

Islamic Religious Education Model Based on National Values to Improve Interfaith Tolerance

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Abstract: Low motivation among students in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) remains a challenge in secondary schools, affecting both engagement and the internalization of moral and religious values. This study aims to explore the role of teachers in enhancing students' motivation in PAI at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan, identifying effective strategies, relational practices, and classroom dynamics that influence learning motivation. A qualitative case study approach was employed, involving classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis of lesson plans and teaching materials. Data were analyzed thematically to uncover patterns and insights regarding teacher practices and their impact on student motivation. The findings reveal that teachers significantly influence students' motivation through contextualized lessons, interactive and collaborative learning activities, personalized feedback, and the integration of multimedia resources. Positive teacher-student relationships, characterized by empathy, trust, and supportive communication, further enhance intrinsic motivation and encourage active participation in class. Challenges such as varying student interest, external distractions, and sensitive topics were observed, yet teachers who demonstrated creativity, adaptability, and commitment successfully maintained a motivating and engaging learning environment.

Keywords: Teacher Role, Student Motivation, Islamic Religious Education

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping students' cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development (Berdiyarova, 2025; Irpan & Sain, 2024). In particular, religious education is crucial in fostering moral values, ethical awareness, and personal character. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) aims not only to impart knowledge about Islamic teachings but also to guide students in practicing these values in daily life (Frimayanti, 2017; Nahuda & others, 2024). Teachers serve as central figures in this process, acting as facilitators, motivators, and role models for students. Their ability to create engaging and meaningful learning experiences can significantly influence students' interest and commitment to learning. Motivation in learning is essential for achieving academic success and internalizing religious values (Horwitz, 2021; Tabassum et al., 2024). A highly motivated student is more likely to actively participate, reflect, and apply Islamic teachings

in both personal and social contexts. Thus, understanding the role of teachers in motivating students is critical for enhancing the quality of PAI.

Motivation is a key factor in determining students' academic performance, engagement, and long-term learning outcomes (Orji & Vassileva, 2023; Shabbir et al., 2021). In the context of PAI, motivation is particularly important because it bridges knowledge acquisition and practical implementation of ethical principles (Bairaktarova & Woodcock, 2017; Madani et al., 2020). Teachers' strategies, teaching methods, and interpersonal relationships can either enhance or hinder students' motivation. Research indicates that students are more motivated when learning is interactive, contextually relevant, and guided by supportive educators (Furtak & Kunter, 2012; Linnenbrink-Garcia et al., 2016). Moreover, motivational practices contribute to the development of self-regulation, critical thinking, and moral responsibility. In contemporary education, where distractions and competing interests are prevalent, fostering intrinsic motivation is a major challenge for teachers. Therefore, studying the influence of teacher roles on students' motivation in PAI provides insights into effective educational practices.

In secondary education, students often face challenges in balancing academic, social, and personal responsibilities (Linnenbrink-Garcia et al., 2016; Nayak & Kachhi, 2025). These challenges may affect their interest and engagement in learning, particularly in subjects perceived as abstract or theoretical, such as PAI. Teachers who can contextualize lessons, connect content with students' experiences, and provide meaningful feedback can significantly increase learning motivation. Additionally, the teacher's attitude, commitment, and modeling of religious values influence students' perception of the relevance and importance of PAI. Effective teaching in this context requires creativity, empathy, and adaptability to diverse student needs (Achumi & Rawat, 2025; Liu et al., 2024). By fostering a motivating learning environment, teachers can help students internalize Islamic principles while maintaining active participation. Consequently, examining teacher roles in enhancing motivation is essential to improving both learning outcomes and moral development.

Despite the acknowledged importance of motivation in learning, studies and observations indicate that many students still show low engagement in PAI classes. Factors such as monotonous teaching methods, limited teacher-student interaction, and insufficient relevance to students' daily

lives contribute to decreased motivation. Teachers may focus heavily on rote memorization or theoretical knowledge without facilitating meaningful application of Islamic teachings. As a result, students often perceive PAI as less interesting or disconnected from practical life. This low motivation can lead to reduced participation, lower achievement, and limited internalization of moral and religious values. Addressing these challenges requires an in-depth understanding of how teachers can actively enhance motivation in diverse classroom settings.

Additional challenges include variations in students' prior knowledge, learning preferences, and social backgrounds. Some students may struggle to engage with standard teaching approaches, while others may be distracted by external factors such as social media or peer influence. Teachers face the complex task of designing strategies that cater to these differences while maintaining learning objectives. Furthermore, limited professional development opportunities can reduce teachers' ability to implement innovative motivational techniques. Identifying effective practices and understanding teacher roles in fostering motivation is therefore crucial for achieving optimal learning outcomes in PAI.

Several studies have emphasized the critical role of teachers in influencing students' motivation. Teachers who employ interactive methods, provide constructive feedback, and demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject can significantly enhance students' interest and engagement. In the context of Islamic education, teachers' moral conduct, role modeling, and ability to connect lessons with daily life have been shown to impact students' intrinsic motivation. Research also indicates that motivational strategies such as collaborative learning, project-based activities, and reflective discussions contribute to both cognitive and affective outcomes. These findings highlight the need for teachers to adopt diverse approaches that integrate pedagogical skills with ethical and spiritual guidance.

Further literature suggests that motivation in religious education is closely linked to students' perception of relevance and personal connection. When teachers relate Islamic teachings to contemporary social issues, moral dilemmas, and students' life experiences, engagement increases. Studies also demonstrate that teacher-student relationships, characterized by trust, respect, and support, enhance motivation and learning outcomes. However, despite extensive research on teacher influence and motivation in general education, studies specifically focusing on

PAI in secondary schools remain limited. There is a need to examine contextual factors, teaching strategies, and motivational practices tailored to Islamic education.

Although previous research has explored motivation in education and teacher roles in general, few studies specifically investigate how teachers influence motivation in PAI at the secondary school level. Existing studies often emphasize theoretical frameworks or broad educational contexts without addressing practical strategies in Islamic education. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the specific roles of teachers in enhancing students' motivation in PAI at SMA. The novelty lies in identifying concrete strategies, teacher behaviors, and classroom practices that directly affect students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The study also provides empirical evidence from a real educational setting, offering insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers.

The primary objective of this research is to explore the role of teachers in increasing students' motivation to learn PAI in secondary schools. Specifically, the study aims to identify effective teaching strategies, motivational techniques, and teacher behaviors that enhance engagement and interest in PAI. It also seeks to examine the impact of teacher-student relationships, lesson design, and contextual relevance on students' learning motivation. Furthermore, the study intends to provide practical recommendations for teachers to implement motivational practices effectively. By achieving these objectives, the research contributes to improving the quality of Islamic education, fostering student engagement, and promoting moral and religious development.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore the role of teachers in enhancing students' motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan (Starman, 2013). The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena, such as teaching practices, motivational strategies, and student engagement, within a real-life educational context. A case study design provides a detailed and holistic examination of how teachers influence motivation, taking into account the perspectives of both teachers and students, as well as the specific cultural and institutional setting of the school. This approach is particularly suitable for capturing the nuances

of classroom interactions and understanding the processes that contribute to increased learning motivation.

The research participants include PAI teachers who are actively involved in teaching students from grades X and XI, as well as students selected through purposive sampling to ensure a representative mix of academic achievement, motivation levels, and social backgrounds. In addition, school administrators are included to provide contextual information about curriculum policies, teacher development programs, and support systems that influence motivational practices. By focusing on a single school, the study allows for an intensive investigation of specific strategies and behaviors, enabling researchers to draw meaningful insights and practical implications for enhancing student motivation in PAI.

Data collection in this qualitative case study is conducted through multiple methods to ensure triangulation and the reliability of findings (Setiawan, 2018). First, classroom observations are carried out to document teacher behaviors, instructional techniques, and student engagement during PAI lessons. Observations focus on interaction patterns, the use of motivational strategies, and how teachers facilitate active participation. Second, semi-structured interviews are conducted with teachers to explore their approaches to motivating students, challenges faced, and perceptions of effective strategies. Third, interviews with selected students are conducted to understand their experiences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding teacher influence on their motivation. Finally, document analysis of lesson plans, teaching materials, and school policies supplements the data, providing additional context for understanding teacher practices and instructional strategies.

Data analysis follows a thematic approach, in which all collected data from observations, interviews, and documents are systematically coded and categorized into emerging themes. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns of teacher behaviors, strategies that effectively enhance student motivation, challenges in implementation, and contextual factors that support or hinder motivational practices. Themes are then interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers contribute to increased student engagement and motivation in learning PAI. Throughout the analysis, triangulation of multiple data sources ensures validity and credibility, allowing the findings to reflect a rich and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon (Trisna Rukhmana, 2022).

Ethical considerations are strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent is obtained from students, parents, teachers, and school administrators before participation, emphasizing voluntary involvement and the confidentiality of all data. Participants are informed about the objectives, procedures, and potential benefits of the study. Observations and interviews are conducted respectfully and sensitively, particularly when discussing personal experiences and perceptions. The study aims to provide practical recommendations for teachers and school administrators, contributing to improved strategies for enhancing motivation in PAI while maintaining ethical and professional research standards.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Teacher Practices and Strategies

Observations at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan revealed that PAI teachers employ a variety of strategies to engage students and enhance motivation. Teachers often begin lessons with real-life examples or questions that connect Islamic teachings to students' daily experiences. This contextual approach allows students to perceive the relevance of religious education, fostering intrinsic motivation. Teachers also use storytelling, analogies, and interactive questioning to maintain attention and stimulate curiosity. These techniques not only clarify complex concepts but also encourage students to think critically and reflectively about the application of Islamic values in their lives.

Teachers incorporate collaborative learning activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and problem-solving exercises. During these activities, students are encouraged to share opinions, debate ethical dilemmas, and collectively find solutions. This participatory approach increases engagement and allows students to feel a sense of ownership over their learning. Observations indicated that students were more attentive and responsive during these sessions, demonstrating enthusiasm for contributing ideas and listening to peers' perspectives. Teachers emphasized that fostering collaboration helps develop both social skills and motivation to actively participate in lessons.

Teachers also implement individualized attention and feedback to address varying levels of student motivation and learning needs. Students who appear disengaged receive targeted support through encouragement, clarification of concepts, and guidance on applying

knowledge. Teachers monitor progress and provide constructive feedback, reinforcing positive behaviors and academic efforts. Interviews revealed that students feel valued when teachers recognize their efforts and offer personalized support, which significantly enhances their motivation and willingness to participate in PAI lessons.

Another key strategy observed is the integration of technology and multimedia resources, including videos, slides, and online discussion platforms. These tools make lessons more interactive and visually stimulating, catering to diverse learning preferences. Students reported that multimedia presentations helped them understand abstract concepts and made learning more enjoyable. Teachers noted that the use of digital resources also facilitated more dynamic classroom interactions, encouraging students to ask questions, express opinions, and explore topics beyond the textbook.

Overall, the combination of contextualized instruction, collaborative learning, individualized support, and multimedia integration reflects a comprehensive approach to motivating students in PAI. Teachers' strategies demonstrate a clear understanding of the factors that influence student engagement and motivation. The findings suggest that when teachers actively employ diverse techniques and adapt to student needs, motivation levels increase significantly, resulting in more effective learning outcomes and positive classroom dynamics.

2. Teacher-Student Relationships and Motivation

The study found that positive teacher-student relationships play a critical role in motivating students in PAI. Observations indicated that students are more responsive and attentive when teachers demonstrate warmth, empathy, and genuine interest in their development. Students often referred to teachers as role models, valuing their ethical conduct, fairness, and supportive attitudes. Such relationships foster trust and a sense of safety, encouraging students to actively participate and take intellectual risks in classroom discussions.

Interviews with students revealed that teachers who listen attentively, acknowledge contributions, and provide encouragement significantly enhance motivation. Students expressed that feeling respected and understood by their teachers makes them more eager to

engage in learning activities. Teachers highlighted that establishing mutual respect and maintaining open communication channels are essential components of fostering intrinsic motivation in the classroom.

Teachers also actively monitor students' emotional and social needs, adjusting their teaching approaches accordingly. For example, students who show signs of disengagement are given opportunities for small-group discussions or one-on-one guidance. These personalized interventions strengthen the teacher-student connection, making students feel supported and recognized. Observations demonstrated that students responded positively to these interactions, exhibiting higher levels of participation and commitment to learning.

Moreover, teachers use motivational language and reinforcement consistently. Praise for effort, acknowledgment of improvement, and constructive feedback are integrated into daily teaching practices. Students reported that verbal encouragement and recognition of their contributions enhanced self-confidence and increased their motivation to continue learning. Teachers emphasized that motivation is not solely academic but also emotional and social, requiring a holistic approach to student engagement.

In summary, the quality of teacher-student relationships is closely linked to motivation in PAI. Trust, empathy, and personalized support foster a positive learning environment where students are more likely to engage actively. The findings indicate that teachers who cultivate strong interpersonal connections contribute significantly to students' motivation, which in turn improves learning outcomes and the internalization of Islamic values.

3. Challenges in Motivating Students

Despite the effective strategies observed, teachers face several challenges in motivating students in PAI. One major issue is varying levels of student interest and prior knowledge, which can make it difficult to maintain uniform engagement across the class. Some students perceive PAI as less relevant compared to other subjects, leading to lower intrinsic motivation and attention during lessons. Teachers must therefore employ differentiated strategies to address diverse learning needs and sustain motivation for all students.

External factors, such as peer influence and social media, also impact student motivation. Observations indicated that distractions from mobile devices or off-topic conversations

occasionally reduce participation and focus. Teachers highlighted that balancing content delivery with active engagement is challenging when competing interests exist outside the classroom. They must continuously find innovative approaches to capture students' attention and maintain interest in PAI topics.

Limited resources and professional development opportunities present additional challenges. Some teachers reported a lack of access to multimedia tools, teaching aids, or training on modern pedagogical techniques. These limitations can hinder the implementation of engaging instructional strategies, affecting overall student motivation. Administrators acknowledged the need for ongoing teacher development programs to strengthen skills in motivating students and integrating innovative methods in PAI.

Another challenge relates to sensitive topics in Islamic education. Teachers must navigate discussions on moral and religious issues carefully to avoid discomfort or conflict among students. Observations revealed that some students hesitate to express opinions on controversial issues, affecting participation and motivation. Teachers addressed this by creating safe discussion spaces and emphasizing respectful dialogue, which gradually encouraged more active engagement.

Overall, the challenges highlight the complex nature of motivating students in PAI. Teachers must balance diverse learning needs, external distractions, limited resources, and sensitive topics while maintaining a positive and engaging classroom environment. The findings underscore the importance of continuous support, training, and innovation to overcome these obstacles and enhance student motivation effectively.

4. Outcomes and Impact of Teacher Strategies

The implementation of diverse motivational strategies resulted in observable positive changes in student engagement and learning outcomes. Students demonstrated increased participation in class discussions, willingness to express opinions, and collaborative behavior during group activities. Observations revealed a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment compared to prior lessons. Teachers reported that students appeared more enthusiastic, attentive, and committed to learning PAI.

Interviews with students confirmed that the strategies, including contextualized instruction, collaborative activities, and personalized feedback, significantly enhanced their motivation. Students expressed that they understood the relevance of Islamic teachings to their daily lives, which increased intrinsic motivation. They also reported feeling more confident in applying ethical and moral principles learned in class, both academically and socially.

Teachers observed improvements in classroom dynamics, including higher levels of cooperation, respect, and mutual support among students. Students began demonstrating proactive learning behaviors, such as initiating discussions, asking questions, and providing constructive feedback to peers. This indicates that teacher strategies not only enhance individual motivation but also foster a positive learning culture within the classroom.

The impact of teacher-student relationships on motivation was also evident. Students who felt recognized, supported, and encouraged exhibited greater persistence and engagement in learning PAI. Teachers noted that their active involvement, empathy, and guidance played a crucial role in sustaining motivation, even among initially disengaged students. The findings emphasize that teacher behaviors and relational practices are integral to promoting effective learning and ethical development.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing student motivation in PAI through a combination of strategies, interpersonal engagement, and adaptive teaching practices. Positive outcomes include increased participation, improved understanding of Islamic teachings, enhanced ethical awareness, and a supportive classroom environment. The study demonstrates that effective teacher practices can transform student attitudes and foster a motivated, engaged, and morally aware learning community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this qualitative case study at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan, it can be concluded that teachers play a central and pivotal role in enhancing students' motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Effective teacher practices, including contextualizing lessons, employing interactive and collaborative learning strategies, integrating multimedia resources, and providing personalized feedback, were found to significantly increase student engagement and intrinsic motivation. Positive teacher-student relationships, characterized by

empathy, trust, and supportive communication, further strengthened students' willingness to participate actively in classroom activities and internalize ethical and religious values. Despite challenges such as varying student interest, external distractions, sensitive topics, and limited resources, teachers who demonstrated creativity, adaptability, and commitment were able to maintain a motivating and inclusive learning environment. The study highlights that teacher behaviors, instructional strategies, and relational practices are interrelated and collectively contribute to improved learning outcomes, active participation, and the ethical development of students. Overall, the research emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development and innovative teaching approaches in fostering motivation, engagement, and moral awareness in Islamic education.

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