

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND PARENTAL SUPPORT IN FOSTERING CHILDREN'S LEARNING ENTHUSIASM AT TPA AL BAROKAH PETUKANGAN UTARA

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Abstract

Religious education plays a crucial role in shaping children's character and morals from an early age. TPA Al-Barokah is an Islamic educational institution that remains actively engaged in Quranic learning despite facility constraints due to ongoing mosque renovations. This study aims to identify the factors that stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning, analyse the roles of teachers and the surrounding environment in sustaining their motivation, and examine the impact of enthusiasm on the continuity of learning and children's character development. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that children's enthusiasm for learning is significantly influenced by inspirational teachers who use the talaqqi method and experience-based learning, active parental support, a positive peer environment, and innovative instructional methods. Learning continuity is maintained even under non-ideal conditions, demonstrating that motivation for religious learning depends not solely on physical facilities but also on strong intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Children's enthusiasm for religious learning positively impacts their character development, nurturing independence, discipline, responsibility, and a deep appreciation for Islamic knowledge. This study affirms the necessity of collaborative support from teachers, parents, and the community to ensure the continuity of religious education as a foundation for cultivating a morally upright generation.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Learning Motivation, Teacher's Role, Children's Character, TPA

INTRODUCTION

Religious education occupies a foundational position in Muslim societies, serving not merely as a conduit for theological knowledge but as an instrument for shaping moral character, social behaviour, and spiritual identity from early childhood. Within the framework of Islam, seeking knowledge is regarded as a religious obligation, as reflected in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim" (Sunan Ibn Majah). This imperative underscores the central value placed on learning in the Islamic tradition. It helps explain the widespread establishment of community-based Islamic learning centres across Muslim-majority countries, particularly in Indonesia.

Indonesia hosts one of the largest Muslim populations in the world, and informal Islamic educational institutions, locally known as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA), have long served as primary vehicles for transmitting Quranic literacy, Islamic jurisprudence, and character education to children aged 5–12. Unlike formal schooling, TPAs operate on a voluntary community basis, often attached to local mosques, and function as socio-religious extensions of family and community life. Despite their cultural significance, TPA institutions frequently face challenges related to infrastructure, resource availability, and the maintenance of learner motivation across varying environmental conditions (Azra, 2016; Muhaimin, 2018).

The relationship between learning motivation and environmental conditions has been extensively studied in educational psychology. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), advanced by Ryan and Deci, posits that individuals are most effectively motivated when three basic psychological needs are satisfied: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Applied to informal religious education contexts, SDT suggests that children's intrinsic motivation for Quranic learning flourishes when they feel connected to their teachers and peers, perceive themselves as competent learners, and experience a degree of agency in their learning process. However, research that specifically examines how these motivational dynamics operate within community Islamic learning contexts in Indonesia, particularly amid physical adversity, remains underrepresented in the scholarly literature.

Several empirical studies have examined teacher effectiveness and student motivation in formal Islamic Religious Education (PAI) settings in Indonesian schools (Hamdani, 2017; Nasution, 2014). Others have focused on Quranic memorisation programmes in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and their outcomes on academic and moral development (Arifin, 2015). However, there is a notable gap in research on the motivational ecology of informal TPA environments, particularly in urban settings, where physical disruptions, such as facility renovations, may be expected to diminish children's participation. Moreover, the combined role of teacher-student emotional bonds, parental support, and peer social dynamics in sustaining enthusiasm for learning under non-ideal conditions has not been systematically explored.

Previous studies have tended to examine motivational factors in isolation, focusing either on teacher pedagogy (Tohirin & Nurfuadi, 2023), parental involvement (Calderon-Villarreal et al., 2025; Owoyale-Abdulganiy, 2024), or peer influence without integrating these into a holistic framework that accounts for the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational forces in Islamic education. Furthermore, much existing literature focuses on older students in formal institutional settings, leaving a gap regarding younger children in community-based non-formal learning environments.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the case of TPA Al-Barokah, Petukangan Utara, Jakarta, a community Islamic learning centre where children

continued attending classes voluntarily at their teacher's home during a period of mosque renovation. This phenomenon offers a natural experiment for examining motivational resilience: what sustains children's enthusiasm for religious learning when the primary learning space is unavailable? The study specifically aims to: (1) identify the key factors that sustain learning enthusiasm among children at TPA Al-Barokah; (2) analyse the respective roles of teachers, parents, and the peer environment in maintaining children's motivation; and (3) examine the impact of learning enthusiasm on character development and the long-term continuity of religious education.

The novelty of this research lies in its contextualised examination of motivational resilience within an informal Islamic education setting under conditions of physical disruption, integrating both motivational theory (SDT) and Islamic pedagogical concepts such as *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) and *talaqqi* (direct instruction). The findings are expected to provide empirically grounded insights for educators, parents, and policymakers working to strengthen community-based Islamic education in Indonesia and similar Muslim-majority contexts.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows: the Methods section describes the research design, data collection procedures, and analytical framework; the Results section presents the principal findings; the Discussion section interprets the findings in relation to established theoretical frameworks and prior empirical research; and the Conclusion offers recommendations and directions for future research.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore sustained enthusiasm for learning among children at TPA Al-Barokah in Petukangan Utara, South Jakarta, Indonesia. A qualitative methodology was considered most appropriate given the exploratory and contextual nature of the research questions, which required an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, motivations, and social dynamics, rather than quantitative measurement of variables (Moleong, 2017).

The research was conducted at TPA Al-Barokah, affiliated with Masjid Al-Barokah in Petukangan Utara. The study was carried out over a four-week period during which the mosque was undergoing structural renovation, rendering the primary learning space unavailable. During this period, learning activities were relocated to the lead Islamic educator's residence. Participants comprised 24 children enrolled at TPA Al-Barokah aged 6–12 years, three TPA teachers, and eight parents. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on their direct involvement in the learning activities and their ability to provide rich, relevant information about the phenomenon under study.

Three complementary data collection techniques were employed. First, participatory observation was conducted across multiple learning sessions to document children's behavioural manifestations of enthusiasm, teacher instructional practices, and the social dynamics of the learning environment. Observation notes focused on attendance patterns, the quality of participation, spontaneous learning behaviours, and teacher-student interactions. Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted individually with the three TPA teachers and eight selected parents, and in small groups with children (4–5 per group). Interview questions explored participants' perceptions of motivation, the impact of the facility disruption, the role of family support, and the significance of teacher influence. Third, documentation was collected in the form of photographic records of learning activities, attendance logs, and programme schedules. These documentary sources served to triangulate and corroborate observational and interview data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The primary instrument of this qualitative research was the researcher as participant-observer (Moleong, 2017). Observation and interview guides were developed based on a review of the theoretical literature on motivation in Islamic education, self-determination theory, and teacher effectiveness. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was employed by cross-referencing observational data, interview transcripts, and documentary evidence. Member checking was applied by sharing preliminary interpretations with key teacher-participants for verification. Prolonged engagement in the field and researchers' reflexivity further enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising three concurrent processes: (1) data condensation, in which raw data were coded thematically and reduced to meaningful segments; (2) data display, in which condensed data were organised into thematic matrices and narrative summaries to facilitate interpretation; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, in which interpretive claims were iteratively tested against the full dataset and triangulated across data sources. Thematic categories that emerged from the analysis included: teacher motivational practices, parental support mechanisms, peer social dynamics, intrinsic religious motivation, and adaptive learning behaviours.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study are organised around four principal thematic areas that emerged from data analysis: (1) the manifestations of children's learning enthusiasm; (2) teacher roles and instructional strategies; (3) parental and environmental support; and (4) observed impacts of learning enthusiasm on character development. These themes are presented below, supported by illustrative evidence from observational data and interview excerpts.

Manifestations of Learning Enthusiasm

Children's enthusiasm for learning was consistently evident across several observable dimensions despite the disruption caused by the mosque renovation. Attendance data revealed that 91.7% of enrolled children (22 out of 24) maintained regular attendance at the alternative learning venue at the teacher's home throughout the study period. Observations documented children arriving punctually, often before the teacher, with their learning materials prepared. Multiple children independently reminded their peers of the daily schedule, suggesting a strong internalised commitment to continuity of learning.

Children demonstrated active participation during sessions, including volunteering to read aloud, asking clarifying questions about the meanings of hadith, and enthusiastically participating in memory recitation (*muraja'ah*) exercises. In group interview sessions, children articulated intrinsic motivations for their continued attendance: "I come because I want to go to heaven," and "My teacher teaches us nicely, I do not want to miss it." These statements indicate both spiritual motivation and the relational dimension of their engagement, consistent with the autonomy and relatedness components of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Teacher Roles and Instructional Strategies

Teachers at TPA Al-Barokah deployed a range of instructional approaches that appeared to sustain children's motivation under adverse conditions. The primary method employed was *talaqqi*, direct face-to-face instruction in which the teacher models correct Quranic recitation and immediately corrects individual students. Both teachers and parents valued this method for its personalised attention and its alignment with classical Islamic pedagogical tradition. Beyond *talaqqi*, teachers incorporated storytelling (*kisah nabi*), kinetic memorisation (reciting hadith with accompanying gestures), interactive quizzes, and role-play simulations of daily Islamic practices such as wudu and salat.

Interview data with teachers highlighted the deliberate cultivation of emotional proximity. One teacher stated, "When students feel comfortable with me and feel that I care for them, they come voluntarily even when I did not ask them to." This echoes the Islamic concept of *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct), in which the teacher's moral character and relational warmth serve as a form of living pedagogy. Observational data confirmed that teacher-student interactions extended beyond formal instruction to include personal check-ins, encouragement during difficulty, and public recognition of effort and achievement.

Parental and Environmental Support

Parental support was identified as a significant extrinsic motivational factor. All eight interviewed parents reported actively encouraging their children to attend TPA sessions, with six parents (75%) confirming that they personally accompanied children

to the teacher's home, particularly on days when weather or other barriers might have deterred attendance. Several parents also reported reinforcing learning at home by reviewing Quranic verses and duas (supplications) with their children. One parent noted: "When my child sees that I also value this knowledge, she is more serious about attending."

Peer social dynamics also played an observable motivational role. Children were frequently observed encouraging one another, sharing notes, and voluntarily forming small study pairs (*halaqah*) before formal sessions commenced. This peer-facilitated engagement reflects the positive influence of social relatedness on intrinsic motivation, as theorised in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020), and aligns with Islamic traditions of communal learning. The social cohesion observed among TPA Al-Barokah students appears to have functioned as a protective factor against motivational attrition during the facility disruption.

Impact on Character Development

Beyond cognitive and spiritual learning outcomes, children's sustained enthusiasm was associated with observable character development across multiple domains. Teachers and parents reported improvements in punctuality and self-discipline, increased respectfulness toward elders and peers, a greater willingness to assist others with learning tasks, and perseverance (*istiqamah*) in the face of inconvenience. One teacher observed: "The children who attend regularly show a different attitude; they are more patient, more polite, and they take responsibility for their own learning." Parents corroborated these observations, noting that children who maintained attendance during the renovation period showed greater discipline and reduced screen time at home.

Discussion

The findings of this study illuminate the multidimensional nature of learning motivation in community-based Islamic education and affirm that children's enthusiasm for religious learning is sustained through an integrated ecology of intrinsic motivation, relational pedagogy, parental involvement, and positive peer dynamics. These findings are discussed below in relation to established theoretical frameworks and recent empirical research.

The sustained attendance and active participation observed at TPA Al-Barokah during the mosque renovation period provide compelling evidence of strong intrinsic motivation among the children. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), intrinsic motivation is maximised when the learning environment supports the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the case of TPA Al-Barokah, children's autonomous choice to attend the teacher's home, their sense of growing competence through incremental Quranic mastery, and the strong relational bonds with teachers and peers appear to have collectively

sustained their motivational engagement. This finding is consistent with Di Domenico & Ryan (who demonstrated that intrinsically motivated learning behaviours characterised by curiosity, exploration, and persistence are neurobiologically robust and resistant to contextual disruption when core psychological needs are met).

The teacher's role in sustaining motivation emerges as the most salient factor in this study, consistent with a growing body of research on teacher effectiveness in Islamic education. (Tohirin & Nurfuadi, 2023) documented that Islamic education teachers who combine subject mastery with emotional attentiveness and moral exemplarity produce significantly stronger student engagement. Similarly, the present study found that teachers' use of *talaqqi*, a personalised, dialogical instruction method rooted in Islamic scholarly tradition, created conditions for sustained support of competence and emotional relatedness that appeared critical to maintaining children's motivation during facility disruption. The concept of *uswah hasanah*, central to Islamic pedagogy, resonated strongly in the observed data: children's admiration for their teachers' personal sacrifice in opening their homes for learning created a powerful relational dynamic that no physical facility could replicate.

The centrality of parental support identified in this study aligns with a substantial international literature. (Calderon-Villarreal et al., 2025) found that parental involvement was positively associated with children's self-regulated learning and motivational persistence in primary education. Similarly, Owoyale-Abdulganiy (2024), in a study of Islamic Studies learning in Nigeria, found that parental engagement, framed within Islamic communities as a religious duty, significantly predicted children's academic motivation and attendance. The present study extends these findings to an Indonesian informal education context, demonstrating that parental accompaniment, home reinforcement of learning, and explicit communication of religious value all contributed to children's continued participation at TPA Al-Barokah. Notably, the religious framing of parental involvement, parents viewing accompaniment as an act of *ibadah* (worship), appears to function as a distinctive motivational amplifier in Islamic educational contexts that is not fully captured by mainstream parental involvement theories rooted in secular educational psychology (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

The role of peer social dynamics as a motivational support mechanism is also theoretically significant. The observation that children spontaneously formed learning pairs and reminded one another of session times suggests that the TPA Al-Barokah community had developed what Bandura (1997) termed collective efficacy, a shared belief in the group's capacity to achieve learning goals. This peer-mediated motivation appears to have buffered individual children against the potential discouragement arising from facility disruption. From an Islamic educational perspective, this finding resonates with the tradition of *halaqah*-based learning, in which communal

engagement with knowledge is considered spiritually and pedagogically superior to individual study in isolation.

The positive character development outcomes observed, including improved punctuality, interpersonal respect, and perseverance, align with research documenting the character-formation effects of consistent participation in Islamic education (Al-Ghazali, 2018; Hamdani, 2017). The value of *istiqamah* (steadfast consistency) is explicitly taught within Islamic pedagogy and appears to have been internalised by children whose continued attendance during adversity itself modelled this virtue. These findings suggest that informal Islamic education settings may offer unique affordances for character development precisely because they operate within a value framework that imbues persistence and communal learning with intrinsic spiritual significance. This dimension distinguishes TPA-based learning from purely secular motivational contexts.

The present study makes several contributions to the literature. First, it provides rare empirical evidence of motivational resilience in informal Islamic education amid physical disruption, addressing a gap in existing research that has predominantly focused on formal classroom settings. Second, it demonstrates the complementarity of Self-Determination Theory and Islamic pedagogical concepts (*talaqqi*, *uswah hasanah*, *halaqah*) in explaining motivation in community-based religious education, an integration that is underutilised in current educational psychology literature. Third, by documenting the specific mechanisms through which teachers, parents, and peers sustain motivation, the study offers actionable insights for TPA educators and administrators seeking to strengthen community-based Islamic education in Indonesia.

Several limitations should be noted. The single-site case study design limits generalisability, and the four-week observation period may not capture longer-term motivational trajectories. Future research should employ multi-site designs across diverse Indonesian urban and rural TPA contexts, and consider longitudinal approaches to examine whether enthusiasm sustained during facility disruption correlates with long-term religious engagement and character outcomes. Quantitative instruments measuring motivational dimensions could also complement qualitative findings, enabling broader population-level inferences.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the factors sustaining children's enthusiasm for learning at TPA Al-Barokah in Petukangan Utara during a mosque renovation that disrupted the primary learning environment. The findings demonstrate that children's motivational resilience was sustained through an integrated ecology of factors: the inspirational and relationally warm pedagogy of dedicated teachers employing *talaqqi* and experience-based methods; active and religiously motivated parental support; the

social cohesion and mutual encouragement of a positive peer community; and the children's own intrinsic spiritual motivation rooted in Islamic values of knowledge-seeking. These findings are theoretically consistent with Self-Determination Theory and classical Islamic pedagogical traditions, affirming that motivation for religious learning is not contingent on physical facilities but rather emerges from deep relational, spiritual, and communal conditions.

The sustained enthusiasm for learning observed was associated with positive character development outcomes, including improved discipline, perseverance, and respectfulness, as well as a deeper appreciation for Islamic knowledge. These outcomes suggest that TPA institutions, when equipped with committed teachers and supported by engaged families, serve as powerful sites for holistic child development that extend well beyond Quranic literacy.

Policy implications include the need for systematic professional development programmes for TPA educators, community-level platforms for coordinating parental engagement in Islamic education, and government recognition of TPA institutions as integral components of Indonesia's national educational architecture. Future research should pursue multi-site longitudinal designs and consider integrating quantitative motivational measures with qualitative contextual analysis to build a more comprehensive empirical foundation for community-based Islamic education in Indonesia and comparable Muslim-majority societies.

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