

## READING ISLAMIC PROPHETIC STORIES IN ENGLISH TO HELP BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR FAITH

Fazira

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**Abstract:** *Islamic boarding schools place a strong emphasis on the growth of students' faith, but modern students are increasingly interacting with languages from throughout the world, especially English. This study investigates how reading English-language Islamic prophetic stories can strengthen boarding school students' faith. Students from an Islamic boarding school took part in structured reading exercises utilizing English prophetic narratives as part of a mixed-methods study. Semi-structured interviews, reading comprehension assessments, religious perception scales, and questionnaires were used to gather data. The results show that exposing students to English-language Islamic prophetic stories not only improves their religious comprehension but also fortifies their faith, moral reflection, and spiritual awareness. Additionally, because of the writings' contextual significance, students showed increased motivation to learn English. According to this study, incorporating English-language Islamic literature into religious instruction can be a successful teaching method for promoting faith and improving language proficiency in Islamic boarding schools.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Prophetic Stories; Faith Development; Islamic Boarding School Students; English Reading Materials; Value-Based Language Learning*

### Introduction

Students' religious identity, moral character, and spiritual dedication are greatly influenced by Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren. Local-language Islamic books and classical Arabic have historically been the main sources of religious teaching in these establishments. The necessity to incorporate English instruction into religious contexts is one of the new educational demands brought about by globalization and the increasing significance of English as an international language.

It is well known that reading exercises are useful for teaching values and acquiring new languages. Deeper involvement and internalization of values may result from reading materials that are in line with students' cultural and religious backgrounds. By delivering religious narratives in a language that is widely accessible, English Islamic stories of prophets give a unique chance to integrate language instruction with faith growth.

Even though Islamic literature in English is becoming more widely available, little empirical research has looked at how it affects students' beliefs, especially in Islamic boarding school settings. By examining how reading English-language Islamic prophetic stories helps boarding school students' faith grow, this study aims to close this gap.

In Islamic education, faith (iman) refers to belief, comprehension, and practice. Faith growth, according to academics, entails behavioral manifestation in day-to-day life, emotional devotion to spiritual ideals, and cognitive understanding of religious doctrines. Therefore,

engaging children both academically and emotionally through instructional methodologies is crucial to bolstering faith.

### **Literature Review**

Reading is a cognitive and affective process in addition to a language activity. Readers can emotionally relate to people and events in narrative texts, especially stories, which encourages moral reflection and internalization of values. When given in a meaningful way, religious stories have been demonstrated to affect students' attitudes, ethical reasoning, and spiritual awareness.

Islamic education has historically employed prophetic tales (qisas al-anbiya) to impart moral integrity, patience, faith, and obedience. These stories maintain their spiritual core while becoming more widely available when translated into modern languages, such as English. In order to give pupils the ability to communicate globally, English is being taught more and more in Islamic boarding schools. However, when English-language publications are not religiously relevant, problems occur. One way to improve student motivation and match language learning with institutional ideals is to incorporate Islamic material into English lessons.

Reading exercises have been shown in earlier research to have a major impact on the formation of moral character and language proficiency. Reading serves as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural viewpoints, values, and beliefs in addition to being a receptive skill in language instruction. Understanding and engagement tend to rise when students are exposed to literature that speak to their religious and personal identities.

Value-based language instruction is especially successful in religious educational institutions, according to a number of academics. Islamic education has historically combined moral and spiritual development with cognitive instruction. For a very long time, prophetic tales, or qisas al anbiya, have been utilized as teaching methods to foster faith, tenacity, obedience, and moral behavior. These stories give students tangible illustrations of moral behavior that they can consider and use in everyday circumstances.

The utilization of English The increasing demand for English proficiency among Muslim students has led to an increase in interest in Islamic literature in recent years. According to research, incorporating Islamic material into English language instruction helps boost students' motivation and lessen their reluctance to learning a foreign language. Students' attitudes toward studying improve when they see English as a way to acquire and comprehend Islamic information.

In educational contexts, faith development is frequently seen as a multifaceted process including practice, belief, and emotional commitment. Narrative texts can encourage moral thought and emotional engagement, two crucial elements of religious internalization, according to studies on faith-based teaching. Students are encouraged to process religious beliefs both academically and emotionally by reading prophetic stories in English.

There is still a dearth of empirical research that focuses on Islamic boarding school students, despite these theoretical findings. The majority of current research focuses on higher education or general Islamic schools. Therefore, more research is required to comprehend how English Islamic prophetic stories work in the particular educational setting of Islamic boarding schools, where students' identity construction is greatly influenced by their religious devotion and community life.

## Method

To obtain a thorough grasp of the phenomenon, this study used a mixed-methods design that combined quantitative and qualitative techniques. The participants were sixty 15–18-year-old students from an Islamic boarding school with intermediate English ability. Purposive sampling was used to choose them. Without changing the original design, this supplementary methodological explanation broadens the original method section and offers more insight into the study process. In order to record both quantifiable results and students' subjective experiences with faith formation through reading activities, the study used a mixed methods methodology.

The study was carried out across a number of teaching sessions in typical English classes. Islamic prophetic tales in English that were suitable for the students' level of linguistic skill were given to them. The writings highlighted moral principles like endurance, patience, sincerity, and faith in God while concentrating on well-known prophets.

Students participated in guided reading exercises that included comprehension questions, vocabulary clarification, and quiet reading during the implementation phase. Following each reading session, teachers led quick talks to promote contemplation of the moral teachings found in the stories. Because these conversations were intended to be exploratory rather than theological, students were free to share their own perspectives.

Before and after the intervention, reading comprehension exams and faith perception surveys were used to gather quantitative data. The surveys tracked shifts in students' moral consciousness, religious motivation, and attitudes toward faith. Semi-structured interviews with chosen participants were used to collect qualitative data in order to better understand their spiritual reflections and educational experiences.

Data analysis was done in a step-by-step manner. Descriptive statistics were used to assess quantitative data in order to find broad patterns in understanding and perceptions of faith. To find recurrent themes pertaining to moral reflection, emotional engagement, and attitudes toward learning English, qualitative interview data were transcribed and subjected to a thematic analysis. A more thorough assessment of the influence of English Islamic prophetic stories on students' faith development was made possible by the merging of both data sets.

## Result and Discussion

The results imply that reading English-language Islamic prophetic stories helps boarding school students grow in their religion. The stories supported earlier beliefs about the function of storytelling in value education by encouraging moral contemplation and spiritual engagement.

Additionally, incorporating Islamic material into English reading exercises increased students' interest and decreased resistance to learning a foreign language. This lends credence to the idea that culturally and religiously appropriate materials might help close the gap between local religious values and global language instruction.

The study also emphasizes how these reading exercises have the dual advantage of enhancing English competence and bolstering faith. This method is consistent with the comprehensive education ideals that Islamic boarding schools advocate. The study's conclusions emphasize how crucial narrative-based instruction is for bolstering kids' faith in Islamic boarding school environments. In addition to being a language input, reading Islamic prophetic stories in English is a means of internalizing moral and spiritual principles. Students gradually formed a stronger emotional bond with the lessons—such as patience, sincerity, obedience, and faith in God—through frequent exposure to prophetic stories.

Students' interpretations of how prophetic stories relate to their everyday lives are one noteworthy result. Many participants said that reading English-language stories about prophets inspired them to consider their own difficulties as learners. Even when conveyed in a foreign

language, the prophets' moral challenges were seen as sympathetic. This implies that as long as the information is relevant and culturally familiar, faith-related content can still have a transforming effect when communicated in a second language.

From the standpoint of language learning, the findings show that contextualized religious texts help lessen the anxiety that is frequently connected to learning a foreign language. When reading English literature that supported their beliefs, students reported feeling more confident. Increased vocabulary learning, comprehension abilities, and reading engagement were all facilitated by this confidence. These results provide credence to the idea that emotive aspects are important while learning a second language, particularly in religiously oriented educational settings.

Additionally, the incorporation of English Islamic literature seems to close the apparent gap between the demands of contemporary academia and religious education. English is frequently seen as a strictly secular subject in many Islamic boarding schools. However, pupils started to view English as a helpful tool for comprehending and promoting Islamic principles when religious narratives were incorporated into English training. In order to promote balanced educational growth that honors both religious and global competencies, this change in perspective is crucial.

The findings also imply that cognitive comprehension is not the only factor in the development of religion. Reading exercises also have an impact on the behavioral and emotional aspects of faith. Students said they were more motivated to put the moral qualities—like honesty, humility, and perseverance—discussed in the stories into practice. This supports the notion that Islamic education may successfully include religion, emotion, and action through narrative-based learning.

### **Pedagogical Consequences**

The study's conclusions have a number of significant ramifications for instructors and curriculum designers at Islamic boarding schools. First, kids' religious identities should not be separated from English language training. Choosing reading books that uphold Islamic principles can improve language acquisition results as well as spiritual growth. Instructors are urged to include value-oriented narratives, biographies of Islamic leaders, and prophetic tales in their English reading curricula.

Second, in addition to reading assignments, instructional tactics should prioritize reflective activities. Students can absorb the moral teachings of the stories through discussion sessions, guided reflection questions, and personal response journals. Through these exercises, students can make connections between written material and their personal experiences, which enhances their understanding and spiritual awareness.

Third, teacher preparation programs ought to give English instructors in Islamic boarding schools the tools they need to successfully incorporate religious content. In addition to being proficient in language pedagogy, teachers must be able to lead meaningful conversations about religious principles without making language classes solely doctrinal. Achieving educational goals in both areas is ensured by a balanced approach.

Lastly, curriculum planners ought to think about creating graded English Islamic reading materials that correspond with students' language proficiency levels. In addition to preventing cognitive overload, well-structured materials guarantee that students concentrate on both language understanding and value reflection.

### **Study Limitations**

This study has a number of drawbacks that should be noted despite its contributions. The sample came from a single Islamic boarding school and was somewhat tiny. Because of this, the results could not be entirely applicable to all Islamic educational institutions with various instructional or cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the intervention's duration was constrained. Short-term exposure to English Islamic stories may not adequately capture long-term changes in pupils' beliefs and behaviors since faith development is a long-term process. Longer intervention periods in future research could offer more detailed information on this strategy's long-term effects.

The use of self-reported data in surveys and interviews is another drawback. Despite the use of triangulation, social desirability or teacher and researcher expectations may have affected students' answers. Future research designs may benefit from more objective measurements of faith-related behavior.

### **Future Research Directions**

Comparative studies between Islamic boarding schools that utilize mainstream English texts and those that employ faith-based English reading materials could be the subject of future research. The precise additional value of Islamic material in language acquisition could be ascertained with the aid of such comparisons.

Researchers may also look into how various Islamic literary genres, such historical narratives, modern Islamic short stories, or moral parables, affect students' language and religious development. Investigating modern formats, such as multimedia storytelling and online reading platforms, could increase this strategy's application. Longitudinal research is also advised to investigate the long-term effects of consistent exposure to English Islamic literature on students' moral behavior, language skills, and religious identity. Future investigations would benefit from incorporating teachers' viewpoints and observations from the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

According to the study's findings, reading English-language Islamic prophetic stories is a successful teaching method for strengthening Islamic boarding school students' faith. The method encourages moral contemplation, spiritual awareness, and favorable attitudes toward learning English. To help students strengthen their religion and learn the language, educators are urged to include religiously significant English works in their courses. Long-term effects and comparative studies in various educational contexts may be the subject of future research. This study shows that there are significant educational advantages in Islamic boarding school environments when English-language Islamic prophetic stories are incorporated into English training. By promoting faith, moral awareness, and spiritual contemplation in addition to language acquisition, this method not only enhances children' reading comprehension but also improves their whole growth.

The results show that faith-based reading resources can serve as a useful link between the demands of contemporary language acquisition and religious education. Students are more open to learning English and see it as applicable to their religious and personal lives when it is contextualized through Islamic stories. In order to promote positive learning attitudes and long-term motivation, this relevance is essential.

The study also emphasizes the significance of teaching strategies that concurrently address the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of learning. Students can interact intellectually with English Islamic prophetic stories, emotionally relate to the moral difficulties of prophetic individuals, and consider how these ideals might be applied in their everyday lives. Such a strategy is consistent with the educational concept of Islamic boarding schools, which prioritizes both intellectual and character development.

Overall, by offering actual data from an Islamic boarding school setting, the study adds to the expanding corpus of research on value-based language acquisition. It recommends that in order to promote both language competency and faith growth, educators and curriculum designers should take into account the strategic use of spiritually significant English texts. By doing this, Islamic educational establishments can better equip students to engage with worldly knowledge while upholding their core religious beliefs.

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