Design and Development of Interactive Digital Comic Media to Foster Historical Consciousness and Islamic Thought: a Case Study at MTsN 2 Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop an interactive digital comic-based learning medium to foster students' historical consciousness and Islamic thought while improving their understanding of Islamic history at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* Negeri 2 Sidenreng Rappang. Using the Research and Development (R&D) method with the ADDIE model—analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation—this research produced a digital comic entitled *The Siege of Jerusalem by Umar bin Khattab* as a learning medium for the subject of Islamic Cultural History (SKI). The digital comic does not merely visualize historical events but is deliberately designed to build Islamic historical awareness by presenting history as *'ibrāh* and to instill an Islamic worldview on justice, tolerance, and leadership through the character of Umar bin Khattab. Data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and tests. The results showed that traditional learning media remained dominant and less engaging, leading to low motivation and limited comprehension. The developed digital comic improved students' learning outcomes by 14 points and increased motivation, accompanied by higher levels of historical reflection and the ability to connect the conquest of Jerusalem to the values of justice, tolerance, and mercy within Islamic thought. Qualitative data from students and teachers also indicated deeper historical awareness and internalization of Islamic ethical values. Thus, Islamic-values-based digital comic media effectively enhances cognitive understanding while fostering Islamic historical consciousness, moral reflection, and students' interest in learning Islamic history.

Keywords: digital comic; historical consciousness; interactive learning media; Islamic history; Islamic thought; ADDIE model; Islamic values

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology has brought great changes in human life, technology has become an important part of the activities and activities of society. Technology contributes to many aspects in various fields, especially the field of education which is a fundamental sector for the creation of innovations and creative ideas in human resource development. One of the roles of technology that is generally known in the field of education is its contribution in developing interactive learning methods (Asad et al., 2021; Kutbiddinova et al., 2016; Prykhodkina et al., 2025; Valeev et al., 2016). The development of technology is an opportunity to develop and hone creativity, especially for educators who can now create interactive learning media (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Gan et al., 2015; Henriksen et al., 2016; Suchyadi & Suharyati, 2021).

The innovative curriculum has a vision to create quality education, competent graduates, and have a good attitude, in this case students are not only taught about things encountered in daily life, but also how a science is formed or created (Andersone, 2020; Belluigi & Cundill,

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2017; Saravanakumar, 2020). The History of Islamic Culture (SKI) as a subject taught at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level provides an illustration related to how science and civilization are currently created, making this subject fundamental to be studied.

The nature of history learning is generally boring as a result of long explanations that make students not interested in taking lessons seriously (Haydn & Stephen, 2021; Loewen, 2018; Voet & De Wever, 2016). This problem is a challenge to maximize learning outcomes in SKI subjects. Technology in this case is present as a solution, a tool that can be used to increase students' attractiveness to SKI subjects (Bilotta et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2025). Digital comics are a form of interactive learning media that has been widely used to increase students' enthusiasm in following lessons, in practice, the increase achieved is up to 39% of the initial results (Khotimah & Hidayat, 2022; Linardatos & Apostolou, 2023; Rasmet et al., 2025). Students' enthusiasm for digital comics in learning is generally very high, especially because this media combines visual, narrative, and interactive elements that are in accordance with the learning style of the current digital generation, thus indicating a significant improvement in student learning outcomes.

SKI lessons contain various important events experienced by the Muslim community, and these lessons play a significant role in shaping students' Islamic character and values. SKI presents stories of struggle, morality, and leadership from prominent Islamic figures, allowing students to emulate the honesty, courage, and discipline of the Prophet and his companions. In this sense, SKI functions as a medium for instilling noble values that remain relevant to students' lives today.

In addition, the goal of SKI learning is not limited to strengthening students' factual knowledge, but also to developing *historical consciousness*. Historical consciousness is not merely the ability to recall past events; it involves connecting the past, present, and future, and drawing moral and spiritual lessons from Islamic history. This concept aligns with the messages of QS Hud 11:120, as explained in Q.S Hud 11:120: "All the stories of the Messengers We have told you (the Prophet Muhammad), the stories with which We have strengthened your hearts. In it has been given to you (all) truths, advice, and reminders for the believers."

This concept aligns with the messages QS Yusuf 12:111, which emphasize that the stories of the prophets serve as a source of heart-strengthening, ibrah (moral lessons), and reminders for people of understanding (*ulul albab*). Thus, SKI aims to nurture students who not only understand Islamic history but also internalize it as a foundation for building an Islamic worldview and character. However, in practice, SKI is often perceived as boring and unengaging, with a strong "fairytale-like" impression that reduces students' focus and prevents optimal learning. If this condition continues, students may struggle to understand and remember the material presented (Aprilia & Aminatun, 2022; Willingham, 2021). To address this issue, teachers can utilize technology to design and create interactive learning media. This is essential to help Muslim students engage meaningfully with Islamic history, as emphasized in QS Hud 11:120, where historical narratives are presented to strengthen faith and provide guidance.

Based on the above verse, Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Asygar explained that this verse is dedicated so that people can take lessons and warnings. This surah contains the advantages of providing lessons and warnings that are reflected from the stories of the Prophets and their

respective people. These stories tell how the Prophets had patience in preaching, and invited their people to the way of Allah. These stories serve as a guide to those who are on the path of truth about the goodness of continuous da'wah and the victory that comes in the future.

The stories of the prophets teach that the struggle to uphold truth is always accompanied by trials, yet patience ultimately leads to victory and the pleasure of Allah. In this regard, the study of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) is not merely a record of past events but a source of guidance aligned with divine revelation. Beyond moral formation, SKI incorporates *Islamic thought* on leadership, justice, tolerance, and civilization, enabling students to understand the intellectual foundations that shape Islamic character. Thus, learning about the prophets and Islamic figures is not just about recalling historical moments but examining the Islamic worldview that informed their actions.

Within this framework, the struggles of the Prophet, his companions such as Umar ibn al-Khattab, and other key Islamic figures serve as concrete reflections of *Islamic thought* manifested in history. The learning media developed—whether digital comics or other visual formats—aims to present this Islamic intellectual perspective in an engaging and accessible way. Through visual representation, the principles embedded in Islamic thought can be internalized more effectively, allowing SKI to play a strategic role in helping students understand how Islamic intellectual traditions shape behavior, decision-making, and the development of Muslim civilization.

Referring to the importance of SKI learning, it is considered important to develop a method that can increase students' interest and enthusiasm in the learning process. Based on a statement from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, there are more than 60% of students showing a significant increase in learning outcomes. This result is achieved if learning is carried out using technology-based interactive media that can create real illustrations or visualizations of learning materials, such as digital comics. Digital comics are believed to be able to increase students' interest in learning history, when compared to historical literacy media, digital comics that are able to illustrate history are more in demand by students.

Visual media with attractive illustrations not only share information well, but can also provide an accurate picture of the material being delivered. This emphasizes the power that visual media has on the human senses, through good sensory capture, the lessons received will also be better attached than if they only listen. Optimizing digital comic learning media increases the attractiveness of lessons through more interesting and interactive materials. The advantage obtained from this is an increase in students' motivation and interest in learning, opening up the potential for the effectiveness of the subject. In the context of SKI, the potential for the effective use of digital comics is very high, especially to have a great impact on their understanding. As digital comics are also used in building a good understanding of the pillars of Islam. So the opportunity to achieve the same results for SKI subjects is also great.

The use of digital comics is a form of technological innovation that can help teachers in building an interesting, interactive learning environment, with the hope of increasing students' motivation and interest in learning. The use of digital comics is illustrated in several previous studies, one of which is the research of Noor Fahmi Adhi Alghifari, in the research of designing digital comic media to describe the history of the Islamic kingdom in Kerta and Pleret, although it still has many shortcomings, in the design process, researchers try to portray events as accurately as possible according to their history. At the end of the study, students who read this

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comic expected another publication with a different story, reflecting the high interest and enthusiasm as a result of designing the digital comic media.

A similar research was carried out by Syaifuddin Azhar, in his research it was known that digital comics in addition to making it easier for teachers to increase interaction in the classroom, teachers also stated that digital comics can be made through free platforms. The effectiveness of digital comics in increasing SKI understanding can be seen in increasing the focus, interest, and activeness of students in the classroom. Similar results were obtained in the research of Desy Rosita et al, their research proves that digital comic media in SKI learning has succeeded in creating attraction and motivation for students, as well as making it easier for teachers in teaching and learning activities. These three studies reflect on the feasibility and potential of digital comics in increasing learning effectiveness, especially for subjects such as SKI.

The advantages of visual learning media are explained in Picture Superiority Effect Theory, in this theory it is explained that visual media is a fundamental factor that can improve a person's ability to remember, and deeply study the relationship between one thing and another thanks to illustrations, concepts, and direct experience. PSE Theory is a concept developed from Dual Coding Theory, which states that experiences created by vision have a spontaneous impact under various conditions, stimulating memory to access information more quickly when in similar conditions or have been experienced before. Both explain that through the sense of sight, a person's ability to learn and remember things becomes stronger. However, in reality, even though students see the material directly, text-effective and monotonous media are not able to stimulate or improve students' learning abilities, this explains the existence of a gap between theory and real conditions influenced by the use of learning media.

The theory of constructivism is described as an attempt to build a living order that is in harmony with modern culture. This theory has a constructive nature in terms of ability, and understanding in the learning process. In addition, this theory also explains how a person, especially an educator, is able to create something from what has been learned both in theory and in practice. The theory of constructivism also assumes that learning resources are not only teachers, but many other media that can be used for learning, so this theory is in harmony with learning that can be carried out independently through various platforms.

Based on the reflections obtained from empirical research, there are expectations that have not been achieved in the application of technology in the location to be chosen as the location of the research, namely Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Sidenreng Rappang, where the availability of technology and technological infrastructure is considered to be able to support the application of learning using technology, but in reality technology-based learning such as the use of digital comic interactive media. The theory of constructivism is also not in harmony with the conditions that occur, which are the current conditions with all the availability of facilities and infrastructure that should be able to build teachers' ability to immediately implement technology-based learning which in reality has not been implemented until now.

The use of interactive media such as digital comics can be carried out by anyone as long as they have internet access, although without developing their own applications, teachers can create digital comics through free platforms, or take advantage of applications and materials that have previously been created by others. This makes it easier for teachers, especially those

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who are not experts in informatics or information systems, to still be able to use interactive media in the learning process. Learning using interactive media such as the use of digital comics is considered to be able to encourage the development of students' cognitive domains, in the concept of bloom taxonomy, a level that will be achieved through interactive media-based learning at least in (1) Knowledge; (2) Understanding; (3) Application; and (4) Decomposition and elaboration.

The phenomenon faced today is in contrast to the conditions that should have supported the integration of technology in the learning process, so an analysis is needed on why technology-based learning has not been implemented in a sustainable manner. Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Sidenreng Rappang is one of the State Tsanawiyah Madrasah in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, as an educational institution located in the center of the city, access to internet and electricity is very adequate, indicating that the facilities and infrastructure needed to be able to integrate interactive media-based learning into the learning process. To find out the potential results of integrating digital comic interactive media in the learning process, in-depth research leading to the impact of the development of digital comic learning media is considered urgent, especially in learning Islamic Cultural History.

This research was carried out to find out the impact of learning development by using digital comic media in the subject of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) as an effort to create an interesting, effective, efficient, and more in-depth learning experience. The application of this method will not only lead to an increase in students' understanding, but also improve teachers' abilities and skills to adapt to technological developments well without ignoring Islamic values as a guideline for life. Research on the use of digital comic media serves as a strategic effort to enhance learning quality and strengthen teachers' pedagogical skills. Building on this foundation, the present study is directed not merely at improving students' understanding but at achieving three interconnected objectives: (1) to design and develop interactive digital comic–based learning media, (2) to evaluate its effectiveness in fostering historical consciousness and the internalization of Islamic thought, and (3) to improve students' understanding of Islamic history. Through these aims, the study positions digital comics as an innovative medium that supports both cognitive and reflective dimensions of SKI learning.

METHOD

This research used the Research and Development (R&D) method with the ADDIE model to produce digital comic–based learning media for the Islamic Cultural History (SKI) subject. The stages include analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation, supported by an experimental pre–post design in which students are divided into two groups to measure learning outcomes before and after using the media. To ensure alignment with the research focus, the measurement of learning effectiveness does not rely solely on cognitive tests but also incorporates indicators related to *historical consciousness* and *Islamic thought*. These indicators are embedded in student questionnaires and reflection sheets, which assess: (1) the ability to connect historical events with contemporary contexts, (2) the ability to identify moral lessons and wisdom, and (3) students' perceptions of justice, tolerance, and leadership as reflected in the figure of Umar ibn al-Khattab. Qualitative interviews and written reflections are also used to capture deeper changes in students' historical awareness and understanding of Islamic thought.

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The study was conducted at MTsN 2 Sidenreng Rappang from March to August 2025, selected for its adequate digital facilities and visually oriented student characteristics. Research data include primary sources (interviews, observations, tests, questionnaires) and secondary sources (documents and literature). Data collection techniques consist of observation, questionnaires, interviews, documentation, tests, and evaluative instruments. Data analysis is performed through an interactive process of reduction, presentation, verification, and conclusion drawing. In addition to quantitative analysis of pre–post test scores, thematic analysis is applied to students' responses regarding historical meaning and Islamic values. Validity checks include dependability to ensure consistency and confirmability to maintain objectivity. Through this methodological integration, the study effectively operationalizes and measures both historical consciousness and Islamic thought as core components of the developed learning media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Analysis of the Needs of Digital Comics-Based Learning Media

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Sidenreng Rappang Regency is one of the junior high schools that has a strategic location in Sidenreng Rappang Regency. The meaning of strategic in the context of the research location is that the research location is in the middle of an urban area, in this case, MTsN 2 Sidrap has the advantage of digital infrastructure in the form of a smooth network, stable electricity, and very easy access to the school location. Based on the researchers' observations at the research site, with all the geographical advantages it has, the use of technology in the learning process has not been optimized by teachers at MTsN 2 Sidrap. The results of this observation are the background for the analysis of the need for technology-based learning media at the research location.

Observation is carried out through several stages, none other than to analyze the need for technology-based learning media and the readiness of research locations in implementing the use of technology-based learning media. The initial stage in needs analysis is to map observations through observation guidelines that accommodate the need to illustrate the general picture of the need for more modern learning media at the research site.

The observation guidelines used in this study lead to several main things, such as the learning media currently used, teachers' perception of technology-based learning media, the use of digital comics as a learning medium, readiness to use learning media, and the challenges faced. These aspects are considered to be able to provide an overview of obstacles and challenges, as well as the potential for technology optimization in implementing technology-based learning media or specifically digital comic-based learning media in the subject of Islamic History at MTsN 2 Sidrap.

The picture obtained from the observation stage is divided into several main points, which are as follows:

1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Media Used Today (Conventional Media)

The use of conventional learning media such as textbooks, whiteboards, and static images is still the main method in learning Islamic History. Its main advantage lies in its availability and ease of access, where teachers can use it right away without the need for complex technical preparation. It is also free from dependence on digital infrastructure such as electricity and the internet, so the risk of technical interference is relatively low.

However, in the context of learning material that is rich in chronological flows, characters, and important events, conventional media has limitations in visualizing information in depth. Students tend to be less actively involved because the interaction offered by this media is one-way. As a result, learning becomes monotonous, and students lose focus faster. Based on observations, material that is historical narrative becomes difficult for students to remember without adequate visual reinforcement.

In addition, conventional media is often unable to adapt to the learning needs of today's digital generation who are accustomed to interactive and dynamic visual formats. This has the potential to reduce learning motivation and hinder the achievement of the in-depth understanding expected from learning Islamic History.

2. Teachers' Perceptions of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Technology-Based Learning Media

Most teachers recognize that technology-based learning media offers great opportunities to improve the quality of learning. Digital content that comes with moving images, infographics, animations, or simulations can help explain complex historical events in a simpler and easier to understand way. Teachers are also aware that technology allows for the adjustment of materials according to students' learning styles, both visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

However, the teacher also expressed a number of concerns. First, there are limitations in skills in operating the software or applications used to design interactive media. Second, the preparation of technology-based media takes longer than conventional methods. Third, there is the potential for technical glitches such as sudden device problems or disrupted internet connections, even though the infrastructure is generally adequate.

The teacher also highlighted that not all available digital media is in accordance with the context of Islamic educational values and goals. Therefore, content selection and adaptation are crucial so that technology really strengthens the learning process, not just entertainment.

3. Readiness to Use Technology-Based Learning Media

In terms of infrastructure, the state tsanawiyah madrasah that is the location of the research has quite adequate digital facilities, including a stable internet network, computer devices, projectors, and access to online learning platforms. This is a strong starting capital for the implementation of technology-based learning media.

However, the readiness of human resources, especially teachers, is still a determining factor that is not optimal. Some teachers have limited experience in using technology creatively to design learning media that is contextual with Islamic History materials. Adaptation to technology also varies, with younger teachers tending to adapt faster, while senior teachers need more intensive mentoring.

In addition, training programs or workshops that focus on digital teaching media design have not been carried out regularly. In fact, improving teachers' skills in this case is very important to make the most of the available infrastructure, so that technology is not only used as a complement, but really becomes an integral part of the learning strategy.

4. Challenges and Obstacles in the Use of Technology-Based Learning Media

One of the main challenges is the limited time of teachers in designing quality digital teaching media. The heavy administrative and learning preparation burden often makes it difficult for teachers to allocate time to create or adapt interactive materials. This results in a

reliance on ready-made digital materials, which are sometimes not in accordance with the learning context in the madrasah.

Another challenge is the digital skills gap among teachers. Although some are proficient in using various applications, others still need technical assistance. Psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes in using technology or fears of broken devices are also still found.

In addition, teachers are also worried about the potential distractions that students face when using digital devices. Open internet access has the potential to make students access content outside of learning materials, so a targeted supervision and technology integration strategy is needed.

5. Digital Comics as a Learning Media

Teachers consider digital comics as an innovative and relevant alternative media to the character of the digital generation students. Visualizations of characters, historical settings, and storylines can help students build a clear mental picture of historical events. The integration of text and images according to the principles of Dual-Coding Theory is believed to improve memory and understanding of concepts.

Material Analysis

The curriculum is part of this consideration, this story is in line with the core competencies and basic competencies of the Islamic Cultural History lesson which emphasizes the introduction of important figures, major events, and exemplary values. Umar bin Khattab in this story became an example of just, tolerant, and visionary leadership. Its presentation in the form of digital comics strengthens student involvement because it utilizes Dual-Coding Theory, which is a combination of text and images to improve retention and comprehension of material.

Furthermore, the use of digital comics for this story is also relevant to the social context of digital generation students who are used to accessing information in visual formats. Instead of just reading the narrative text in the book, students can see illustrations of characters, settings, and situations of events in person, which helps build an emotional connection with the material. This is expected not only to increase interest in learning, but also to instill moral messages more effectively. This historical phenomenon contains a multicultural message that is very important in the midst of the diversity of Indonesian society. Through interesting visualizations, students can understand that Islam upholds the principles of peace and tolerance between religions. These values are very important to form an attitude of mutual respect in the madrasah environment and in the wider community, so that learning not only produces knowledge, but also forms positive character and behavior.

Analysis of the Needs of Digital Comics-Based Learning Media

The analysis of needs in this study is a strategic and fundamental stage before the learning media design process is carried out. This stage serves to identify real conditions in the field and find the root cause of the gap between learning objectives and student achievement. Based on the results of observations and interviews at MTsN 2 Sidrap, it is known that Islamic Cultural History (SKI) learning still relies on conventional media such as textbooks, Student Worksheets (LKS), and whiteboards, with simple visual additions in the form of printed images. Although the media was able to deliver the material in an informative manner, the

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teacher admitted that students still had difficulty understanding the chronology of events, recognizing important figures, and living the Islamic values contained in the story of Islamic history.

These difficulties show that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the form of presentation of material that tends to be verbal and the low ability of students to relate historical facts with spiritual values that should shape their Islamic consciousness. In other words, the presentation of the material that is less contextual causes SKI learning to lose its reflective spirit, namely the ability to reflect on the meaning behind every historical event as a reflection of the greatness of Allah and the manifestation of the values taught by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

These findings are in line with the views of Mursalin et al., who affirm that needs analysis is the main key in the development of contextual and effective learning media. Without a deep understanding of the characteristics of learners and the obstacles they face, learning media risks not being in line with the goals of Islamic education that emphasizes a balance between cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects.

Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire in grade VIII showed that more than 75% of students admitted that it was difficult to imagine the setting of places and historical figures just from the description of the text. On the other hand, more than 80% of students admitted that they were enthusiastic if learning was presented in the form of narrative visuals such as digital comics. This is strengthened by the AI-Based Digital Comics for IRE research conducted by Lestari et al. reported that 77.3% of students had difficulty understanding text-based religious education materials, but 82.8% expressed high interest in digital comics as a learning medium.

The data shows that there is an urgent and rational need to develop digital comic-based learning media at MTsN 2 Sidrap. The use of interactive visual media is expected to be a causal solution to the problem of abstraction of historical material that is difficult to understand through text alone. Moreover, from the perspective of Islamic thought, visual-based learning that fosters imagination, reflection, and appreciation of values can be seen as a form of tadabbur contemplating the signs of Allah's greatness through historical events and figures. This is in line with the words of Allah in QS. Joseph [12]:111.

"Verily, in their stories there is a lesson for those who have understanding."

This verse emphasizes that the main purpose of studying Islamic history is not just to know chronological facts, but to explore wisdom, imitate the morals of the figures, and strengthen faith through reflection on the sunnatullah in the journey of the previous ummah. Therefore, the development of digital comics in SKI learning not only functions as a pedagogical innovation, but also as a means of tazakkur and ta'dib inviting students to think, reflect, and behave in accordance with the values taught by the Qur'an and As-Sunnah.

Digital Comic Based Learning Media Design

The media design stage is carried out by paying attention to the principles of instructional design and the results of student needs analysis. The developed media concept combines short narrative text with chronological illustrations, based on dual coding theory that emphasizes the importance of processing information through verbal and visual channels simultaneously. According to this theory, the incorporation of text and images that support each other can

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strengthen students' conceptual understanding and memory. This is in line with the findings of Wafa et al., who show that the use of illustrative comic media is able to make it easier for students to understand complex subject matter, because it presents information in visual form that is easy to follow and meaningful.

In addition to the visual aspect, the design also pays attention to the explicit integration of Islamic values. This follows Darmayanti's recommendation that madrasah students need digital media that is not only visually appealing, but also relevant to their Islamic character and values—more than 80% of respondents in her study supported the development of Islamic comic media. In the context of Islamic education, the design of learning media does not only focus on visual and pedagogical aspects, but also on the explicit integration of Islamic values. Education in Islam aims to form kamil people, namely human beings who are balanced between intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects. Therefore, every form of educational media should ideally also internalize moral values and monotheism. This principle is in line with the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an surah An-Nahl verse 125:

"Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and refute them in a good way. Verily, your Lord is the One who knows best those who stray from His path, and He is the One who knows best those who are guided." (QS. An-Nahl (16): 125)

The above verse emphasizes the importance of a thoughtful and pleasant approach in the process of imparting knowledge. Learning media that combines visual and verbal elements can be a means of "good lessons" (mau'izhah hasanah) because it is able to attract students' attention and foster a positive interest in learning. Thus, the use of comic media that contains Islamic messages can be an effective strategy to convey moral and spiritual values in a contextual way and in accordance with the times.

Furthermore, the design of this media is also directed to instill exemplary values, the spirit of seeking knowledge, and moral responsibility as taught in the Qur'an surah Al-'Alaq verses 1–5 about the command to read:

"Read the name of your Lord who created, He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and it is your Lord the Most Merciful, who teaches (mankind) by means of the light. He teaches man what he does not know." (QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1–5)

The above verse contains the message that the learning process must be based on worship intentions and spiritual awareness, not just the transfer of knowledge. Therefore, Islamic comic-based learning media is expected not only to help students understand the subject matter cognitively, but also foster a love for Islamic science and values. In this study, the design process was carried out using Canva as a creative platform to compose story panels, determine a consistent color palette, and add concise and communicative dialogue text. This approach aims to ensure that the learning media produced is not only effective instructionally, but also reflects Islamic values in the appearance and message conveyed to students at the junior high school/MTs level.

Development of Digital Comics-Based Learning Media

The development of digital comic media prototypes in this study was carried out systematically through two main stages, namely expert validation and limited trials. This stage aims to ensure that the media developed is not only technically and pedagogically feasible, but

also in accordance with Islamic values and the purpose of moral education contained in the learning of Islamic Cultural History (SKI).

Validation was carried out by SKI material experts, learning media experts, and Islamic religious education experts, focusing on the suitability of the content with the curriculum, visual quality, and the accuracy of the moral and spiritual messages conveyed. The involvement of validators from these various fields has a clear cause-and-effect relationship: the more comprehensive the scientific perspective used in validation, the higher the level of integration between aspects of knowledge, technology, and Islamic values in the media produced.

This is in line with the findings of Alsyha et al., who in their research on the development of Islamic e-comics emphasized the importance of involving experts across fields to ensure product quality. The results of their research validation showed a score of "very feasible" with a range of 86–92% before proceeding to the field test stage. This achievement shows that the validation process is not just a technical procedure, but part of tahdzib al-'ilm of purification of knowledge so that it remains based on the values of truth and benefit.

After the validation process, the prototype is tested on a small group of students to assess readability, visual appeal, and ease of understanding the material. The feedback obtained showed a very positive response. Students admitted that it was easier to understand the meaning of Islamic values contained in historical stories, especially in the part that described the conquest of Jerusalem by Umar bin Khattab which was visualized by highlighting his attitude of tolerance and justice towards non-Muslims.

These findings indicate a clear cause–effect relationship between the visual presentation of contextual narratives and the development of students' deeper meaning-making in Islamic learning. From a cognitive perspective, the effectiveness of digital comics can be explained through Paivio's Dual Coding Theory and Picture Superiority Effect (PSE**)**, which state that information presented both verbally and visually is processed through two complementary channels, leading to stronger retention and comprehension. In this context, the vivid depiction of historical figures and events allows students to encode information more efficiently, making complex historical material easier to grasp and remember. Thus, digital comics do not merely attract attention; they enhance cognitive processing that supports both factual recall and conceptual understanding.

At the same time, constructivist learning theory explains how students actively build meaning from the narratives they encounter. By situating historical events within rich visual and dialogic contexts, the media encourages learners to interpret, connect, and internalize the material through their own reflective processes. Students are not passive recipients of historical information—they reconstruct the events, infer moral implications, and relate them to their lived experiences. This process is evident in students' reflections, where many describe feeling emotionally and spiritually "involved" in the story, echoing the findings of Munawir et al. regarding emotional engagement in digital comics themed on Isra' Mi'raj.

The theoretical framework becomes complete when integrated with Islamic thought and historical consciousness, which clarify *what kind of meaning* learners are expected to construct. Through these digital comics, students are guided to identify and internalize core Islamic concepts—such as justice, tolerance, courage, humility, and tawhid—as embodied by key historical figures. Their responses show not only improved cognitive understanding but

also heightened Islamic historical awareness: they begin to see history as a source of *'ibrah* (moral insight), identity formation, and ethical guidance.

Qualitative data reinforce this shift. Students who initially viewed historical narratives as distant "stories" or "tales" began to recognize their relevance to contemporary life. Their reflections reveal a transition from perceiving history as mere entertainment toward appreciating it as a framework for moral reasoning and spiritual growth. This evolution in perspective demonstrates that digital comics, when grounded in dual coding, constructivism, and Islamic thought, effectively nurture the development of historical consciousness and support deeper, value-oriented learning in SKI education.

From the perspective of Islamic thought, this process is a form of tadabbur and tazakkur in learning, which is to reflect on the wisdom of historical stories to strengthen faith and morals. Allah SWT says in QS. Joseph [12]:111:

"Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson for those who have understanding. The Qur'an is not a fabricated story, but it confirms the previous books, explaining everything, and as a guide and mercy for the believers."

This verse affirms that historical stories in Islam are not just a record of past events, but a means of spiritual and moral education that teaches the values of truth, justice, and compassion. Thus, the development of SKI-based digital comics is not only oriented towards learning technology innovation, but is also an effort to foster Islamic awareness through media that is reflective, interactive, and has da'wah value.

Implementation of Digital Comics-Based Learning Media

Implementation was carried out in two meetings: one using conventional media and the other using digital comics. Observations showed a significant increase in students' activeness, motivation, and comprehension during the digital comic session. Many previously passive students became more confident in asking questions and offering opinions, especially when discussing symbolic scenes such as Umar ibn al-Khattab refusing to enter the church as a gesture of respect toward other believers. These findings align with Munawir et al., who reported higher learning motivation in experimental classes using digital comics (91.36) compared to control classes (87.80). This improvement indicates that a combination of visual narrative and religious content not only enhances engagement but also strengthens *historical consciousness* and *Islamic historical awareness*, as students are drawn emotionally and cognitively into the learning process.

In addition to increased motivation, indicators related to the ability to explain and interpret historical events also improved. Students demonstrated higher *historical consciousness* by elaborating the sequence of events, drawing moral judgments, and articulating key aspects of *Islamic thought* regarding justice, leadership, and tolerance. Many were able to explain the ethical significance behind Umar ibn al-Khattab's actions and link them to broader Islamic perspectives on fairness and interreligious respect. This supports the findings of Wafa et al., who argue that illustrated comic media not only strengthens factual understanding but also deepens the internalization of moral and spiritual messages through contextual visuals.

The increase in the activity and reflection of Islamic values in this learning reflects the purpose of Islamic education as explained in the Qur'an surah Al-Hashr verse 18:

"O you who have believed, fear Allah and let each one of you pay attention to what he has done for tomorrow (the Hereafter); and fear Allah, for Allah is Aware of what you do." (QS. Al-Hashr (59): 18)

The above verse emphasizes the importance of the learning process that fosters reflective awareness, so that students not only understand knowledge cognitively, but are also able to relate it to moral and spiritual responsibility. Digital comic media based on Islamic values can be an effective means of shaping such awareness, as it combines historical understanding with ethical values that guide behavior. Thus, the use of digital comics does not merely improve pedagogical effectiveness but also fosters Islamic historical awareness and supports the formation of students who are knowledgeable, reflective, and grounded in the ethical dimensions of Islamic though.

Evaluation of Digital Comics-Based Learning Media

The The evaluation is carried out by examining the feasibility, practicality, and effectiveness of the media. In terms of feasibility, validators gave high scores for the alignment of the material with the SKI curriculum and the integration of *Islamic thought* within the narrative structure. In terms of practicality, teachers reported that the media is easy to operate and compatible with existing school devices. The effectiveness test showed a 14-point increase in students' average scores, accompanied by a notable rise in *historical consciousness* and *Islamic historical awareness*. Students demonstrated stronger ability not only to recall chronology but also to interpret events, draw moral judgements, and articulate key aspects of *Islamic thought* on justice and tolerance. This finding is consistent with Darmayanti's research, which highlights that Islamic-based digital comics significantly enhance student motivation and comprehension.

Furthermore, students reflected that the digital comic format helped them remember historical material more deeply, even several days after the lesson. The integration of visual storytelling and contextual narrative supported the development of *historical consciousness*, enabling students to connect past events with present-day relevance. In line with constructivist principles, the media encourages *tafakkur* (reflection) and *tadabbur* (contemplative understanding), fostering not only historical knowledge but also intellectual and spiritual growth.

This value is in line with the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an surah Al-'Ankabut verse 43:

"And these parables We have made for mankind; and no one understands it except those who have knowledge." (QS. Al-'Ankabut (29): 43)

The above verse emphasizes the importance of the reflective thinking process in understanding the knowledge and wisdom contained in every story or event. Digital comic media that raises the story of Islamic history can be a means of learning that fosters the attitude of tafakkur (contemplation) and tadabbur (understanding meaning), so that students not only gain historical knowledge, but also spiritual values that form character. Overall, the evaluation confirms that this digital comic media effectively promotes Islamic historical awareness and the internalization of Islamic thought, making it suitable for widespread use in SKI learning provided that a short teacher training module is prepared to optimize its classroom implementation.

CONCLUSION

The analysis at MTsN 2 Sidenreng Rappang revealed that over 75% of students struggle with chronology and historical figures using conventional SKI media, yet show high interest in visual-interactive resources, necessitating support for historical consciousness and Islamic values like justice, tolerance, and leadership exemplified by Umar ibn al-Khattab. The digital comic was designed via ADDIE, integrating dual coding principles and Canva for concise text, chronological illustrations, and clear Islamic messages, earning "very feasible" validation from experts and proving attractive, user-friendly, and effective in limited trials by emphasizing historical lessons (*'ibrāh*) and ethical themes. Implementation in Grade VIII boosted participation, motivation, comprehension, and reflective skills, with even passive students engaging actively, connecting past events to present issues, and articulating Islamic thought on fairness, humility, and compassion. Evaluation confirmed its feasibility, practicality, and effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes, historical interpretation, and value internalization in SKI education. For future research, longitudinal studies could assess the media's long-term impact on students' sustained historical consciousness and ethical decision-making in diverse Indonesian madrasah contexts.

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