

Strategies of Islamic Education Teachers in Fostering Student Enthusiasm Through the Treasure Hunt Game-Based Inquiry Model

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a crucial role in shaping the character and morals of students. PAI teachers not only transfer knowledge but also transfer value. Often in learning using monotonous learning models, such as conventional methods including lectures, questions and answers and discussions. The use of various learning models helps teachers to create an interesting learning atmosphere, prevent boredom, and increase student interest in learning. Teachers at SMP 1 Kedungwuni innovate learning to prevent student boredom in order to foster their enthusiasm, namely by using an inquiry learning model based on a treasure hunt game. This type of research uses field research with a qualitative approach. The research was conducted at SMP 1 Kedungwuni. The results showed that the PAI teacher's strategy in learning using an inquiry model based on a treasure hunt game, the PAI teacher first made a lesson plan for learning steps. Secondly, by implementing this learning model, it can foster student activity, enthusiasm and motivation in participating in PAI learning.

Keywords: PAI teacher strategy, enthusiasm, inquiry, treasure hunt.

Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a crucial role in shaping the character and morals of students. PAI teachers not only transfer knowledge but also transfer of value (Aladin, 2019; Farikhin et al., 2024). PAI teachers have an important role in shaping students into individuals with positive characters. The use of diverse learning models helps teachers to create an interesting learning atmosphere, prevent boredom, and increase students' interest in learning (Hermayani et al., 2024; Khoirroni et al., 2023). However, the reality is that PAI learning often uses monotonous conventional methods such as lectures, questions and answers, and discussions that are teacher-centered (teacher learning) instead of focusing on students (student learning) (Asmadi et al., 2024; Hamid & Hadi, 2020; Risana et al., 2025). So that it causes problems in learning, including students feeling bored, decreased enthusiasm, students not listening, sleepiness, and low student participation in learning (Maya & Maulida, 2019; Prayogi, 2024).

Based on observations made by researchers at SMP 1 Kedungwuni, a similar phenomenon is shown. Where students in PAI learning seem bored with the lack of cooperation between students, lack of interest in participating in learning,

and lack of student involvement. In this condition, teachers are required to be more innovative and interactive in using learning models in order to improve the condition of enthusiastic students, as well as increase student involvement. From these problems, PAI teachers at SMP 1 Kedungwuni innovated in learning, namely by using a combined learning model between learning models. A suitable model to use is the Treasure Hunt game-based Inquiry model to foster student enthusiasm.

The inquiry learning model is a relationship of educational activities in a responsive and systematic way in order to know and get a reply from a problem they have, so that students have a receptive way of thinking (Ambarjaya, 2012). Meanwhile, the Treasure Hunt model is a learning model that encourages students to actively search and find information through the process of asking, investigating and solving problems. This is strengthened by research (Marsilawati, 2022) with the research title "The Application of the Inquiry Learning Model to Increase Learning Interest and Mathematics Learning Outcomes of Grade XI IA2 Students of SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja. The results of his research show that the application of the inquiry learning model in mathematics learning can increase the learning interest and mathematics learning outcomes of students in grade XI IA2SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja in the 2018/2019 academic year. Meanwhile, the use of the treasure hunt-based learning model is in line with research conducted by (Sudarto et al., 2024) with the research title "Increasing the Activeness of Grade V Students of SD Inpress 4/82 in Learning through the Application of the Treasure Hunt Learning Model". The results of this study show that in Cycle I there are 40% active students while 60% of students are inactive and in Cycle II there are 80% active students while 20% of students are inactive. So by applying the treasure hunt learning model, it can increase the activeness of 5th grade students of SD Inpres 4/82 Tellu Siattingge sub-district in science learning. This is in line with research conducted by Aef Awaudin Iskandar (2023) showing that the outbound treasure hunt learning method can increase learning interest and overcome students' lack of focus and enthusiasm during the history learning process of SMA Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya students.

Although the inquiry model has been shown to be effective in increasing students' interest in learning, motivation and engagement, there has not been much research that integrates the inquiry model with game-based approaches such as treasure hunts. This study offers a new learning model by integrating a treasure hunt-based inquiry learning model in PAI learning. This innovation is expected to foster student enthusiasm and participation, as well as contribute to the development of effective and fun learning strategies in PAI subjects.

The purpose of this research is to analyze more deeply related to the strategies of PAI teachers in applying the treasure hunt game-based inquiry model to foster

student enthusiasm at SMP 1 Kedungwuni. This research is important because it can provide a solution to the problem of low student enthusiasm in PAI learning. By integrating this treasure hunt game-based inquiry model, it is hoped that it can create a fun and interactive learning atmosphere. So that it can increase student motivation and involvement. In addition, the results of this research can be a reference for PAI teachers in developing more innovative and effective learning strategies.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of field research. According to Sugiyono (2016), field research is research with the characteristics of problems related to the background and current conditions of the subject being researched and its interaction with the environment. This field research was chosen to deeply understand the context and dynamics of PAI learning applied at SMP 1 Kedungwuni, especially related to the treasure hunt-based inquiry learning strategy in fostering student enthusiasm. This research was conducted at SMP 1 Kedungwuni, Pekalongan Regency. The subjects of this study are PAI teachers, grade VIII students involved in learning, and school principals. The data collection technique was carried out through participatory observation activities where the researcher was directly involved in learning activities to observe the interaction between teachers and students, as well as classroom dynamics during the implementation of the treasure hunt-based inquiry learning model. Interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, 5 students and principals to explore information about the implementation of learning, challenges faced, and perceptions in the use of the learning model as well as documentation in the form of collecting relevant documentation such as lesson plans, field notes, photos of learning activities, and asmaul husna materials used during the learning process. Data analysis techniques use data reduction techniques, data presentation and conclusion drawn.

Results

PAI Teacher's Strategy in Learning

Teachers have an important role in learning activities. Teachers are required to be creative and innovative in using learning models so that boredom does not occur so that students' enthusiasm decreases. Based on the results of observations at SMP 1 Kedungwuni, it shows that in PAI learning, teachers often use conventional methods such as lectures, questions and answers, and discussions. The conventional method is a traditional learning method that emphasizes on teacher lectures and students play the role of passive recipients of information, this is commonly referred to as teacher-centered learning rather than students (Rivalina & Siahaan, 2020). There are many problems experienced by students in PAI learning, including students feeling bored, sleepy, and lack of

enthusiasm in learning. This is based on the results of interviews with 2 students who stated:

*"I often get sleepy when I study PAI, because I only listen to the material
From the teacher alone, it makes me less enthusiastic".
"I'm bored if I just listen, the method used is monotonous"*

In overcoming these problems, PAI teachers innovate the learning model, namely by using an inquiry model in collaboration with the treasure hunt game. This is in accordance with the results of an interview with 1 PAI teacher "I try to use a new learning model so that students do not feel bored, namely with a game-based inquiry model looking for treasure".

The inquiry learning model is a series of learning activities that emphasize the activeness of students to have learning experiences in finding material concepts based on the problems posed (Siswantoro, 2020; Zagoto. et al., 2022). Inquiry learning is a learning activity where students are encouraged to learn through their active involvement with the concepts and principles, and the teacher encourages students to have experiences and conduct experiments that allow students to discover principles for themselves.

Meanwhile, treasure hunt games are a type of game that requires players to search and find objects or "treasures" that have been hidden (Rahmadhani, 2024: 89). These games can be played in a variety of formats, both physically and digitally, and often involve clues or puzzles that players must solve to find the treasure. In this PAI learning, students/players are required to look for objects in the form of questions that have been hidden in various places. Each object has a problem called a mission. Each student is required to complete one mission before looking for an object that contains the next mission (Yusup & Mastoah, 2025).

By collaborating with the learning model above, it is hoped that it can regrow students' enthusiasm in PAI learning. In line with previous research conducted by (Wartini, 2021) with the results of the study showing that 1) the application of the guided intuition learning model is able to increase students' learning motivation. The average student learning motivation score was in the high category with an average score of 103.73 in the first cycle and 109.27 in the second cycle with the high category. 2) The application of the guided inquiry learning model is able to improve students' critical thinking skills. The average value of students' critical thinking skills was in the good category with classical completeness of 87.1% in the first cycle and classical completeness of 90.6% in the second cycle with the good category. So, with the application of the guided inquiry learning model, it can increase students' learning motivation and students' critical thinking skills.

This study was strengthened by a research conducted by (Nurkhaliza et al., 2020) with the title of research on the implementation of inquiry-based interactive games in science learning to increase the enthusiasm and creativity of elementary/middle school students. This study showed that the experimental group experienced a significant increase with an N-Gain value of 0.58 (medium category) for enthusiasm and 0.55 (medium category) for creativity, while the control group only reached 0.15 and 0.20. Statistical analysis ($p < 0.001$) confirmed that the differences between the two groups were significant. These findings prove that the integration of interactive games with inquiry models is able to create more engaging science learning and encourage the development of students' creative skills.

To achieve this, teachers first make a strategy in the form of lesson plans to make it easier to carry out activities. According to Calam & Qurniati (2016), strategy is a general way or policy to achieve goals in order to carry out missions. (Sumandya & Widana, 2022) stated that learning strategies are the way chosen to deliver material in a learning environment, including: the nature, scope, and learning activities that provide learning experiences to students. The strategy provides unified direction and becomes a guide through the following steps: a.) To achieve a goal, b.) set the size, c.) eliminate differences, d.) Choosing an alternative, e.) implementation of strategic plans, and f.) evaluate objectives. The existence of steps in developing strategies is so that in the learning process they can achieve more targeted goals and in accordance with the expected learning outcomes.

The following are the steps of inquiry learning based on the treasure hunt game based on the RPP documentation made by the PAI Teacher The material used is *asmaul husna*, learning is carried out in class 7D:

1. Planning and Preparation Stage

a. Setting learning goals

The teacher determines the basic competencies to be achieved, then the teacher formulates specific learning objectives, such as understanding the meaning of *naqli* from some *asmaul husna* materials, and imitating behaviors that reflect these traits.

b. Devising a game scheme

The teacher designs the treasure hunt game plot with clues related to *asmaul husna*, for example clues that lead to the meaning or postulation of the name *asmaul husna*.

c. Preparing media and materials

Teachers prepare learning media in the form of paper designed for instructions, assignment question sheets, and learning resources that are relevant to the *asmaul husna* material.

d. Divide students into groups

The number of students in class 7D is 36, divided into 4 groups, this is to encourage cooperation and discussion in solving challenges.

2. Introductory Activities

- a) Greetings and prayers: The teacher opens the learning with greetings and prayers together to ask for blessings in the learning process.
- b) Perception: The teacher relates the previous material to the topic of Asmaul Husna to build students' knowledge connections.
- c) Motivation: The teacher explains the importance of understanding Asmaul Husna in daily life and how it can improve the quality of faith.
- d) Group Division: Students are divided into 4 small groups and given an explanation of the rules of the treasure hunt game.

3. Core Activities

a) Exploration

- 1) Giving Initial Clues: The teacher gives the first clue to each group that leads to the next location or information. These clues are paper or treasure maps made according to the location of the treasure hunt.
- 2) Search and Discussion: The group of students looked for the next clue and discussed the meaning and postulates of the naqli of Asmaul Husna that were found.
- 3) Observation and analysis: students observe from the performance questions, then analyze the relationship with asmaul husna.

b) Elaboration

- 1) Presentation of Findings: Each group presented the results of their findings, including the meaning and postulates of the naqli from Asmaul Husna that had been studied.
- 2) Class Discussions: Teachers facilitate class discussions to deepen students' understanding of Asmaul Husna and its application in daily life.
- 3) Reflection: Students reflect on the learning they have done and how it can improve the quality of their faith

c) Confirmation

- 1) Feedback: teachers provide feedback on the results of student discussions and presentations to strengthen their understanding.
- 2) Assessment: the teacher assesses students' participation in discussion, presentation, and understanding of the material through observation and oral tests.

4. Closing Activities

- a) Conclusion: the teacher and the students conclude the material that has been learned about Asmaul Husna and implement it in daily life
- b) Independent Assignment: the teacher gives an independent assignment in the form of writing a short essay about one of the asmaul husna and how students can emulate this trait.
- c) Closing Prayer: the teacher closes the learning with a joint prayer.

Increased Student Enthusiasm and Engagement

The application of the treasure hunt-based inquiry learning model at SMP 1 Kedungwuni, has been proven to be able to regrow students' enthusiasm and involvement in learning Islamic religious education (PAI), especially in the asmaul husna material. Through this model, students not only look at the object of learning, but also as subjects who are active in the process of discovering the meaning and application of the asmaul husna material.

Increased Active Participation

Prior to the implementation of this learning model, most students tended to be passive in PAI learning. According to the statement of student b, "Previously, I was passive if learning was only listening. But unlike this lesson, I felt more interested and no longer bored of participating in PAI learning. However, after the implementation of this treasure hunt-based inquiry model, students became more active. In line with the research conducted by (Siregar et al., 2017) which showed the results of the research, the application of treasure hunt learning media was able to significantly increase the results of student activity. This is shown by the increase in the number of students who reach the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) in each cycle. In the transition from the first cycle to the second cycle, there was an increase of 7.06%, and from the second cycle to the third cycle, there was a further increase of 5.88%. The target of the Outcome Achievement Indicator (HDI) $\geq 80\%$ has been achieved in cycle 3. In addition, the activeness of students each cycle also increases, especially in the aspect of opinion. In line with (Indra & Hasibuan, 2022), the results of observations showed that teachers in the first cycle were 70.83%

(adequate) then 87.6 (good) in the second cycle. In addition, the Treasure Hunt method can be said to have been successfully recognized by the results of the student response questionnaire to the Treasure Hunt method showing a percentage of 95% (very good). After the implementation of the Treasure Hunt method, student learning activity increased from the results of observation in the pre-cycle, which was 57.41%. increased to 72.90% in cycle I and continued to increase in cycle II to 85.16%. So based on these data, it can be concluded that the Treasure Hun method can increase student activity in SKI subjects in Class VIII MTsN 1 Langkat.

Based on the results of observation, students showed that they were more active in discussing in groups, asking questions, and trying to find answers to the instructions given. This suggests that this model is fun and challenging for students to motivate them to engage more in learning. This is in accordance with the results of an interview with PAI teachers "many students who are more active, usually those who are passive are just silent, now everyone is actively discussing and asking questions". According to the results of the interview with student A, "learning with this treasure hunt game is so exciting! I became more aware of the asmaul husna material because we found out with friends. We also learn to work together and help each other."

Increased Learning Motivation

The application of the treasure hunt game-based inquiry learning model also succeeded in increasing students' learning motivation. Through competitions and challenges in the game, students feel interested and motivated to understand the asmaul husna material better. They feel that PAI learning becomes more fun and not monotonous, thus increasing their interest and enthusiasm for learning. This is in accordance with the results of interviews with PAI teachers and students

PAI teacher: "The application of this treasure hunt model has had a positive impact on students' learning motivation. previously many students were less interested in PAI learning, they only attended classes and listened, yes there are one or two people who are active but others still lack motivation to follow PAI learning.

Student d: "because there are challenges in the game, there is a reduction in points if the answer is wrong, so we are more challenged to follow and more enthusiastic and curious more". Student b also stated "I feel more enthusiastic and not bored, learning to find treasures is very cool, we are adventuring while learning".

In line with the research conducted by (Rahmawati, 2024) The results of the research that have been carried out show that grade IV students of SDN 1 Bancangan can solve math story problems with good time efficiency and experience an increase in learning completeness from 22% to 78%. Students were more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in mathematics learning which was

shown based on student activity increased from 78% to 88%. The results of the above data show that the treasure hunting method is effective in improving the ability to solve mathematical story problems

Conclusion

Based on the results of the previous material presentation, it was found that the PAI teacher's strategy in fostering student enthusiasm had a very positive impact. Students who previously felt bored and lacked enthusiasm in learning due to the use of monotonous learning models such as the use of conventional learning models which include: lectures, questions and answers and discussions have now changed to a new learning model, namely the use of an inquiry learning model based on the treasure hunt game.

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