

# Using digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education and its impact on achievement and developing moral thinking

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the use of digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on achievement and how it affects the development of moral thinking. The quasi-experimental design was implemented as a methodology and the sample included of (60) students from the fourth grade from Abdul Rahman bin Awf School in Abha. The results showed that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the average responses of students in the two groups in the test. The experimental group performed better than the control group. The findings also showed that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the average responses of students in the two groups (experimental and control) in the moral thinking scale and favour of the experimental group.

**Keywords:** digital story; Islamic education; achievement; moral thinking

## 1. Introduction

The Islamic education curriculum aims to achieve several of the main and essential functions in the lives of students. The most prominent of these functions is to consolidate, develop, and improve Islamic values and beliefs in the souls of students and society. This is the first mission of the Islamic education teachers as they start their journey in the institutions of education, and the goal increases with the increase of the level of students and in light of the developments and experiences that the teacher goes through and acquires. From this standpoint, the Islamic education teacher must catch up with modern culture to accomplish the required tasks and to carry out his educational roles following the developments that the world is going through (Bint Haridh, 2015).

The success of the educational process depends on a group of elements. The teaching method that the teacher chooses in the teaching process is the most important of these elements, especially if it is linked to an abstract subject. Students view the Islamic education subject as difficult in light of its characteristics and their inability to form integrated conceptual structures for the principles that they learn. Traditional methods are considered an obstacle to delivering information to students in a way that ensures achieving the desired goals and objectives. Therefore, the teacher must find teaching methods that help in presenting the material, contribute to the students' comprehension and understanding, and keep it in their minds. The appropriate strategy transforms the academic content of the subject into the students' minds, which makes the learning process investigative and not instructive (Saed et al., 2018).

The digital story strategy is a new and important strategies in the e-learning process, which creates an appropriate environment to stimulate students' motivation to learn and motivate them to actively participate with the academic material by providing a realistic atmosphere close to the students' sensory perceptions. It helps attract students to the educational material and helps to practice thinking in a sound scientific manner (Baabbad, 2021). The use of the digital story strategy within the educational system is very important to meet the requirements and needs of students, increase their academic achievement, and develop their moral thinking. It contributes to attracting and drawing students' attention to the meanings contained in the academic material because humans are naturally inclined to the story, whether by reading it, hearing it, or watching it (Ibrahim, 2020).

### **1.1. Problem statement**

Islamic education is the basis for the upbringing of all Islamic personalities. Therefore, great attention must be given to it, and work must be done to deliver it in ways and methods that preserve the impact of learning and keep pace with the times through the use of modern means in education. However, it has not received the attention hoped for from male and female teachers in the field. It remained captive to the traditional and usual methods, which mainly consist of memorization and direct teaching, and not using methods that attract the students to the subject and enhance and develop their mental abilities. There are several reasons behind this notion, such as lacking good awareness regarding the vital role of modern methods in the teaching and learning process, and the lack of awareness courses among teachers on the importance of using different strategies to teach students. Digital stories are also modern methods and techniques in the teaching process that is subject to experimentation with its well-known steps for teaching Islamic education. Therefore, the current study seeks to test the impact of digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on achievement and moral thinking.

### **1.2. Objectives of the study**

The current study is based on the main objective of “investigating the impact of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on achievement and developing moral thinking.”

The following sub-objectives were formed out from the main objective:

- 1) To explore the impact of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on the achievement of fourth-grade primary school students.
- 2) To explore the effect of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education to develop moral thinking among fourth-grade primary school students.

### **1.3. Questions of the study**

The current study answers the main question: “What is the impact of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on achievement and the development of moral thinking?”

The sub-questions for this research are:

- 1) What is the impact of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on the achievement of fourth-grade primary school students?
- 2) What is the impact of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education to develop moral thinking among fourth-grade primary school students?

#### **1.4. Significance of the study**

The study opens the way for researchers and those interested in employing digital stories to conduct qualitative research in this field that benefits the educational process. The results will encourage Islamic education teachers to employ digital stories during teaching, by urging the relevant departments to prepare digital stories for various lessons. The study also hopes to develop the professional performance of Islamic education teachers by using the digital stories strategy to increase achievement and develop moral thinking. It contributes to providing educational literature in the field of the story method in teaching in general, and digital stories in particular, which makes it an addition in its field to the Saudi library.

#### **1.5. Limitations of the study**

- 1) Thematic limitations: This study was limited to addressing the topic “The effect of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on achievement and developing moral thinking.”
- 2) The human limits included the sample which was selected from the fourth-grade students at Abdul Rahman bin Awf School.
- 3) The spatial limits included applying the study in the city of Abha in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- 4) Time limits: This study was applied during the academic year 2022–2023.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Digital story**

Technology has revealed a modern generation of stories, most notably the digital story, as it contributes to integrating computer-based methods with narrative explanation. The digital story has made its mark on the teaching process, as it suits all types of learners, whether audio or visual. It adds excitement and fun to develop and enhance capabilities to solve problems. It is compatible with all age groups and is used in most academic fields (Rahimi and Yadollahi, 2017).

Shelton et al. (2017) defined a digital story as a narrative explanation in conjunction with visual communication that contains realistic images with a set of sounds. Al-Darwish and Abdel-Aleem (2017) define it as “a realistic or fictional prose story based on the organized mixing of maps, pictures, texts, voice-over, and musical backgrounds to embody the characters, events, phenomena, and situations that support the achievement of one or more goals of learning the academic subject.” Nazuk et al. (2015) defined it as a modern and new method of explaining the story digitally through the use of audio, music, situations, pictures, and experiences. Thang et al. (2014) argued that it is a technique of mastery of narration with a variety of diverse and multiple video, audio, media, and image files.

The digital story plays a vital role in the process of teaching and because it simplifies the such process, develops students' thinking skills, and helps the teacher deliver new experiences to students in an effective manner, as tasks are easier to perform and ideas and concepts are easier to convey to students' minds. Students experience the atmosphere of the lesson by bringing abstract objects closer to their sensory perceptions, where they imagine their reality and truth (Arif and Naji, 2019). The digital story is also consistent with the needs and requirements of students because it is based on multiple media (audio, visual, and movement).

The digital story contains a set of educational and artistic elements as mentioned by Condy et al. (2012). First, point of view refers to identifying the idea and determining it from the point of view of its author. Second, the dramatic question that attracts the recipient, viewer, or student to the topic of the digital story, and waits for the answer at the end of the story, to receive the answer to the question. Third, emotional content refers to the feelings and emotions contained in the digital story, affects viewers and students, and contributes to attracting them while watching the digital story. Fourth, sound helps viewers and students understand the context of the digital story and motivates them to continue and follow the events (Rahimi and Yadollahi, 2017). The good sound that is desired to be included in the digital story must be chosen to ensure the impact on viewers and students and increase their harmony with the digital story. Fifth, conceptual music contributes to supporting the digital story and making it interesting and exciting for viewers and students. It can move viewers and students from one situation to another, influence their directions and positions, and motivate them to follow the events with enthusiasm. Sixth, the economy as the production of the digital story must be taken into account, so that it is economical in its events and time to avoid being long and boring, nor short or disruptive. Seventh, speed as the image, sound, and video must be displayed appropriately and quickly move the viewer or student from one scene to another in a logical order and sequence (Condy et al., 2012).

Digital stories are classified according to the way they are prepared (Shehata, 2014). The first type, storyboards, refers to a collection of texts and still images. It is sufficient to know how to make slides using the PowerPoint program and obtain images to place the images inside them to prepare stories. The second is video lyrics, which refers to the collection of phrases or images to form a short and simple story (Condy et al., 2012). The third is presentations, which refer to the combination of texts supported by movement and images with sound effects. The fourth is theatrical representation, which refers to focusing on events and feelings and also presenting the facts. Finally, video clips are a combination of conversations, images, and texts to form a story about a specific topic and carry specific goals from the point of view of the narrator (Shehata, 2014).

## **2.2. Moral thinking**

Moral thinking is one of the important aspects of human development because it is linked to the nature of mental interpretations of what is socially unacceptable or acceptable, what we should do, and what we should think about during the situations that a person experiences. Al-Andali and Al-Qarala (2022) defined moral thinking as

“the set of practical rules and orders that characterize positive (good) behaviour, which entails that moral thinking helps us distinguish between what is good and what is evil.” Ismail et al. (2021) defined moral thinking as “a judgment about an action or act that an individual makes after performing a process of logical reasoning called moral reasoning, based on obedience to society’s standards, obedience to the law, or based on general moral principles.” Muhammad (2021) views moral thinking as “the method by which an individual reaches a certain judgment of right or wrong, whose standards are derived from society’s morals and legislation.”

Muhammad (2020) stated that there are factors that affect moral thinking such as intelligence, which refers to the level of intelligence possessed by a student or individual that creates an obstacle between understanding situations and understanding moral terms. Another factor is the type of education, which refers to focusing on the mistakes committed by the student or individual without working to guide him to what is correct. Changes in social values are also an important factor that occurs in moral values, which cause imbalance and confusion among the student or individual (Al-Andali and Al-Qarala, 2022). Contradiction in moral behaviour is one of the reasons why children become disturbed in their feeling that there is a contradiction between what parents and teachers ask of them and the behaviour of adults themselves. Finally, conflict with social pressures, which could entail the conflict of ethical concepts used by a university to which a student belongs or an individual from another group with whom the student or individual interacts, all of which create a disturbance in the process of the student or individual choosing appropriate behaviour (Muhammad, 2020).

Moral thinking is characterized by a set of features and characteristics. It is universal and refers to the unification, stability, comprehensiveness, and universality of thinking in all cultures. Freezing moral thinking is another feature where a person stops thinking at a specific age, due to the defect in moral development to which the person is exposed (Sabira, 2019).

### **2.3. Previous studies**

Al-Yahisi (2023) explored how using the digital stories strategy develops speaking skills. The study relied on the quasi-experimental method and was included (60) seventh-grade female students in Sana’a, who were distributed into two groups with a ratio of (30) female students in each group. The findings revealed the existence of apparent variations in the scores of each group of the study. It was clear that the experimental group performed better in the test, which showed the positive impact of the strategy.

Al-Mhairat and Shehadeh (2023) studied how digital stories affect history learning outcomes. The scientists used a certain method called quasi-experimental. They studied a group of 44 boys and girls who were in the sixth grade. They were split into two groups: one group that was trying something new and one group that remained the same. There were 22 boys and girls in each group. The findings indicated that there were noticeable differences in the average scores of the two groups after the test was given. The experimental group had higher scores on average.

Al-Haseri and Al-Dalala (2023) looked at how well digital stories help students improve their skills in understanding and analyzing information, as well as their overall performance in learning Arabic. The study used a specific method called quasi-experimental and selected a group of 50 students in Saudi Arabia who were in the third grade and divided them into two smaller groups. The researchers used observation cards and tests to help with their study. The investigation yielded important differences in the scores of both groups participating in the study, where the students of the experimental group outperformed the students in the control group.

In 2022, Saeed conducted a study to see if the theory of successful intelligence could help teach philosophy and improve moral thinking skills in high school students. The scientist conducted an experiment on a group of 26 female students from the secondary stage in Al-Arish, Egypt. The research used a test to assess abilities in thinking about what is right and wrong. The results showed that there were big differences in the scores before and after the moral thinking test. The scores were much better after taking the test.

Haj Amin and Muhammad (2022) studied how digital stories can help kindergarten children learn about spiritual values. The study used a specific method called quasi-experimental to study a group of 70 young children in East Nile, Sudan. They split the sample into two groups. Each group had 35 students. The results indicated that there were notable differences in the average responses of the two groups after the measurement. The experimental group had better results.

Al-Noubi et al. (2021) examined the viability of the computerized story in creating melodic accomplishment among center school understudies. The think about utilized the quasi-experimental strategy with one gather through estimation (pre-post), and the consider test comprised of (15) male and female understudies. The comes about appeared that there were measurably noteworthy contrasts within the normal reactions of the understudies to the accomplishment test within the pre-and post-measurement, and favor of the post-measurement. The discoveries too found contrasts within the normal reactions of understudies on the accomplishment test within the post and follow-up estimation, in favor of the follow-up estimation.

Esdira (2021) explored the role of a life skills program based on the humanitarian approach to develop moral thinking and achieve psychological security among student teachers studying the teaching methods course at Bani Walid University in Libya. After using the experimental and descriptive approach, and applying the study on 38 students, the findings showed clear differences between the average scores of the students in the testss of moral thinking and in favour of the post-measurement. The findings also found differences between the average scores of students on the pre-and post-scale of psychological security and in favour of the post-application.

Cigerci and Gultekin (2017) explored how digital stories develop listening skills. The study relied on the experimental method. The study population consisted of fourth-grade students in Turkey. The note card was used as a study tool. The results revealed differences between students' scores in the pre-and post-measurement of listening skills in favour of the post-measurement, which means that there was an effect of digital stories in developing listening skills.

Previous studies have differed in dealing with the digital story according to their different objectives (Al-Yahisi, 2023). For example, dealt with the effectiveness of the

digital story in developing speaking skills while Haj Amin and Muhammad (2022) dealt with the effectiveness of the digital story in developing spiritual values and Cigerci and Gultekin (2017) addressed the impact of digital stories on developing listening skills. The current study agrees with the other studies in dealing with the digital story strategy and differs from them in dealing with the dependent variable. What distinguishes the current study from other studies is that it investigated the effectiveness of the digital story strategy in developing achievement and moral thinking among fourth-grade primary school students. The study addressed the development of moral thinking to build a good Muslim human being.

### **3. Methodology**

The quasi-experimental approach was utilized because it is appropriate to the nature of the study, where the study sample was divided into two groups (experimental and control). The experimental group was taught using the digital story for the selected lessons, while the control group was taught traditionally. The study designed some activities based on the digital story and from the Islamic Education material. The researcher then applied these activities and performed two test to measure the impact of using digital story in enhancing moral thinking among students.

#### **3.1. Sample**

The population of the study included all students in the fourth grade of primary school in the city of Abha in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the academic year (2022–2023). The participants included here were (60) students from the fourth grade at Abdul Rahman Bin Auf Primary School. The sample was divided into two groups. The experimental group consisted of (30) students who studied using the digital story strategy, and the control group consisted of (30) students who studied using the traditional method.

#### **3.2. Study instrument**

##### **3.2.1. The academic test**

A multiple-choice achievement test was prepared to measure the effectiveness of using digital stories and their impact on the achievement of fourth-grade students in Islamic education. Two units were chosen, namely (The Guidance of the Prophet in his home, and the personal conditions of the Prophet) for the topics prescribed in Islamic education for fourth-grade primary students. The validity of the content was confirmed by sending the test to specialized and experienced judges to express their opinions and comments, and the reliability coefficient reached (0.76).

##### **3.2.2. Moral thinking scale**

A group of previous studies and research that dealt with moral thinking were reviewed to build the scale that achieves the objectives of the current study. The scale consisted of (30) multiple-choice questions and included a group of moral crises that the main character faces. The validity of the scale was checked by showing the test to specialized and experienced judges to express their opinions and comments. The

reliability of the test was verified through the use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the reliability coefficient reached (0.74), which is an acceptable value.

### 3.3. Verifying equivalence between the two groups

The study used a *T*-test for two independent samples to test the equivalence of the experimental and control groups in the achievement test, and the following table shows the results:

**Table 1.** Results of verifying equivalence between the two groups in the pre-application of the achievement test.

Group	NO.	Mean score	St. Dev	T-value	Sig.
experimental	30	13.10	1.47	1.252	0.215
Control	30	13.53	1.19		

It is clear from **Table 1** above that the *t*-value is not statistically significant, which indicates that there the absence of apparent differences between the average responses of the two groups in the achievement test, which confirms the equality of the two groups in achievement.

**Table 2.** Results of verifying equivalence between the two groups in the pre-application of the moral thinking scale.

Group	NO. of students	Mean score	St. Dev	T-value	Sig.
experimental	30	11.87	1.27	1.023	0.311
Control	30	11.57	0.971		

**Table 2** reveals that the *t*-value was not statistically significant, which indicates the absence of apparent differences between the average responses of the two groups in the moral thinking scale and confirms the equality of the two groups in moral thinking.

### 3.4. Statistical analysis

For data analysis, different statistical tools were used such as the means scores, standard deviations, and independent samples test to detect the significance of differences between two independent groups. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the reliability of the study instrument and the Eta square  $\eta^2$  to measure the size of the effect.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. The first question

“What is the effect of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on the achievement of fourth-grade primary school students?” To answer this question, a T-test was used for two independent groups to verify the significance of the differences between the two groups (experimental and control) in the achievement test, as shown in the following table.



**Table 3.** T-test results for the significance of the differences between the means of the two groups in the achievement test.

Group	NO. of students	Mean score	St. Dev	T-value	Sig.	Eta square	Effect size
experimental	30	25.10	1.91	17.472	0.000	0.917	Large
Control	30	16.43	1.92				

**Table 3** above reveals the existence of clear variations in the effect of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education on the achievement of fourth-grade primary students and in favour of the experimental group, with a large effect size. This result is consistent with previous studies (Al-Haseri and Al-Dalala, 2023; Al-Mhairat and Shehadeh, 2023; Al-Noubi et al., 2021; Al-Yahisi, 2023; Cigerci and Gultekin, 2017; Haj Amin and Muhammad, 2022).

This is explained by the fact that digital stories contributed to creating a learning environment characterized by enthusiasm, vitality, and excitement, which increased students' motivation to interact, participate, and pay attention during the learning process. The digital story creates moments of enjoying the suspense of knowing what will happen next, which makes students increase their questions and participation. Using sound effects, combining them with images, and using colors attracted students and played a major role in increasing concentration to achieve the desired goals of the learning process without making students bored and distracted.

#### 4.2. The second question

“What is the impact of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education to develop moral thinking among fourth-grade primary school students?” To answer this question, a *T*-test was used for two independent groups to verify the significance of the differences between the two groups (experimental and control) in the moral thinking scale, as shown below.

**Table 4.** T-test results for the significance of the differences between the means of the two groups in the moral thinking scale.

Group	NO. of students	Mean score	St. Dev	T-value	Sig.	Eta square	Effect size
experimental	30	24.67	1.58	22.085	0.000	0.945	Large
Control	30	15.87	1.50				

The results in **Table 4** yields the existence of apparent variations in the students' scores. This indicates that there is a statistically significant effect of using the digital story strategy in teaching Islamic education in developing moral thinking among fourth-grade primary school students and in favour of the experimental group, with a large effect size. This result is consistent with Esdira (2021) and Saeed (2022).

This result can be explained by the fact that the information provided to the students according to the digital story was characterized by sequence and organization, which enabled the students to use and practice the method of organized thinking and contributed to linking ideas logically and objectively. Using a summary of the events of the digital story helped in obtaining better responses on the Moral thinking scale. The digital stories included moral positions and values that required students to focus,

observe, link, contemplate, ethical discussion, analyze, and conclusion, and perceive things in a good way. All of these were reflected positively in the way students explained the information provided to them and the difficulties they encountered during the learning process, which indirectly helped train students in moral thinking.

## 5. Recommendation

Based on the results, the study recommends developing methods and techniques for teaching the Islamic education curriculum and focusing on using active learning methods that ensure student interaction, instead of relying on memorization and memorization methods in the teaching process. It is also recommended to urge Islamic education supervisors to follow up on Islamic education teachers and cooperate with the competent authorities to evaluate them. It is better to encourage Islamic education teachers to use modern methods, techniques, and strategies that benefit the educational process, especially the digital story strategy. The study recommends providing the directorates and the ministry with the necessary capabilities and tools to implement modern educational strategies and methods based on technology, including the digital story. Finally, it is also recommended that seminars, workshops, and courses specialized in the field of the electronic learning environment be held for Islamic education teachers. The study also recommends conducting similar research on different samples. For example, future research can consider gender variables.

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