, such as ritual worship, that are less amenable to narrative treatment but remain central to the PAI curriculum. Thus, this study offers a model for PAI instruction relevant to contemporary classroom challenges, in which realizing storytelling's full potential can help produce students who are religiously grounded, socially aware, and reflective.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Damayanti, N. (2023). Story Telling Bermuatan Kisah Nabi untuk Meningkatkan Akhlak Peserta Didik di Sekolah Dasar. *PROPHETIK: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.35457/prophetik.v2i2.4030>
- De Vega, N. (2024). *Metode & Model Pembelajaran Inovatif: Teori & Penerapan Ragam Metode & Model Pembelajaran Inovatif Era Digital*. PT Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia. <https://buku.sonpedia.com/2024/03/metode-model-pembelajaran-inovatif.html>
- Ervina, E., Nilasari, N. P., & Syafiq, M. (2025). Penerapan Metode Story Telling Islami Untuk Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Siswa Terhadap Materi Sejarah Nabi Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Mudabbir: Journal Research and Education Studies*, 5(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.56832/mudabbir.v5i2.1073>
- Fauziah, F., Ikhtiono, G., & Fahri, M. (2024). Hubungan Penggunaan Media Digital Storytelling Dengan Pemahaman Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran PAI. *Proceeding of Annual Seminar on Islamic Studies*, 5(1), 20–28.
- Habibati. (2017). *Strategi Belajar Mengajar*. Syiah Kuala University Press.
- Hamzah, A. (2017). *Pendidikan Agama Islam: Implementasi Metode Mengaji*. Kencana.

- Hasian, R. (2026). IMPLEMENTASI METODE STORYTELLING DALAM PEMBELAJARAN PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM (PAI) PADA SISWA SEKOLAH DASAR. *Walada: Journal of Primary Education*, 5(1), 519–524. <https://doi.org/10.61798/wjpe.v5i1.526>
- Hatmiah, H. (2025). STORY TELLING PEMBANGUN KARAKTER DALAM MATA PELAJARAN PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM DI SD MUHAMMADIYAH TELUK BETUNG KABUPATEN HULU SUNGAI UTARA. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DAN KEGURUAN*, 1(7), 2165–2174.
- Herlina, E., Gatriyani, N. P., Galugu, N. S., Rizqi, V., Mayasari, N., Feriyanto, Junaidi, Nurlaila, Q., Rahmi, H., Cahyati, A., Wahyudi, Ratnadewi, Azis, D. A., & Saswati, R. (2022). *Strategi Pembelajaran*. TOHAR MEDIA.
- Huda, N., & Ikhsan, J. (2024). *Menggugat Metode Ceramah Dalam Pendidikan: Meluruskan Fitnah Mengusulkan Paradigma Baru*. Jejak Publisher.
- Indrajit, R. E., Murni, T., & Maspaeni. (2024). *Digital Storytelling: Narasi dalam Pendidikan*. Media Akademi. <https://trimahika.co.id/produk/seri-teknologi-dan-pengembangan-pendidikan-digital-storytelling-narasi-dalam-pendidikan/>
- Listiani, H., Karimuddin, K., Amirah, A., & Janah, R. (2024). *Buku Referensi Strategi Pembelajaran: Teori dan Metode Pembelajaran Efektif*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Lubis, A. (2021). *Metodologi Pengajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam*. RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Moleong, L. J. (2018). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Muhammad, K. H., & Mukhid, Abd. (2023). Implementasi Metode Storytelling Berbasis Materi Moderasi Beragama dalam Meningkatkan Kecakapan Berbicara Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Kajian Islam & Pendidikan*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.47435/al-qalam.v15i1.1959>
- Nabihasnah, H. M., Alhayyu, M., & Gusmaneli. (2025). Strategi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Melalui Pendekatan Storytelling untuk Membentuk Akhlak Mulia Anak Usia Dini. *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal*, 2(2), 197–212. <https://doi.org/10.61132/reflection.v2i2.793>
- Pristalinda, D. E. (2025). *Implementasi Metode Storytelling Pada Pembelajaran Pai Di Smk Islam Al-Khoiriyah Petarukan* [Undergraduate\_thesis, UIN K.H Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan]. <http://perpustakaan.uingusdur.ac.id/>
- Rahmana, S. (2025). Pengaruh Storytelling-Based Learning terhadap Hasil Belajar Siswa pada Pembelajaran PAI di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Amin*, 4(1), 194–206. <https://doi.org/10.54723/ejpgmi.v4i1.325>
- Ramadhan, H. (2021). Efektivitas media naratif dalam pembelajaran PAI. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Nusantara*, 4(1), 60–68.
- Rosilawati, A., & Khairawati. (2013). *Ilmu pendidikan Islam*. STAIN Pontianak Press.
- Sabarudin, M. (2022). Metode Story Telling Kisah Qur'ani untuk pendidikan karakter dalam pembelajaran akidah akhlak. *Jurnal Al Burhan*, 2(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.58988/jab.v2i1.10>

- Satriani, I. (2019). *Storytelling and Digital Storytelling: Theory and Practice for Educators*. Deepublish. <https://tirtabuanamedia.co.id/shop/buku-pengetahuan-umum-dan-lain-lain/storytelling-and-digital-storytelling-theory-and-practice-for-educators/>
- Sukino, A. (2013). *Ilmu pendidikan Islam*. STAIN Pontianak Press.
- Sumarsih, T., & Wirdati, W. (2022). Enam Alasan Guru Menggunakan Metode Ceramah pada Mata Pelajaran PAI. *An-Nuha*, 2(1), 123–132. <https://doi.org/10.24036/annuha.v2i1.170>
- Suryadinata, A. M. I., Fatma, & Nindiawati. (2025). Metode Ceramah Dalam Pendidikan Islam (Keuntungan dan Keterbatasannya): *Jurnal Kolaboratif Sains*, 8(6), 3458–3467. <https://doi.org/10.56338/jks.v8i6.7674>
- Wariunsora, M., & Hukubun, Y. (2025). *BUKU AJAR: METODE BERCERITA BAGI ANAK USIA DINI (PANDUAN UNTUK MAHASISWA DAN PENDIDIK PAUD)*. Penerbit Adab.
- Yusuf, M. (2017). *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan*. Prenadamedia Group.