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THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS IN INCREASING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LEARNING AT IBTIDAIYAH AL HIKMAH ARGOMULYO

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Abstract: *The role of Islamic religious education teachers in increasing students' interest in learning has a significant impact on the formation of character, morals and spirituality. This article discusses several important aspects of the teacher's role. First, teachers need to provide a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics and life principles that are beneficial for students. Furthermore, teachers must become learning facilitators who are able to create a supportive learning environment, use varied and interesting learning methods, and provide exemplary examples in applying Islamic religious values in everyday life. Additionally, teachers need to understand their students' needs, interests, and backgrounds to design relevant and engaging lessons. These steps include teaching material in the context of students' lives, utilizing learning technology, and encouraging active student participation in discussions and other learning activities. Thus, through an effective role, teachers can help increase students' interest in learning about Islam and form a generation that has a stronger understanding of Islamic religious values and is able to apply them in everyday life.*

Keywords: *Teacher's role, Interest in Learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education has an important role in shaping students' character, morals and spirituality. Islamic religious teachings do not only focus on religious aspects, but also teach ethical, moral and life values that are beneficial for individuals and society. So true. Islamic religious education has a very important role in shaping students' character, morals and spirituality. Islamic religious teachings teach moral principles which are the basis for forming good character. Through learning the Islamic religion, students are taught to be honest, fair, patient, responsible and have an empathetic attitude towards others (Cahyani and Masyithoh 2023) .

Islamic religious education also teaches fundamental moral values such as compassion, generosity, patience and tolerance. It helps students understand the

difference between right and wrong, and guides them to make the right decisions in everyday life. Islamic religious teachings teach ethics in various aspects of life, including interacting with others, in business, in government, and in everyday life. Teachers can use Islamic religious lessons to illustrate how these ethical principles are applied in practice. Apart from moral and ethical aspects, Islamic religious education also focuses on developing students' spirituality. Through worship, dhikr, and spiritual reflection, students are invited to strengthen their relationship with Allah SWT and develop an awareness of their life purpose. Islamic religious teachings also teach values that are beneficial for individuals and society as a whole. For example, teachings about compassion, justice and togetherness can help build harmonious relationships in society. Thus, Islamic religious education is not only about religious aspects, but also about forming good personalities, strong morals and deep spirituality in students. This is very important to form a generation that is responsible, empathetic and has a positive contribution to society (Yusri et al. 2024) .

Some of the challenges faced in increasing interest in learning about Islam include students' perceptions of religion that are less positive, a lack of understanding of the relevance of Islamic teachings in everyday life, and a lack of interesting and interactive learning methods. Some of the challenges faced in increasing interest in studying Islam include that some students may have negative perceptions or lack interest in Islamic religious studies (Mahmudi and Solehuddin 2023) . This can be caused by various factors, including personal experience, environmental influences, or a wrong understanding of the Islamic religion. Many students may not deeply understand how Islamic teachings can be relevant to their daily lives. They may view religion as something separate from their practical lives. Conventional and monotonous learning methods may not be attractive enough for some students. Lack of variety in learning methods can cause boredom and lack of interest in learning (Abbas, Subando, and Tamami 2023) . To overcome these challenges, teachers can take several steps, including connecting Islamic teachings with students' daily lives, explaining how Islamic values can guide them in facing various situations, challenges and decisions in life.

Teachers can use various interactive learning methods such as discussions, role plays, simulations, or interesting learning technology. This can help maintain student interest and involvement in learning. Teachers can provide a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics and life principles that are beneficial for students. This can help change students' perceptions of the Islamic religion to be more positive. Teachers can create a comfortable and open learning environment where students feel safe to ask questions, discuss and share thoughts about the Islamic religion without fear of being judged or ridiculed. By overcoming these challenges and implementing appropriate strategies, teachers can help increase students' interest in learning about Islam and provide a more meaningful and relevant learning experience for them (Aliyah et al. 2023) .

Islamic religious education teachers have an important role as learning facilitators who can overcome these challenges. They must be able to create a supportive learning environment, use varied and interesting learning methods, and provide exemplary examples in applying Islamic religious values in everyday life. Islamic religious education teachers have an important role as learning facilitators who can overcome challenges in increasing students' interest in learning. Teachers must be able to create a comfortable, open and supportive learning environment in the classroom. This allows students to feel safe in discussing, asking, and sharing thoughts about the Islamic religion without fear or inhibition. Teachers need to develop their creativity in designing and using various interesting and varied learning methods (Ghozali, Nasor, and Setyaningsih 2023) . Methods such as discussions, role plays, simulations, or interactive learning technology can help increase student interest and involvement in learning. Teachers must be role models for students in applying Islamic religious values in everyday life. Teacher attitudes, behavior and integrity can influence students' interest in learning about Islam. By providing good examples, teachers can help students understand how relevant Islamic teachings are in their lives. Teachers must be able to overcome challenges that students may face in understanding Islamic teachings, such as negative perceptions of religion or a lack of understanding of the relevance of Islamic teachings in everyday life. They need to provide in-depth and relevant understanding and explain religious concepts in a way that is easy for students to understand. Teachers can encourage students to discuss and reflect on the meaning of Islamic teachings in their own lives. These discussions can help students deepen their understanding and make learning more meaningful for them. By carrying out these roles, Islamic religious education teachers can become effective agents of change in increasing students' interest in learning about Islam and helping them understand and apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

Teachers need to understand their students' needs, interests and backgrounds to be able to design lessons that are relevant and interesting for them. This includes linking teaching materials to the context of students' lives, utilizing learning technology, and encouraging students' active participation in discussions and other learning activities. Understanding students' needs, interests and backgrounds is an important step in designing effective Islamic religious learning. Teachers must understand the context of their students' lives and relate teaching material to the experiences and realities they face every day. For example, presenting stories or examples that are relevant to the problems faced by teenagers today. Teachers can use learning technology such as multimedia presentations, videos, or online learning platforms to deliver teaching material in an interesting and interactive way (Mahmudi and Solehuddin 2023) . Technology can also be used to provide additional, more varied learning resources. Teachers must encourage students' active participation in the learning process. This can be done through discussions, questions, problem solving, or other collaborative activities that involve students directly in the learning process. Every student has a different learning style. Teachers need to be aware of their

students' learning styles and adapt learning methods to suit each student's preferences and needs. For example, some students prefer to learn through visuals, while others prefer to learn through listening or doing. Teachers must create an environment that allows students to express their ideas freely and develop their creativity. This can be done through creative projects, open discussions, or assignments that encourage critical thinking. By understanding and accommodating students' needs and interests, teachers can create learning experiences that are more relevant, engaging, and meaningful for them. This will help increase students' interest in learning about Islam and strengthen their spiritual understanding and experience (Muslihin, Adib, and Setyaningsih 2024) .

Teachers need to provide a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics and life principles that are beneficial for students. With a deeper understanding, students will be more interested in learning more about the Islamic religion. Providing a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics and life principles is the key to increasing students' interest in learning about the Islamic religion. Teachers need to provide comprehensive teaching about Islamic teachings, covering aspects such as akidah (beliefs), worship (rituals), morals (ethics), history and Islamic law. This will help students understand the Islamic religion thoroughly and in depth. Apart from Islamic religious teachings, teachers must also emphasize the moral values contained in it. These include values such as honesty, justice, compassion, patience, and concern for others. Teachers can use stories from the Koran or the life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to illustrate these values. Teachers must relate Islamic religious lessons to students' daily lives and show how ethical principles in Islam can be applied in various contexts of their lives. This will help students see the direct relevance of Islamic teachings in their lives. Through discussion and reflection, teachers can help students to understand the meaning and implications of Islamic teachings in their own lives. This discussion can also open up space for students to ask questions and submit their own thoughts about Islamic teachings. Teachers can provide high-quality additional reading resources on Islamic teachings, so students can deepen their own understanding outside of the classroom. These can be books, articles, or trusted online sources. By providing a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and the values contained therein, teachers can increase students' interest in learning about the Islamic religion. Students will be more motivated to learn more about the Islamic religion when they see values that are useful and relevant to their lives. By understanding this background, Islamic religious education teachers can design more effective and interesting learning, so that they can increase students' interest in learning about Islam and form a generation that has a stronger understanding of religious values and is able to apply them in everyday life. .

METHOD

This research uses qualitative research methods *case study* (Wada et al. 2024) . This is intended so that the problem being focused on will be studied in

more depth. The research was carried out at SDN 4 Waringinsari Timur Pekon Waringin Sari Timur, Adiluwih District, Pringsewu Regency . The research was carried out from November 2021 to April 2022. The data collection techniques used were Interview, Observation and Documentation techniques (Sugiyono 2013) . Data Analysis Procedure: Reduced data will make it easier for researchers to collect further data. Second, data presentation . third *Conclusion Drawing/Verification*. To test the validity of qualitative data, *Triangulation and Member Check* were carried out (Moleong 2002) .

DISCUSSION

The role of Islamic religious education teachers in increasing interest in learning is very important because Islamic religious education not only introduces religious values, but also builds spiritual and moral awareness in students. The following are some of the roles of Islamic religious education teachers in increasing interest in learning:

1. Providing in-depth understanding: Islamic religious education teachers can provide a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics, and useful life principles. This can make students more interested in understanding and learning further. Providing a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics and life principles is one of the keys to increasing students' interest in learning in Islamic religious education. Teachers can present teaching material in a structured and systematic manner, starting from basic concepts to more complex ones. This helps students understand gradually and build a solid understanding. Teachers can explain the historical, cultural context and relevance of Islamic teachings to students' daily conditions and lives. This helps students see the importance of Islamic teachings in their lives. Teachers can utilize credible and quality sources in delivering teaching material. This can include the holy Qur'an, hadith, Islamic literature, as well as relevant modern references. Holding discussions and reflections on Islamic teachings, moral values, and life principles helps students to understand more deeply and apply these concepts in the context of their own lives. Teachers can use case studies or concrete examples from real life to illustrate Islamic religious concepts. This makes students' understanding more practical and directly related to their experience. Giving students opportunities to ask questions about things they don't understand helps clarify complex concepts and promote deeper understanding. By providing a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, teachers can help build a strong foundation for students' interest in learning about Islamic religious education, as well as forming character and personality that is in accordance with Islamic values (Defnaldi et al. 2023) .
2. Presenting relevant learning: Teachers can relate teaching material to the context of students' daily lives. For example, connecting Islamic religious lessons with social problems, teenage life, or mental health. In this way, students will be more interested and see the relevance of what they are learning. Linking teaching materials to the context of students' daily lives is an effective strategy to increase their interest in learning in Islamic religious education. Teachers can use examples from students' daily lives or the latest news related to Islamic teachings. For

example, discussing issues of bullying, promiscuity, or mental health problems that are often experienced by teenagers, then relating them to Islamic religious concepts such as love, brotherhood, or good morals. Teachers can present scenarios or role plays that place students in real-life situations related to Islamic religious values. This helps students understand how Islamic principles can be applied in their daily lives. Teachers can ask reflective questions that connect Islamic religious lessons with students' experiences. For example, "How can Islamic teachings about patience help you deal with problems at school?" or "How can Islamic values influence the way we interact with friends?" Holding group discussions about social problems or youth issues that are relevant to Islamic teachings can trigger students' critical thinking and help them see the connection between Islamic religious lessons and their daily lives. Teachers can help students formulate concrete solutions based on Islamic teachings to overcome the problems they face in everyday life, such as conflicts at school, unhealthy relationships, or academic stress. By linking teaching material to the context of students' lives, teachers can make Islamic religious learning more relevant, interesting and useful for students, thereby increasing their interest in learning and strengthening their understanding of Islamic teachings (Astuti 2023) .

3. Islamic religious education teachers must also be role models for students in applying religious values in everyday life. Teacher attitudes, behavior and integrity can influence students' interest in learning about Islam. Islamic religious education teachers as role models have a big influence in forming students' interest in learning about the Islamic religion. Teachers must show a good and positive attitude in interacting with students, fellow teachers, and other people in the school environment. Attitudes such as patience, respect and tolerance are examples of attitudes in accordance with Islamic teachings that can influence students. Teachers must be active in implementing Islamic religious values in everyday life, such as praying with consistency, maintaining good relationships with others, and showing integrity in all things. Teachers must be consistent between what is taught in class and the behavior and attitudes shown outside the classroom. This will help students understand that the religious values taught are not just theory, but can actually be practiced in everyday life. Teachers can provide concrete examples of how Islamic teachings are applied in everyday life. For example, teachers can tell personal experiences or examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW that show how Islamic religious values are realized in real actions. Teachers can also provide encouragement and motivation to students to develop themselves spiritually and morally. By giving praise and appreciation for behavior that is in accordance with religious values, teachers can motivate students to continue trying to be better. By being a consistent and convincing role model, Islamic religious education teachers can have a positive impact on students' interest in learning about Islam, as well as helping them internalize and apply religious values in their daily lives (Muslihin, Adib, and Setyaningsih 2024) .

4. Creating a comfortable learning environment: Teachers can create a supportive and comfortable learning environment for students to discuss, ask questions, and share thoughts about Islamic teachings. This will motivate students to be active in the learning process. Creating a supportive and comfortable learning environment is very important in Islamic religious education because it will motivate students to be active in the learning process. Teachers can create a classroom atmosphere that is open to discussion and asking questions without fear or inhibition. This allows students to feel comfortable to share their thoughts, experiences, and questions about Islamic teachings. Teachers must listen attentively when students speak. This not only creates a sense of value for students, but also provides an opportunity for them to express their thoughts with more clarity and confidence. Teachers can encourage students to participate in group discussions, collaborate on projects, or carry out activities that involve interaction between students. This helps students expand their understanding through different perspectives. Teachers can provide various reference materials such as books, articles or videos that are relevant to the topic being studied. This helps students in exploring more deeply and deepening their understanding of Islamic teachings. Teachers can provide constructive feedback to students when they participate in discussions or express their thoughts. This feedback can help students improve their understanding and motivate them to continue contributing. Teachers must instill mutual respect among students, so that each student feels safe to express his opinion without fear of being ridiculed or judged by his friends. By creating a supportive and comfortable learning environment, teachers can motivate students to be active in the Islamic learning process, increase their participation, and help them to gain a deeper and broader understanding of Islamic teachings (Mahmudi and Solehuddin 2023) .
5. Teachers can use various interesting learning methods such as discussions, role plays, simulations, or interactive learning technology. Thus, students will be more motivated and enthusiastic to learn. The use of various interesting learning methods can increase students' interest in learning in Islamic religious education. Holding discussions in class allows students to share opinions, exchange ideas, and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings. Teachers can facilitate discussions by asking questions that stimulate students' critical thinking. Through role playing, students can place themselves in situations that require decision making based on Islamic teachings. For example, playing a character in Islamic history or in an everyday life scenario that raises a moral dilemma. Simulations allow students to experience situations that mimic real life. Teachers can design simulations that challenge students to apply Islamic religious principles in solving problems or facing certain challenges. Using learning technology such as video, animation, or digital learning platforms can make learning more interesting and interactive. Teachers can use quality multimedia content to explain Islamic religious concepts in a more visual and attractive way. Organize collaborative

projects that allow students to work together to delve deeper into specific Islamic religious topics. For example, a research project on Islamic history, creating a presentation on Islamic religious values, or developing a social campaign based on Islamic values. Using challenging games or quizzes can make learning more fun and interesting for students. Teachers can design games such as puzzles, interactive quizzes, or board games based on Islamic religion. By utilizing various interesting and interactive learning methods, teachers can increase students' interest in learning about Islam, motivate them to actively participate in learning, and help them understand and apply Islamic religious concepts better.

6. Apart from focusing on cognitive aspects, teachers must also help students in their spiritual development. This can be done through the practice of worship, meditation, or spiritual counseling. So true. Apart from teaching Islamic religious concepts cognitively, teachers must also help students in developing their spiritual dimensions. Teachers can provide direction and guidance to students regarding worship practices such as prayer, fasting, and dhikr. Encouraging students to perform worship with consistency and sincerity can help them strengthen their spiritual connection with Allah. Introducing meditation techniques that comply with Islamic teachings can help students calm their minds, increase self-awareness, and deepen their spiritual connection. Teachers can guide students in simple meditations that focus on dhikr or spiritual reflection. Teachers can make time to speak privately with students who need spiritual guidance or counseling. This may include providing advice, answering questions about the Islamic religion, or helping students resolve conflicts or spiritual challenges they face. Teachers can encourage students to read and study the Koran regularly. Through a deeper understanding of the Islamic holy book, students can gain inspiration and guidance to live a more meaningful and devout life. Teachers can help students understand and apply the moral values taught in the Islamic religion in everyday life. This includes teaching about compassion, honesty, justice and empathy towards others. Inviting students to self-reflect on their actions, attitudes and behavior in the context of Islamic teachings can help them strengthen their spiritual awareness and improve themselves. By assisting students in their spiritual development, teachers can help them develop a deeper connection to the Islamic religion, gain inner peace, and guide them to live more meaningful and morally responsible lives. By carrying out these roles, Islamic religious education teachers can help increase students' learning interest in Islamic religious lessons and form strong character and morals in the younger generation (Ghozali, Nasor, and Setyaningsih 2023) .

CONCLUSION

The role of Islamic religious education teachers is very important in increasing students' interest in learning about Islam. Through various strategies and approaches, teachers can help students understand Islamic teachings, internalize moral and ethical

values, and develop their spiritual awareness. The following are several important points that can be concluded about the role of teachers in this matter: 1). Inspiring and Providing Deep Understanding: Teachers must be able to inspire students to learn about the Islamic religion by providing a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, ethics, and life principles that are beneficial for students. 2). Creating a Supportive Learning Environment: Teachers need to create a comfortable, open, and supportive learning environment in the classroom, where students feel safe to ask questions, discuss, and share thoughts about the Islamic religion. 3). Using Interesting and Relevant Learning Methods Teachers must use various interesting and relevant learning methods, such as discussions, role plays, simulations, learning technology, and so on, to increase students' interest and involvement in learning about Islam. 4). Providing Exemplary Examples in Applying Religious Values: Teachers must be role models for students in implementing Islamic religious values in their daily lives. Teacher attitudes, behavior and integrity can influence students' interest in learning about Islam. 5). Understanding Student Needs and Interests: Teachers need to understand their students' needs, interests, and backgrounds to be able to design lessons that are relevant and interesting for them. This includes linking teaching materials to students' life contexts, utilizing learning technology, and encouraging students' active participation in discussions and other learning activities. By combining all these aspects, Islamic religious education teachers can become effective agents of change in increasing students' interest in learning about the Islamic religion. In this way, students will be more motivated to learn and understand Islamic teachings better, as well as apply these values in their daily lives.

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