



Implementation of the Ulul Azmi Prophet Story Card Game as a Learning Medium to Strengthen Students' Understanding of Prophet History in Islamic Religious Education for Eighth-Grade Students at SMPN 4 Jiken

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Abstract:

This study aims to describe the implementation of the "Stories of the Ulul Azmi Prophets" card game in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction, assess changes in students' understanding following the use of the media, and identify the advantages and challenges associated with its application. A descriptive approach was employed, involving 16 eighth-grade students from SMPN 4 Jiken. Data were collected through pre- and post-instruction tests, observations, and interviews. The results indicate that the "Stories of the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets" card game can be implemented through activities such as grouping, explaining game rules, using cards as information sources, conducting discussions, and performing evaluations. There was a shift in student learning mastery: the number of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) rose from 9 (56.25%) before using the media to 13 (81.25%) afterward—an increase of 25 percentage points. The card game media also helped boost student engagement and attentiveness, facilitated material retention, created an enjoyable learning atmosphere, and fostered collaboration. Challenges identified included time constraints, classroom management, disparities in student abilities, and the need for media preparation. Although learning outcomes improved following the media's implementation, these findings do not conclusively demonstrate a strong cause-and-effect relationship, as the study lacked a control group and involved a limited number of participants. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples and utilize comparative or quasi-experimental designs.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a vital component of the educational process, as it focuses not only on the mastery of religious knowledge but also on shaping the attitudes, character,

and behavior of students. Ideally, PAI instruction provides learning experiences that enable students to understand Islamic teachings while connecting them to their daily lives.(Ma'rifatani, 2017). Therefore, the learning process requires strategies and media capable of bridging learning materials with the learners' concrete experiences.

The evolution of education policy in Indonesia also prioritizes learning that fosters active student engagement as a key aspect. For 2026, the government has mandated revisions to the learning outcomes for the Religion and Character Education subject through the Decree of the Head of BKPD Number 020 of 2026. These changes underscore the importance of religious education that is relevant to both student needs and the development of national education.(Press Release, 2026)

The history of the Prophet is one topic within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) that requires engaging teaching strategies. This subject matter encompasses a broad range of information, including the names of key figures, life backgrounds, the journey of spreading the faith (da'wah), challenges faced, miracles, and exemplary values. If the material is presented solely through lectures and textbook reading, students may struggle to recall the connections between the figures, events, and the underlying values.

In this context, instructional media play a crucial role. They serve not merely as tools to assist teachers in delivering material, but also as a means to create learning experiences that are more concrete, interactive, and meaningful.(Mardiana et al., 2023). Research on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning media indicates that the use of innovative media can help overcome monotonous instruction and enhance student engagement. Research by Usamah et al. demonstrates that the use of educational board games in PAI instruction serves as an alternative for supporting the learning process and improving learning outcomes. (| *Attadib Journal of Elementary Education*, n.d.)

The use of games as a learning medium is also supported by broader research. An analysis by Sailer and Homner indicates that gamification has a positive impact on cognitive outcomes, motivation, and learning behavior.(Sailer & Homner, 2020a). Li's research also found a positive influence of gamification on learning outcomes, although this influence was affected by the learning context, learner characteristics, game design, and the duration of implementation. (Li et al., 2023) Thus, games are not solely used to provide entertainment, but need to be designed based on learning objectives.

Card-based learning media offer advantages such as simplicity, portability, and cost-effectiveness; they are suitable for group play and enable students to acquire information through activities like reading, matching, sequencing, answering questions, and discussion. Research on the use of domino-style cards in teaching the History of Islamic Culture indicates that card-based game media can boost student engagement and foster a more interactive learning environment (Kumala et al., 2025). Other research on flashcard games in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the junior high school level also indicates that card games can serve as an alternative for improving students' learning outcomes (Sidik et al., 2025a).

The subject matter concerning the *Ulul Azmi* prophets holds great potential for development into a card game, as it features figures and narratives that can be presented concisely and systematically. The prophets classified as *Ulul Azmi* are generally identified as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. These five prophets demonstrated steadfastness in fulfilling their prophetic missions, despite facing various forms of rejection and challenges.

Research into the communication patterns of the *Ulul Azmi* prophets also highlights these five figures, illustrating the values of patience and steadfastness, as well as the strategies employed to navigate the various challenges encountered in their mission of *da'wah* (preaching)..(Usman & Abdullah, 2025).

From a normative perspective, the discussion regarding the steadfastness of the Messengers can also be linked to Surah Al-Ahqaf, verse 35, which commands the exercise of patience – specifically, the kind of patience demonstrated by the Messengers who possessed steadfastness of heart. This principle establishes a crucial foundation: the study of the Prophets' stories should not merely stop at the memorization of historical facts but must instead be directed toward understanding their values and the examples they set.

Preliminary observations at SMPN 4 Jiken indicate that instruction on the history of the Prophets faces several challenges, including students struggling to distinguish between the stories of individual Prophets and low levels of engagement during lessons. These conditions highlight the need for innovative learning media tailored to the characteristics of junior high school students.

Research by Restu Anggraeni and Muhammad Ardiyan indicates that the effectiveness test for conceptual understanding yielded an N-Gain score of 0.69, falling into the medium category. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Uno card game medium is highly suitable and effective for enhancing students' learning motivation and conceptual understanding.(Anggraeni et al., 2025)

Research by Siti Rofi'ah and Ilvi Mariana demonstrates a significant improvement in learning outcomes regarding religious moderation literacy among the experimental group receiving the intervention compared to the control group. Thus, the use of the Word Square learning model, supported by Educard media, has proven effective in enhancing religious moderation literacy learning outcomes for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. This study holds practical implications for the development of teaching methods focused on strengthening religious moderation literacy, aiming to cultivate a generation better equipped to lead a harmonious religious life.(Rofi'ah et al., 2024)

Research by Ida Winingsih and Budi Murtiyasa demonstrates that the use of "educards" is effective and improves learning outcomes in the experimental class. The average learning outcome score was 81.37 for the experimental class and 70.03 for the control class. Students achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75, and the mastery rate reached 75% in the classroom instruction. Based on this study, it is hoped that teachers will utilize engaging media – such as educards and interactive tools – in their instruction to further enhance thematic learning outcomes. Keywords: Educard, Learning Outcomes, Thematic Learning.(Winingsih et al., 2018)

Research by Muhammad Fathoni shows that student engagement increased from 59% in Cycle I to 76% in Cycle II. The number of students achieving mastery rose from 11 (68.75%) to 14 (87.5%), and the average student score also improved – rising from 71 in Cycle I to 79 in Cycle II – following the use of game card media.(Fathoni, 2021)

Research by Siti Annisa and Lulu Lathipah indicates that the *Cerita Ihsan* (Stories of Ihsan) e-book significantly facilitates the teaching process. Its engaging and interactive design – featuring novel elements such as a song about the five *Ulul Azmi* prophets, audio content, and embedded digital games – adds variety to lessons and makes them more appealing to students. Most students enjoyed using the interactive e-book. (Wahiddah et al., 2022)

Previous research indicates that instruction on the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets and Messengers has been conducted using various approaches and learning media. These studies demonstrate that the use of interactive teaching methods and media can help enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. However, there is a lack of research specifically implementing "Ulul Azmi Cards" – a learning tool designed to assist students in understanding the material regarding the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets and Messengers.

Although previous research indicates that card-based media and games can enhance learner engagement and comprehension, most studies have focused on the use of cards as a general medium for delivering content. Research specifically dedicated to developing card games for teaching the stories of the prophets within Islamic Religious Education – particularly regarding the *Ulul Azmi* prophets – remains limited. Furthermore, prior studies have not extensively examined the use of cards that integrate information about the prophets' stories with gameplay, discussion, and the reinforcement of exemplary values within a single instructional sequence.

The "Stories of the Ulul Azmi Prophets" card game featured in this study possesses characteristics that distinguish it from previous card-based media; the cards serve not merely as tools for conveying information but as integral components of a game-based activity that actively encourages students to read, recall, discuss, and comprehend the stories and exemplary virtues of the Ulul Azmi prophets. Consequently, this study aims to address this gap by describing the implementation of the game, the resulting changes in students' understanding, and the advantages and challenges associated with its use in Islamic Religious Education instruction).



Method (منهج)

This study employs a qualitative approach and is descriptive in nature. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process of the *Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi* (Stories of the Prophets of Great Resolve) card game in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction, as well as the students' experiences and responses during the learning process.

Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research is used to understand the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a particular issue or phenomenon. Adopting this approach, the study does not aim to test hypotheses statistically but rather to describe the learning phenomenon based on field data. The research focuses on the process of implementing the media, learner activities, group interactions, teacher and student responses, and the nature of understanding demonstrated by the learners during the lesson.

Qualitative data were obtained through observation and interviews. Observations were used to assess students' active participation, attentiveness, interaction, and engagement during the use of the card game, while interviews were conducted to understand the experiences and feedback of both students and teachers regarding the learning medium. These qualitative data were then integrated with pre-test and post-test results to provide a more comprehensive picture of the changes in students' understanding following the implementation of the *Nabi Ulul Azmi* story card game.

The research was conducted at SMPN 4 Jiken, Blora Regency, Central Java. The research subjects consisted of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher and eighth-grade students. A total of 16 students participated, while the informant was a single PAI teacher. The informant

was selected using purposive sampling, taking into account their direct involvement in PAI instruction utilizing card game media.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from observations of the learning process, as well as interviews with the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher and students. Secondary data were obtained through documentation, including instructional materials, card game media, activity photographs, student work, and other documents relevant to the research.

Students' understanding of the material regarding the *Ulul Azmi* prophets was measured using pre-tests and post-tests administered before and after the implementation of the *Ulul Azmi* prophets story card game. The test instruments were designed based on learning indicators, covering the ability to identify, explain, and comprehend the exemplary values found in the stories of the *Ulul Azmi* prophets. Assessment was based on the number of correct answers, which were then converted to a 0–100 scale. The test results were compared against the school's Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) to determine student learning mastery. Changes in understanding were assessed by comparing pre-test and post-test results and analyzing the percentage of students who met the KKM.

The data analysis techniques employed observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to gather data on the implementation process of the card game medium, covering the activities of both the teacher and the students during the lesson. The aspects observed included: the teacher's readiness to use the medium; student attention; student engagement in the game; interaction among students; the ability to match information; the ability to answer questions; the ability to retell the Prophet's story; the ability to identify exemplary values; and the classroom atmosphere while the game was in progress.

Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman interactive model. This model comprises three main activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, the researcher selected and focused on data related to the implementation of the card game medium and the students' understanding. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives, categorization tables, and relevant interview excerpts. The final stage involved drawing conclusions. These conclusions were continuously verified by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation.

Result (نتائج)

Implementation of the "Stories of the Ulul Azmi Prophets" Card Game

The lesson begins with an introductory phase, during which the teacher provides an apperception activity and outlines the learning objectives. The teacher then offers a preliminary explanation regarding the *Ulul Azmi* prophets to introduce the subject matter. Subsequently, students undergo an initial assessment to gauge their level of understanding prior to the use of the card game as a learning aid.

The next stage involves the use of the "Stories of the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets" card game. Students are divided into groups, with each group receiving a set of cards containing information about the *Ulul Azmi* prophets. These cards serve as a medium for reading, identifying, matching, categorizing, and discussing information related to the lesson material.

To begin the activity, the teacher explains the game rules. Students then play with the cards in groups, following the teacher's instructions. They are required to identify connections between

the information on the cards – such as the names of prophets, stories of their struggles, miracles, and exemplary values – and how these can be applied in daily life.

The use of card games makes the learning process more interactive. Students do not merely listen to the teacher's explanations but actively engage in reading, discussing, answering questions, and connecting the information found on the cards. This approach shifts the focus of learning toward student activity.

These findings align with research on the use of flashcard games in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction, which indicates that card game media can be utilized to improve student learning outcomes. The research also incorporates observation, interviews, and testing as part of the process to assess changes in learning following the use of the media. (Sidik et al., 2025b)

Changes in Students' Understanding After Using Card Game Media

To assess changes in students' understanding, the evaluation results obtained before and after using the *Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi* card game were compared. The research findings indicate an increase in the number of students achieving scores above the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM).

Learning Stage	Number of Students Above KKM	Number of Students Below KKM	Mastery Percentage
Before using card media	9 students	7 students	56,25%
After using card media	13 students	3 students	81,25%
Increase	4 students	-4 students	25%

Based on the table, prior to the use of the card game, only 9 out of 16 students (56.25%) achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). After the "Stories of the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets" card game was implemented, the number of students scoring above the KKM rose to 13 (81.25%). Consequently, there was an increase of 4 students achieving mastery, while the mastery rate rose by 25%.

This improvement demonstrates that the use of card games has a positive impact on students' understanding of the material regarding the Prophets known as *Ulul Azmi*. Students found it easier to retain information because the material was presented through cards, making it more concrete, concise, and engaging. Furthermore, the game activities and group discussions facilitated the indirect reinforcement of information, thereby making the material easier to comprehend and remember.

Research findings also indicate that instruction using card games can enhance student engagement. Students do not merely receive information from the teacher; instead, they actively search for, read, connect, and communicate the information found on the cards. This fosters a learning environment that is more active and student-centered. Kelebihan Penggunaan Media Permainan Kartu Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi

Based on observations made during instruction, there are several advantages to using the "Stories of the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets" card game in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) class for 8th-grade students at SMPN 4 Jiken. First, the card game enhances students' interest and learning motivation. Packaging the lesson as a game makes students more enthusiastic compared

to instruction relying solely on the lecture method. Students demonstrate greater attention to the material because they are directly involved in the game activities.

Secondly, card games can make it easier for students to understand and remember the material. Information regarding the stories of the *Ulul Azmi* prophets is presented concisely, allowing students to read and review the information while the game is in progress.

Third, this medium can enhance student engagement and collaboration. Games played in groups encourage students to discuss, exchange information, and assist one another in completing the game.

Fourth, the use of card media can alleviate boredom in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons. Material regarding the history of the Prophet—which is sometimes perceived as requiring rote memorization—can be presented through more interactive activities, thereby making the classroom atmosphere more enjoyable.

Fifth, card games are relatively easy to use and can be adapted to the learning context. Teachers can develop game rules based on learning objectives, the number of students, and the difficulty level of the material.



Discussion (مناقشة)

Implementation of the Ulul Azmi Story Cards

The use of "Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi" (Stories of the Prophets of Great Resolve) card games offers an active learning alternative to instruction centered solely on teacher explanations. The subject matter regarding the prophets' histories inherently involves a significant amount of information that students need to comprehend and retain. Relying exclusively on the lecture method risks causing student boredom and a lack of engagement in the learning process.

Card game media transforms material—originally conveyed verbally—into a learning activity that directly engages students. Students have the opportunity to read information on the cards, recall the material, discuss with peers, and provide answers based on the information they have gathered. Incorporating games into instruction can also create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Research on the use of "fun cards" in Islamic Education has found that this medium can boost students' learning motivation, active participation, and academic outcomes. (Aminah, 2016)

The study of *Ulul Azmi* requires students not only to know the names and stories of these prophets but also to understand their steadfastness, patience, faith, and exemplary qualities. Card games can be utilized to help students recall these narratives while discussing values applicable to daily life. This demonstrates that game-based media can serve as a learning stimulus, offering students the opportunity to process information firsthand. These findings align with research by Septiani and Jamaludin, which indicates that game-based learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can enhance student engagement and facilitate the understanding of religious subject matter. (Septiani & Jamaludin, 2025).

Sailer dan Homner (2020) juga menemukan bahwa gamifikasi memberikan efek positif terhadap hasil kognitif, motivasional, dan perilaku pembelajaran. Namun, penelitian tersebut juga menunjukkan adanya variasi efektivitas berdasarkan desain dan konteks pembelajaran. (Sailer & Homner, 2020b). Dengan demikian, keberhasilan media kartu dalam penelitian ini tidak semata-mata disebabkan oleh unsur permainan, tetapi juga karena permainan dirancang berdasarkan materi yang sedang dipelajari.

Using cards helps transform the narrative details of the Prophet's history into more structured information. Instead of simply reading a long text, students discover information through various cards; they must then link cards representing key figures to specific stories, events, and exemplary values.

This process encourages students to engage in activities involving the recall and comprehension of information. These findings align with the research of Kumala et al. (2025) regarding the use of domino cards in the teaching of Islamic Cultural History. Their study demonstrates that card-based media can serve as an innovative tool to enhance student engagement in learning Islamic history.

Understanding the History of the Prophet

Research data indicate that the use of card game media is associated with improved student learning mastery. Prior to using the media, only 56.25% of students achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM); following its use, that figure rose to 81.25%.

This improvement demonstrates that card games can assist students in understanding the material regarding the Stories of the *Ulul Azmi* Prophets. Presenting information on cards allows students to grasp the content in a simpler manner and through repeated exposure. The process of reading and discussing the cards facilitates the repetition of information, making the material easier to remember.

These results align with previous research on the use of card games in learning. Rifai's study found that the use of card-based media with eighth-grade students could improve learning absorption, as evidenced by the increase in the average score from 49.67 on the pretest to 63.25 on the posttest. (Rifai, 2019)

Other research on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction has also found that the use of "couple card" media combined with the "Make a Match" model can improve learning outcomes. In that study, the mastery rate increased from 71.38% in Cycle I to 80.27% in Cycle II. (Ismatulah et al., 2024a)

More specific findings regarding the use of card games in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) are also evident in research on flashcard games involving junior high school students. The study indicates that the use of card games can serve as a means to improve learning outcomes in PAI. (Ismatulah et al., 2024b)

Therefore, the increase in the mastery rate from 56.25% to 81.25% in this study indicates that the "Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi" card game medium can facilitate the students' comprehension process. The medium engages students directly with the learning material and allows them to process that information through gameplay activities.

Advantages and Weaknesses of the Nabi Ulul Azmi Card

Based on the implementation of instruction, card game media offers several advantages. First, it enhances student engagement. Students have the opportunity to be directly involved in the learning process through game activities, discussions, and answering questions.

Secondly, it enhances students' attention and interest. Game-based learning introduces variety, ensuring that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons do not consist solely of listening to the teacher's explanations. (Fadillah et al., 2026)

Third, it helps students retain the material. Information about the *Ulul Azmi* prophets, presented concisely on the cards, can be read and studied repeatedly. Fourth, it encourages

cooperation. When the game is played in groups, students are required to communicate and collaborate to complete the game's tasks. Fifth, it helps teachers present the material in a more engaging way. Teachers can use the cards as a stimulus to explain the stories, miracles, struggles, and exemplary lives of the Ulul Azmi prophets.

These findings align with research on card game-based learning media, which indicates that such media can help enhance students' learning absorption. Furthermore, studies on board game media in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction also demonstrate improved learning outcomes following lessons that utilize game-based media. (Usamah et al., 2024)

In addition to these advantages, the use of card games also presents several challenges. The first challenge is time management. Teachers require time to organize groups, explain the rules, distribute the cards, conduct the game, facilitate a discussion, and provide an evaluation.

The second challenge is classroom management. Game-based activities can make students more active and the classroom atmosphere livelier (Raharjo et al., 2024). Therefore, the teacher must clearly establish the rules of the game from the start.

The third challenge is the variation in students' abilities. Students differ in their capacity to comprehend and retain the material; some can quickly grasp the content of the cards, while others require additional guidance. (Pendidikan, n.d.)

The fourth challenge concerns the readiness of the instructional materials. Teachers need to ensure that there is a sufficient number of cards, that the content on the cards is accurate and aligned with the learning objectives, and that the cards are in good condition.

These challenges do not imply that card game media are ineffective; rather, they demonstrate that the successful use of such media is heavily influenced by the teacher's ability to plan and manage instruction. Research on "couple card" media in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) also indicates that card-based media can contribute to improved learning outcomes when implemented using appropriate instructional strategies. (Ismatulah et al., 2024c).



Conclusion (خاتمة)

Based on the research findings regarding the implementation of the "Stories of the Ulul Azmi Prophets" card game in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons for Grade VIII students at SMPN 4 Jiken, it can be concluded that:

1. The "Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi" (Stories of the Prophets of Great Resolve) card game can be implemented in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons through activities such as grouping students, explaining game rules, using the cards as information sources, conducting discussions, and performing evaluations. The use of this medium fosters greater active student engagement in the learning process. Limitations of this study include the relatively small number of participants, the absence of a control or comparison group, and the fact that the research was conducted within a specific school setting and focused on specific subject matter.
2. There was an improvement in students' learning mastery following the use of card game media. Out of 16 students, only 9 (56.25%) achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) prior to using the cards. After using the media, this figure rose to 13 students (81.25%). Thus, there was an increase of 4 students, representing a 25-percentage-point rise in the mastery rate. The research results indicate a shift in student understanding following the implementation of the card game. Pre-test and post-test results show an increase in

understanding scores after the card game was introduced, although these findings are insufficient to conclusively establish a strong cause-and-effect relationship.

3. The "Stories of the Ulul Azmi Prophets" card game offers several advantages, including enhancing student engagement and attentiveness, aiding material retention, creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, fostering cooperation, and introducing variety into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons. Challenges associated with using this card game include time constraints, classroom management, disparities in student abilities, and the need for thorough preparation of the materials. Therefore, teachers need to plan the use of the cards systematically to ensure learning objectives are optimally achieved.

These research findings must be interpreted within the context of the study's limitations, specifically its descriptive approach and the participation of only 16 students. Consequently, the results cannot yet serve as definitive evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Kisah Nabi Ulul Azmi card game. While the observed changes in learning outcomes offer an initial indication of the game's utility in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction, they do not conclusively demonstrate a strong cause-and-effect relationship. Future research should involve larger sample sizes and extended implementation periods, and employ comparative or experimental designs to obtain more robust evidence on the game's impact on enhancing student understanding.



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