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The Effectiveness of Comic Strip–Based Learning Media in Enhancing Students' Learning Outcomes on Rukhsah in Islamic Education: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of comic strip–based learning media in enhancing students' learning outcomes on the topic of *rukhsah* in Islamic Education. The research is motivated by the persistent challenges in teaching abstract religious concepts using conventional instructional methods, which often result in low student engagement and limited conceptual understanding. This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group. The sample consisted of 56 eighth-grade students from SMPN 42 Padang, divided into an experimental group and a control group. Data were collected through pretest and posttest assessments, observation sheets, and documentation. The instruments were validated through expert judgment and reliability testing. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics, including normality and homogeneity tests, independent samples t-test, and N-Gain analysis. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes in the experimental group compared to the control group. The mean score increased from 64.75 (pretest) to 90.43 (posttest) in the experimental group, while the control group improved from 64.07 to 81.96. The independent samples t-test showed a significance value of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Furthermore, the N-Gain score of 77.58% in the experimental group was categorized as highly effective, confirming that comic strip–based learning media substantially enhances students' understanding of *rukhsah*. This study offers a novel contribution by integrating comic strip–based visual narrative media into the teaching of Islamic jurisprudential concepts, particularly *rukhsah*, which has rarely been explored through rigorous quasi-experimental research. It introduces a contextual visual learning approach that bridges abstract religious knowledge with real-life situations. The study contributes theoretically by supporting the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and constructivist learning principles within Islamic Education. Practically, it provides an innovative instructional strategy for educators to improve student engagement and conceptual understanding. Additionally, it offers empirical evidence that can inform curriculum development and the integration of creative learning media in religious education.

Keywords: comic strip learning media, learning outcomes, Islamic Education, rukhsah, quasi-experimental study, visual learning, multimedia learning

Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in developing human potential and shaping individuals' intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual capacities (Faradiba & Budiningsih, 2021). In the Indonesian context, this mandate is explicitly articulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes education as a conscious effort to foster holistic student development (Masnuah, Khodijah, & Suryana, 2022). Despite these normative ideals, improving students' learning outcomes remains a persistent challenge. Recent national reports indicate that although minimum competency achievements have shown improvement, disparities across regions and schools continue to exist (Kemendikdasmen, 2025). This condition underscores the urgent need for pedagogical innovation, particularly in instructional strategies and learning media, to enhance the quality of classroom learning.

Learning outcomes are commonly understood as measurable changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills after engaging in the learning process (Nabillah & Abadi, 2020). These outcomes are influenced by internal factors such as motivation and readiness, as well as external factors including teaching methods, learning environments, and instructional media (Nusroh et al., 2024). In contemporary educational discourse, instructional media has been widely recognized as a crucial component in facilitating effective learning. According to Gagné and Briggs, learning media function as stimuli that enhance student engagement and cognitive processing (Tahir et al., 2023). Empirical studies further demonstrate that well-designed media can significantly improve students' understanding and retention of learning materials, especially in subjects requiring conceptual comprehension (Nasrawati, 2023).

Within this framework, visual-based learning media, particularly comic strips, have gained increasing attention as innovative pedagogical tools. Comic strips integrate visual narratives with concise textual explanations, enabling students to process information through dual coding mechanisms, which enhance comprehension and memory retention (Wahdania et al., 2020; Mayer, 2009). Previous studies have shown that comic-based learning can increase motivation, engagement, and academic performance across various disciplines (Toh et al., 2017; Özdemir, 2017). However, most existing research focuses on general subjects such as language and science, while studies examining the effectiveness of comic strip media in Islamic Religious Education remain limited, particularly in the context of abstract jurisprudential concepts.

One of the challenging topics in Islamic Education is *rukhsah* (legal concession), which requires not only memorization but also contextual understanding of its application in real-life situations (Putra, 2022). The abstract and situational nature of this concept often makes it difficult for students to grasp when taught using conventional lecture-based methods. This issue is consistent with findings in Islamic education research, which highlight that traditional pedagogical approaches tend to limit students'

critical understanding and contextual reasoning (Fauzi & Sabila, 2022; Muhaidhori, Fauzi, & Hadi, 2025). Furthermore, classroom observations at SMPN 42 Padang revealed that learning activities are still dominated by teacher-centered methods, resulting in low student engagement and learning outcomes below the minimum competency standard.

From a theoretical perspective, the integration of visual storytelling in learning aligns with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that students learn more effectively when information is presented through both visual and verbal channels (Mayer, 2009). In Islamic education, innovative and contextual learning approaches are also essential for fostering meaningful understanding and internalization of religious values (Fauzi et al., 2024). Thus, comic strip media offers a promising approach to bridge the gap between abstract religious concepts and students' everyday experiences.

Despite its potential, there remains a significant research gap regarding the application of comic strip–based learning in Islamic Education, particularly in teaching *rukhsah*. Previous studies have not sufficiently explored how visual narrative media can enhance students' conceptual understanding in fiqh-related topics. Moreover, limited research has employed rigorous quasi-experimental designs to examine the effectiveness of such media in improving learning outcomes.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of comic strip–based learning media in enhancing students' learning outcomes on the topic of *rukhsah* in Islamic Education. This research contributes to the literature by (1) integrating visual narrative media into Islamic jurisprudence learning, (2) applying a quasi-experimental design to provide empirical evidence of effectiveness, and (3) offering pedagogical insights for developing innovative learning media in Islamic Education contexts.

Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach grounded in the positivist paradigm, which emphasizes objective measurement, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis to explain causal relationships between variables (Sugiyono, 2020). Specifically, this research adopted a quasi-experimental method using a nonequivalent control group design, which is widely used in educational research when random assignment is not feasible (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). The design involved two groups: an experimental group that received treatment using comic strip–based learning media and a control group that was taught using conventional lecture-based instruction. Both groups were administered pretests and posttests to measure differences in learning outcomes before and after the intervention.

The study was conducted at SMPN 42 Padang during the 2026/2027 academic year. The population consisted of all eighth-grade students totaling 126 individuals. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in quasi-experimental studies to ensure

comparable group characteristics (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Class VIII.B was assigned as the experimental group and class VIII.C as the control group, each consisting of 28 students, resulting in a total sample of 56 participants. The selection was based on similarities in academic ability, previous learning performance, and teacher recommendations to minimize selection bias and enhance internal validity.

The research instruments included (1) a cognitive achievement test on the topic of *rukhsah*, (2) an observation checklist to assess the implementation fidelity of the comic strip media, and (3) expert validation sheets for both media and content. The achievement test was developed based on Bloom's revised taxonomy to measure students' cognitive abilities, ranging from understanding to higher-order thinking skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Prior to implementation, the instruments underwent validity and reliability testing. Content validity was established through expert judgment involving specialists in Islamic education and instructional media, while construct validity was examined using item analysis techniques. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a threshold value of ≥0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency (Field, 2013). The validation results indicated that the comic strip media and instruments were categorized as highly valid and suitable for classroom use.

The experimental procedure was conducted in three stages: pretest, treatment, and posttest. During the pretest phase, both groups were assessed to determine their baseline knowledge of *rukhsah*. In the treatment phase, the experimental group was taught using comic strip–based learning media designed to integrate visual narratives with contextual Islamic jurisprudence scenarios, while the control group received traditional instruction. The intervention was carried out over three instructional sessions to ensure adequate exposure to the treatment. Classroom observations were conducted to ensure the consistency and effectiveness of the implementation. Finally, the posttest was administered to both groups to evaluate learning gains after the intervention.

Data collection techniques included testing, observation, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Descriptive analysis was used to determine mean scores, standard deviations, and score distributions. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests were conducted, including normality testing using the Shapiro–Wilk test and homogeneity testing using Levene's test, to ensure that the data met parametric test requirements (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Hypothesis testing was performed using an independent samples t-test to compare posttest scores between the experimental and control groups. Additionally, the effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated using the normalized gain (N-gain) score, which provides a standardized measure of learning improvement (Hake, 1999). To strengthen the interpretation of results, effect size analysis (Cohen's d) was also recommended to assess the magnitude of the treatment effect, which is considered essential in experimental educational research (Cohen, 1988).

To ensure methodological rigor, this study also addressed potential threats to internal validity, such as selection bias, maturation, and instrumentation effects, by maintaining equivalent group conditions, consistent instructional duration, and standardized testing procedures (Shadish et al., 2002). Ethical considerations were also observed by obtaining permission from the school, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining the confidentiality of student data.

Results and Discussion

The Implementation of Comic Strip Learning Media

Instructional media play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness, interactivity, and engagement of the learning process. As noted by Hamalik (1986) cited in Rasyid (2018), the use of learning media can stimulate students' motivation, foster new learning interests, and produce positive psychological effects. Learning media are broadly categorized into audio, visual, and audiovisual forms (Pagarra, Syawaluddin, & Krismanto, 2022). Among these, comic strip media represent a form of visual learning media that integrates sequential illustrations with concise narrative text, enabling the delivery of complex information in a simplified and engaging manner (Pamorria & Kaherunnisa, 2024).

The implementation of comic strip–based learning in this study was systematically conducted over three instructional sessions involving both experimental and control groups. The experimental group received instruction using comic strip media designed to contextualize the concept of *rukhsah* through visual storytelling, while the control group was taught using conventional lecture-based methods. This approach is theoretically grounded in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that learners process information more effectively when it is presented through both visual and verbal channels (Mayer, 2009). In addition, the integration of narrative and imagery supports dual coding processes, which enhance memory retention and conceptual understanding (Paivio, 1991).

In the first session, the researcher conducted classroom preparation, administered the pretest, and introduced the learning objectives. This phase ensured that baseline cognitive abilities were measured prior to the intervention. In the second session, the comic strip media were implemented. Students were divided into small groups and engaged in collaborative learning activities, including reading, interpreting, and discussing the comic narratives, followed by completing worksheet-based tasks (LKPD). This learning process reflects constructivist principles, where knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction and contextual engagement (Vygotsky, 1978). In the third session, a reinforcement of key concepts was conducted, followed by the administration of the posttest to measure learning outcomes.

Observational data revealed a very high level of implementation fidelity, with an observation score of 98.75%, categorized as "Very Good." This finding indicates that the comic strip media were effectively integrated into the

learning process, aligned with instructional objectives, and capable of enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Students demonstrated increased participation, enthusiasm, and interaction during learning activities. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that visual narrative media can significantly improve engagement and facilitate deeper understanding (Toh et al., 2017; Özdemir, 2017). Furthermore, in the context of Islamic education, innovative visual media have been shown to bridge the gap between abstract religious concepts and students' real-life experiences (Muhaidhori, Fauzi, & Hadi, 2025).

Students' Learning Outcomes on Rukhsah Material

Learning outcomes represent measurable changes in students' cognitive abilities following instructional interventions. In this study, learning outcomes were specifically assessed within the cognitive domain based on Bloom's taxonomy, encompassing levels from knowledge to evaluation (Kasanah & Pratama, 2024; Pratama Putra, 2024). The results of descriptive statistical analysis are presented below:

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Group	Mean Pretest Score	Mean Posttest Score
Control Class	64.07	81.96
Experimental Class	64.75	90.43

The data indicate that both groups had nearly identical pretest scores, confirming equivalence in initial ability. However, after the intervention, the experimental group exhibited a substantially higher posttest mean compared to the control group. This suggests that the comic strip–based learning media contributed significantly to enhancing students' understanding of *rukhsah*.

From an inferential perspective, the assumption tests confirmed the appropriateness of parametric statistical analysis. The Shapiro–Wilk test yielded significance values greater than 0.05 (0.208, 0.218, 0.091, and 0.139), indicating that the data were normally distributed. Similarly, the homogeneity test showed significance values of 0.147 (pretest) and 0.228 (posttest), confirming homogeneity of variance across groups. These results validate the use of independent samples t-test for hypothesis testing.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test Results for Pretest

Variable	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest (Control vs Experimental)	0.863

The pretest significance value of 0.863 (> 0.05) indicates no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups before the intervention. This confirms that both groups were comparable at baseline.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-Test Results for Posttest

Variable	Sig. (2-tailed)
Posttest (Control vs Experimental)	0.001

The posttest significance value of 0.001 (< 0.05) indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups after the intervention. This demonstrates that the comic strip–based learning media had a significant positive effect on students' learning outcomes.

From a deeper analytical perspective, the substantial increase in the experimental group's mean score (from 64.75 to 90.43) suggests not only improvement in knowledge acquisition but also enhanced conceptual understanding and application abilities. This aligns with the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, particularly in the domains of understanding and applying knowledge.

Effectiveness of Comic Strip Learning Media

The effectiveness of the intervention was further examined using the N-Gain score:

Table 4. N-Gain Score Analysis

Group	Mean N-Gain	Category
Control Class	0.5027	Moderate
Experimental Class	0.7758	High

Table 5. N-Gain Percentage Analysis

Group	N-Gain (%)	Effectiveness
Control Class	50.27%	Moderately Effective
Experimental Class	77.58%	Effective

The results indicate that the experimental group achieved a significantly higher level of learning improvement compared to the control group. According to Hake (1999), an N-Gain value above 0.7 is categorized as high, confirming the strong effectiveness of the comic strip intervention.

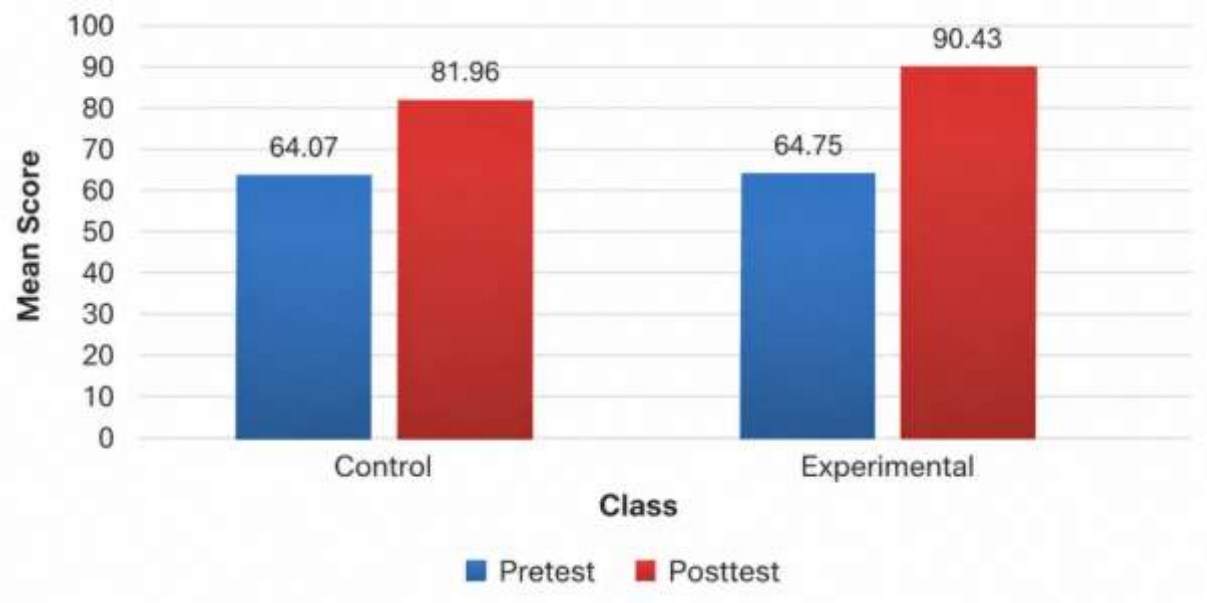


Figure 1. Comparison of Mean Pretest and Posttest Scores

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings strongly support the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2009), which emphasizes that integrating visual and textual elements enhances meaningful learning. The comic strip media transformed abstract Islamic jurisprudence concepts into concrete and relatable scenarios, enabling students to better understand the application of *rukhsah* in real-life contexts, such as illness, travel, and emergency situations.

Moreover, these findings align with constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), where students actively construct knowledge through interaction and contextual engagement. The collaborative learning activities facilitated through comic strip discussions enabled students to engage in higher-order thinking processes, including analysis and evaluation.

The results are also consistent with previous studies demonstrating that comic-based learning media can significantly improve student achievement and motivation (Setiawan, 2021; Mutiara & Safitri, 2024). International research further supports that visual storytelling enhances comprehension, retention, and engagement (Toh et al., 2017; Özdemir, 2017). In Islamic education contexts, innovative instructional media have been shown to enhance both cognitive understanding and meaningful internalization of religious concepts (Muhaidhori et al., 2025).

However, it is important to critically note that the effectiveness of comic strip media depends on careful instructional design. As highlighted by Haqiqi and Permadi (2022), not all learning materials are suitable for comic-based representation, and the development process requires creativity, time, and pedagogical alignment. Therefore, future studies should explore the scalability and adaptability of comic strip media across different subjects and educational levels.

Overall, this study provides robust empirical evidence that comic strip–based learning media is a highly effective pedagogical innovation for improving students' learning outcomes, particularly in subjects that require contextual and conceptual understanding such as *rukhsah* in Islamic Education.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of comic strip–based learning media into the teaching of *rukhsah* within Islamic Education, a topic that is inherently abstract and context-dependent. While previous studies have explored the use of comic media in general subjects, this research specifically applies visual narrative pedagogy to Islamic jurisprudential concepts, which have rarely been examined through experimental designs. Furthermore, this study adopts a quasi-experimental approach with rigorous statistical analysis (including N-gain and inferential testing), thereby providing stronger empirical evidence compared to predominantly descriptive studies in the field of Islamic Education. The incorporation of visual storytelling to represent real-life applications of *rukhsah* also offers a novel instructional model that bridges the gap between doctrinal knowledge and contextual understanding.

The contribution of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it reinforces the applicability of the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and constructivist learning theory within the context of Islamic Education, demonstrating that combining visual and textual elements can significantly enhance students' cognitive engagement and comprehension of religious concepts. Practically, this research provides an evidence-based pedagogical innovation for teachers, particularly in designing engaging and contextual learning media for complex Islamic topics. Additionally, the findings offer a reference for curriculum developers and educational practitioners to integrate creative, student-centered learning approaches in religious education. By presenting empirical data on the effectiveness of comic strip media, this study contributes to the advancement of instructional strategies that are both innovative and relevant to 21st-century learning demands.

Conclusion

This study found that the use of comic strip–based learning media significantly improved students' learning outcomes on the topic of *rukhsah* in Islamic Education. The findings indicate that the increase in students' achievement in the experimental group (from a mean pretest score of 64.75 to a posttest score of 90.43) was substantially higher than that of the control group (from 64.07 to 81.96). Statistical analysis further confirmed this result, with a significance value of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating a meaningful difference between the two groups. The N-Gain score of 77.58% (high category) demonstrates that the effectiveness of comic strip media exceeded initial expectations. These findings challenge the conventional assumption that lecture-based instruction is sufficient for teaching abstract Islamic concepts

and open new discussions on the importance of visual and contextual learning approaches in Islamic Education.

From a scientific perspective, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by reinforcing prior findings on the effectiveness of visual learning media while also extending their application into the domain of Islamic jurisprudential education. It not only supports previous research on comic-based learning but also questions the dominance of traditional instructional methods that tend to limit students' conceptual understanding. Moreover, this study introduces a contextual visual narrative approach as an innovative pedagogical model that enriches scholarly discourse, particularly in integrating multimedia learning theories within Islamic Education contexts.

However, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted with a relatively small sample size and within a specific educational setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples across different educational levels and contexts. In addition, further research could explore the application of comic strip media in other Islamic Education topics or compare it with other innovative learning media to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. It is also recommended for educators and curriculum developers to consider integrating visual narrative–based learning strategies to enhance student engagement and conceptual understanding in the classroom.

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