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Beyond Knowledge Transfer: the Multi-Faceted Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Catalyzing Student Motivation

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ABSTRACT

Students' learning motivation is an important factor in effective learning, while Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic role in fostering motivation through pedagogical, motivational, and exemplary practices. This study aims to describe the planning and implementation of Islamic Religious Education teachers' efforts to enhance students' learning motivation and to analyze their outcomes in terms of student engagement, subject comprehension, religious attitudes, and character development. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design conducted at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang. The research subjects and data sources included 2 (two) Islamic Religious Education teachers, and 2 (two) administrative staff, and a class of students. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification, with data validity strengthened through cross-checking across sources and techniques. The findings show that teachers enhance learning motivation through systematic instructional planning, including the preparation of teaching modules, engaging learning activities, comprehensive assessment strategies, and adaptation of teaching methods to students' characteristics. During implementation, teachers create a positive learning atmosphere through educational games, quizzes, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, group work, rewards, contextualization of learning materials, and regular content reviews. These efforts contribute to increased student participation, improved understanding of Islamic Religious Education materials, and the development of religious attitudes and character. The study recommends that teachers maintain varied and adaptive instructional strategies while strengthening students' intrinsic motivation through meaningful learning experiences, positive reinforcement, role modeling, and collaboration between schools and parents.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Learning Motivation, Teacher's Role, Student Engagement, Islamic Education

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in developing students' potential in the aspects of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and character formation. In this process, teachers do not only function as conveyors of material, but also as educators, guides, facilitators, motivators, and role models. That role becomes increasingly important in Islamic Religious Education because PAI learning does not stop at mastering religious knowledge, but is directed so that students can understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives. In this thesis, the role of the teacher is understood as a series of actions and responsibilities of the teacher in guiding, directing, and encouraging students so that the learning objectives can be achieved.

Learning motivation is one of the elements that determines the quality of student

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engagement in learning. Students who have motivation tend to show enthusiasm, perseverance, courage to ask questions, and a willingness to complete tasks. Conversely, low motivation can be seen through a lack of attention, passivity in learning activities, or easily experiencing boredom. The study in the thesis shows that learning motivation can originate from both internal and external factors and can experience increases or decreases according to the conditions of the students and the learning environment (Maharani et al., 2024; Yatmoko & Fitriani, 2021).

Islamic Education teachers have a strategic position in building that motivation. Exemplary behavior, communication methods, variation in teaching techniques, awarding, and the ability to connect material with students' experiences can make learning more relevant. Teachers can also create classroom conditions that allow students to participate actively. In the perspective of learning, teachers as facilitators need to provide supportive learning conditions so that students can learn actively and optimally (Fauzi & Mustika, 2022).

The initial phenomenon found by the researchers indicates that students' learning motivation in PAI lessons is not uniform. Some students appear enthusiastic, paying attention to the explanations, and actively asking questions, while others are still less focused, talking with their seatmates, or engaging in other activities during the lesson. These conditions indicate that teachers need strategies that are not only oriented toward delivering material but also capable of maintaining attention and stimulating students' learning motivation (Emda, 2018).

Previous research in theses has shown studies on learning motivation, teachers' efforts to increase student activity, factors affecting motivation, and PAI teachers' strategies. However, this research focuses on the series of roles of PAI teachers from planning, implementation, to the outcomes on students' learning motivation in the context of MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang. This focus is important because the increase in motivation cannot be seen from just one strategy, but from the interconnection between teacher readiness, the implementation of learning, and changes in student learning behavior. Based on that context, this research aims to: (1) describe the planning of PAI teachers in enhancing students' learning motivation; (2) describe the implementation of PAI teachers' efforts in enhancing students' learning motivation; and (3) analyze the results of these efforts on students' activity, material understanding, as well as their religious attitudes and character.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the role of PAI teachers in enhancing students' learning motivation based on conditions that occur directly in the madrasah environment (Moleong & Surjaman, 1989). The research focuses on three aspects, namely planning, implementation, and the results of PAI teachers' efforts in improving students' learning motivation (Sugiyono, 2018).

The research was conducted at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang. The data sources consist of primary data and supporting data. Primary data were obtained through interviews and observations of PAI teachers, teachers/administrative staff, and students. Supporting data were obtained through documentation related to learning, teaching materials, student

activities, and the condition of the madrasah Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is used to directly see the learning activities, teacher-student interactions, the methods used, and student behavior during the learning process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Interviews are conducted to obtain explanations regarding lesson planning, strategies to increase motivation, ways to evaluate student progress, and changes observed after the strategies are implemented.

Documentation is used to reinforce information through learning tools and field notes. Data analysis refers to the model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Miles et al., 2013) which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The data obtained is selected based on the research focus, grouped according to the themes of planning, implementation, and results, and then presented systematically.

Conclusions are drawn after patterns and relationships between meetings are reexamined. The validity of the data is strengthened through cross-checking information from multiple sources and techniques. The information obtained from interviews is compared with the results of observations and documentation so that the findings do not rely on a single source. In this way, the research aims to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the role of PAI teachers in enhancing students' learning motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning by Islamic Education Teachers in Enhancing Learning Motivation Learning

Planning is a starting point that determines the direction and quality of the entire teaching and learning process, including the efforts of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to enhance students' learning motivation. The results of observations, interviews, and documentation collected at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang show that PAI teachers do not view planning merely as a fulfillment of administrative duties, but rather as a strategic instrument to stimulate students' learning motivation even before the learning process begins. As emphasized in the study on the multidimensional role of teachers, the function of teachers as learning resources and facilitators requires adequate mastery of the material and the ability to provide supportive learning conditions so that students can learn actively and independently (Sanjaya, 2006). This finding is also in line with studies that emphasize that course design is a predictor of the quality of learning and student engagement, which is equally important compared to the teacher's performance in the classroom (Levinsson et al., 2024). The planning carried out by PAI teachers at the research location materialized in four interrelated main steps: the preparation of teaching modules, the design of engaging learning, the development of effective assessment plans, and the adjustment of teaching methods to the characteristics of the students.

The first step identified in this study was the preparation of the Love-Based Teaching Module by PAI teachers as an operational guide for learning. The module contains the formulation of learning objectives, selection of materials, determination of methods and media, as well as an evaluation scheme tailored to the characteristics of the students. The results of interviews with PAI teachers confirm that the teaching module is designed so that learning is not dominated by lecture methods, but rather enriched with educational games, quizzes, and group work, allowing students to play an active role as the center of learning, while the teacher

positions themselves as a facilitator. This finding strengthens empirical evidence that the quality and consistency of lesson plan preparation are significantly correlated with the quality of teacher instruction and student learning outcomes; a quasi-experimental study on elementary school teachers even shows that the majority of teachers who consistently prepare lesson plans are able to improve their teaching quality, with a statistically significant impact on student learning outcomes (Ali & Juanda, 2025). Another study adds that a carefully prepared Lesson Implementation Plan provides clear direction for teachers in managing the learning process from the planning stage, implementation, to evaluation, while also helping to adjust strategies to the needs and characteristics of students (Diva et al., 2024).

The transformation of the teaching module's function from merely an administrative document to an instrument for sparking motivation is an important finding of this research. PAI teachers at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang condition the classroom based on student-centered learning through a combination of group discussions, educational games, quizzes, and cooperative interactions as a classroom climate engineering to encourage sustainable learning activity. This pattern is consistent with the results of the literature review, which concludes that lesson planning plays a crucial role in improving teaching quality because it opens up space for teachers to develop more active, participatory, and efficient strategies (Nadlir et al., 2024). Thus, the preparation of teaching modules is not merely an administrative-curricular requirement, but rather a foundation that determines whether PAI learning can foster students' learning motivation sustainably or, on the contrary, become trapped in a monotonous and teacher-centered teaching pattern.

The second step is the design of attractive instructional scenarios through activities based on active participation, such as group discussions, educational simulations, quizzes, interactive dialogs, and presentations. Teachers consider the profiles of students and classroom dynamics so that the learning design does not stop at material transfer, but instead creates a participatory learning environment free from boredom. These findings align with the view that student learning motivation increases when teachers are able to design engaging lessons, use varied methods, and actively involve students in the learning process. In line with this, a literature review on teacher competencies emphasizes that a teacher's ability to design effective learning strategies, understand individual student needs, and present material in an engaging manner directly contributes to student learning motivation, while also serving as a bridge between the external motivation provided by the teacher and the development of students' internal motivation (Cahyanti et al., 2024).

Evidence from the realm of active learning further strengthens this finding. Experimental studies on active learning strategies such as case studies, discussions, games, and role-playing show improvements in academic performance, skill development, and learning satisfaction even among reluctant learners (Gosavi & Arora, 2022). Similarly, the systematic implementation of digital game-based quizzes in learning has been proven to significantly increase student engagement and interaction compared to learning without interactive quizzes, and even improve the learning achievement curve of students over time (Nuci et al., 2021). The relevance of these findings to the context of this research lies in the consistency of the pattern: the design of learning that presents a variety of activities and space for student participation empirically proves to be an important determinant of learning motivation, not merely an additional cosmetic strategy.

The third step, PAI teachers design a holistic assessment scheme that encompasses the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Affective assessment is conducted through the observation of students' attitudes, morals, and collaborative skills, while performance measurement is realized through group discussions and presentations. Teachers also implement mixed-ability study groups to enhance material absorption as well as tolerance among students. The planning of such assessments aligns with the view that providing evaluations that appreciate students' efforts and progress has a positive impact on learning motivation, as students are no longer solely focused on grades but are encouraged to continuously improve the quality of their learning (Sardiman, 2004). This perspective is also consistent with the idea that the competence to manage learning, including designing varied evaluation instruments, is an inseparable part of teacher professionalism in creating an active and enjoyable learning atmosphere for students (Andini et al., 2024).

From the perspective of pedagogical research, the decision of PAI teachers to design process-based assessments, rather than solely cognitive outcomes, is also linked to findings regarding the role of pedagogical competence and instructional practices of teachers on student engagement. Studies involving hundreds of teachers show a positive and significant relationship between pedagogical competence, student-centered instructional practices, and the level of student learning engagement in behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions (Cabrillos, 2026). These findings strengthen the argument that comprehensive assessment planning is not merely an administrative technicality, but rather a motivational strategy that liberates students from the psychological pressure of purely quantitative assessments, thereby encouraging them to participate actively, collaborate, and demonstrate good learning ethics throughout the learning process.

The fourth step is the adjustment of teaching methods based on the conditions and characteristics of the students, including the time of learning, the level of concentration, and the enthusiasm of the students. When learning takes place during the late hours and students' concentration decreases, the teacher does not solely rely on the lecture method, but combines it with discussions, educational games, quizzes, and group work. Such methodological flexibility reflects the teacher's understanding of the principle that the use of monotonous methods causes students to lose attention, while variation in methods stimulates curiosity and encourages active participation Teachers, as motivators and facilitators, are required to creatively design learning so that students acquire knowledge as well as motivation to continue learning, and this is clearly evident in the method adjustments practiced by PAI teachers at this research site (Muspawi, 2021).

Recent empirical evidence also confirms the importance of varying game-based and digital technology methods in maintaining learning motivation. Studies on digital game-based learning show a greater positive impact on student engagement and motivation compared to conventional online activities, although its implementation needs to consider individual student characteristics to avoid counterproductive effects such as feelings of inferiority due to social comparison among students (Nadeem et al., 2023). The relevance of these findings to the context of Islamic Education (PAI) at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang shows that methodological flexibility is not merely a technical variation, but rather a form of the teacher's pedagogical sensitivity to the real psychological conditions of the students. This allows PAI learning to transform from a passive instructional model to an active and beneficial learning

ecosystem for all students.

Overall, these four planning steps affirm that PAI teachers at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang position themselves as designers of learning experiences as well as motivational agents from the pre-instructional stage. These findings are also relevant to the broader context of Islamic education; a study on the implementation of PAI teacher competencies in state madrasahs in Indonesia found that lesson planning conducted consistently and in alignment with the curriculum, along with efforts to connect Islamic values with students' daily lives, significantly contributes to students' understanding, motivation, and the formation of religious character, although the depth and creativity of such planning still vary among teachers depending on their individual experience and competence (Faruk et al., 2026). Thus, the more mature and directed the planning prepared by PAI teachers, the greater the opportunity for the creation of an effective, engaging learning process that can continuously enhance students' learning motivation.

The research results show that planning is the initial stage carried out by teachers before the learning process begins. The teacher prepares teaching modules as a guide to determine learning objectives, materials, methods, activities, and assessments. That planning makes learning activities more focused and helps teachers determine the form of activities that are suitable for the students' conditions. Teachers also design engaging lessons not just by relying on the lecture method. Based on the interview, the teacher prepares educational games, quizzes, group work, discussions, and activities that provide space for students to participate. The selection of methods is carried out by considering the students' conditions, especially when their concentration begins to decline. The strategy shows that lesson planning is aimed not only at completing the material but also at maintaining student engagement.

In assessment planning, teachers do not solely focus on academic abilities. Assessment is also directed toward cooperation, morals, ethics, and manners. One of the teachers explained that students with different abilities can be grouped together so they can help each other understand the material. The results of the group work are then presented with the guidance of the teacher. The pattern shows that assessment is also utilized as a means to build interaction and motivation. These findings align with the view that teachers have the responsibility to plan and manage the learning process systematically. Thorough planning provides direction for learning activities so that learning objectives can be achieved more effectively (Muspawi, 2021). In the context of motivation, planning that includes varied activities also allows students to gain non-monotonous learning experiences. The planning of PAI teachers in this study thus includes three main elements: the readiness of learning tools, the design of engaging activities, and the adjustment of strategies to the characteristics of the students. These three elements serve as the foundation for the implementation of learning that can encourage students to be more active.

the Implementation of Learning Motivation Enhancement by Islamic Education Teachers

The implementation of learning is a proving ground where the design is translated into learning experiences directly felt by the students. Research data at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang shows that the implementation of PAI learning to enhance student motivation is realized through three main strategies: creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, providing rewards for student achievements, and stimulating interest in learning through the

contextualization of material and repetition of material at the beginning of each lesson. These three strategies reflect a shift in the teacher's role from merely delivering content to becoming a facilitator who actively and responsively orchestrates classroom dynamics according to students' needs. During the implementation of PAI learning begins with the formation of a friendly and positive classroom climate, starting with greetings, group prayers, and apperception before entering the core material. After delivering the material, the teacher presents educational games, quizzes, group discussions, and Q&A sessions to keep the students engaged and enthusiastic until the lesson is over. When students' concentration begins to decline, the teacher immediately shifts the activity to a game that remains relevant to the PAI material, so that students' attention is refocused on learning. This pattern is consistent with the findings of classroom action research that applied the Joyful Learning method in PAI learning, which showed a significant improvement in learning evaluation results between the first and second cycles, along with an increase in the percentage of teacher activities categorized as well-executed by observers (Yazid et al., 2026).

The significance of a pleasant classroom atmosphere on PAI learning motivation is also confirmed by a study on the formation of a positive classroom climate in madrasah ibtidaiyah, which found that a conducive and religious classroom climate, built through human interactions between teachers and students as well as the habituation of religious values through exemplary behavior, significantly contributes to the strengthening of students' religious character and learning enthusiasm (Hermawan & Subando, 2026). Another study on basic level PAI learning also confirms that the application of Joyful Learning through educational games, active discussions, group work, and creative media consistently increases students' motivation, enthusiasm, participation, and understanding, while also reducing boredom and strengthening positive relationships between teachers and students in the classroom (Khairunnisa et al., 2026). From the perspective of more general motivation theory, observations of hundreds of learning sessions show that teachers who start lessons with high enthusiasm and then provide space for experimentation and support to students achieve much higher levels of learning engagement compared to teachers who display chaotic or less structured teaching behavior at the beginning of the lesson (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021).

These findings reinforce the conclusion that the classroom climate is not merely a backdrop but a determining variable that influences the degree of student engagement and motivation in PAI learning. A structural modeling study involving thousands of students and dozens of high school teachers even found that teachers' intrinsic motivation in teaching is significantly positively correlated with students' intrinsic motivation in learning, with motivational styles that support autonomy and the quality of teacher-student relationships serving as connecting mechanisms between the two (Zou et al., 2024). These findings are relevant to the attitude of PAI teachers at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang, who begin their lessons with enthusiasm and familiarity, as a pleasant atmosphere is fundamentally inseparable from the quality of the emotional relationships built between teachers and students throughout the learning process.

During the implementation phase, the teacher sought to establish an engaging learning atmosphere. The lesson commenced with greetings and a collective prayer, followed by the delivery of instructional content and activities designed to foster student engagement. One teacher explained that following the lecture, students participated in educational games or

quizzes related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) topics, such as stories of the Prophets or the Wali Songo. These activities were conducted in groups, with successful groups receiving rewards. This approach rendered the learning process more interactive while reducing student monotony. Observational data further revealed that the teacher provided opportunities for students to ask questions, engage in discussions, express opinions, and respond to queries. To maintain student attention, the teacher employed light humor, motivational prompts, and an approachable communication style. When students began to lose focus, the teacher pivoted the activity toward games or quizzes that simultaneously served as a content review. Consequently, reinforcement activities functioned not only to consolidate knowledge but also to restore academic focus.

The second strategy involved providing rewards or appreciation to students who demonstrated active participation, task completion accuracy, or success in responding to questions. These rewards were not strictly material; they also encompassed verbal praise, appreciation, and recognition of student effort. The PAI teacher at the research site consistently implemented this practice whenever individual students or groups successfully completed educational games, quizzes, or group discussions. Such recognition serves as a form of extrinsic motivation capable of fostering enjoyment and self-confidence while encouraging students to sustain their learning achievements over time (Sardiman, 2004). The provision of rewards emerged as a prominent strategy within the instructional execution. Rewards were conferred upon active students or groups who successfully completed tasks or answered questions correctly. Rather than relying solely on tangible prizes, the recognition frequently took the form of praise, appreciation, and acknowledgement of student efforts. This strategy represents a form of extrinsic motivation that reinforces positive learning behaviors (Sardiman, 2004). Furthermore, the teacher stimulated learning interest by contextualizing PAI material within daily life. For instance, when teaching Islamic creed (akidah) and ethics (akhlak), the teacher drew upon examples closely aligned with the students' experiences at home, at school, and within the community. This contextual approach facilitated students' comprehension of the concepts while helping them recognize the direct relevance of Islamic values to their conduct. Contextual learning is vital, as it enables students to understand the real-world applicability of concepts rather than merely receiving them passively.

The implementation of instruction also underscored the teacher's dual role as a facilitator and a motivator. The teacher created opportunities for students to learn through experiential activities, group work, and social interaction. The facilitative role was realized through the provision of a supportive learning environment and guidance that fostered active learning (Fauzi & Mustika, 2022). Meanwhile, the motivational role was evident in the encouragement, appreciation, reinforcement, and strategies used to sustain learning enthusiasm. Beyond classroom instruction, the PAI teacher's role extended to the habituation of religious activities. Field documentation indicated the practice of congregational Dhuha prayers guided by the teacher. By modeling and guiding students to apply religious values, the teacher expanded PAI learning from the cognitive domain into habitual behavior.

Nevertheless, the academic literature on rewards is not entirely uniform and warrants a balanced discussion. A classic meta-analysis concluded that tangible rewards contingent on task engagement or completion can diminish students' intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999). Conversely, another meta-analysis found that rewards generally do not undermine intrinsic

motivation, noting that verbal praise actually enhances it, and that negative effects primarily arise from tangible rewards given merely for task completion regardless of effort quality (Cameron & Pierce, 1994). This debate was subsequently reconciled by more recent scholarship, which posits that extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are not inherently contradictory; rather, extrinsic rewards can serve as an initial entry point to spark engagement, which can later transform into a cycle of intrinsic motivation when managed appropriately and proportionately (Bardach & Murayama, 2025). In this context, the practice of the PAI teacher at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang (who predominantly utilized praise, recognition, and non-material appreciation over tangible rewards) aligns with findings that verbal and personalized recognition are more effective in cultivating sustained learning motivation than tangible incentives alone (Yuhe & Bhaumik, 2025).

Other studies at the primary school level similarly demonstrate a significant positive correlation between the frequency of reward provision and students' academic performance, while simultaneously confirming that rewards serve as an initial trigger that gradually fosters an intrinsic love for learning, particularly when these rewards are personalized to align with individual student interests and needs (Sigalingging et al., 2023). Consequently, the success of the reward strategy implemented by the PAI teacher lies not in the magnitude or material value of the reward itself, but in the precision of its form and timing as a reinforcement mechanism for sustained positive learning behaviors.

The third strategy involves stimulating learning interest by contextualizing PAI material within students' daily lives and conducting content reviews at the beginning of each lesson. The teacher provides concrete examples of manners, ethics, and etiquette (adab and akhlak) applicable both at home and at school, while routinely revisiting prior material to ensure knowledge retention before introducing new concepts. This approach reflects the application of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) framework, which has consistently been shown to enhance learning motivation across various educational levels and subjects. For instance, a classroom action research study in middle school mathematics documented an increase in student motivation scores from a moderate category during the pre-cycle phase to a high category by the end of the second cycle following the implementation of contextual learning that linked instructional material to students' real-life experiences (Firmansah & Sulistyaningrum, 2026).

The specific relevance of contextual learning within PAI instruction has also been demonstrated in the subject of Quran-Hadith, where connecting the concepts of halal and thayyib (lawful and wholesome) to students' daily food consumption experiences significantly enhanced student engagement, enthusiasm, and comprehension during group discussions and presentations (Rahman et al., 2026). Another study on senior high school PAI learning underscored that a religious and conducive school climate, combined with an engaging and contextual teaching approach, reinforces student motivation through the interplay between internal drives and external environmental support, including parental involvement at home (Sholeh et al., 2024). In alignment with these findings, research examining PAI teachers' strategies in fostering student motivation and character development revealed that providing individualized attention and moral guidance through exemplary role modeling further amplifies the effectiveness of contextualization and material revision in the classroom (Reino & Hurmaini, 2025).

Overall, these three instructional strategies (establishing an engaging learning environment, applying targeted rewards, and integrating contextualization alongside routine material reviews) demonstrate that the success of PAI teachers in boosting student motivation at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang hinges on their ability to translate lesson planning into instructional practices that are responsive to the psychological conditions and real needs of learners. Effective implementation is thus not merely a technical execution of a predefined plan, but rather a dialogic process continually adapted to classroom dynamics over time. A similar pattern emerges in studies examining teacher performance implementation in other subjects, which indicate that alignment across the planning phase, systematic execution from opening to closing activities, and organized evaluation collectively contribute positively to enhancing student learning motivation (Pikiani et al., 2025). Accordingly, the planning and execution of PAI instruction at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang function continuously and symbiotically to build sustainable student learning motivation.

Performance Outcomes of Efforts to Enhance Student Learning Motivation by Islamic Religious Education Teachers

The findings of this study demonstrate a positive change in student engagement during the learning process. Active participation was manifested through students' confidence in asking questions, responding to teacher queries, engaging in discussions, expressing opinions, collaborating in groups, and participating in educational games and presentations. Teachers observed the development of student motivation through attendance levels, active participation, and students' comprehension of instructional material. This increase in student activity indicates a transition wherein students are no longer passive recipients of information, but rather active subjects in the learning process. The variation of pedagogical methods (including educational games, quizzes, discussions, and group work) fostered a more communicative instructional atmosphere. This finding aligns with the understanding that motivation drives students to engage more earnestly in the learning process (Maharani et al., 2024).

Another key outcome was the improvement in students' comprehension of PAI subject matter. Students were provided opportunities to re-explain materials, answer questions, participate in discussions, and connect learning content to real-life contexts. Additionally, teachers routinely conducted content reviews at the beginning of lessons to assess students' retention of prior material. Through repetition and interactive activities, comprehension was evaluated not solely by numerical grades, but also through students' ability to articulate and apply the concepts. Furthermore, the findings revealed the formation of students' religious attitudes and character. Observable behavioral changes included the habit of greeting teachers (salam), showing polite and courteous demeanor, respecting teachers and peers, reciting prayers before and after lessons, and participating in religious practices such as congregational prayers. One teacher noted that this shift was evident when students who previously offered general greetings adopted the habit of uttering Islamic greetings upon meeting their teachers. These findings demonstrate that PAI instruction encompasses a habituation dimension that extends beyond classroom boundaries (Sholeh et al., 2024).

The research findings illustrate that learning motivation and character formation do not operate in isolation. When students perceive instruction as engaging, their active

participation increases. When instructional content is understood and contextualized within daily life, students more readily recognize its practical utility. Moreover, when teachers provide exemplary role modeling and habituation, the values taught are more likely to be integrated into students' daily behavior. The interpersonal dynamics among teachers, students, and parents also served as crucial supporting factors. Teachers emphasized the necessity of parental collaboration to ensure that learning habits and religious values cultivated at school are sustained at home. This support encompasses reminding students to study, assisting with homework, and encouraging the practice of religious values. Consequently, the enhancement of learning motivation observed in this study occurs within an integrated educational ecosystem involving teachers, students, the school, and the family.

Integration of Instructional Planning, Implementation, and Educational Efforts in Enhancing Student Learning Motivation

When the three research focuses are examined as an integrated continuum, a distinct pattern emerges: planning serves as the foundational basis for implementation, while implementation yields observable changes in student behavior and learning outcomes. Teachers initially prepare instructional modules and pedagogical strategies, which are subsequently operationalized through varied learning activities. Consequently, the outcomes manifest as improvements in students' active participation, subject comprehension, and religious character development. These findings reinforce the premise that the teacher's role in instruction cannot be reduced merely to the act of teaching; rather, teachers fulfill multi-faceted functions as educators, facilitators, mentors, motivators, and role models. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), these roles carry a unique dimension, as instructional success is evaluated not solely by mastery of cognitive content, but also by shifts in attitudes and habituated behaviors that reflect Islamic values. The most prominent strategies identified in this study are instructional variation and contextualization. Varied classroom activities mitigate student monotony, whereas real-life contextualization renders the instructional material personally relevant. Furthermore, rewards provide external reinforcement, while role modeling and habituation foster internal drive and positive conduct. This combination demonstrates that learning motivation is more accurately conceptualized as a continuously constructed process rather than the product of a single, isolated method. Conversely, the study also highlights that student motivation remains inherently dynamic. Initial observations revealed instances where students temporarily lost focus, underscoring the continuous need for teachers to make instructional adjustments, provide individual attention, and deploy strategies responsive to evolving classroom dynamics. These findings reaffirm the critical importance of pedagogical competence, specifically the teacher's ability to interpret instructional situations and execute flexible pedagogical responses.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a crucial role in enhancing student learning motivation at MTs Wahid Hasyim Dau Malang. First, regarding the planning dimension, teachers prepare instructional modules, design engaging learning experiences, establish assessment methods, and adapt pedagogical approaches to align with student conditions and needs. Second, regarding the

implementation dimension, teachers cultivate an enjoyable learning environment by incorporating educational games, quizzes, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, group work, presentations, targeted rewards, and the contextualization of instructional materials within daily life. Third, the outcomes of these strategies are evidenced by heightened student engagement, improved subject comprehension, and the development of religious character and attitudes. Consequently, the enhancement of student learning motivation in PAI instruction is achieved through a synergy of systematic planning, diversified execution, effective communication, positive reinforcement, exemplary role modeling, and habitual practice.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. PAI teachers are encouraged to maintain variations in instructional methods and continuously adapt strategies to accommodate evolving student characteristics. Motivational approaches should not rely solely on external rewards, but should also be directed toward fostering intrinsic motivation through meaningful learning experiences and role modeling. School administrators are advised to provide sustained support for teachers by offering adequate instructional facilities and reinforcing religious programs that foster character development. Furthermore, strong collaboration between the school and parents should be maintained to ensure that positive behavioral habituation continues beyond the school environment. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand upon this study by examining different educational levels or geographical contexts, utilizing diverse analytical frameworks, and investigating additional variables related to student learning motivation to attain a more comprehensive understanding.

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT

The authors declare that informed consent was not required because this research did not involve human participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

M was solely responsible for all aspects of this research, including conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, investigation, writing the original draft, and reviewing and editing the manuscript. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript and takes full responsibility for its content.

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