



## Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool in Qur'anic Education: Effects on Students' Intrinsic Motivation

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

Storytelling; Qur'anic Instruction; Intrinsic Motivation

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This study investigates the effect of storytelling in Qur'anic instruction on students' intrinsic learning motivation in primary education. A quantitative approach with an ex post facto correlational design was employed, involving 33 sixth-grade students selected through total sampling. Data were gathered using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ). Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, assumption testing, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression, were conducted using SPSS 26.00. The results show a very strong and statistically significant relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.878$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with storytelling accounting for 77.1% of the variance in students' intrinsic motivation ( $R^2 = 0.771$ ). These findings suggest that storytelling serves as a powerful pedagogical tool that enhances students' internal engagement in learning. Theoretically, the study supports Self-Determination Theory, demonstrating that narrative-based instruction promotes meaningful engagement, emotional connection, and intrinsic motivation. Practically, the results emphasize the value of incorporating storytelling in Qur'anic instruction to foster engaging, context-driven, and value-oriented learning environments.

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## INTRODUCTION

Effective learning in the 21st century goes beyond simply transmitting knowledge; it now focuses on fostering students' intrinsic motivation, which plays a crucial role in their engagement and long-term academic success. Intrinsic motivation, defined as an internal drive that encourages individuals to engage in activities due to enjoyment, interest, and personal value, has been consistently associated with enhanced cognitive engagement, persistence, and academic achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2022). However, fostering this type of motivation in elementary school students remains a significant challenge. Traditional teacher-centered approaches limit students' opportunities for active engagement and do

not address their emotional and experiential needs (Alam, 2023). This is particularly problematic in religious education, including Qur'anic instruction, which is often delivered in a textual and normative manner without much pedagogical innovation. This study aims to address this issue by exploring how storytelling can foster intrinsic motivation, especially in religious contexts, to promote deeper learning engagement (Aseery, 2024; Papakostas, 2024).

This study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that intrinsic motivation develops when three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Ryan & Deci, 2022). Autonomy refers to students' sense of control over their learning, competence relates to their perception of their ability to understand the material, and relatedness involves emotional connections with the learning environment (Kaufmann & Vallade, 2023). Storytelling, as an instructional method, has the potential to address these needs by allowing students to engage with narratives that are both emotionally and cognitively stimulating. By fulfilling the psychological needs outlined in SDT, storytelling may facilitate deeper student engagement and promote intrinsic motivation. Therefore, this study applies SDT to examine the role of storytelling in Qur'anic instruction and its impact on students' intrinsic learning motivation (Rahmadi et al., 2024; Kamilia & Satriyawan, 2026).

One of the main challenges in elementary education is maintaining students' intrinsic motivation, especially in religious studies. Traditional methods of teaching, such as rote memorization and passive learning, fail to engage students emotionally and cognitively, ultimately hindering their learning motivation (Radišić et al., 2024). In Qur'anic instruction, these methods often lead to a disconnect between students and the content, reducing their autonomy, competence, and emotional connection to the material. Consequently, students may not internalize the values and teachings of the Qur'an effectively. This gap in engagement and motivation calls for innovative pedagogical strategies that can enhance the emotional (Zhao, 2024; Arguedas et al., 2025), cognitive, and spiritual aspects of learning. Storytelling, with its inherent ability to capture attention, evoke emotions, and stimulate reflection, offers a promising solution to this issue.

Several studies have explored the role of storytelling in education, demonstrating its effectiveness in fostering student engagement, enhancing memory retention, and supporting cognitive development (Clemente-Suárez, 2024; Sabih & Kuyini, 2024). Moreover, research has shown that storytelling can foster intrinsic motivation, particularly when the narrative resonates with students' personal interests and emotions (Wu & Chen, 2020). However, the focus has predominantly been on general educational settings, with few studies

investigating the impact of storytelling in religious education. In Qur'anic instruction, storytelling is underutilized despite the Qur'an itself being rich in narratives designed to convey moral lessons (Akrim, 2021). While existing studies emphasize the cognitive benefits of storytelling, there is limited empirical evidence regarding its influence on students' intrinsic motivation in religious education contexts.

Additionally, most studies on storytelling have been qualitative or anecdotal, with few employing quantitative methods to establish robust statistical relationships between storytelling and intrinsic motivation (Miller & Pennycuff, 2021). Research specifically focusing on the role of storytelling within Qur'anic pedagogy and its effects on intrinsic motivation particularly concerning emotional and spiritual engagement remains scarce (Rakha et al., 2025; Bilal, 2025). This gap in the literature highlights the need for more empirical research that integrates storytelling with Qur'anic instruction and examines its effects on students' intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the lack of rigorous quantitative studies limits our understanding of the direct and indirect effects of storytelling on students' motivation in religious contexts.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated approach, which combines storytelling as a pedagogical tool with Qur'anic instruction, framed within the context of intrinsic motivation and Self-Determination Theory. Unlike previous studies that treat storytelling and Qur'anic instruction separately, this research aims to demonstrate that storytelling can serve as a bridge between value-based education and intrinsic learning motivation. This study also contributes to the limited body of quantitative research on Islamic education by providing empirical evidence of storytelling's effectiveness in a religious learning context. By applying a quantitative approach, this study offers a more objective and data-driven analysis, contributing to a deeper understanding of how storytelling impacts motivation in Qur'anic instruction.

This study addresses the research gap by examining the effect of storytelling on intrinsic learning motivation among elementary school students in Qur'anic instruction. The main research question is: Does storytelling in Qur'anic instruction significantly affect students' intrinsic learning motivation? Based on the integration of Self-Determination Theory and storytelling, it is hypothesized that storytelling will enhance students' motivation by fulfilling their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The findings will contribute to the field of educational management by offering a pedagogical strategy that enhances both cognitive and emotional engagement in religious learning. This study provides practical implications for educators in religious settings, encouraging the use of storytelling to create more engaging, value-driven, and motivating learning experiences.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an ex post facto correlational design to examine the effect of storytelling in Qur'anic instruction on students' intrinsic learning motivation. A quantitative design was chosen to enable objective measurement and statistical analysis of the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2014). The ex post facto design was applied because the independent variable, storytelling in Qur'anic instruction, was not manipulated experimentally but observed as it naturally occurred in the classroom setting (Ejelöv & Luke, 2020). This design allowed for the analysis of existing conditions and their impact on students' intrinsic motivation without altering the classroom environment.

The study was conducted with 33 sixth-grade elementary school students from regular and intensive classes, selected using total sampling. This sampling method was employed to ensure the representativeness of the sample and to minimize sampling bias, as it included all members of the population in the research sample. The independent variable was storytelling in Qur'anic instruction, and the dependent variable was intrinsic learning motivation. A Likert-scale questionnaire, consisting of 45 items (20 for storytelling and 25 for intrinsic motivation), was used as the research instrument. The instrument's validity was assessed using Corrected Item-Total Correlation, with reliability evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), confirming the instrument's high reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Data were collected through the administration of the questionnaire after the students participated in Qur'anic learning sessions using storytelling. The data collection was conducted in the classroom under teacher supervision to ensure accurate responses. The responses were coded and converted into numerical data based on the Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26.00, including descriptive statistics to summarize the data and inferential statistics, such as Pearson correlation and simple linear regression, to analyze the relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation. The regression analysis used the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to measure the effect size. Ethical considerations were ensured by obtaining voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring no interference with regular classroom activities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted to provide an overview of the distribution of scores for the storytelling and intrinsic motivation variables. The table below presents the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for each variable.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Storytelling (X)</i>	33	55	80	66.12	6.87
<i>Motivasi Intrinsik (Y)</i>	33	68	100	84.36	8.65

As seen in Table 1, the storytelling variable had a mean score of 66.12 (SD = 6.87), indicating that students generally had a positive perception of storytelling in Qur'anic instruction. The intrinsic motivation variable had a mean score of 84.36 (SD = 8.65), which shows a relatively high level of intrinsic learning motivation among the students. Both variables fall into the high category, suggesting that the students were positively engaged with storytelling-based Qur'anic instruction and exhibited strong intrinsic motivation to learn.

### Assumption Testing

Prior to inferential analysis, assumption testing was conducted to ensure the data met the requirements for parametric analysis. The normality test indicated that the residuals were normally distributed, with a significance value of 0.837 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Additionally, the linearity test confirmed a linear relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation, as indicated by a non-significant deviation from linearity ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the data were deemed appropriate for regression analysis.

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the strength of the relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2, indicating the degree of association between the two variables.

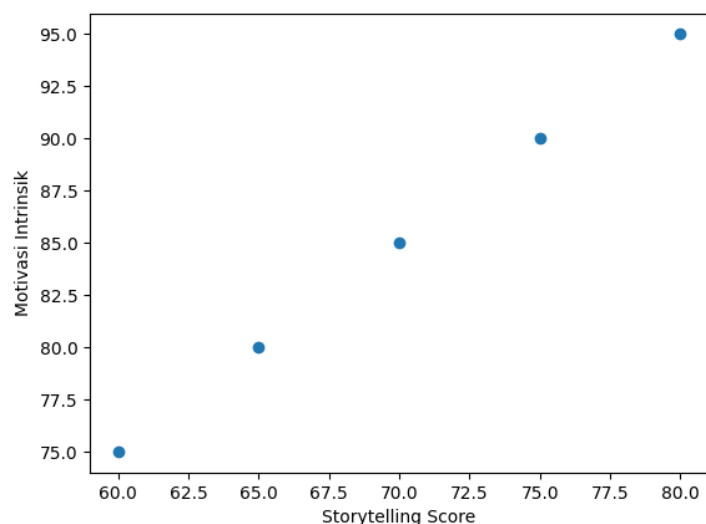
**Table 2. Pearson Correlation**

Variable	Storytelling (X)	Intrinsic Motivation (Y)
<i>Storytelling (X)</i>	1.000	0.878
<i>Intrinsic Motivation (Y)</i>	0.878	1.000

Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000

As shown in Table 2, the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between storytelling and intrinsic motivation was 0.878 with a significance level of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the two variables, suggesting that storytelling is highly associated with intrinsic motivation in Qur'anic instruction.

To further examine the relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation, a visual analysis was conducted using a scatter plot. This figure provides a graphical representation of how the two variables are associated across the observed data.



**Figure 1. Relationship between Storytelling and Intrinsic Motivation**

As shown in Figure 1, the scatter plot illustrates a clear positive linear trend between storytelling scores and intrinsic motivation. This pattern indicates that as the storytelling score increases, the level of students' intrinsic motivation also tends to increase. The distribution of data points forms an upward trajectory, confirming the strong positive relationship identified in the correlation analysis. This visual evidence reinforces the statistical findings, suggesting that storytelling in Qur'anic instruction plays an important role in enhancing students' intrinsic motivation.

### Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of storytelling on intrinsic motivation. The results are presented in three main components: Model Summary, ANOVA, and Coefficients.

### Model Summary

To assess the strength of the relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation, the model summary is presented in Table 3 below. This summary includes the correlation coefficient ( $R$ ), the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), adjusted  $R^2$ , and the standard error of estimate, which provide a comprehensive overview of the model's explanatory power.

**Table 3. Model Summary**

Model	Coefficient		Standard Error	
	R (Corr.)	R Square (Det.)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.878	0.771	0.764	4.25

As shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.878, indicating a very strong relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.771, meaning that 77.1% of the variance in intrinsic motivation can be explained by storytelling, while the remaining 22.9% is influenced by other factors not captured by the model. The adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.764 indicates a similar explanatory power while accounting for the number of predictors in the model. The standard error of estimate was 4.25, reflecting the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line.

#### ANOVA

To evaluate the overall significance of the regression model, an ANOVA test was conducted. The results of the test are presented in Table 4 below, providing insight into the statistical significance of the model and its appropriateness for explaining the relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation.

**Table 4. ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Regression</i>	1885.12	1	1885.12	104.50	0.000
<i>Residual</i>	558.79	31	18.03		
<i>Total</i>	2443.91	32			

As shown in Table 4, the regression model was statistically significant with an F-value of 104.50 and a significance level of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the model is appropriate for explaining the relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation. The low p-value confirms that the model is valid and that storytelling significantly contributes to intrinsic motivation. The sum of squares for regression (1885.12) indicates the explained variance, while the residual sum of squares (558.79) reflects the unexplained variance. The degrees of freedom (df) and mean squares provide additional details for the analysis.

## Coefficients

To determine the direction and magnitude of the effect of storytelling on intrinsic motivation, the regression coefficients were analyzed. The results of the analysis, including the regression coefficients, standard errors, and significance values, are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Coefficients

Variabel	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	11.276	7.188	-	1.569	0.127
Storytelling (X)	1.105	0.108	0.878	10.221	0.000

As shown in Table 5, storytelling had a regression coefficient (B) of 1.105 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that storytelling has a positive and statistically significant effect on intrinsic motivation. The coefficient value suggests that for every unit increase in storytelling, intrinsic motivation increases by 1.105 units. The beta value of 0.878 further supports the strong positive relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation. The t-value of 10.221 ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that the effect of storytelling on intrinsic motivation is statistically significant, reinforcing the positive impact of storytelling on students' intrinsic learning motivation.

## Regression Equation

Based on the regression analysis, the equation is formulated as follows:

$$Y = 11.276 + 1.105X$$

This equation indicates that each one-unit increase in storytelling is associated with an increase of 1.105 units in intrinsic motivation.

## Summary of Findings

Overall, the results of this study indicate that 1) there is a very strong relationship between storytelling and intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.878$ ), 2) storytelling explains 77.1% of the variance in intrinsic motivation, 3) the regression model is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), and 4) storytelling has a positive and significant effect on students' intrinsic motivation.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that storytelling in Qur'anic instruction significantly enhances students' intrinsic learning motivation. The correlation coefficient of 0.878 and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.771$ ) indicate a very strong and statistically significant

relationship, suggesting that storytelling functions as a powerful pedagogical tool to engage students internally in the learning process. This result is consistent with previous studies on the effectiveness of storytelling in increasing motivation (Wu & Chen, 2020), but it extends the existing literature by applying it specifically to Qur'anic instruction, an area that has received limited attention in educational research.

Theoretically, these findings can be interpreted through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that intrinsic motivation arises when the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Ryan & Deci, 2022). Storytelling, as demonstrated in this study, appears to fulfill all three needs. The narrative structures provide students with the autonomy to engage with content in a meaningful way, while the coherent storytelling approach supports their understanding and enhances perceived competence. Additionally, the emotional engagement facilitated by the stories fosters a sense of relatedness, making the learning experience more personally relevant and motivational.

This study also aligns with cognitive-narrative theories, which suggest that humans are naturally inclined to process information through stories (Beach, 2025). Storytelling, as a pedagogical strategy, aids students in organizing and internalizing knowledge in a meaningful way, enhancing comprehension and retention. Moreover, from an affective neuroscience perspective, the emotional engagement induced by storytelling plays a crucial role in strengthening motivation (Li, Gow & Zhou, 2020). This integration of cognitive and emotional elements helps students connect with the material on a deeper level, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation.

Additionally, the present study extends previous research by focusing specifically on intrinsic motivation within Qur'anic instruction. While previous studies have explored storytelling in educational contexts (Sarica, 2023), few have focused on the emotional and motivational outcomes in religious education, particularly in the context of Islamic teachings. This distinction is crucial because intrinsic motivation, as opposed to cognitive outcomes like achievement or comprehension, is a key driver of long-term academic success and sustained learning behavior (Goh, 2026; Wu et al., 2024). This study contributes to the existing body of literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of storytelling in fostering intrinsic motivation in religious education.

In the context of Islamic education, the significance of storytelling is especially profound (Bin Muhammad Yusoff, 2023). The Qur'an itself uses narrative (qashash) as a central pedagogical tool for conveying moral and spiritual lessons (Akrim, 2021). This study illustrates that integrating storytelling into Qur'anic instruction is not a new idea but rather a revitalization of an

existing pedagogical method. Storytelling allows students to internalize Qur'anic values more meaningfully, fostering a deeper emotional and motivational connection to the content. The study's findings suggest that storytelling serves as a bridge between textual knowledge and personal, internalized motivation.

Finally, the study's results indicate that storytelling plays a dominant role in influencing students' intrinsic motivation, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.771. This is a relatively high level of explanatory power, suggesting that the quality of instructional design especially through narrative structures—is critical in shaping students' motivational dynamics. However, the remaining unexplained variance (22.9%) points to the need for further research to explore additional factors, such as teacher characteristics and socio-cultural context, which may also contribute to intrinsic motivation. This highlights the importance of adopting a more comprehensive model that captures the complexities of intrinsic motivation.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that storytelling in Qur'anic instruction significantly enhances students' intrinsic learning motivation, providing empirical evidence that storytelling is a central pedagogical strategy for fostering deeper engagement in learning. The findings support Self-Determination Theory, highlighting storytelling's role in fulfilling students' psychological needs of engagement, meaning-making, and emotional connection. The study contributes to the academic literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of narrative-based learning, particularly within religious education. However, the research also acknowledges that intrinsic motivation is influenced by multiple factors beyond storytelling, suggesting that future studies should explore additional variables and adopt broader methodological approaches to gain a more holistic understanding of motivational development in educational contexts.

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