



Efforts of Islamic Education Teachers to Foster Learning Motivation Among Senior High School Students

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Abstract

This article discusses the efforts of Islamic Education teachers in fostering learning motivation among students at the senior high school level. The teacher's role is crucial in creating a conducive and inspiring learning environment. The study aims to identify the strategies implemented by Islamic Education teachers to enhance students' enthusiasm for learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches used. The methodology employed is qualitative research in the form of a case study, conducted through classroom observation, interviews, and documentation of teaching practices. The findings reveal that Islamic Education teachers at the senior high school level strive to build students' learning motivation through several effective strategies, including implementing fair and transparent assessments, where students understand the evaluation criteria and feel appreciated for their efforts. Teachers also provide rewards or praise for students' achievements, both verbally and symbolically, as a form of appreciation that encourages learning enthusiasm. Additionally, teachers create a healthy competitive atmosphere through quizzes or contests related to the subject matter, motivating students to be more active, confident, and engaged in the Islamic Education learning process.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping the character, spiritual values, and morals of students at the high school level (Juanda et al., 2025; Kamila, 2024; Mukhlis, 2024; Pujianti, 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). Amidst globalization and the development of information technology, challenges in education are becoming increasingly complex, including in terms of maintaining student motivation. Learning motivation is an important factor that influences the success of the learning process. When students are highly motivated, they tend to be more active, diligent, and responsible in following lessons. Conversely, low motivation can lead to a lack of participation, declining learning outcomes, and a weak understanding of religious values (Azhar & Wahyudi, 2024; Faristin et al., 2023; Kurnia et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2024).

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Islamic Education teachers are required not only to deliver teaching materials, but also to be able to create a fun, interactive, and meaningful learning atmosphere (Fernanada et al., 2025; Nur'aini et al., 2024; Suseno & Ritonga, 2025). In this case, teachers act as facilitators who encourage students to think critically, be creative, and develop their potential. Efforts to build student motivation are inseparable from the learning approach used, including the methods and media applied (Hanaris, 2023; Nur'aini et al., 2024; Rakhman et al., 2024). Teachers' creativity in designing relevant and interesting learning activities is key to stimulating students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education.

However, the reality in the field shows that some Islamic Education teachers still use teaching methods that tend to be monotonous and lack variety. The teaching media used do not fully utilize digital technology that is familiar to students today. This has the potential to make students less interested and feel bored in class. Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply how Islamic Education teachers can develop teaching strategies that are more innovative and adaptive to the needs of students.

This study aims to explore the efforts of Islamic Education teachers in building student motivation in senior high schools through a qualitative approach using case studies. The focus of the study is on the teaching practices used by teachers, the forms of assessment given, and the ways in which teachers create an inclusive learning environment that supports student development. This study also highlights how teachers provide space for students' initiative, creativity, and independence in accordance with their talents, interests, and physical and psychological conditions.

By understanding the strategies used by Islamic Education teachers in building learning motivation, it is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the development of more effective and humanistic learning practices. The implications of this research are not only relevant to Islamic Education teachers, but also to education policymakers in designing training and mentoring programs that support teacher professionalism. Learning motivation that grows from the right approach will strengthen the role of Islamic Education in shaping a generation that is faithful, moral, and competitive.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (Abidin, 2021; Akhirin, 2015; Engkizar et al., 2022; Engkizar et al., 2025; Oktavia et al., 2020, 2023; Rahman et al., 2018). A qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore in depth the phenomena that occur in the field, particularly those related to the efforts of Islamic Education teachers in building student motivation at the senior high school level at Lengayang Pesisir Selatan Senior High School 2 in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Case studies are used to understand the learning practices carried out by teachers in real situations contextually, so that a complete and meaningful picture of the strategies applied can be obtained.

The research subjects were Islamic Education teachers and students at one of the high schools selected purposively. The selection of subjects was based on the consideration that these teachers were actively teaching Islamic Education and had experience in managing diverse classes. This study focused on teaching practices that took place in the classroom, including interactions between teachers and students, the methods used, and the forms of assessment applied.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made directly of the learning process in the classroom to see how teachers delivered material, used learning media, and created a learning atmosphere that supported student motivation. In-depth interviews were conducted with Islamic Education teachers and several

students to obtain their perspectives on learning strategies and factors that influence learning motivation. Documentation was used to supplement the data through analysis of learning tools, assessment records, and teaching materials used by teachers.

The data obtained were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting relevant information according to the research focus. Data presentation was carried out in the form of a narrative describing the main findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. Conclusions were drawn inductively based on patterns that emerged from the data, resulting in a deep understanding of the efforts of Islamic Education teachers in building student motivation to learn.

Data validity is maintained through triangulation techniques, which involve comparing data from various sources and collection methods. In addition, researchers also conduct member checks by confirming interview results with informants to ensure the accuracy of information. With this approach, it is hoped that the research results can make a meaningful contribution to the development of more effective and contextual Islamic Education learning strategies (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2025; Jaafar et al., 2025; Oktavia et al., 2023, 2024)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that Islamic Education teachers at the high school level are strongly committed to building student motivation through various supportive and nurturing approaches. One of the main strategies implemented is fair and transparent assessment. Teachers develop assessment criteria based on clear indicators, such as student participation in discussions, timeliness of assignment submission, and quality of answers. In an interview, one teacher stated that.

"I always explain to students how I grade their assignments, so they know that my grading is not arbitrary, and that everyone has the same opportunity (informant 1)."

This statement shows the teacher's awareness of the need to build students' trust in the grading system. The students also responded positively to this fair assessment system. An 11th grade student said, *"If my score is low, I can ask the teacher directly, and he or she is willing to explain. So I feel valued (informant 2)"*

Transparency in assessment not only increases motivation to learn, but also strengthens the relationship between teachers and students in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students feel they have control over their learning process and are encouraged to improve their learning outcomes based on the feedback provided.

In addition to fair assessment, Islamic Education teachers also use rewards or praise as a form of appreciation for student achievement. Praise is given verbally in class, such as saying "good," "great," or "thank you for your participation," which is delivered sincerely and in a timely manner. On some occasions, teachers also give simple rewards such as stationery or motivational stickers. One teacher said, *"I don't always give rewards, but if there are students who try hard, I give them small rewards so that they feel cared for (informant 3)"*

This strategy has been proven to have a positive impact on students' enthusiasm for learning. One student said, *"When I was praised for actively answering questions, I felt motivated to participate in the next lesson. It feels good when our efforts are appreciated (informant 4)"*

Giving praise and rewards not only serves as external motivation, but also strengthens students' intrinsic motivation to continue learning and actively participating in class.

Teachers also facilitate competitions between students in the form of quizzes or contests related to Islamic Religious Education material. These activities are

usually conducted at the end of a topic discussion, using a fun and interactive format. Teachers prepare quiz questions that are challenging but appropriate for the students' ability level. In an interview, one teacher explained, *"I create group quizzes so that they can work together and learn while playing. They are usually more enthusiastic when there is a challenge (informant 5)"*

The students were very enthusiastic about participating in the competition. Healthy competition encourages students to prepare themselves better, improve their understanding of the material, and build self-confidence. In addition, this activity also strengthens social interaction among students and creates a pleasant learning atmosphere.

Islamic Education teachers also strive to ensure that competitions do not cause pressure or unhealthy competition. They emphasize that the main goal is learning and togetherness. One teacher said, *"I always emphasize that winning is not everything. The important thing is that they learn and dare to try (informant 6)"*. This attitude helps maintain a balance between the spirit of competition and the values of togetherness taught in Islamic Education.

In implementing these strategies, teachers show sensitivity to the psychological and social conditions of students. They do not discriminate based on students' backgrounds or academic abilities. All students are given the same opportunity to participate and show their potential. Teachers also provide space for students to develop creativity and independence, for example by allowing students to choose presentation methods or assignment formats that suit their interests.

Students feel valued and supported in the learning process. One student stated, *"Our teachers never discriminate. Everyone is given the opportunity to speak and express their opinions. That makes me more confident (informant 8)." This inclusive and supportive learning environment is an important foundation for building sustainable learning motivation.*

The efforts of Islamic Education teachers in building student motivation are closely related to Abraham Maslow's theory of learning motivation and B.F. Skinner's theory of reinforcement. Maslow emphasizes the importance of fulfilling psychological needs and appreciation as the basis for motivation (Rahma et al., 2024; Sartika et al., 2022). In this context, praise and rewards from teachers are a form of fulfilling the need for recognition, which can encourage students to be more active and confident in their learning. Meanwhile, Skinner's reinforcement theory explains that behaviors that receive positive reinforcement tend to be repeated. Teachers' strategies in appreciating students' achievements through praise or rewards are a form of positive reinforcement that is effective in increasing learning motivation.

This study is also in line with the findings of (Jaya et al., 2025; Rasyad, 2024), which state that teachers who apply fair and open assessment are able to create a conducive learning atmosphere and increase student participation. Transparent assessment makes students feel valued and in control of their learning process. This is reinforced by the results of interviews in this study, in which students felt more motivated when they knew that assessment was based on their efforts and involvement. Teachers' openness in explaining assessment criteria also creates a more positive relationship between teachers and students, which ultimately has an impact on increasing learning motivation.

In addition, the competitive strategies in the form of quizzes or competitions implemented by Islamic Education teachers are relevant to the active learning approach recommended by Gymnastiar, (2024), where student involvement in challenging and enjoyable activities can increase motivation and learning outcomes. Healthy competition encourages students to study harder, work together, and demonstrate their abilities in a positive manner. This study shows that teachers not only create competition, but also maintain an inclusive and supportive atmosphere, in

accordance with the principles of student-centered learning. Thus, the strategies found in this study have a strong theoretical basis and are consistent with previous research findings.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that Islamic Education teachers at the high school level have a strategic role in building student motivation through a fair, appreciative, and participatory approach. Transparent assessment based on clear indicators gives students a sense of trust and fairness, encouraging them to be more active and responsible in the learning process. Praise and rewards for student achievement have been shown to strengthen intrinsic motivation and increase enthusiasm for learning, while competitions in the form of quizzes or contests create a fun and challenging learning atmosphere and encourage students to demonstrate their best abilities. Teachers also maintain an inclusive classroom atmosphere by not discriminating between students and providing space for creativity and independence in accordance with the talents and interests of each student. These findings are in line with learning motivation theory and previous research results, and have important implications for the development of more effective Islamic Education learning strategies that are oriented towards student needs.

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