



Storytelling Methods In Islamic Cultural History Learning: A Systematic Literature Review On Students' Learning Interest

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the utilization of storytelling techniques in the instruction of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) and their correlation with students' learning interests. History education is frequently regarded as monotonous and less engaging due to intricate content, teacher-centered delivery, rote memorization practices, and limited contextual presentation. These factors contribute to students' diminished interest in learning SKI. Consequently, innovative pedagogical approaches are necessary to make learning more meaningful and captivating. This research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) by analyzing twenty articles published between 2019 and 2025 sourced from Google Scholar, Scopus, and SINTA databases. Articles were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria pertinent to storytelling methodologies, SKI learning, and students' learning interests. The chosen studies were analyzed thematically to identify key findings and emerging research trends. The review identified three primary findings: (1) storytelling enhances students' attention and emotional engagement, (2) storytelling facilitates a contextual and meaningful comprehension of historical content, and (3) its effectiveness is contingent upon teachers' pedagogical competence, media support, and integration with other learning strategies. In summary, storytelling presents a promising approach for boosting students' interest in learning SKI and elevating the quality of history education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) is a fundamental component of Indonesia's national education system aimed at educating, guiding, and directing students to become individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character (Siregar & Hasibuan, 2024). Within the context of PAI, one subject that plays a significant role in achieving these objectives is Islamic Cultural History (Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam/SKI). History learning holds a strategic position in character building because it contains life values that can serve as role models for younger generations. Many countries consider history an essential element of national education because historical events provide valuable lessons, both positive and negative, for building a better society (Wulandari et al., 2024). Therefore, SKI learning is directed toward enabling students to recognise, understand, and internalise the values embedded in Islamic history as a foundation for their way of life through guidance, teaching, role modelling, and habituation. SKI functions not only as a medium for the transfer of historical knowledge but also as a means of internalizing Islamic educational values, which constitute the primary objective of Islamic education (Saman, 2024).

However, the implementation of PAI, particularly SKI learning, still faces various challenges. The rapid development of information technology, globalisation, and socio-cultural changes requires Islamic schools to continuously adapt and innovate. These challenges include the quality of educators, the continued use of conventional teaching methods, limited educational facilities and infrastructure, and the need to integrate character education into PAI learning (Hardiansyah & Sriyanti, 2025). More specifically, there is a prevailing perception among students that history subjects are boring, unattractive, and difficult to understand (Ariyanti & Anggerawati, 2024). This occurs because SKI materials are often delivered monotonously without direct relevance to students' real-life experiences, resulting in low learning interest and motivation. Lecture-based, memorisation-oriented approaches, which are still commonly used, are insufficient for stimulating students' imagination and deep understanding of historical values. Consequently, students tend to memorise facts without comprehending the social, cultural, and spiritual contexts underlying historical events. In fact, students' active engagement is essential for developing meaningful understanding and long-term retention in history learning (Zamhariroh et al., 2025).

In the learning process, learning interest is one of the key factors determining students' success in understanding learning materials. Learning interest refers to an internal drive that encourages individuals to learn, pay attention, and actively participate in learning activities (Putri & Fitriani, 2024). According to Slameto, interest is a feeling of preference and attraction toward something without coercion (Aprijal et al., 2020). Students with high learning interest tend to be more focused, active, and enthusiastic during the learning process, enabling them to achieve learning objectives more effectively. Conversely, low learning interest often causes students to become passive, easily bored, and less engaged in classroom activities

(Debby Yuliana Sinaga et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers need to implement learning methods that effectively enhance students' interest in learning.

In response to these issues, innovation in teaching methods and learning media is crucial for improving the quality of SKI learning. Teaching methods employed by PAI teachers should be adapted to learning objectives, students' characteristics, types of learning materials, and classroom situations (Zein Damanik & Larasati, 2025). One method considered relevant for SKI learning is storytelling. Storytelling is a technique of delivering information through engaging and structured narratives that can improve students' memory and understanding of the material presented (Julianti & Nurani, 2025). Besides being an art of narration, storytelling also serves as a means of instilling values without appearing didactic. This method not only activates intellectual aspects but also engages students' emotions, imagination, creativity, and sensitivity (Wardiah, 2017). In SKI learning, which is rich in stories of figures, events, places, and historical periods, storytelling enables teachers to present materials in a coherent, engaging, and meaningful manner so that students can more easily understand and internalise the learning content.

Several previous studies have demonstrated that the implementation of storytelling methods in SKI learning has a positive impact on students' learning interest. Research conducted by Putri and Fitriani (2024) revealed that storytelling significantly increased students' learning interest, as indicated by higher enthusiasm, attention, and active participation during classroom activities. In addition, storytelling was found to improve students' historical imagination skills, enabling them to reconstruct and retell historical events more meaningfully (Wulandari et al., 2024). Nevertheless, studies related to the implementation of storytelling in SKI learning remain scattered across various publications and have not yet been comprehensively synthesized through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach.

Based on the background above, this article aims to examine the implementation of storytelling methods in Islamic Cultural History learning and their relevance to enhancing students' learning interest through a literature study. Through the SLR approach, this study seeks to synthesize findings from previous research in order to provide a conceptual understanding of the effectiveness of storytelling, the factors influencing its successful implementation, and its contribution to creating more contextual and applicable SKI learning. Furthermore, this study identifies limitations in previous research, such as the dominance of studies conducted in specific educational contexts, limited variations in learning media, and the lack of longitudinal studies examining the impact of storytelling on students' character development. Therefore, future research is recommended to develop empirical studies with more diverse research designs, integrate interactive digital media, and examine the long-term effectiveness of storytelling across different educational levels and learning contexts.

2. METODE

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which is a systematic approach used to identify, evaluate, and synthesize findings from previous studies related to a specific research topic (Triandini et al., 2019). The SLR method was selected because it enables researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of research trends, patterns, and findings regarding the implementation of storytelling methods in Islamic Cultural History (SKI) learning and their relevance to students' learning interests. In conducting the review, this study adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to ensure a transparent, systematic, and accountable selection of articles.

The review process began with the formulation of research questions that guided the entire literature review process, namely: 1) What are the concepts and characteristics of storytelling methods in learning? 2) How are storytelling methods implemented in SKI learning? 3) What is the role of storytelling methods in improving students' learning interest in Islamic Cultural History learning?

After formulating the research questions, the researchers developed a review protocol as a guideline for literature searching, screening, eligibility assessment, and data analysis (Nata et al., 2025). Literature searches were conducted through several academic databases and journal portals, including Google Scholar, Garuda, ERIC, and nationally accredited journals indexed in SINTA. The use of multiple databases was intended to increase the comprehensiveness and coverage of relevant literature sources. The search was conducted using several keywords and keyword combinations, including "storytelling," "storytelling method," "Islamic Cultural History," "history learning," "digital storytelling," and "learning interest."

The inclusion criteria in this study were: 1) articles discussing storytelling methods in educational contexts, particularly SKI or history learning; 2) articles published between 2020 and 2025; 3) articles published in accredited national or reputable international journals; 4) articles available in full text; and 5) studies employing qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, classroom action research, or literature review approaches. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: 1) articles not relevant to the focus of the study; 2) articles without clear research procedures or findings; 3) duplicate articles from different databases; and 4) conference papers, opinion articles, or unpublished manuscripts.

The article selection process followed the PRISMA stages consisting of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. At the identification stage, a total of 86 articles were initially obtained from various databases. After removing 18 duplicate articles, 68 articles remained for the screening stage. During the screening process, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance to the research focus, resulting in the exclusion of 34 articles that did not specifically discuss storytelling methods or SKI learning. Furthermore, 34 full-text articles were assessed at the eligibility stage. At this stage, 14 articles were excluded because they did not provide sufficient methodological explanations or did not focus on

students' learning interest. As a result, 20 articles were ultimately selected and included in the final review and thematic analysis.

To ensure the quality and credibility of the reviewed studies, a quality appraisal process was conducted using several criteria, including: 1) clarity of research objectives; 2) suitability of research methods; 3) completeness of data analysis procedures; 4) relevance of findings to the research topic; and 5) clarity of conclusions. Only articles meeting these quality criteria were included in the final analysis.

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process involved classifying research findings into several major themes, including: 1) the concepts and characteristics of storytelling methods; 2) the implementation of storytelling in SKI learning; and 3) the role of storytelling in improving students' learning interest. This thematic analysis aimed to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and research trends across the reviewed studies.

The final stage involved synthesizing the findings and drawing conclusions by integrating the thematic analysis results to produce a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the potential of storytelling methods in Islamic Cultural History learning and their implications for enhancing students' learning interest

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESULT

a. The Concept and Characteristics of Storytelling

The storytelling method in learning is understood as a pedagogical approach that utilizes stories as the primary medium for delivering instructional materials. Storytelling does not merely present information; rather, it organizes learning content into systematic narrative structures, making it easier for students to understand and engage with the material.

Table 1. The Concept and Characteristics of Storytelling

No	Author(s) and Year	Research Objective	Method	Relevant Findings
1	Maknun & Adelia (2023)	To describe the implementation of the storytelling method in learning for elementary Islamic school (MI/SD) students.	Descriptive qualitative	Storytelling is the activity of narrating a story, including the ability to organize scenes, events, and dialogues.
2	Adelia & Maharani (2025)	To develop digital storytelling learning media for short story writing materials for fifth-grade students at	ADDIE model consisting of Analyze, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation	The use of digital storytelling as a learning medium can be considered an alternative to traditional classroom learning.

		SD Negeri 02 Indralaya Utara.		
3	Fithriyah et al. (2025)	To examine the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving students' learning outcomes on folklore materials at MI Darul Ulum Pasinan Baureno.	Descriptive qualitative	This method involves delivering stories orally in an engaging manner, which can increase students' interest and participation in learning. Storytelling not only helps students understand the content of stories but also enhances their imagination and language skills.
4	Wulandari et al. (2024)	To improve students' historical imagination skills in history learning.	Classroom Action Research (CAR)	Storytelling methods are essential in history learning. Storytelling is an oral activity conducted to convey messages, information, or fairy tales packaged into narratives that can be listened to and understood by learners.
5	Sutejo et al. (2025)	To investigate the effect of the storytelling method on students' interest in learning Tarikh subjects.	Quantitative	The storytelling method is implemented by delivering information, messages, or lessons through narratives. It is applied orally to create effective communication and evoke emotions, enabling students and teachers to connect with the story and understand the intended message.

6	Nurbaeti et al. (2022)	To identify the implementation of storytelling methods in improving children's literacy in Indonesian language learning.	Descriptive qualitative	In addition to fostering children's reading interest, storytelling methods can also improve verbal language skills, comprehensive reading comprehension, and writing abilities.
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Storytelling is considered one of the oldest forms of art. Long before the emergence of written records and books, humans communicated and documented life events through oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. Oral tradition was once regarded as a primary means used by parents to convey values and experiences (Wardiah, 2017).

Storytelling is defined as the activity of "telling a story." The term refers to the act of conveying narratives, either orally or through other media, with the purpose of delivering messages, stimulating imagination, and building emotional connections between the storyteller and the audience (Fithriyah et al., 2025). Conceptually, storytelling is characterised by the use of plots, characters, conflicts, and moral messages integrated into learning objectives. These characteristics make storytelling communicative and contextual because the stories presented can be linked to students' experiences and everyday lives. The storytelling method can also help teachers overcome difficulties in designing enjoyable learning activities while preventing students from becoming unmotivated in certain subjects (Maknun & Adelia, 2023).

Stories possess power, functions, and benefits as communication media as well as methods for shaping children's character. Storytelling represents a creative process that continuously activates not only intellectual aspects but also sensitivity, morality, emotions, artistic appreciation, fantasy, and imagination, engaging both left-brain and right-brain functions (Wulandari et al., 2024). In storytelling activities, the narration process itself plays a crucial role because it is through this process that the messages embedded in the stories can be effectively conveyed to children. During storytelling sessions, knowledge transfer occurs as storytellers communicate information and values to their audiences.

Several studies indicate that storytelling can be developed into digital forms without losing its essential narrative nature. Digital storytelling utilises media such as images, text, sound effects, music, videos, and animations to present stories. Although supported by digital media, the narrative structure remains the core element of the method, while media functions as a supporting tool for story delivery. In educational contexts, digital storytelling has been shown to generate positive responses by creating engaging learning experiences, and its integration into the curriculum is recommended to support more effective learning outcomes. Therefore, storytelling can fundamentally be understood as a learning method that emphasises

the power of narratives and students' emotional engagement in understanding learning materials.

However, the active role of teachers in managing storytelling techniques is essential to ensure that the stories delivered achieve the intended learning objectives. Storytelling methods should be combined with questioning, visualisation, summarising, and retelling activities in order to develop students' comprehensive understanding, critical listening abilities, and logical thinking skills (Nurbaeti et al., 2022).

b. Storytelling Methods in Islamic Cultural History (SKI) Learning

Table 2. The Implementation of Storytelling in SKI Learning

No	Author(s) and Year	Research Objective	Method	Relevant Findings
1	Hambali et al. (2021)	To analyze and examine the implementation of the storytelling method as an effort to improve motivation in Islamic Cultural History learning.	Descriptive qualitative with a case study approach	Islamic Cultural History emphasizes understanding the essence, meaning, values, and historical chronology of the development of Islamic da'wah throughout different periods. The storytelling method can effectively develop students' imagination and character through the values embedded in the stories presented.
2	Zamhariroh et al. (2025)	To analyze the potential use of Plotagon in implementing the ASSURE Model for digital storytelling-based SKI learning.	Library research	History subjects not only present facts and past events but also instill noble values and wisdom contained in Islamic civilization.
3	Putri & Fitriani (2024)	To determine the effectiveness of the storytelling method in fostering students' learning interest in Islamic Cultural History (SKI) at UPTD SPF SDN Blok VI Baru.	Classroom Action Research (CAR)	SKI functions not only as a transfer of historical knowledge but also as a medium for internalizing noble moral values, which are the primary goals of Islamic education.

4	Wulandari et al. (2024)	To improve students' historical imagination skills in history learning.	Classroom Action Research (CAR)	History learning is highly important for a nation. Many countries consider history education an essential component of national education.
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The content of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) subjects encompasses the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and values. Among these three dimensions, the most fundamental aspect is the exploration of moral lessons (*ibrah*) and the interpretation of historical facts. Therefore, learning SKI in schools is not merely a process of transferring historical knowledge, but more importantly, it serves as value education that internalizes Islamic values within students.

Islamic Cultural History refers to the history of intellectual advancement and the development of civilization achieved during various periods of Islamic rule, beginning from the era of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the contemporary development of Islamic civilization. The history of Islamic civilization reflects the achievements of Muslims in the fields of literature, science, and the arts. The primary objective of SKI learning is to draw lessons from the historical journeys of past communities, both obedient and disobedient societies, and to use these lessons as guidance and role models for present and future life in order to attain happiness in both worldly life and the hereafter (Suryadi et al., 2025).

Based on the literature review, storytelling methods in Islamic Cultural History learning are implemented by presenting historical materials in structured, coherent narratives. Chronological SKI materials, such as the Prophet's da'wah journey, the development of Islamic civilisation, and the stories of historical figures, are particularly suitable for delivery through narratives that contain clear plots, characters, and settings.

In learning practices, teachers act not only as facilitators but also as narrators who deliver learning materials through contextual historical stories. Storytelling is not limited to verbal narration; it can also be integrated with collaborative learning, digital media, and supporting activities such as question-and-answer sessions, reflective discussions, and simple assignments related to the story content. The implementation of history learning through storytelling methods, which involve activities such as constructing stories, organising narratives, and retelling historical events, provides opportunities for students to develop their historical imagination, namely the ability to reconstruct and retell historical events. This ability is considered highly important in history learning (Wulandari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, based on the review of the analysed articles, the storytelling method has been shown to positively influence students' learning interest in Islamic Cultural History learning. Nearly all reviewed studies demonstrated relatively consistent findings, indicating increased enthusiasm, attention, and active student engagement when SKI materials were delivered through storytelling compared to conventional methods such as lectures. Storytelling was found to transform

students' perceptions of SKI subjects, which had previously been regarded as boring and heavily dependent on memorisation. Through the presentation of learning materials in the form of narratives involving plots, characters, conflicts, and moral values, students became more capable of understanding the content while simultaneously developing a greater interest in participating in the learning process.

c. Storytelling in Enhancing Students' Learning Interest

According to Slameto, interest is defined as a feeling of preference and attraction toward something without coercion (Aprijal et al., 2020). Interest is a psychological tendency that encourages individuals to choose, attend to, or participate in certain activities. Interest may emerge from previous experiences, personality traits, and social and cultural influences. In the educational context, learning interest refers to an individual's psychological state characterised by strong motivation and enthusiasm for learning activities.

Learning interest is closely related to the extent to which students are engaged in the learning process and how effectively they absorb information. It encompasses not only curiosity about a particular topic but also the willingness to invest time and effort in exploring it. Learning interest is an important element that motivates students to seek knowledge, rooted in their attraction, enjoyment, and desire to gain understanding (Furqon, 2024).

Table 3. Storytelling in Enhancing Students' Learning Interest

1	Aprijal et al. (2020)	To determine the influence of students' learning interest on their learning outcomes in the Aqidah Akhlak subject at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darussalam Sungai Salak, Tempuling District, and to identify factors influencing learning outcomes.	Quantitative	There is a significant influence between students' learning interest and learning outcomes. Learning interest does not emerge automatically, as it is influenced by various factors, including teachers' attitudes and the instructional materials delivered.
2	Budiasningrum et al. (2025)	This study focuses on the importance of selecting teaching methods in relation to students' learning interest.	Descriptive analysis	The primary factor influencing the emergence of students' learning interest is the teaching method used by educators in presenting learning materials. The selection of

				enjoyable learning methods can enhance both students' learning interest and learning outcomes.
3	Debby Yuliana Sinaga et al. (2024)	To analyze students' learning interest before and after the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model.	Classroom Action Research (CAR)	Learning interest is one of the crucial aspects in education, particularly in achieving learning objectives. Teachers should carefully select learning models that are appropriate for both the subject matter and students' characteristics.
4	Laoli et al. (2024)	To identify students' learning interest and the factors influencing learning interest among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa in the 2023/2024 academic year.	Quantitative	Factors influencing students' learning interest consist of internal and external factors. Internal factors include feelings of enjoyment, attention, attraction, and engagement, while external factors include parental support and the surrounding environment.

Based on the results of the literature review, learning methods play a significant role in enhancing students' learning interest. The improvement of learning interest does not occur instantly; rather, it develops through learning processes that are varied, innovative, interactive, and aligned with students' learning styles. Such learning processes are capable of attracting students' attention, fostering emotional engagement, and creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere.

The delivery of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) materials in the form of stories enables students to focus more effectively during the learning process compared to conventional instructional methods. Students demonstrate higher levels of interest, as indicated by their willingness to listen and their active responses throughout

classroom activities. This condition suggests that storytelling can foster learning interest through the aspect of attention, which is considered one of the primary indicators of learning interest.

In addition, storytelling contributes to enhancing learning interest through students' emotional engagement. Historical narratives of Islamic civilization presented in coherent and expressive ways allow students to experience the emotions embedded within historical events, such as exemplary conduct, struggle, and the moral values of Islamic figures. This emotional involvement encourages students to feel more connected to the learning materials, thereby generating enjoyment and sustained interest in participating in SKI learning activities.

Furthermore, storytelling helps simplify complex SKI materials that are rich in historical information. Through narratives, students can more easily understand sequences of events and cause-and-effect relationships within Islamic history, making learning feel less burdensome and more accessible. This ease of understanding contributes to increased learning interest, as students no longer perceive SKI as a difficult and monotonous subject.

Overall, the findings of the literature review indicate that storytelling, as a learning method, is capable of enhancing students' learning interest in Islamic Cultural History learning. This role is reflected in the increased attention, emotional engagement, and active participation demonstrated during the learning process. With these characteristics, storytelling can be regarded as a relevant and effective instructional method that can be implemented across various educational contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is a relevant and effective instructional approach in Islamic Cultural History (SKI) learning. The synthesis of various research findings demonstrates that the implementation of storytelling can create more contextual, engaging, and meaningful history learning experiences through the presentation of materials in coherent narrative forms that actively involve students in the learning process. The findings of this review also reveal that storytelling contributes to the enhancement of students' learning interest, as indicated by increased attention, emotional engagement, active participation, and students' ability to understand and internalize Islamic historical materials more deeply. Therefore, the findings of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) provide a conceptual contribution by reinforcing the understanding that storytelling functions not only as a method of delivering instructional content but also as a learning strategy that supports the internalization of values in SKI learning.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of storytelling is strongly influenced by teachers' abilities to design narrative structures, manage instructional time, select appropriate learning media, and adjust storytelling delivery according to students' characteristics. In addition, this review has several limitations, including its restriction to articles available in certain databases, the dominance of studies conducted within particular educational contexts and levels, and the limited number

of longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of storytelling on students' learning outcomes and character development.

Therefore, future studies are recommended to develop more diverse empirical investigations involving broader educational contexts and samples, as well as integrating digital technology and interactive media into the implementation of storytelling in SKI learning. Further research should also examine the influence of storytelling on affective aspects, character development, and students' critical thinking skills in greater depth in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of storytelling methods in Islamic Cultural History learning.

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