

Exploring Students' Motivation to Learn and Efforts to Develop It: A Case Study at a Quranic Educational Institution

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Abstract

Learning motivation plays a crucial role in supporting the success of learning activities at Quranic education institutions. Observations in the field indicate variations in learning motivation, with some students at these institutions still exhibiting less-than-optimal enthusiasm. This study aims to explore the actual state of learning motivation, identify determining factors, and map out and formulate strategies for its development in a thorough and detailed manner. A qualitative approach using a case study design was employed, focusing on an in-depth analysis of a single institutional setting as the unit of analysis. Data collection was conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving teachers, students, and parents. The research findings indicate that motivation is the result of an interaction between internal factors including interest, self-confidence, and physical condition and external factors such as family support, teaching methods, peer influence, and excessive use of electronic devices. Based on these findings, integrated development strategies have been identified and formulated, including creative and interactive learning, strengthening partnerships with parents, a reward system, and the development of a sustainable religious education program. In conclusion, this case study demonstrates that improving motivation requires an approach tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of the Quran educational institution in question.

INTRODUCTION

Quran Education Institutions are a form of non-formal Islamic educational institutions that play a highly strategic role in teaching the Quran to children from an early age. Through a series of systematically organized activities, the Quran Education Institution not only focuses on teaching students to read the Quran with proper tajwid but also strives to instill values of faith, cultivate noble character, and encourage students to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. Therefore, the Quran Education Institute serves as a key complement to the religious education that students receive within their families and through formal schooling (Achadah & Mukholifah, 2023; Masnawati & Fitria, 2024; Retnasari et al., 2019; Sania, 2022).

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The success of the learning process in the context of Quran educational institutions is greatly influenced by various factors, one of which is the students' level of motivation to learn. Fundamentally, motivation to learn is understood as an energy drive that originates from within the individual or is derived from the surrounding environment, which directs and drives a person to engage in learning activities earnestly in order to achieve the established learning objectives. According to the theory proposed by Mc Donald in Nurchasanah et al., (2021), motivation is characterized by a change in energy accompanied by feelings and behavioral reactions oriented toward achieving specific goals. In the context of an Quran Educational Institution, high learning motivation will encourage students to be more active, disciplined, and consistent. Conversely, low motivation has the potential to create obstacles in the form of a lack of participation, declining attendance, and a diminished deep interest in the Quranic material and Islamic values being taught (Anda, 2019; Sari & Arif, 2020; Syafi'uddin, 2025).

Based on initial observations conducted by the researcher at the study site, it was empirically found that the students' levels of motivation were not uniform. Some students were highly motivated, while others exhibited signs of lack of focus, irregular attendance, and low enthusiasm. This phenomenon is worth studying in depth because every Quran educational institution has its own unique dynamics, culture, and challenges that are not entirely the same as those of other institutions. Therefore, this research was conducted as a case study focusing on an in-depth analysis of a single system at the Quran Educational Institution of the Darussalam Mosque in Air Bang Village.

The main objectives of this study are: i) to explore the actual level of learning motivation among students at the study site; ii) to identify the primary contributing factors, both internal and environmental; and iii) to map out and formulate relevant, measurable development strategies that align with the characteristics of the institution. The results of this study are expected to provide an in-depth analysis that is not only descriptive but also offers solutions that are truly tailored to the actual conditions on the ground.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case study design. This design was chosen because the researcher aims to explore, understand, and present an in-depth analysis of the phenomena occurring within a specific, bounded environment, rather than merely providing a general overview or conducting measurements based on statistical figures (Anidar et al., 2026; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2025, 2026; Marta et al., 2022; Nurrahmaniah, 2025; Oktavia et al., 2025). The primary focus is to explore real-world conditions, understand the relationships between variables, and formulate appropriate development strategies for the case at the Quran Education Institution of the Darussalam Mosque in Air Bang Village.

Location and Scope of the Case: The research was conducted entirely at the Darussalam Mosque Quran Education Institute in Air Bang Village. This location was designated as a single case study because it possesses distinctive characteristics, dynamics, and issues, constituting a cohesive unit of analysis. Activities spanned from the preparation phase through data collection to the preparation of the report during the month of May 2026.

Subjects and informants: Selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing informants based on the consideration that they have first and knowledge of the conditions and possess the most relevant information. The main informants include: i) Teachers or female instructors at the Quran Educational Institution, as the parties managing the learning process; and ii) Groups of students consisting of those

with both high and low motivation, in order to obtain a complete and balanced comparative picture; as well as iii) Students' parents as supporters from the external environment.

Data sources: These are divided into two types: primary data, obtained directly from the field in the form of continuous observations, in-depth interview responses, and daily field notes; and secondary data, consisting of institutional profile documents, attendance records, activity schedules, documentary photographs, administrative archives, and supporting literature related to motivation theory and Quranic education.

Data collection techniques: Conducted repeatedly and in a complementary manner to ensure a comprehensive picture of the case: Participant Observation: The researcher is present and remains within the institution's environment throughout the activities, observing the learning process, attitudes, levels of engagement, and interactions among participants in detail and on an ongoing basis. In-Depth Interviews: Conducted face-to-face using flexible yet focused questions to explore the background, perspectives, expectations, and challenges faced by each party. Documentation: Used to strengthen empirical evidence in the form of activity recordings, administrative records, and mentoring notes stored at the institution.

Data analysis: Using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which takes place concurrently with the data collection process, includes the following stages: Data reduction: Selecting, grouping, and simplifying the information deemed most relevant to the focus of the case study. Data Presentation: Organizing the selected results into a structured narrative so that patterns of relationships among facts and dynamics within the case can be clearly seen. Drawing Conclusions and Verification: Identifying specific meanings and patterns unique to this case, then repeatedly verifying their accuracy until the resulting conclusions are robust and consistent with the realities on the ground (Engkizar et al., 2022; Hamdi & Desvia, 2025; Pou et al., 2026; Siswanto & Izza, 2018; Ummah et al., 2025; Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Data validity check: triangulation of sources and techniques, by cross-checking information obtained from teachers, students, parents, observations, and documentary evidence. Enhancing the thoroughness of observations, conducting repeated follow-ups and observations over a sufficient period of time to ensure that the picture obtained is not merely a fleeting impression. Member check: reconfirming key points from the data analysis with primary sources to ensure consistency in the meaning and details conveyed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Darussalam Mosque Quran Education Institute is a mosque-based Quran education institution that serves children from elementary school age through adolescence in the Air Bang neighborhood. Classes are held every afternoon in small groups organized by ability level. Based on an in-depth exploration, it was revealed that the students' levels of motivation in this environment vary considerably and are not yet uniform. Some students demonstrate fairly high motivation, characterized by regular attendance, active participation, and a genuine desire to improve their Quran reading skills. However, there is another group of students who still show signs of low motivation and require special attention.

This is consistent with the statement made by informant 1, a teacher: *"There are still some students who lack focus while studying. Sometimes they talk with their friends or don't pay attention during class. But there are also students who are diligent and actively participate in activities."*

A similar view was expressed by informant 2: *"Every child has a different level of enthusiasm for learning. Some come of their own accord to learn to recite the Quran, but others need to*

be constantly reminded and motivated.”

From the students’ perspective, the majority expressed enjoyment in learning to recite the Quran because they wanted to be able to read it fluently. However, some students also acknowledged that fatigue after a day of formal schooling often dampened their enthusiasm upon arriving at the Quranic Education Center. This finding confirms that, in this case, learning motivation is not a fixed variable but rather a dynamic one that is heavily influenced by a combination of psychological factors and the unique daily environmental conditions in this region.

Exploration of causal factors. An in-depth analysis of the field data reveals that the issues observed in this case stem from the cumulative effects of interconnected internal and external systems.

Internal factors: First, a lack of interest in learning. Some students admitted they were more interested in playing with friends than attending classes. As informant 3 stated: *“Sometimes I’d rather play with my friends, so when I’m studying, I tend to lose focus.”* This lack of interest causes their attention to wander, making it difficult for them to fully grasp the material being taught. Second, a lack of self-confidence. There is a tendency for students to feel shy and afraid of making mistakes when asked to read in front of their friends. This is evident from informant 4’s statement: *“I sometimes feel shy when asked to read because I’m afraid of making mistakes.”* This excessive anxiety encourages a passive attitude and a tendency to avoid active participation.

Third, less-than-ideal physical conditions. Fatigue from previous school activities posed a very specific challenge in this case, as the study sessions took place immediately after school. As informant 5 explained: *“After school, I’m sometimes tired, so I tend to get sleepy during Quran study.”* This condition directly reduces the students’ ability to concentrate and stay engaged throughout the lesson.

External factors. First, a lack of parental guidance. According to the teachers, the level of family support in this area varies. Students who receive regular guidance at home show much better progress than those who lack such support. The lack of adequate supervision within the family environment means that students are not accustomed to studying independently.

Second, the influence of the peer group. Observations show that group dynamics are very strong at this location. When a peer invites others to chat or play during class, other students tend to be influenced. This pattern of interaction has the potential to create groups with less disciplined study habits.

Third, the teaching methods lack variety. The students expressed a preference for a fun and relaxed atmosphere. As informant 6 said: *“I like learning while playing.”* The use of methods that tend to be uniform and teacher-centered leads to prolonged boredom.

Mapping and Formulating Development Initiatives. Based on the results of an in-depth exploration of the case, the researchers, together with the institution’s administrators, mapped out and formulated development strategies tailored to the students’ abilities and actual conditions on the ground, divided into four main pillars: developing engaging and varied learning models; transforming monotonous teaching methods into more varied ones by incorporating educational games, inspirational stories, and the use of simple yet meaningful media. The schedule was also designed to include short breaks so that the students would not become too exhausted, given that they had just returned from school.

Strengthening the system of recognition and religious guidance. A tiered reward system has been established, consisting of verbal praise, progress reports, and simple

gifts given fairly not only to the brightest students but also to those who demonstrate improvement through effort. This is accompanied by a reminder of the importance of worship before each lesson begins.

Developing partnerships and communication with parents. A schedule for regular communication between teachers and parents has been established, and simple monthly meetings are held to discuss progress and provide basic guidance on how to support children's learning at home in alignment with the instruction provided at the Quran Educational Institution. Fostering a social atmosphere and group cohesion. Peer dynamics are managed as a positive force by forming small study groups composed of students with varying abilities so they can help one another and mutually reinforce their motivation to learn.

Overall, the results of this case study reinforce the view that learning motivation cannot be built using a one-size-fits-all approach for all institutions. At the Darussalam Mosque Quran Educational Institution, the success of development efforts depends heavily on aligning initiatives with school practices, the students' physical conditions, and the unique patterns of family support in the region. If these four pillars of development can work in tandem, the obstacles faced can be gradually overcome, and the institution's Islamic educational goals will be achieved more effectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the exploration, analysis, and in-depth discussion outlined in the case study framework, it can be concluded that the level of learning motivation among students at the Quran Educational Institution of the Darussalam Mosque in Air Bang Village is generally quite good, though not yet uniform. There is a group of students who demonstrate high enthusiasm, but there are still other groups whose lack of motivation has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of learning if not addressed. In this case, low motivation is the result of a combination of interrelated factors. From the students' internal perspective, the dominant factors are low interest, a lack of self-confidence, and physical fatigue a characteristic issue stemming from the fact that activities take place immediately after formal school. From an external perspective, the most influential factors are a lack of parental support and guidance, unguided peer dynamics, and teaching methods that tend to be uniform, leading to boredom.

Based on these specific findings, integrated development efforts tailored to the characteristics of this case have been formulated and mapped out, namely: varying teaching methods and adjusting the pace of activities; implementing a system of rewards and fostering religious values; strengthening partnerships with parents; and managing peer groups to channel them into a positive force. To maximize results, it is recommended that these strategies be implemented consistently, on a scheduled basis, and monitored periodically. For future researchers, the results of this case study can serve as a basis for comparison or be further developed through action research at the same location to assess the actual effectiveness of the strategies that have been formulated.

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