

Research Article

# Efforts of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Increasing Students' Learning Motivation at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK Kartasura

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## ABSTRACT

This study discusses how Islamic Religious Education teachers' efforts to improve students' learning motivation. This study aims to identify efforts made by teachers to improve students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects and the factors that influence students' learning motivation. The method used in this study is a qualitative research method with a case study type, namely research conducted directly in the field or a place used for research. This research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK. The results of the study showed that students' learning motivation was quite high because it had been formed from the beginning and had a basic knowledge of Islamic Religious Education brought from Elementary School level, so teachers only need to equate and align perceptions with students. In addition, there are 4 factors that influence students' learning motivation, one of which is the importance of parental involvement. The conclusion of this study is that the right Islamic Religious Education teaching method can increase students' motivation and interest in learning. Motivation is very much needed in Islamic Religious Education subject learning activities. Therefore, it is important for an Islamic Religious Education teacher to find methods and strategies to increase Islamic Religious Education learning motivation.

**Keywords:** Islamic teacher; Islamic Religious Education; Learning Motivation; Teacher Efforts

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning motivation is an important element that can affect the quality and success of the education process in schools. In the world of education, high motivation can increase student engagement, accelerate the process of mastering the material, and form positive characters that will benefit their lives in the future. This is also true in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which is one of the compulsory subjects in schools, including at Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK Junior High School. In Muhammadiyah schools, the elements of PAI become their own subjects, so that the clump of PAI subjects consists of fiqh, al-qur'an hadith, aqidah akhlak, history of Islamic culture, and Arabic. PAI learning not only aims to provide students with religious knowledge, but also to form noble morals and improve students' spiritual quality.

Motivation is indispensable in learning activities of PAI subjects. The success of a teacher in implementing a learning system depends on the teacher's efforts to arouse the learning motivation of his students. The amount of motivation will determine the high and low learning achievement obtained by a student (Wafiroh et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important for a PAI teacher to find methods and strategies to increase PAI learning motivation. In SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK itself, the learning motivation of students is quite high because it has been formed from the beginning of entry and has had a basic about PAI brought from the elementary school level, so the teacher only needs to equalize and harmonize perceptions with students. In order for students to have motivation in learning, the teacher has a very important role. Teachers not only explain, train, and lecture, but also design subject matter, make homework, evaluate student achievement, and organize discipline, so the role of the teacher is needed. One of the most important roles of the teacher is as a motivator (Januardi et al., 2024). Thus, one of the lessons that support Islamic Religious Education is a strategy or approach to increase learning motivation that will lead students towards effective and efficient learning that emphasizes student activeness physically, mentally, intellectually and emotionally.

However, it cannot be denied that one of the biggest challenges in learning PAI is how to increase students' motivation, considering that there are several external and internal factors that can affect their interest and attention to this subject. Many students find religious learning less interesting and prefer to focus on other subjects that are considered more relevant to their daily lives. Therefore, the role of teachers in increasing motivation to learn PAI is very important. Teachers are not only in charge of delivering the material, but should also be able to create an atmosphere that is fun, interesting, and relevant to students' lives so that they can understand and appreciate the importance of religious teachings in their lives.

Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK Junior High School as one of the educational institutions based on Islamic values, continues to strive to motivate students in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings. In this school, PAI teachers play an active role in designing and implementing various strategies that can arouse students' enthusiasm for learning, both through conventional and innovative approaches. The efforts made include the use of varied methods, such as approaches based on the values of daily life, creative utilization of learning media, and assignments that can foster students' sense of responsibility and love for religious teaching materials. The success of the Islamic Education learning process will not be separated from the readiness of educators to modify learning models that have the aim of increasing the frequent involvement of students properly and effectively in the learning process. The development of the right learning model basically aims to create learning conditions that allow students to learn effectively and interactively as well as fun so that students achieve optimal learning achievement.

This article will discuss in depth the various efforts made by PAI teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK in increasing students' learning motivation. Through a deeper understanding of these strategies, it is hoped that effective solutions can be found to overcome challenges in PAI learning and provide insights for other educators in creating a more interesting and meaningful learning atmosphere for students. In addition, this article will also explore how these efforts contribute to students' character development, forming more noble individuals, and strengthening their religious foundation in the midst of increasingly dynamic times.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a type of case study research, namely research conducted directly in the field or a place used for research. This research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK. This type of case study research is used to examine phenomena that occur in a particular place or unit. This research approach uses a qualitative approach, which is research intended to understand certain phenomena. This phenomenon can be something experienced by the research subject such as behavior, perception, motivation, action and so on which is holistically described in the form of words that describe the conditions as they are (Ridha et al., 2024). The source of data obtained in this study is the results of interviews in the form of notes and voice recordings conducted to Mr. Setioko as a PAI subject teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK. This research instrument is in the form of an interview guide containing 9 questions submitted to the interviewee. Researchers used data collection techniques in the form of interviews and documentation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning can be said to be of quality if students are active during learning, as well as increasing the achievement of students related to the material that has been conveyed by educators. As for fostering student activeness and understanding, a good learning design needs to be made. Educators can be said to be successful if the learning objectives can be achieved with the implementation of optimal learning. To realize optimal learning, educators need to have skills in teaching and educators must be able to master several competencies in order to improve their expertise as educators. The role of the teacher has great significance in increasing the enthusiasm for learning of students. Given that each individual has differences in their behavior, this gives rise to variations in their level of enthusiasm and motivation to learn. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers try to create various strategies to stimulate and strengthen the learning motivation possessed by students (Fitri, 2024). Efforts that can be made by PAI teachers are creative in using learning methods, learning media, or classroom management. In addition to this, of course, there are other efforts that PAI teachers can make in improving the quality of learning in schools. Creative, professional, and fun teachers must have special skills or ways to improve the quality of learning. One of the efforts made by PAI teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK is to maintain good communication with students and improve learning methods that are considered irrelevant.

## 3.1 Teachers' Efforts in Improving Learning Motivation

### 3.1.1 Using Digital Learning Methods

Along with the times, science and technology have also developed, the development of science and technology which is increasingly sophisticated, indirectly has a considerable influence on aspects of human life. One aspect of human life that is influenced by the development of science and technology is education. Innovation in learning methods is one of the things that must be considered by a teacher in teaching in the classroom. The learning methods taught must also be adapted to the times because the longer science is also growing. One of the learning methods that can be done to increase student learning motivation is by using digital media. At SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK applies the learning method by using the e-learning learning method, which is a digital-based learning method. Because we cannot deny the development of the times with extraordinary globalization, the school captures the moment to create new learning innovations so that students no longer use full printed books but already use digital learning, namely using laptops. However, every learning method must have a positive side and a negative side, for the positive side of using laptops, namely students can learn something new that they might not have gotten or learned in the school world before, but when they entered Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK Junior High School which initially they did not know anything about laptops and did not know anything about learning applications and loading learning media on laptops they could start learning. For the negative side, some students who do not focus on learning sometimes open applications or other things on the laptop, especially not all teachers are able to monitor students during learning, but teachers make a point system for students who are not focused during learning.

### 3.1.2 Maintain Communication with Students

To maximize learning activities, teachers also make efforts to increase learning motivation, one of which is by maintaining communication with students. The communication in question is that the teacher and students make an agreement at the beginning of school so that students understand the rules made by the teacher and understand the values that must be achieved. In addition to the initial entry, other communication is during learning, namely by involving and giving an active role to students such as questions and answers or students can ask about material that has not been understood. In addition to involving students, another effort is that teachers must also often provide good motivation and positive affirmations to children because sometimes children learn according to their mood so that teachers as much as possible maintain the mood of students by giving positive affirmations and providing shirah or stories in order to create an atmosphere that makes students enthusiastic in learning. In addition, teachers can implement cooperative learning where students work collaboratively in small groups. Through interaction and cooperation with peers, students can support, motivate and learn from each other. Cooperative learning also increases students' sense of responsibility and accountability towards their group. Making Learning Interesting: Teachers can use a variety of interesting learning methods and tools, such as audiovisual media, digital technology, games, and experiments (Hanaris, 2023).

### 3.1.3 Implementing Differentiated Learning

In addition to the learning methods applied, namely by using digital-based learning, teachers must also implement effective learning so that student learning motivation can increase. There are many motivations or encouragements that can help students to have a high interest in learning, one of which is by synchronizing learning with students' abilities so that students feel comfortable with the learning being carried out. In order to synchronize learning with students' abilities, differentiated learning is needed. Differentiated learning is a teacher's effort to respond to differences among students in the classroom. The use of this differentiation strategy considers the needs of students including readiness, interest, and profile or learning.

Style by providing appropriate activities. SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK has implemented this differentiated learning, one of which is in PAI subjects. Differentiated learning itself is carried out according to the needs of students, such as the example applied in PAI subjects, namely in fiqh subjects. One of the chapters studied in the fiqh map is thaharah or how to purify yourself. In this subject, teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK apply differentiated learning by separating men and women when discussing thaharah which is only known by women or only known by men. For male students, the material is given by Mr. Setioko as the PAI subject teacher, while for female students Mr. Setioko invites female teachers to provide thaharah material that can only be known by women. The provision of the material is also adjusted to the child's ability, when children who are quick to capture information or knowledge if the material is finished they are allowed to do other things or read other materials but specifically for children who are somewhat late in receiving

information or can be called somewhat weak in academics usually provided more assistance or there are additional hours carried out outside of learning.

After implementing appropriate learning or differentiated learning, the indication of increased student learning motivation can be measured by the assessment results. In terms of learning, to be able to measure student learning outcomes, assessment is also necessary. Alternative assessment is one of the instruments that can be used to measure student learning outcomes. Because every learning that has been done by the assessment teacher can be measured from the formative and summative grades, for formative assessment can be obtained from skills because in the PAI subject it takes practice to find out the extent to which students understand the material presented. While related to the material can be taken from daily assessments, midterm and end-of-semester assessments. According to Mr. Setioko as the PAI teacher, the assessment results of the students in the PAI subject can be said to be good because 80% of the students have understood what the teacher has conveyed, although there are some children who still get extra guidance.

### **3.1.4 Student Parent Involvement**

Student learning motivation cannot be separated from the involvement of student guardians or parents because parents are the first madrasah for their children. Part of the student's time after returning from school is spent with parents at home. Parents are obliged to provide encouragement or motivation and provide good direction so that children still have the enthusiasm to learn. Physical and socio-psychological factors in the family greatly influence the development of children's learning. What is meant by physical factors in the family is the house, home facilities, layout and layout of the house, as well as the condition of the house with the environment around it. The better the condition of the house, home facilities, layout and layout of the house and the condition of the house with the surrounding environment, it will have a good influence on the calmness of children's learning, which in turn affects children's learning achievement (A'la, 2016). In addition to parental involvement with their children, parental involvement with the school is also important because from there parents and the school can both evaluate the development of their children's learning at school. At SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK itself there is a PAWAS or student guardian association that oversees all generations, where in each class there are 2 or 3 representatives from the parents of students. In PAWAS, it will be discussed about the lessons or shortcomings learned by students which will be conveyed through parents to the school and will then be evaluated by the school. In addition to the association at school, in each class there is also a separate association that makes it easier for student guardians if there is something they want to convey to the homeroom teacher.

## **3.2 Factors Affecting Student Motivation in Learning**

### **3.2.1 Student Interest in Materials and Teachers**

Students' interest in materials and teachers greatly affects their enthusiasm and participation in learning. Some students will only be interested in some materials or subjects. There are times when some children are only interested in certain subjects because they feel the material is relevant and interesting to them. For example, there are children who are interested in fiqh subjects because in the fiqh subject there are several practices such as prayer practice, ablution, material for caring for the body and so on. According to them, subjects that have practices make it easier for them to understand the material. However, this will be different when they encounter subjects such as history or SKI which require a lot of reading and memorization. Such material may seem boring to some students who have no particular interest in the topic. When students are forced to constantly read long texts without any interesting elements, they can lose focus and interest. Therefore, it is important to understand that the attraction to the material or the teacher varies greatly depending on the interests and approaches used in teaching. According to Slameto (in Patricia Minarsih Nggie, 2016) through the relationship between teachers and students that goes well, students will like the teacher and then will like the subjects given so that students try to learn as well as possible. Vice versa, if the student hates the teacher then he will be reluctant to learn the subject given by the teacher (Nggie, 2016).

### **3.2.2 Level of Awareness or Need to Learn the Material**

Before students feel that learning is a necessity, it will be difficult for teachers to encourage / arouse students' enthusiasm for learning. Judging from the nature of motivation can be distinguished between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is motivation that arises from within the individual, for example, students learn because they are driven by their own desire to increase their knowledge, or someone plays soccer because he loves soccer. So thus,

in intrinsic motivation the goal to be achieved is in the activity he is doing. The level of awareness or need to learn a material also has an important role in the learning process. When students feel that the material is useful in their lives, they tend to pay attention and learn the material with enthusiasm and care. For example, when students need certain knowledge or material for exams or for the skills they need in their daily lives, they will be encouraged to listen and learn the material presented. Students will have a strong desire to learn the material presented, because they know it is beneficial to them. Conversely, if students do not feel a deep need for the material presented, they will tend to ignore the lesson or simply follow the learning without any enthusiasm. To get feedback and reinforcement from students can be done through grading. According to Thorndike with his learning theory Law of effect students will learn more enthusiastically if they know and get good results. The good results will be a pleasant feedback for students for the next learning effort. Good results are a reinforcement (Tampubolon, 2016).

### **3.2.3 Student Concentration in the Learning Process**

Student concentration in the learning process is also an important factor. Learning concentration is indeed very necessary in any learning process. This is because the aspect that supports students in learning is concentration. If students cannot concentrate on the ongoing lesson, then the impact will be detrimental to themselves because they do not get anything from the lesson. Because of the importance of concentration for students, concentration can be a prerequisite for students in learning to successfully achieve learning goals. Despite the growing and sophisticated world, students often face distractions that affect their concentration. One of the most common examples in the classroom is when students use laptops or other electronic devices during learning. While technology can make learning more effective, it can also be a source of distraction. Many students open other applications on their laptops such as social media or online games that cause them to break their concentration which should be used for learning. This results in students not fully focusing on the material being taught, which ultimately reduces the effectiveness of the learning itself. Therefore, it is important for educators to create a learning atmosphere that can help students stay focused and fully engaged with the material being delivered.

### **3.2.4 Learning Methods Used**

The learning methods applied by teachers also have a big impact on students' enthusiasm and participation in the learning process. If the methods used are innovative, creative, interactive, and active, students will be more interested and motivated to follow and listen to the learning process. Learning with media can be a way for teachers to make students enjoy learning. Successful learning is fun learning that can make students feel comfortable and have no pressure. Therefore it is very important for teachers to create comfortable and active student learning without pressure. For example, the methods used are discussion-based, games, questions and answers or quizzes that can foster student activeness and make students feel involved. Students are not just passive recipients of information but can also contribute and interact with their peers. This not only improves students' understanding of the material, but also keeps them enthusiastic and not bored during the learning process. On the other hand, monotonous learning methods that only use the lecture method without actively involving students tend to make students lose interest in listening to the material being studied. Therefore, it is important to always develop and adjust learning methods to suit the needs and characteristics of students (Sitanggang, 2025).

## **3.3 Factors Affecting Student Motivation in Learning**

### **3.3.1 Challenges Faced in Improving Student Motivation and Their Solutions**

Parental attention plays an important role in child development and children's enthusiasm for learning. But not a few parents also pay less attention to their children when at home. There are some parents who ignore the development of children's learning. In fact, at school the teacher is as much as possible to provide the best service for students so that they are always enthusiastic and motivated to learn. Teachers strive for students to have an optimal learning experience, with adequate facilities and teaching that suits their needs. However, after children leave school, teachers are no longer able to directly monitor student development and behavior. This is where parents play an important role as those who have full responsibility outside the school environment. Therefore, collaboration between the school and parents is needed, because education does not stop at school, but must be continued at home with more intense attention and affection so that children remain highly motivated to learn. Attention is a very important thing needed by children because parental attention has an influence on child development. Parents' attention is needed as reinforcement in the child's learning process, this attention

can be done by accompanying children in learning activities at home, enforcing children's learning hours at home and asking children about learning activities at school. The attention of these parents will be very impressive to children so that the enthusiasm for learning is higher. Overly disciplined attention is also not a good thing that should be applied in a family because it will cause rebellious attitudes in children because children feel pressured and cannot express their opinions (Saputri, 2019).

Meanwhile, the challenge faced in the classroom is how to encourage children to think critically about phenomena or issues that occur around them. Nowadays, there are so many events that require serious attention, be it social, political or environmental issues. However, many children seem indifferent to these issues. They prefer to remain silent and not get involved in discussions or problem solving. This is a challenge for us as educators, as critical thinking skills are essential to developing their social awareness. Based on observations, only about 20% of them were able to think critically and provide relevant responses to the issues discussed. To overcome this challenge, when in class, before learning the teacher conveys the latest news to provoke them to think critically. The ability to think critically is easier to obtain with an inquiry learning model, because using an inquiry learning model teaches students to train the critical thinking skills of each individual to answer questions from their own questions. Teachers have the duty and obligation to create an efficient, meaningful and quality learning process. In order to achieve quality learning, teachers need to carry out learning and evaluation processes that prioritize the regulation of students' understanding, attitudes, and skills. In addition, teachers must adhere to the principles of goal orientation, objectivity, comprehensiveness, and continuity. The level of learning motivation at SMP Muhammadiyah Al Kautsar PK is still moderate towards good (Wardani, 2023).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research discussion above, it can be concluded that the right approach or communication can increase students' motivation and interest in learning. Motivation is needed in PAI learning activities. Therefore, it is important for a PAI teacher to find methods and strategies to increase the motivation of PAI learning. Various methods such as approaching students by adjusting the various characters of students and maintaining good communication with students is one way that PAI teachers can use in teaching and learning activities. Thus, one of the lessons that support Islamic Religious Education is a strategy or approach to increase learning motivation that will bring students towards effective and efficient learning that emphasizes student activeness physically, mentally, intellectually and emotionally. In addition to learning methods and strategies carried out by teachers, the role of parents is also important in increasing children's learning motivation to stay high.

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