The Role of Teachers in Increasing Students' Learning Motivation in Islamic Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - This study examines teachers' roles in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Tulungagung. It explores teaching strategies, challenges faced, and supporting factors contributing to increased motivation.

Design/Methods/Approach - A qualitative approach involved observation, document analysis, and in-depth interviews with six key informants: PAI teachers, students, school principals, parents, and school psychologists. Data analysis followed qualitative procedures, including data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Findings - PAI teachers use group discussions, project-based learning, and technology integration to boost motivation. Teaching methods align with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by linking lessons to students' daily lives. However, challenges like low student interest and time constraints persist. School support through training, resources, and parental involvement significantly aids motivation. Psychological factors influence learning outcomes, including self-confidence, social support, and material relevance.

Research Implications/Limitations - This study highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers, schools, parents, and psychologists in fostering motivation. Findings are specific to MAN 2 Tulungagung and may not generalize to other contexts. Future research could examine similar factors in different settings.

Originality/Value - This research provides new insights into the connection between teaching strategies, psychological factors, and stakeholder collaboration in religious education. It emphasizes integrating SDT principles with practical teaching methods and institutional support.

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an important component of the national education system that aims to shape the character and personality of students with noble morals and deep religious knowledge. At Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Tulungagung, Islamic religious education plays a central role in shaping students' attitudes, behaviour, and religious understanding. Therefore, the success of PAI learning is greatly influenced by various factors, one of which is the teacher's role in increasing student learning motivation (Bafadhol, 2017).

Learning motivation is an internal factor crucial in determining the success of the teaching and learning process (Filgona et al., 2020). Students who have high motivation tend to be more active, creative and enthusiastic in participating in the learning process (Williams & Williams, 2011). They have a strong internal drive to seek knowledge, understand new concepts, and achieve set learning goals (Cook & Artino, 2016). In contrast, students with low learning motivation tend to be passive and participate less in learning activities (Holte et al., 2020). They may lose interest, feel lazy, or not see the important value of the material being studied, which can ultimately affect their overall learning outcomes (Christenson et al., 2012).

In Islamic religious education, high learning motivation has a significant impact (Hosaini et al., 2024). Along with a cognitive understanding of religious teachings, students also need to be able to internalize these values in everyday life (Layyina & Radino, 2022). High learning motivation will help students be more involved in self-reflection, introspection, and practical application of religious teachings in everyday life (KekĺiK & Erdem-KekĺiK, 2012). They will be more motivated to explore more profound understanding, ask questions, discuss, and look for ways to apply religious values in their daily behaviour and actions (Vaisey, 2009).

High learning motivation in Islamic religious education is about understanding theoretical concepts and encouraging students to internalize moral, ethical and spiritual values in their daily actions (Anam et al., 2019). Therefore, motivating students effectively is one of the main challenges for PAI teachers in achieving the broader goals of religious education, namely forming character and personality with noble morals and deep religious knowledge (Samad et al., 2023).

The role of teachers in cultivating and increasing student learning motivation at MAN 2 Tulungagung has significant implications. Teachers who have competent qualities, sources of inspiration, and are able to create a conducive learning environment can be the main key to motivating students (Dörnyei & Muir, 2019). They are not only tasked with providing learning material but are also responsible for creating interesting, relevant, and motivating learning experiences for students (Lykke et al., 2016).

In the context of Islamic religious education, where character formation and instilling moral values are essential, the role of teachers becomes more prominent. PAI teachers at MAN 2 Tulungagung have adopted various strategies and approaches to increase student learning motivation. They may use creative approaches in delivering

material, encourage student participation in discussions, integrate technology in learning, or provide challenges relevant to students' daily lives (Beldarrain, 2006).

However, there is still room for further research to evaluate the teacher's role in increasing student learning motivation and find new strategies that may be more effective. Such research can help identify best practices, challenges teachers face, and students' needs in increasing their learning motivation (Zepeda et al., 2020). Further research will play an important role in improving the quality of Islamic learning at MAN 2 Tulungagung, as well as in providing valuable insights for the professional development of PAI teachers. This research examines teachers' role in increasing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung. Through this research, a clear picture can be obtained regarding the various strategies used by teachers, factors that support and hinder student learning motivation, and recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of PAI learning at MAN 2 Tulungagung. Thus, this research can significantly contribute to developing Islamic religious education in Indonesia, especially at MAN 2 Tulungagung.

Based on the background above, this study aims to examine the role of teachers and teaching strategies in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung, as well as to investigate how support from the school, parents, and psychological factors influence students' learning motivation. This research will explore various teaching methods, such as group discussions and technology, to increase student engagement with the PAI material. By understanding these factors, this study is expected to provide valuable insights to improve the quality of education in the madrasa.

Theoretical Review
Self-Determination Motivation Theory (SDT)

Self-determination theory (SDT), developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, highlights the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and identifies three basic psychological needs that are crucial for fostering intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being (E. Deci L. & Ryan, 2012). Intrinsic motivation arises from personal interest and satisfaction, where students learn because they enjoy the activity. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as grades or recognition, motivating students to learn to achieve specific outcomes or avoid punishment. To support intrinsic motivation, SDT emphasizes three key needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Autonomy refers to the desire for control over one's actions, competence involves feeling capable and effective, and relatedness involves feeling connected and valued by others.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, teachers can apply SDT principles to increase student motivation. Teachers promote autonomy by offering students choices in how they learn—such as selecting between group or individual projects or choosing topics of personal interest. Providing appropriately challenging tasks and constructive feedback helps foster a sense of competence while creating an inclusive and supportive learning

environment, ensuring students feel valued and connected and addressing their relatedness needs (Maulidya Nisa et al., 2024).

Social Learning (Social Learning Theory)

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that learning occurs through direct experience and social interaction, observation, imitation, and modelling (Bandura, 1977b). In education, this theory emphasizes the role of teachers in influencing students by setting examples and providing opportunities for social interaction. Key concepts in this theory include observational learning, where students learn by watching others; imitation, where they replicate observed behaviours; and modelling, where teachers act as role models. Reinforcement plays a crucial role, as behaviours are strengthened or weakened based on the responses they receive. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed, also impacts motivation and learning outcomes. Bandura's theory suggests that exposure to aggressive behaviours may lead to imitative aggression, while pro-social behaviours, such as helping others, can also be learned. Additionally, the theory highlights the importance of cognition in processing information, generalization (applying learned behaviours to new situations), and differentiation (distinguishing between different situations).

Social Learning Theory can be applied in Islamic religious education to enhance students' religious understanding and experiences (Chanifah et al., 2021). Teachers can be role models by exemplifying Islamic behaviours, allowing students to observe and imitate positive practices. Teachers can provide concrete examples that make abstract values more relatable by demonstrating how religious values are applied in everyday life. Creating a positive, supportive environment for social interactions through collaboration and discussion can further facilitate learning and reinforce Islamic teachings.

Expectancy-Valence Theory

The Expectancy-Value Theory, developed by Victor Vroom, explores how motivation is influenced by three key factors: expectancy, valence, and instrumentality (Lokman et al., 2022). Expectancy is the belief that effort will lead to the desired outcome. In Islamic education, teachers can help students understand that their efforts will lead to a deeper understanding of religious teachings. Valence refers to the value placed on the outcome, and teachers can emphasize the importance and relevance of religious learning in students' lives, making them see its significance. Instrumentality is the belief that performance will lead to desired results. Teachers can show students how their efforts in learning will lead to a deeper understanding of religious values and their practical application. By explaining the benefits of religious learning, linking effort to outcomes, and recognizing achievements, teachers can enhance students' motivation and encourage active participation in the learning process (Çoban, 2013).

Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The Hierarchy of Needs theory by Abraham Maslow outlines five levels of human needs, which are (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006): physiological needs, security needs,

love/belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Physiological needs, such as food, shelter, and rest, are essential for survival. Once these are met, individuals seek security and stability, including financial security and protection. Love and belonging must focus on social relationships like family, friends, and community. Esteem needs involve recognition and rewards for achievements, while self-actualization represents the highest level, where individuals reach their full potential and experience personal growth.

In Islamic Religious Education, teachers can apply Maslow's theory by meeting students' basic needs, fostering a safe and supportive environment, encouraging positive social relationships, and recognizing their efforts. This approach can help students feel physically safe, emotionally supported, and valued, motivating them to engage in learning. Teachers should create an inclusive atmosphere where students feel heard and respected, provide recognition for their achievements, and offer challenges that encourage personal growth in religious learning. By understanding and applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, teachers can effectively support students in reaching their full potential in Islamic education (Adiele & Abraham, 2013).

Social Cognitive Theory (Social Cognitive Theory)

Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, highlights the influence of the environment, behaviour, and cognitive processes on learning. According to Bandura, learning occurs through direct experience and observing others in one's environment. A key concept in this theory is self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a specific task or goal (Bandura, 2014). Additionally, Bandura emphasizes observational learning, where individuals observe others' behaviours and the outcomes and then decide whether to adopt or reject those behaviours based on their evaluations of the results (Conner, 2009). Research by Zimmerman and Pajares further supports the importance of self-efficacy in learning, particularly in academic contexts (Nazemi, 2016).

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, teachers play a crucial role in applying the principles of Social Cognitive Theory. They can help students build self-confidence by guiding them in understanding their ability to comprehend and apply Islamic teachings in daily life. Positive learning experiences and reinforcing student achievements can further strengthen students' self-efficacy. By integrating cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors into the learning process, teachers can design compelling educational experiences that promote self-efficacy. This approach helps create a supportive learning environment, motivating students to succeed in understanding and applying Islamic teachings.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand in depth the role of teachers in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung. A qualitative approach allows researchers to collect and analyze in-depth non-numerical data about research participants' experiences, perceptions and views.

(1) Research Design: This research uses a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of teachers in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung. Focus is given to interactions between teachers and students, the teaching strategies used, and their impact on student learning motivation (Patton, 2002).

(2) Participants: Involving various parties such as teachers, students, school principals, guardians/parents of students, and school psychologists, it is hoped that this research can provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of teachers in increasing student learning motivation in the context of Islamic Religious Education subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, individuals considered to have relevant information for this research (Rubin, 2011).

(3) Data collection technique:
  (a) Observation: Observing interactions between teachers and students during the learning process to understand the teaching strategies used and students' responses to them.
  (b) Interviews: Conducted with teachers and students to understand the approaches they use to increase students' learning motivation and perceptions and experiences in learning Islamic Religious Education.
  (c) Document Analysis: Analyzing documents such as lesson plans, lesson materials, and teacher notes to understand the teacher's teaching approach and learning context (Seidman, 2006).

(4) Research procedure:
  (a) Preparation Stage: Identification of participants, arranging observation times, and preparing interview guidelines.
  (b) Data Collection Stage: Includes classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and collecting documents related to learning.
  (c) Data Analysis Stage: Interview transcription, thematic analysis of observation and interview data, and triangulation of data from various sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding (Lewis, 2015).

(5) Research Ethics:
  (a) Obtain permission from the school and consent from research participants.
  (b) Maintain the confidentiality of participants' identities and respect their wishes to participate (Shull et al., 2008).

(6) Validity and Reliability:
  (a) Triangulating data from various sources to ensure the validity of the findings.
  (b) Reflect on the researcher's position, biases, and assumptions that may influence the interpretation of the data (Miles et al., 2014).

(7) Data analysis:
  (a) Carried out inductively by identifying patterns, themes and relationships from the collected data.
  (b) Data were analyzed based on a previously determined conceptual framework, especially relating to the role of teachers in increasing student learning

motivation (Mertens, 2023). Through this qualitative research method, an in-depth understanding of teachers' role in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung will be obtained.

Result and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with various related parties, the following are the main findings of this research:

1. Teacher Strategies in Increasing Learning Motivation

Student learning motivation is one of the critical elements in the educational process, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Teachers at MAN 2 Tulungagung have implemented various strategies to enhance students' learning motivation through innovative and participatory approaches. PAI teachers employ strategies like group discussions, project-based learning, technology integration, and connecting lesson content to students' daily lives. These strategies align with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of social experiences and interactions in learning. Cetin (2015) found that group discussions and project-based learning methods can enhance students' intrinsic motivation through active engagement (Cetin, 2015). Star et al. (2014) also support technology integration to enrich the learning experience and make it more engaging (Star et al., 2014).

A teacher (Mr. Wav) stated, "Relating the material to students' lives makes lessons engaging and relevant. For instance, discussing moral values with relatable real-life cases sparks interest." This strategy boosts motivation and connects learning to real-life contexts relevant to students. The role of the principal is vital in supporting the implementation of effective teaching strategies. At MAN 2 Tulungagung, the principal provides training, workshops, and technological resources to enhance teacher competency. As the principal (Mr. Md) noted, "We regularly conduct training and workshops for PAI teachers, focusing on active learning strategies and technology use." This support aligns with the Self-Determination Theory (E. L. Deci & Ryan, 1980), highlighting the importance of a supportive environment in enhancing teacher competence and motivation. Helniha (2020) found that teacher training focusing on active learning strategies improves teaching effectiveness (Helniha, 2020).

Students report that interactive methods, such as multimedia projects and group discussions, make learning more engaging and enhance their understanding. A student (Mr. Ma) stated, "Group discussions help me understand the material better and participate more actively." This approach aligns with Piaget's Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes that active student engagement in the learning process improves outcomes (Carey et al., 2015). Research by Indra et al. (2023) showed that technology-based projects could increase student engagement (Indra et al., 2023). Ridwan (2019) also confirmed that experiential learning methods could motivate students to understand religious studies (Ridwan, 2019).

Collaboration between teachers and school psychologists provides psychological support to students, helping them build confidence and motivation. A school psychologist (Mr Ku) explained, "We provide counselling and partner with teachers to design compelling strategies that resonate with students' lives." This approach reflects Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, which posits that students' belief in their capabilities affects academic performance. Afifah & Nasution (2023) revealed that counselling and psychological support could boost students' self-confidence (Afifah & Nasution, 2023). Suciani & Rozali (2014) added that emotional support from psychologists helps students overcome academic challenges (Suciani & Rozali, 2014).

The findings of this study indicate that collaboration among teachers, principals, psychologists, and parents creates a holistic learning environment that significantly enhances student motivation at MAN 2 Tulungagung. The implemented strategies improve learning outcomes and contribute to students' social and emotional development. Mubarak and Hassan (2021) emphasized that a holistic approach to religious education produces more motivated students (Mubarak & Hassan, 2021). Kurniati et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of synergy among all stakeholders in creating a supportive learning environment (Kurniati et al., 2024). The innovative strategies applied by PAI teachers at MAN 2 Tulungagung, supported by the principal, collaboration with psychologists, and parental involvement, have successfully increased students' learning motivation. This collaboration exemplifies the practical application of modern educational theories in creating a supportive and motivating learning environment for students academically and socially.

2. Challenges in Increasing Learning Motivation

Several challenges in increasing learning motivation were identified based on interviews with various stakeholders, including PAI teachers, students, parents, school psychologists, and principals. The primary challenge is the lack of student interest in PAI subjects, which are often perceived as less relevant and practical than other subjects. Time limitations also hinder the application of interactive and engaging teaching methods. This finding aligns with research by Baidhawy (2007), which found that students often feel disconnected from the content of religious studies because it is not adequately linked to their daily lives (Baidhawy, 2007). Similarly, a study by Karnadi et al. (2023) highlighted that students' interest in religious subjects significantly decreases when they perceive the material as monotonous or irrelevant to contemporary issues (Karnadi et al., 2023).

PAI teachers at MAN 2 Tulungagung have implemented various strategies to address these challenges. They use creative teaching methods like group discussions, theme-based projects, and multimedia-based learning. Teachers also attempt to relate the material to real-life events to make it more meaningful. These strategies are supported by findings from Suraijiah (2023), who emphasized the effectiveness of contextual and interactive learning in increasing students' engagement in religious education (Suraijiah et al., 2023). Desai and Kulkarni (2022) found that using technology in teaching PAI, such as

video tutorials and interactive applications, significantly enhances students' motivation and understanding (Desai & Kulkarni, 2022).

The school plays a crucial role in supporting teachers. The principal ensures teachers can access training, workshops, and adequate teaching resources to develop more effective and engaging teaching methods. This support allows teachers to innovate and experiment with various approaches to increase student motivation. This is consistent with a study by Lundeto (2023), which found that institutional support, including professional development programs and access to modern teaching resources, significantly improves teaching quality and student engagement in religious education (Lundeto, 2023).

Parents highlighted similar challenges, noting their children's lack of enthusiasm for PAI lessons. However, they recognized the creative efforts of teachers in making lessons more interactive and relevant. Parents also reported observable improvements in their children's interest and understanding when innovative teaching methods were used. This aligns with findings by Jonathan et al. (2023), which demonstrated that parental involvement and teacher creativity are critical factors in increasing students' motivation in religious education (Jonathan et al., 2023).

Psychological challenges, such as a lack of perceived relevance and environmental pressures, were also identified as significant barriers to learning motivation in PAI. School psychologists play a vital role in providing counselling services and collaborating with teachers to develop more engaging and relatable teaching strategies. The role of school psychologists is supported by the research of Vieten et al. (2013), which found that counselling interventions and collaboration between psychologists and teachers effectively address students' motivational challenges in religious education (Vieten et al., 2013).

The challenges in increasing students' learning motivation in PAI at MAN 2 Tulungagung revolve around the perceived irrelevance of the material, lack of interest, and time constraints for interactive methods. However, collaborative efforts from teachers, school leaders, parents, and psychologists have shown promise in overcoming these challenges. Supported by findings from previous research, it is evident that innovative teaching methods, professional development, and psychological support significantly improve students' motivation and engagement in religious education.

3. Students' Perceptions of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teaching

Students interviewed, MA and AS, expressed that their motivation to learn PAI increased due to interactive and relevant teaching methods. MA stated that connecting the material to real-life situations made lessons more engaging, while AS found group discussions and theme-based projects helpful for understanding the subject matter. Both emphasized the positive role of teachers in providing encouragement and serving as good role models, aligning with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that students learn through observation and imitation of their teachers. *"I feel motivated because our teacher always relates the material to real life. This makes the lessons more relevant and interesting."* (Mas MA). *"I feel motivated because our teacher is highly*

interactive and connects the material to daily life. Group discussions make me more active and help me understand the material better." (Mbak AS)

The findings align with research by Oktavia and Khotimah (2023), which demonstrated that contextual and interactive learning enhances student engagement in religious education (Oktavia & Khotimah, 2023). Additionally, research by Sholeh (2024) found that incorporating technology and multimedia, such as videos and interactive applications, significantly improves students' motivation and comprehension (Muh Ibnu Sholeh et al., 2024). In Social Learning Theory, teachers act as models demonstrating desired behaviours through creative teaching methods. Students learn not only from direct instruction but also by observing their teachers' behaviour and attitudes. This indicates that teachers who can relate material to real-life contexts and employ diverse teaching methods are more effective in boosting student motivation and improving the quality of learning.

4. Principal's Perspective on Supporting Teachers to Enhance Learning Motivation

The principal, Mr MD, highlighted that the school supports teachers in boosting students' motivation through regular training and workshops. Additionally, the school offers adequate facilities, such as access to technology and learning resources, to aid in the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). He explained: "The school supports teachers with routine training and workshops. We also provide facilities like computers, projectors, and internet access to enhance PAI teaching." (Mr. MD) This support is crucial in increasing students' motivation to learn PAI. The training and workshops help teachers develop new skills for more effective teaching. Adequate technological facilities enable the use of multimedia in lessons, making the material more engaging and easier for students to comprehend.

The school's support aligns with findings by Sari & Curup (2024), which demonstrate that continuous teacher training positively impacts student motivation (Sari & Curup, 2024). Such training equips teachers to implement more innovative teaching methods, subsequently improving student engagement in learning. Research by Akbar (2019) also underscores the importance of adequate facilities, such as technology and multimedia, in supporting learning (Akbar, 2019). Using technology in classrooms helps capture students' interest and facilitates a better understanding of the material, consistent with the findings of this study.

This perspective is further supported by Social Learning Theory, which suggests that adequate facilities and teacher training enhance teaching quality and student motivation. According to Bandura (1977), teachers with the right skills and access to supportive facilities can be positive role models for students, increasing their motivation to learn (Bandura, 1977a). In this context, school support through training and adequate facilities is key to creating a more effective and engaging learning environment, ultimately contributing to improved student motivation in PAI lessons.

5. Parental Perspectives on Learning Motivation

The parents, SA and DH, expressed positive views on the role of teachers in motivating their children to learn. SA noted that their child often talked about how engaging and enjoyable the PAI (Islamic Religious Education) lessons were due to the teachers' approach. They stated: "My child often talks about how interesting the PAI class is and how the teacher makes the lessons enjoyable. This shows that the teacher has created an engaging and interactive learning environment that motivates my child to learn." DH also observed a significant improvement in their child's motivation to learn since attending MAN 2 Tulungagung, saying: "Previously, my child was less interested in religious studies, but now they are more enthusiastic and motivated to learn. This indicates that the teacher's methods have increased my child's interest and motivation."

Both parents emphasized the various teaching methods employed in PAI lessons, such as group discussions and project-based learning. SA remarked: "The teachers use methods like group discussions and projects, which make the learning process more creative and practical. They also incorporate technology, which makes the lessons more modern and relevant." DH concurred, adding: "The key factor is the teaching approach used. The methods are interactive and connected to students' daily lives. The teachers also encourage active participation, which helps keep my child motivated."

These parental observations align with findings from research by Maisaroh & Wathon (2018), which highlighted that interactive teaching strategies are crucial for enhancing student engagement and motivation (Maisaroh & Wathon, 2018). Furthermore, a study by Amrulloh et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of a supportive and positive learning environment in fostering academic motivation among students (Amrulloh et al., 2024). According to Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978), creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment is essential for student development and motivation. Teachers who facilitate interactive and group-based activities effectively encourage student participation and engagement. Positive feedback from parents underscores the effectiveness of the teaching methods used at MAN 2 Tulungagung in enhancing student motivation. Interactive, creative, and relevant teaching approaches, combined with technology, play a vital role in creating an engaging learning environment.

6. Psychological Factors that Influence Learning Motivation

The school psychologist, KU, identified several psychological factors that influence students' motivation to learn, including self-confidence, social support from teachers and peers, and the relevance of the lesson material to students' lives. According to KU, individual and group counselling and collaboration with teachers to design engaging lessons significantly benefit students with lower motivation. KU explained: "There are several psychological factors that affect students' motivation, including self-confidence, social support, and the relevance of the lesson material. Confident students are more active in learning, while social support from teachers and peers makes students feel more motivated. Students are more interested in learning if the lesson material is relevant to their lives." KU further emphasized: "We provide individual and group counselling services

and work with teachers to design engaging and relevant lessons for students. Social and emotional support from teachers and counsellors is crucial to help students feel more motivated and confident."

Research by Usman (2021) underscores the significant impact of self-confidence and social support on students' learning motivation (Usman et al., 2021). Similarly, findings by Ulya and Irawati (2016) revealed that the relevance of lesson material to real-life situations enhances student motivation (Ulya & Irawati, 2016). According to Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, students are more motivated to learn when they feel empowered and supported by their surroundings, such as peers and teachers. Linking lesson material to students' lives also fosters greater learning engagement, as Vygotsky (1978) elaborated in his Social Learning Theory. Psychological factors such as self-confidence, social support, and the relevance of lesson material play a pivotal role in boosting students' motivation. Through psychological interventions and collaboration with teachers, schools can create a supportive learning environment that enhances student motivation.

This study reveals several significant findings regarding the factors influencing students' motivation to learn in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Tulungagung. One of the most notable findings is the role of teachers in enhancing students' learning motivation. Teachers not only act as educators but also as mentors who create a supportive and motivating learning environment. Active teacher involvement, practical communication skills, and attention to students' development have proven to be key factors in building positive relationships between teachers and students, which, in turn, contribute to increased learning motivation. This aligns with the findings of Ulya & Irawati (2016), who assert that positive teacher-student relationships can significantly enhance students' motivation to learn (Ulya & Irawati, 2016). Teachers who care about students' academic and personal development can provide essential encouragement to boost their motivation (Hanaris, 2023).

The role of teachers as motivators in PAI instruction is crucial. Teachers who actively communicate with students, both personally and within the learning context, successfully create an environment that fosters the development of intrinsic motivation (Johnson et al., 2024). This is supported by the findings of Arif (2023), who explains that intrinsic motivation increases when students feel they have control and freedom in choosing their activities (Arif, 2023). Learning approaches that provide such freedom can enhance student engagement and motivate them to continue learning (Lisnawati et al., 2023). In this context, teachers need to employ methods that allow students to explore their interests in PAI, encouraging more active participation.

The teaching strategies employed by teachers also play a significant role in increasing student motivation (Abror et al., 2024). Interactive and real-life-relevant teaching approaches have proven effective in boosting students' interest and engagement. Constructivist-based learning, which positions students as active participants in the learning process, allows them to develop critical and creative thinking skills and improves their confidence in problem-solving (Effendi, 2016). For example, implementing problem-based learning methods in PAI subjects can motivate students to connect

classroom material with real-life issues, enhance their sense of responsibility toward learning, and encourage collaboration with peers in problem-solving.

Technology in education can also enrich students' learning experiences (Habibulloh et al., 2024). Technology makes learning more engaging and interactive, vital for increasing student motivation, especially in subjects perceived as less appealing. A study by Depita (2024) indicates that integrating technology, such as educational apps and videos, into teaching can boost students' motivation and engagement (Depita, 2024). Technology provides students with more flexible learning opportunities and resources to help them better understand the material. Therefore, incorporating technology into PAI instruction can be an effective way to enhance students' learning motivation.

Teachers and technology influence student's motivation, and school support also plays a significant role. Schools that provide adequate facilities, professional development training for teachers, and recognition of students' achievements can create an environment that supports and motivates students to perform better academically. This aligns with research by Kusnendar and Driana (2024), demonstrating that a supportive school climate and recognition of students' efforts can enhance their motivation to achieve (Kusnendar Driana, 2024). Students will feel valued and encouraged to give their best in learning by fostering a favourable school climate.

Parental support also significantly impacts students' motivation to learn. Parents actively engaging in their children's education can help boost their learning motivation. Research by Diniaty (2017) shows that parental support in moral encouragement and at-home learning activities gives students a sense of security and confidence, increasing their motivation to learn (Diniaty, 2017). In this regard, parents play a critical role in offering moral support and supervising and motivating students to maintain consistent learning efforts, especially in subjects like PAI.

The study also highlights the importance of understanding students' psychological factors in designing effective learning strategies. Students with high intrinsic motivation are more likely to engage in learning than those driven solely by external factors like rewards or punishments. Research by Urfatullaila (2022) reveals that intrinsic motivation significantly impacts students' academic success (Urfatullaila, 2022). Thus, teachers must understand students' psychological conditions and design learning strategies that cater to their needs. Strategies that promote students' autonomy and competence are more effective in boosting their motivation.

Despite these promising findings, the study also identifies challenges that need to be addressed, such as students' lack of interest in religious studies and teachers' limited time to manage their classes effectively. These findings suggest the need for innovation in teaching methods. Research by Karlina et al. (2024) indicates that time constraints and the pressure to complete the curriculum can be significant barriers to implementing effective teaching strategies (Karlina et al., 2024). Therefore, schools must provide more significant support regarding time and training for teachers to manage their time more effectively and maximize students' potential in PAI learning (Sholeh et al., 2023).

Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of a more flexible approach to teaching PAI, including diverse teaching media tailored to students' needs and interests. Research by Firmansyah (2024) suggests that integrating technology into teaching can increase students' engagement in more complex and often perceived as boring subjects like PAI (Firmansyah, 2024). This demonstrates that correctly applying technology can enhance students' interest in learning more intensively and enjoyably.

With these findings, it is essential for schools and all stakeholders to collaborate in creating a conducive and engaging learning environment. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate how technology and pedagogical innovations can enhance students' motivation in PAI. This includes examining how project-based or problem-based learning methods can be effectively applied in PAI classes and how sustained support from schools and parents can impact students' motivation.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding, longitudinal studies are needed to track the development of students' motivation over a more extended period. Such research would provide better insights into the factors influencing motivation and how these factors evolve. By following students over an extended period, these studies could uncover changes in students' motivation, their impact on academic outcomes, and how strategies can adapt to the students' changing needs.

Overall, this research confirms the importance of teachers, school support, parental involvement, and attention to psychological factors in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung. The teacher's role is not only as a teacher but also as a guide and facilitator in the learning process. They are responsible for creating a learning environment that supports and motivates students and pays attention to their psychological needs. Continuous support from schools is critical in supporting teachers' efforts and providing adequate facilities and training for teacher professional development. Apart from that, parental involvement also has a significant role in increasing students' learning motivation. Parental support and involvement in their children's education can create a conducive learning environment at home and provide the emotional and motivational support that students need. Students' psychological factors, such as intrinsic motivation and self-perception, must also be considered in designing effective learning strategies. A holistic and collaborative approach between teachers, schools and parents is needed to create a compelling and enjoyable learning environment for students. Paying attention to all these aspects is hoped to create a learning atmosphere that motivates students to study better and achieve better achievements in PAI subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung.

Conclusion

Research on the role of teachers in increasing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung shows that teachers play an important role in the learning process. PAI teachers use interactive teaching methods such as group discussions, project-based learning, and technology to make lessons more interesting and relevant for students. This strategy has proven effective in increasing

students' intrinsic motivation. Support from schools through training and adequate facilities also plays an important role. Students' perceptions show that interactive and relevant teaching methods motivate their learning. Students feel more interested and motivated when the material taught relates to real life, and the learning methods involve their active participation. Parents also acknowledged the important role of teachers in increasing their children's learning motivation, noting that interesting and relevant teaching methods made their children more enthusiastic about learning. Apart from that, psychological factors such as self-confidence, social support from teachers and peers, and the relevance of lesson material to students' lives also play an important role in students' learning motivation. Overall, this research shows that interactive and relevant teaching strategies, school support, teachers' active role, and psychological factors all contribute to increasing student learning motivation in PAI subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach involving various aspects, from teaching methods, institutional support, and psychological factors, to increase student learning motivation.

Declarations

Research limitations

Research regarding the role of teachers in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects at MAN 2 Tulungagung has several limitations that are important to pay attention to. First, this research was conducted in only one madrasah, so the results may not be generalizable to other madrasas or educational contexts. In addition, the qualitative methods provide in-depth insights but do not allow for broader quantitative measurements regarding student learning motivation. The time limitations of the study may not have been sufficient to see long-term changes in student motivation. External factors such as family environment and socio-economic conditions are not controlled, even though they can influence learning motivation. Limited resources, both in terms of time, funds and personnel, also limit the scope of research and the number of informants who can be interviewed. Subjective bias from interview results can also affect the accuracy of the data.

Additionally, variations in technology access and use across schools or regions may not be fully accounted for. Lastly, this research only focuses on Islamic Religious Education, so these findings may not apply to other subjects with different teaching characteristics and challenges. By paying attention to these limitations, it is hoped that future research can expand the sample scope, use mixed methods, and consider a wider range of external variables to obtain more comprehensive results.

Acknowledgement

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