

Exploring Teachers Creativity in Motivating Students to Learn the Quran: What is Being Done?

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Abstract

Learning the Quran is not merely the process of reading the holy text, but also a spiritual journey that demands dedication, patience, and creativity on the part of the teacher. This study aims to explore the creative methods teachers use to foster student motivation in Quranic learning. This study employs an exploratory qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and participatory observation with 10 teachers and 25 students selected through purposive sampling. All data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the assistance of NVivo 12. The findings reveal four methods teachers use to motivate students to learn the Quran, namely: i) using varied methods such as the *tartil* method, *talaqqi*, and phonetic games; ii) using interactive media such as digital applications, Quranic letter cards, and instructional videos on Quranic material; iii) employing personalized approaches such as individual guidance, praise, and positive reinforcement; and iv) creating a fun learning atmosphere by organizing Quran recitation competitions among students, group games, and rewards for high achievers. The implications of this research make a tangible contribution to innovation in Islamic education by presenting a Quran learning model that is more enjoyable, relevant, and tailored to the needs of today's students.

INTRODUCTION

Quran learning holds a fundamental position in Islamic education, as it is not merely the process of reading sacred texts but also a spiritual journey that shapes students' character, spirituality, and religious intelligence (Zamzami, 2021). The Quran, as a guide for life, requires the full involvement of teachers not only as instructors but also as motivators and role models (Mulyani et al., 2018). Therefore, the success of Quran learning greatly depends on the teacher's ability to implement strategies that continuously foster students' motivation to learn.

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Nevertheless, the process of Quran learning often faces various challenges. Low learning motivation, limited time at school, and differences in students' backgrounds and abilities become factors that hinder the effectiveness of learning. These challenges require teachers not only to rely on traditional methods but also to develop creative approaches that meet the needs of today's generation. Thus, the urgency of this research becomes clearer, namely to explore how teacher creativity can serve as a solution in enhancing students' motivation to learn the Quran.

In this context, teacher creativity becomes a key factor that determines the success of learning. Teachers may employ diverse methods such as *tartil*, *talaqqi*, and phonetic games to avoid student boredom. In addition, the use of interactive media such as digital applications, letter cards, and instructional videos can provide a more engaging learning experience. Equally important, personal approaches through individual guidance, praise, and positive reinforcement have proven effective in building students' intrinsic motivation. This narrative further strengthens the idea that Quran learning should be designed as an enjoyable process, for example through reading competitions, group games, and rewards for outstanding students.

Several previous studies affirm that teacher creativity plays a central role in increasing motivation to learn the Quran. Nurhalifah et al., (2022) found that teachers who applied diverse methods such as *tartil* and *talaqqi* significantly enhanced students' interest. This aligns with the findings of (Yasnita et al., 2025), who emphasized the importance of a humanistic approach through empathetic communication and positive reinforcement. Abidin et al. (2024) added that integrating digital media into Quran learning can foster students' emotional and spiritual intelligence in the digital era. Meanwhile, Novitasari, (2025) discovered that the use of interactive letter cards improved phonetic skills among early childhood learners. Another study by Afriani et al., (2023) confirmed that Quran reading competitions in madrasahs could nurture intrinsic motivation while strengthening reading skills.

Furthermore, Zaini & Pasaribu, (2020) showed that teacher rewards and praise positively influenced Quran learning motivation in elementary schools. Gysbers & Henderson, (2014) emphasized that personal approaches through individual guidance could address differences in students' backgrounds and abilities. Abdulloh et al., (2025) found that a joyful learning atmosphere with group games increased students' active participation in Quran learning. Akem et al., (2025) highlighted the importance of integrating digital applications as learning media relevant to the millennial generation. Finally, Mulyani et al., (2018) asserted that teachers who creatively combined traditional and modern methods were able to foster students' lasting love for the Quran. These ten studies consistently demonstrate that motivation to learn the Quran is strongly influenced by teacher creativity in selecting methods, media, and approaches suited to students' needs.

Subsequently, based on the results of a Scopus database search, studies referring to the issue of teacher creativity in motivating students were found in 177 documents related to motivating students, teacher pedagogy, and the Quran. However, based on the analysis, no study has been identified that specifically focuses on teacher creativity in motivating students to learn the Quran, as illustrated in the following figure.

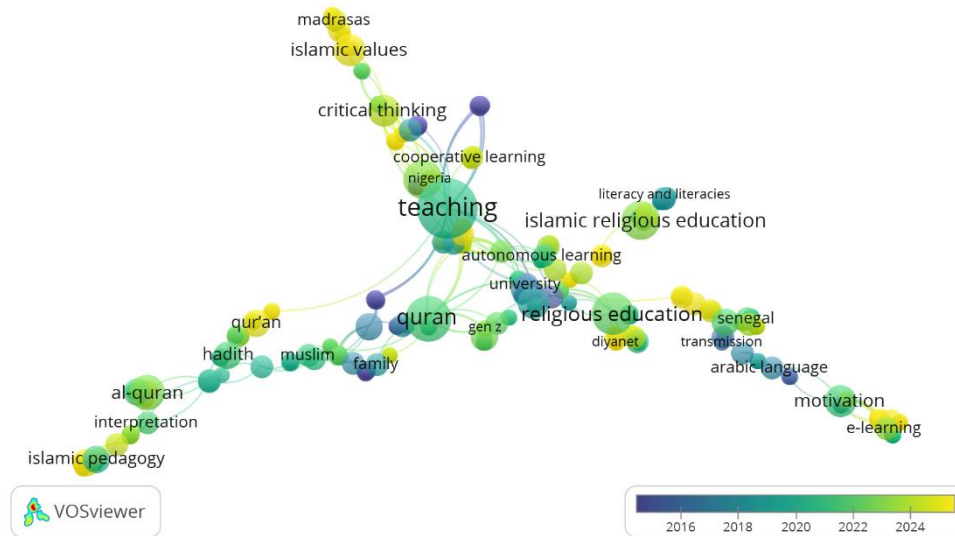


Fig 1. VOSviewer Analysis Results Based on the Scopus Database with the keywords motivating student, teacher pedagogy, and Quran (2016–2026)

Theoretically, Quran learning requires creative teachers because the learning process is not merely the transfer of knowledge but also the formation of motivation and meaningful learning experiences. Constructivist theory emphasizes that students learn more effectively when they are actively involved in building knowledge through relevant experiences. In this context, creative teachers are able to present diverse methods, interactive media, and personal approaches that make Quran learning more engaging and aligned with students' needs. Teacher creativity serves as a bridge between textual material and the real world of students, ensuring that learning is not monotonous and capable of fostering intrinsic motivation.

Moreover, learning motivation theories such as Self-Determination Theory [Deci & Ryan, \(2012\)](#) affirm that students' motivation grows when the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Creative teachers can design Quran learning strategies that meet these three aspects, for instance by providing opportunities for students to choose learning methods, offering challenges appropriate to their abilities, and creating a supportive and enjoyable learning environment. Thus, teacher creativity is not merely an additional factor but a primary requirement for Quran learning to cultivate students' love, skills, and spiritual commitment in a sustainable way.

Although many previous studies have highlighted the importance of diverse methods, interactive media, and personal approaches in Quran learning, there remains a gap between theory and practice in the field. Literature shows that teachers often understand the concept of learning motivation, yet creative implementation in classrooms is still limited and tends to be conventional. This creates a gap between the ideal pedagogical theories emphasizing teacher creativity and the reality of learning that remains monotonous and underutilizes technology and individualized approaches.

Based on this gap, the present study introduces novelty by deeply exploring teachers' creative practices in fostering Quran learning motivation through an exploratory qualitative approach. The main distinction of this study lies in the use of in-depth

interviews and participatory observations with teachers and students, as well as thematic analysis supported by NVivo 12. Consequently, this research does not merely describe phenomena but systematically maps patterns of teacher creativity, which has rarely been conducted in previous studies.

The implications of this study are highly significant for the development of Quran learning theory and practice. Theoretically, the findings enrich Islamic pedagogy discourse by affirming the role of teacher creativity as a key factor in building learning motivation. Practically, the results can serve as guidelines for teachers to design more diverse, interactive, and enjoyable learning, thereby contributing to the improvement of Quran education quality and the spiritual well-being of society.

Based on the background, previous studies, and bibliometric analysis through VOSviewer, the need arises to formulate a research question that emphasizes the focus of this study. The proposed research question is: How do teachers employ creativity to foster students' motivation in Quran learning? This question encompasses the exploration of diverse strategies, the use of interactive media, personal approaches, and the creation of enjoyable learning environments. Thus, this study seeks to answer the extent to which teacher creativity can be a determining factor in the success of Quran learning, while bridging the gap between ideal pedagogical theory and real classroom practice.

METHODS

The research method in this article is designed to provide a systematic and comprehensive overview of teachers' creative practices in fostering motivation to learn the Quran. The method was carefully selected to align with the research objectives, from the research approach and type, data sources, instruments used, number of informants and sampling techniques, to data analysis tools and techniques. Each methodological step is structured based on theoretical and practical considerations, and supported by relevant literature, ensuring this research has a strong academic foundation and is capable of producing valid and accountable findings. Thus, this research method serves not only as a technical framework but also as a scientific foundation that ensures the quality and credibility of the research results. An overview of the research steps is shown in the following figure.

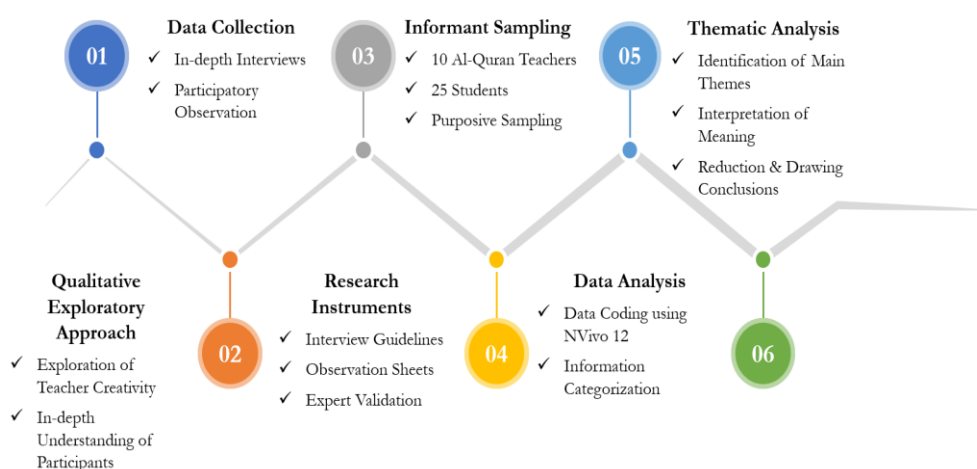


Fig 2. Qualitative research methodology flow

Research methods and types

This study uses an exploratory qualitative approach with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of teachers' creative practices in fostering motivation to learn the Quran. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate for exploring complex social and educational phenomena through the perspective of participants (Creswell, 2014; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2025; 2026; Iskandar et al., 2023; Mutathahirin et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2025; Thuwaiba & Salaeh, 2025). This exploratory research method was used to discover new patterns, meanings, and strategies that have not been widely studied in previous literature, particularly regarding teacher creativity in Quran learning. This approach is appropriate because it allows researchers to discover deeper meaning from teachers' and students' experiences, rather than simply statistical figures.

Data source

The data sources for this study consisted of teachers and students directly involved in the Quranic learning process. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participant observation, while secondary data consisted of learning documents, class notes, and related literature. The selection of these data sources aimed to obtain a comprehensive picture of teachers' creative strategies in a real-world context (Adel et al., 2025; Akem et al., 2025; Anidar et al., 2026; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2022; 2026; Putri et al., 2025; Sugiyono, 2018). Teachers and students were chosen because they are the primary actors who directly experience the dynamics of Quranic learning, thus ensuring more authentic data.

Research instruments

The main instruments of this research were interview guidelines and observation sheets, which were validated by three Islamic education experts. Validation was conducted to ensure the clarity, relevance, and consistency of the instruments in measuring the phenomena under study. Thus, the research instruments have a high level of credibility and can be used for in-depth data collection (Engkizar et al., 2025; Miles & Saldaña, 2015). Expert validation ensures that the instruments align with the research objectives, resulting in more accurate and reliable data.

Number of informants and sampling techniques

The research informants consisted of 10 Quran teachers and 25 students selected using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen because it allowed researchers to determine informants based on certain criteria, namely teachers who actively teach the Quran and students who are directly involved in the learning process. Purposive sampling is considered appropriate for qualitative research that emphasizes data depth over generalization (Merriam & Tisssdell, 2015). The use of purposive sampling technique is appropriate because it focuses on informants relevant to the research objectives, so the data obtained is richer and more in-depth.

Data analysis tools

The data analysis tool used was NVivo 12 software, which makes it easier for researchers to organize, code, and visualize qualitative data. Using NVivo allows for more systematic and transparent analysis, thereby increasing the validity of the research results (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). NVivo software was chosen because it can efficiently manage complex qualitative data, resulting in more structured and accountable analysis results.

Data analysis techniques

The data analysis technique used a thematic analysis approach, which involves identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within the data. Thematic analysis was chosen because it can uncover key themes emerging from the experiences of teachers and students in learning the Quran. The analysis process involved data reduction, categorization, and drawing conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Thematic analysis is appropriate because it can highlight patterns of meaning relevant to the research objectives, thus yielding a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As an introduction to the results and discussion section, this study attempts to present a comprehensive overview of teachers' creative practices in fostering motivation to learn the Quran based on systematically analyzed field data. This section serves as a bridge between methodology and findings, where the research results are not only presented as empirical descriptions but also interpreted through a theoretical framework and relevant literature. The analysis was conducted using a thematic approach assisted by NVivo 12, so that each emerging theme reflects a consistent pattern of meaning from interviews, observations, and learning documents. Therefore, this results and discussion section will detail how teachers' creativity is manifested in strategies, media, and approaches to learning the Quran, as well as how this impacts students' motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Overall, the analysis identified four main forms of teacher efforts to motivate students to learn the Quran: the use of varied methods, the utilization of interactive media, the implementation of personalized approaches, and the creation of a pleasant learning environment. These four themes demonstrate that efforts to increase learning motivation do not rely on a single strategy but involve a combination of various learning practices tailored to the needs and characteristics of students. An overview of the relationships between these themes is presented in figure 3.

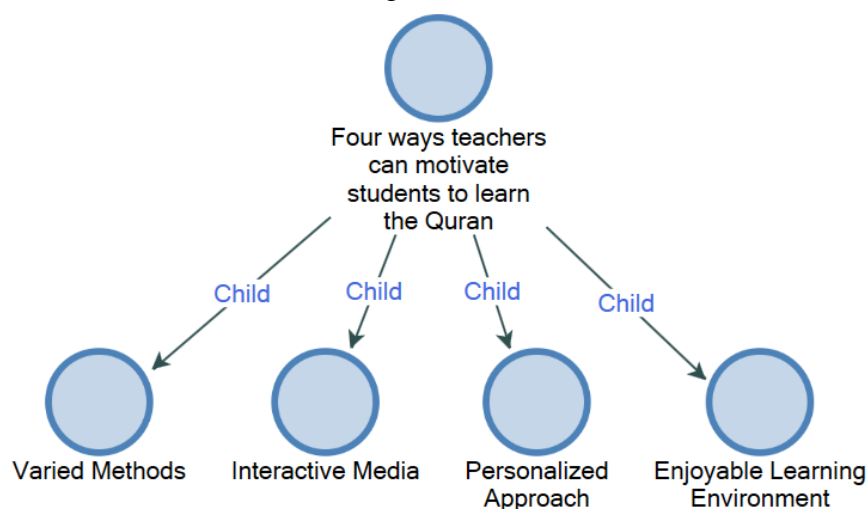


Fig 3. Four Ways Teachers Can Motivate Students to Learn the Quran

Figure 3 shows that teachers' creativity in motivating students to learn the Quran is manifested through four complementary approaches. Each approach represents a form of

learning practice found in the research data and serves as a basis for further discussion. These four themes are then analyzed in depth by connecting the empirical findings with theory and previous research.

First theme (variative method)

According to constructivism theory [Piaget & Vygotsky, \(2008\)](#), effective learning must provide opportunities for students to construct knowledge through direct experience. A variety of methods is key to ensuring that students not only passively receive information but also actively construct meaning from the learning process. In the context of Quranic learning, the *tartil*, *talaqqi*, and phonetic game methods provide space for students to develop reading skills gradually, while maintaining motivation and engagement. This variety of methods also aligns with [Bruner, \(2020\)](#) view on the importance of spiral curriculum, where the material is presented in different ways so that students can understand it from various angles.

Teacher Interview: *"We use the tartil method so that children get used to reading calmly and regularly"* (Teacher Informant 1). *"Talaqqi is very effective, because students immediately imitate the teacher's reading correctly"* (Teacher Informant 2). *"Phonetic games make children more enthusiastic; they learn while playing"* (Teacher Informant 3). *"We combine traditional methods with games to avoid monotony"* (Teacher Informant 4). *"Variation of methods is important, because every child has a different learning style"* (Teacher Informant 5).

Student Interview: *"If there is a letter game, I can remember faster"* (Student Informant 1). *"Learning tartil makes me more confident in reading in front of friends"* (Student Informant 2). *"Talaqqi helped me correct my wrong reading"* (Student Informant 3). *"If you learn in different ways, you won't get bored"* (Student Informant 4).

The data above is supported by participatory observation by the research team. When the teacher used phonetic games, students appeared more active, laughed, and dared to try reading. The classroom atmosphere became lively, interactive, and energetic. Field notes showed students politely correcting each other's reading, while the teacher patiently provided guidance. Even typically passive students became involved. This demonstrates that a variety of methods can break through motivational barriers, build positive social interactions, and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Second theme (interactive media)

According to [Mayer, \(2014\)](#) in Multimedia Learning Theory, the use of interactive media can improve comprehension because students learn through a combination of text, images, sound, and animation. Interactive media helps reduce cognitive load by presenting information visually and auditorily, making it easier to understand. In Quranic learning, digital applications, letter cards, and Tajweed videos are effective tools for strengthening reading skills while maintaining motivation. This aligns with [Cheng & Zhu, \(2021\)](#) view, cone of experience, that learning experiences that involve more senses will be more meaningful and long-lasting.

Teacher Interview: *"Digital applications help children recognize letters more clearly"* (Teacher Informant 1). *"Al-Quran letter cards are very effective for early childhood"* (Teacher Informant 2). *"Tajweed videos make it easier for students to understand the rules of reading"* (Teacher Informant 3). *"Interactive media makes classes more lively and interesting"* (Teacher Informant

4). *"We use media according to students' needs, so they can focus more"* (Teacher Informant 5). Student Interview: *"Learning using the app is more fun; you can repeat it at home"* (Student Informant 1). *"Letter cards helped me learn the hijaiyah letters quickly"* (Student Informant 2). *"The reading video made me understand how to read long and short"* (Student Informant 3). *"If there is media, I will be more enthusiastic about learning"* (Student Informant 4).

Next, the participant observation data: The authors demonstrated that when teachers used digital applications, students focused more on the screen, attempted to repeat readings, and demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm. Some students requested video replays to clarify understanding. Observation notes also indicated that letter cards were used in group games, where students competed to find the correct letter. This activity made the classroom more dynamic, increased student engagement across the board, and demonstrated that interactive media enhances both concentration and learning motivation.

Third theme (personal approach)

According to Self-Determination Theory [Deci & Ryan, \(2004\)](#), relatedness, autonomy, and competence are three basic psychological needs that influence motivation. A teacher's personal approach in the form of individual guidance, praise, and positive reinforcement fulfills students' relatedness needs, so they feel valued and supported. This aligns with [Rogers, \(2002\)](#) view of student-centered learning, where the personal relationship between teacher and student is at the heart of a meaningful learning process.

Teacher Interview: *"I always provide individual guidance for students who are having difficulties"* (Teacher Informant 1). *"A little praise can make a child more confident"* (Teacher Informant 2). *"Positive reinforcement is important so that children feel appreciated"* (Teacher Informant 3). *"I try to approach students personally, so that they are not afraid of making mistakes"* (Teacher Informant 4). *"Personal approach makes the teacher-student relationship closer"* (Teacher Informant 5).

Student Interview: *"If the teacher praises me, I will be brave enough to read again"* (Student Informant 1). *"The teacher often helps me personally, so I can do it quickly"* (Student Informant 2). *"I like it when teachers encourage me when I'm wrong"* (Student Informant 3). *"If the teacher is close to me, I am more enthusiastic about learning"* (Student Informant 4).

Next, in the participant observation data, the teacher was seen approaching students who were struggling to read, gently providing corrections and praising small successes. Students appeared more confident and dared to try rereading without fear. Field notes showed that this personal interaction created a warmer classroom atmosphere, where students felt safe to learn. Even students who were initially reluctant to read in front of the class began to speak up after receiving personal support from the teacher. This demonstrates that a personal approach is effective in building students' intrinsic motivation and self-confidence.

The fourth theme (pleasant learning atmosphere)

According to [Piaget & Vygotsky, \(2008\)](#), a positive social atmosphere in the classroom can increase interaction and motivation to learn. A pleasant learning environment encourages students to actively participate, compete healthily, and cooperate with their peers. This is in line with the theory of social learning, which emphasized that motivation

and learning behavior are formed through social interaction and environmental reinforcement. In Quranic learning, reading competitions, group games, and simple rewards are effective strategies for creating a conducive and enthusiastic learning atmosphere.

Teacher Interview: *"Reading competitions make children more enthusiastic"* (Teacher Informant 1). *"Group games foster cooperation among students"* (Teacher Informant 2). *"Simple rewards can increase learning motivation"* (Teacher Informant 3). *"A pleasant atmosphere makes children not feel stressed"* (Teacher Informant 4). *"We create activities that make students happy and learn at the same time"* (Teacher Informant 5).

Student Interview: *"If there is a reading competition, I want to be the champion"* (Student Informant 1). *"Group games make me enjoy studying with friends"* (Student Informant 2). *"If I get a prize, I will study more diligently"* (Student Informant 3). *"Learning becomes fun when there is competition and games"* (Student Informant 4).

Furthermore, participant observations revealed that the teacher held a reading competition, where students appeared enthusiastic, supported each other, and tried their best to perform. Simple rewards such as praise or small gifts further strengthened their motivation. Observation notes showed the classroom atmosphere transforming into a vibrant learning environment, where students not only learned to read the Quran but also learned to cooperate, compete healthily, and appreciate the efforts of their peers. Group games demonstrated positive social interactions, with students helping and encouraging one another. The teacher actively managed the competition to ensure it remained conducive, ensuring every child had a chance to perform and appreciating their efforts. Even typically quiet students participated, demonstrating that a fun atmosphere can overcome psychological barriers. This classroom environment, filled with laughter, enthusiasm, and social support, reinforces the finding that a fun atmosphere is a crucial factor in increasing motivation to learn the Quran on a sustained basis.

Effective Quranic learning requires a variety of methods that can be adapted to the needs and characteristics of students. According to [Rusdiana & Hikmah, \(2021\)](#), diverse learning strategies enable the creation of deep learning, where students not only memorize but also understand the meaning of the learning. The findings of this study indicate that teachers use *tartil*, *talaqqi*, and phonetic games to foster motivation. Teachers emphasize that *tartil* trains calmness, *talaqqi* strengthens reading accuracy, and phonetic games create a fun learning atmosphere. Students also admit that the variety of methods prevents boredom and helps them memorize letters more quickly. Observations show that students who are usually passive become actively involved, demonstrating that a variety of methods can overcome motivational barriers. Thus, variety of methods is not simply a technical choice, but a pedagogical strategy that strengthens students' cognitive and affective engagement.

Flowing from these findings, the use of interactive media has been shown to be an important factor in increasing learning motivation. As emphasized by [Alanshari et al., \(2022\)](#), technology-based media can function as mind tools that help students construct knowledge through visual and interactive representations. Teachers in this study utilized digital applications, letter cards, and tajweed videos to strengthen student understanding. Students stated that digital media made learning more engaging, easier to repeat at home,

and helped them understand the length of recitations. Observations showed that the use of digital media made students more focused, enthusiastic, and engaged in learning. The letter cards were even used in group games, making the class more dynamic. This confirms that interactive media is not just a tool, but also a motivational tool that strengthens students' concentration, engagement, and understanding of Quranic material.

Furthermore, the teacher's personal approach is another dimension that strengthens learning motivation. Syafrinal, (2025) emphasized that effective learning must center on the emotional and psychological needs of students, where personal support is a determining factor in success. The teacher in this study provided individual guidance, small praise, and positive reinforcement so that students felt valued. Students also acknowledged that the teacher's closeness made them more enthusiastic and braver in rereading, even if they made mistakes. Observations showed that the teacher approached students gently, provided corrections without pressure, and praised small successes. Students who were initially reluctant to perform began to dare to read in front of the class after receiving personal support. This indicates that a personal approach is effective in building students' intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, and emotional connection with the teacher.

With a social dimension, a pleasant learning atmosphere has been shown to be a factor that strengthens student motivation. According to Johnson, (2007), cooperative learning that emphasizes cooperation and healthy competition can improve motivation and learning outcomes. Teachers create a pleasant atmosphere through reading competitions, group games, and simple rewards. Students emphasized that competitions make them want to excel, group games are fun, and small rewards encourage them to study harder. Observations show that the classroom atmosphere transforms into a vibrant learning arena, where students not only learn to read the Quran but also learn to cooperate, compete healthily, and appreciate the efforts of their peers. Teachers are seen actively managing the competition to ensure it remains conducive, ensuring every child has a chance to perform, and offering appreciation for their efforts. Even students who are usually quiet participate, demonstrating that a pleasant atmosphere can overcome psychological barriers. This classroom environment filled with laughter, enthusiasm, and social support reinforces the finding that a pleasant atmosphere is a crucial factor in increasing motivation to learn the Quran on a sustainable basis.

Combining these four findings, it is clear that motivation to learn the Quran is the result of an interaction between pedagogical strategies, media, personal approaches, and the classroom atmosphere. A variety of methods provides flexibility, interactive media enhances concentration and understanding, a personal approach builds emotional connection, and a pleasant atmosphere creates a positive social environment. This analysis demonstrates that learning motivation does not depend solely on a single factor but rather results from the synergy of various complementary approaches. Thus, this study provides an empirical contribution while enriching the theoretical discourse on learning motivation in Islamic education. It also offers practical recommendations for teachers to integrate these four strategies in Quranic learning.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to answer how teachers motivate students in learning the Quran. Four main strategies were found: the use of varied methods, the utilization of interactive media, the application of a personal approach, and the creation of a pleasant learning atmosphere. Interview and observation data show that teachers not only rely on traditional methods such as *tartil* and *talaqqi*, but also integrate phonetic games, digital applications, letter cards, and tajweed videos to enrich the learning experience. A personal approach in the form of individual guidance, praise, and positive reinforcement has been shown to increase student self-confidence, while a pleasant classroom atmosphere through competitions and group games strengthens intrinsic motivation while building positive social interactions. Thus, the research question is answered: motivation to learn the Quran is formed through a combination of pedagogical strategies, media, personal interactions, and a conducive classroom atmosphere.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the four motivational strategies within a holistic Quranic learning framework, differing from previous studies that tended to focus on only one aspect. These findings confirm that teachers' creativity in combining traditional approaches with modern innovations produces a learning model that is adaptive to the needs of today's students. Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse on Islamic education by emphasizing the importance of a multidimensional approach in building learning motivation. Practically, teachers can use the results of this research as a guideline for designing more creative, enjoyable, and student-centered learning, while educational institutions can use them as a basis for developing teacher training programs that emphasize pedagogical innovation, the use of technology, and interpersonal skills in Quranic learning.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

Author contribution

Putri Yanti: Data curation, supervision, providing feedback, data curation, validation, **Arif Ridha & Marzni Mohamed Mokhtar:** validation, writing-reviewing, and investigation, **Ahmad Aziz Fanani & Amul Husni Fadlan:** Conceptualization, editing, observations.

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Competing interest

The authors declare that this research was conducted without any conflict of interest in the research.

AI Statement

The language structure used in this article has been checked and verified by English language experts. In addition, none of the sentences and images in this article were generated by AI tools. All data was obtained from the research process, and the author's review and previous research.

Ethical clearance

The research company has agreed to carry out the research and is willing if the results of this research are published.

Publisher's and Journal's Note

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