



Innovation in Islamic Religious Education Learning through the Integration of Games and Ice Breakers: An Analysis of Teacher Understanding Studies in Religious Subjects

Mohammad Viktor Farid Hakim^{1*}; Muhammad²; S. Ali Jadid Al Idrus³

Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram^{1*}, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram², Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram³

*Mohammad Viktor Farid. E-mail: 230701010.mhs@uinmataram.ac.id¹

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Abstrak

Inovasi dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam sangat penting untuk meningkatkan minat dan keterlibatan siswa. Metode konvensional seringkali kurang mampu menarik perhatian, membuat materi PAI terkesan kurang relevan. Melalui pendekatan inovatif seperti integrasi teknologi, permainan edukatif, dan ice breaker, pembelajaran PAI menjadi lebih interaktif dan menyenangkan, sehingga siswa lebih termotivasi dan memahami materi secara mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat pemahaman guru Pendidikan Agama Islam mengenai inovasi pembelajaran pendidikan agama islam melalui integrasi permainan dan ice breaker. Jenis penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian survey dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Populasi dan sampel dari penelitian ini menggunakan teknik random sampling yang akan diberikan kepada para subjek mealui google form. Hasil survey yang di ujikan dengan beberapa pertanyaan melalui via google form dan wawancara melalui via zoom meet yang di berikan kepada 50 guru, sebanyak 12% guru yang sudah paham akan akan bagaimana cara inovasi pembelajaran melalui permainan dan ice breaker, akan tetapi sebanyak 88% guru yang masih banyak kesulitan akan inovasi pembelajaran melalui permainan dan ice breaker. Sehingga dengan adanya artikel ini dapat membantu guru untuk dapat memahami bagaimana cara membuat inovasi pembelajaran pendidikan agama islam melalui integrasi permainan dan ice breaker.

Kata Kunci: Inovasi, Pembelajaran, Integrasi Permainan, Ice Breaker.

Abstract

Innovation in Islamic Religious Education learning is very important to increase student interest and engagement. Conventional methods are often less able to attract attention, making PAI material seem less relevant. Through innovative approaches such as technology integration, educational games, and ice breakers, PAI learning becomes more interactive and fun, so that students are more motivated and understand the material in depth. This study aims to determine the level of understanding of Islamic Religious Education teachers regarding Islamic religious education learning innovations through the integration of games and ice breakers. This type of research is a type of survey research with a quantitative approach. The population and sample of this study use a random sampling technique that will be given to the subjects using a google form. The results of the survey which was tested with several questions via google form and interviews via zoom meet were given to 50 teachers, as many as 12% of teachers who already understood how to innovate learning through games and ice breakers, but as many as 88% of teachers who still had many difficulties with learning innovations through games and ice breakers. So that the existence of this article can help teachers to be able to understand how to make Islamic religious education learning innovations through the integration of games and ice breakers.

Keywords: Innovation, Learning, Game Integration, Ice Breaker.

Introduction

Innovation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is very important to increase student interest and engagement. This is because innovative learning methods are able to create a learning atmosphere that is more interactive, interesting, and relevant to the needs of today's students. Conventional PAI learning is often not able to attract students' attention, causing them to be less enthusiastic and feel that PAI material is not relevant to their lives. One of the important aspects of innovation in PAI learning is the integration of technology. The use of technology, such as learning videos, apps, and e-learning platforms, can help teachers present PAI materials in a more engaging way. For example, teachers can use animated videos to explain the stories of the prophets or the laws in Islam, so that students can understand the material more easily and feel connected to what they are learning (Shahid et al., 2024). In addition, technology allows for more flexible learning that can be accessed at any time, so students have the opportunity to learn at their own pace.

In addition to technology, the application of game-based learning methods is also an effective form of innovation in increasing students' interest in PAI. By using educational games, students can learn about Islamic values in a fun way. This is in line with the theory of constructivism which states that learning will be more meaningful if students can interact directly with the material they are learning (Fitriyani & Ajizah, 2024). For example, quizzes or puzzles related to PAI materials can make students more active in the learning process, so that they not only become recipients of information, but also play an active role in learning. Other innovations that can be applied are the use of ice breakers and creative activities in PAI learning. This activity is not only able to dilute the atmosphere, but also helps students focus more and be ready to receive the material. For example, before starting learning, teachers can invite students to do a guessing game about the theme to be learned or tell personal experiences related to Islamic values (Isiami et al., 2022). This kind of activity can increase student engagement because they feel that learning PAI is not only about memorization, but also related to daily life.

According to research conducted by (Mustaqimah & Suyadi, 2023), innovations in

PAI learning have a positive impact on improving students' understanding and religious attitudes. The study showed that students who learned with innovative methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and role-playing, tended to have a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings compared to students who learned with traditional lecture methods. In addition, innovation in learning is also able to improve social skills, such as the ability to communicate and work together in groups, which are very important for the development of students' character. Innovation in PAI learning is essential to create an effective, engaging, and enjoyable learning process for students. This not only helps to increase students' interest and engagement, but also encourages them to better understand and live Islamic values. Therefore, PAI teachers need to continue to look for new and creative ways to present materials, so that PAI learning becomes more relevant, contextual, and meaningful for students.

Games and ice breakers have an important role in creating a fun learning atmosphere, especially in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Games that are adapted to learning materials are able to attract students' interest and make them more enthusiastic in participating in lessons (Fitroh Magfiroh et al., 2023). Through games, students not only learn passively but also actively engage, so that the information conveyed is easier to understand and remember. This is in line with the concept of fun learning where students feel comfortable and interested in continuing to follow the learning process. Ice breakers also play a role in melting the atmosphere and helping students feel more relaxed during learning. With ice breaker activities, the classroom atmosphere that was initially rigid and monotonous can change to be more dynamic and interactive (Qamariah et al., 2024). Ice breakers help eliminate boredom and boredom for students, especially in learning sessions that last for a long time. In addition, ice breakers also function as a bridge to strengthen the relationship between students and teachers, so that better communication is created during learning.

The combination of games and ice breakers has a positive impact on student engagement in learning. When students feel entertained and challenged by games or ice breakers, they tend to be more focused and motivated to participate in learning (Lubis et al., 2024). With a fun atmosphere, the knowledge

transfer process becomes more effective, and students more easily associate the material with a pleasant experience. Therefore, teachers are advised to integrate games and ice breakers into their learning strategies to improve the quality and effectiveness of learning.

Method

At this stage of research, a quantitative descriptive survey method is used. Types of survey research can be grouped easily based on the methods used to obtain information. So that the surveys that have been provided are in the form of: (1) Questionnaires through Google forms, and (2) Personal interviews through Zoom meet media which are formed in a structured manner. The target population from this study is teachers of the Islamic religious education study program with a sample of 50. The research data collected is in the form of quantitative data in the form of a percentage system that has been given a questionnaire by the researcher using a Google form. The following data taken as research materials are as follows: 1) Teachers are able and understand the essence of PAI learning, 2) Teachers are able to understand the Basic Objectives and Principles of PAI Learning, 3) Teachers are able to understand the Definition and Function of Games and Types of Games Relevant to PAI Learning, 4) Teachers understand the Concept of Ice Breaker, Game Integration, and the Impact of PAI Learning Innovation. So that the data collection uses research instruments developed with the Guttman Scale. The Guttman scale is a scale that only provides two answer options, including Yes – No and the data is summarized using a descriptive method in the form of percentages.

Result and Discussion

The results of the research that have been obtained from researchers related to teachers' knowledge of scientific research on PAI Learning Innovation Through the Integration of Games and Ice Breakers, teachers are still having difficulties. The data displayed by the researcher is valid data obtained from 50 teachers, where teachers who have participated in this study are 37 men (74%) and 13 women (26%) with a total number of participants there are 50 people with a percentage (100%).

From the research data, it can be presented in several questionnaires with the Google Form system and Interviews with the

structured Zoom Meet system, which can be described in the following tables and descriptions.

Table 1. *Percentage Table Format*

| No. | Statement | Number and Percentage of Responwden |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Teachers are able and understand the essence of PAI learning | 6 Teacher (12%) |
| 2. | Teachers are able to understand the Basic Objectives and Principles of PAI Learning | 22 Teacher (44%) |
| 3. | Teachers are able to understand the Definition and Function of Games as well as Types of Games that are Relevant for PAI Learning | 15 Teacher (30%) |
| 4. | Teachers understand the Ice Breaker Concept, Game Integration, and the Impact of PAI Learning Innovation | 7 Teacher (14%) |

From these results, it can be concluded that there are only 6 teachers with a total percentage of 12% who understand PAI Learning Innovation through Game Integration and Ice Breaker, but there are 44 teachers with a percentage (88%) who still have difficulties with PAI Learning Innovation through Game Integration and Ice Breaker. Of course, this is a big task for teachers to understand how to compile PAI Learning Innovations through Game Integration and Ice Breaker.

1. The Essence of Islamic Religious Education Learning

The essence of learning Islamic Religious Education is an effort to form human beings who believe and fear Allah SWT, have noble character, and are able to implement Islamic teachings in daily life (Lestari & Iryanti, 2024). PAI learning aims not only to convey religious knowledge to students, but also to instill Islamic values that are the basis for thinking, behaving, and acting. Therefore, the learning process of PAI must be holistic, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

PAI learning has an important role in shaping students' character and personality. This is because PAI functions as a forum for moral and ethical formation in accordance with Islamic teachings (Suci Muzfirah & Muqowim, 2021). Through PAI learning, students are expected to develop an attitude of tolerance, discipline, and responsibility, as well as have a sense of

empathy for others. Therefore, PAI contributes significantly to building a generation that has integrity and is able to be an example in society. In PAI learning, the approach used must be contextual and relevant to students' lives. Thus, students can feel that Islamic teachings are not only limited to theory, but can also be applied in real life (Wantini & Witasari, 2024). Therefore, PAI teachers are required to be able to present interesting material and relate religious teachings to the situations faced by students on a daily basis. This approach makes PAI learning more meaningful and able to form the expected Islamic attitudes and behaviors.

2. Objectives and Basic Principles of Islamic Religious Education Learning

The main goal of PAI learning is to develop students' spiritual, intellectual, and social potential so that they are able to become individuals of faith, piety, and noble character (Rahmawati et al., 2024). PAI plays a role in guiding students to know and understand Islamic teachings comprehensively, so that they can apply them in their daily lives. Thus, PAI learning serves as a means to build students' character in accordance with Islamic values. The basic principles of PAI learning include instilling values, developing competencies, and building character. PAI learning must be carried out gradually and continuously so that students can internalize Islamic values effectively (Sawitri & Susanti, 2024). In addition, PAI learning must also be inclusive, respect diversity, and teach students to be tolerant of differences. This principle is very important in forming students who are able to interact with a pluralistic society.

In addition, PAI learning is also based on the principle of the relationship between science and religious values. PAI materials should be able to bridge scientific concepts with Islamic teachings, so that students can see the relevance of religion in every aspect of life (Anisaturahma et al., 2021). By integrating science and religious values, PAI learning is expected to be able to equip students with a complete and comprehensive understanding, so that they can become individuals who are balanced between spirituality and intellect.

3. Definition and Function of Games: Types of Games Relevant for Islamic Religious Education Learning

Play in an educational context is defined as an activity designed to provide a fun, interactive, and educational learning experience for students

(Wakhid et al., 2024). In PAI learning, games function as an effective tool to convey religious material in a creative and interesting way, so that students can more easily understand the concepts taught. In addition, games also play a role in activating students' roles directly in the learning process, making them more engaged and interested in PAI materials. There are different types of games that are relevant and can be applied in PAI learning, such as quiz games, board games, and role-playing. Quiz games can help students test their understanding of PAI material in a fun and competitive way (Rusdiah & Hasan, 2023). Board games, such as "Traces of the Prophet," can teach students about the history of Islam and the stories of prophets through a journey on board games. Role-playing, on the other hand, allows students to play figures in Islamic history, so they can experience firsthand the roles and values they want to convey.

In addition, digital or technology-based games are also increasingly relevant in learning PAI, especially in today's digital era. For example, game applications that teach about the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, and daily prayers can be accessed via mobile devices (Fitriyani & Ajizah, 2024). The use of digital games not only makes learning PAI more interesting, but also allows students to learn independently and interactively. Thus, games serve as an effective medium to increase students' understanding and interest in PAI materials.

4. Ice Breaker Concept, Game Integration, and the Impact of Islamic Religious Education Learning Innovation

a. Ice Breaker Concept: Definition, Goals, and Benefits of Ice Breaker in Learning

Ice breaker is an activity designed to melt the atmosphere and build familiarity among students before or during the learning process (Isiami et al., 2022). In PAI learning, ice breakers function to create a more relaxed and conducive atmosphere, so that students feel more comfortable and ready to receive the material presented. Ice breaker activities can be in the form of simple games, guessing, short stories, or physical activities that involve all students.

The main goal of ice breakers is to eliminate tension and awkwardness that often appear at the beginning of learning, especially when students are not yet

familiar with the classroom atmosphere or the material to be studied (Wantini & Witasari, 2024). With an ice breaker, students will be more able to adapt to the learning environment, so they are better prepared and motivated to learn. In addition, ice breakers also play a role in building closeness between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves. The benefits of ice breakers in PAI learning are very diverse. First, ice breakers help improve students' concentration, especially when learning lasts for a long time. Second, ice breakers can be a means to introduce new concepts or materials in a more interesting and fun way (Lestari & Iryanti, 2024). Third, ice breakers can increase students' active participation in learning, as they feel more motivated and engaged in classroom activities. Thus, ice breakers have an important role in creating an effective and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

**b. Game Integration and Ice Breaker:
How to Combine These Two Elements
in PAI Learning**

Integrating games and ice breakers in PAI learning is one of the effective strategies to create a fun and interactive learning atmosphere. The first step in combining these two elements is to understand the learning objectives to be achieved and choose games and ice breakers that are in accordance with the PAI material (Sawitri & Susanti, 2024). For example, if the material taught is related to the pillars of Islam, the teacher can start with an ice breaker in the form of guesses about the pillars of Islam before moving on to a more in-depth quiz game on the topic.

A combination of games and ice breakers can also be done by using games that contain ice breaker elements in them. For example, the game "Muslim Detective," in which students have to search for and guess facts about Islamic figures, can be started with an ice breaker activity in the form of simple questions to activate students' initial knowledge (Syahid et al., 2024). In this way, students not only feel happy but also gain additional knowledge gradually and systematically. In addition, teachers can close learning with an ice breaker that refers to the material that has been learned through the game. For

example, after students complete a game about the story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, teachers can hold an ice breaker in the form of a sharing session, where students tell the lessons they learned from the game (Rahmawati et al., 2024). This method not only strengthens students' understanding of the material, but also creates an interactive, fun, and meaningful learning atmosphere.

c. The Impact of PAI Learning Innovation
Innovations in Islamic Religious Education learning have a significant impact on improving the quality of learning and students' understanding of Islamic values. One of the positive impacts of PAI learning innovations is the increase in students' interest in learning. Innovative methods such as the use of digital media, educational games, and ice breakers, are able to create a more interesting and fun learning atmosphere. When students feel engaged and enjoy the learning process, they tend to have a greater interest in the material being taught, so their understanding of PAI concepts becomes more in-depth. In addition, PAI's learning innovations also encourage students to actively participate in the learning process, not just as passive listeners. With a more interactive method, students can relate religious concepts to everyday experiences, making PAI learning more relevant and applicable.

Another impact of PAI learning innovations is the improvement of students' critical and analytical thinking skills. Through innovative learning methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and problem-solving, students are invited to explore and understand Islamic teachings from various perspectives. They are trained to think critically, find solutions to the problems given, and be able to relate religious teachings to real-life contexts. This is especially important in today's modern era, where students are faced with a variety of challenges and complex social changes. Innovations in PAI learning help students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to face these challenges, so that they can become individuals who are able to apply Islamic values in their daily lives in a wise and relevant manner.

In addition, PAI learning innovations also have an impact on the development of students' character and morals. Through innovative learning approaches, such as role-playing, storytelling, and collaborative activities, students are taught to understand and live Islamic values, such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy. For example, through role-playing activities, students can act out Islamic figures or simulate daily life situations related to religious values. This helps them to internalize these values more deeply and apply them in real life. Thus, innovative PAI learning not only functions as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a vehicle for the formation of students' character, making them individuals with noble character and strong integrity.

The final impact of PAI's learning innovations is the increase in students' social and collaborative skills. Innovative PAI learning often involves group activities and cooperation, which help students learn to interact with others, value differences of opinion, and work toward a common goal. Through collaborative activities, such as group discussions, joint projects, and educational games, students learn to appreciate Islamic values in the context of cooperation and social relationships. They are taught to respect each other, listen to others' opinions, and resolve conflicts constructively. These social skills are essential to form a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has good emotional and social intelligence.

Thus, innovations in PAI learning have a very positive impact in developing students' social skills, preparing them to become individuals who are able to contribute to society with an inclusive and tolerant attitude.

Conclusion

Islamic Religious Education learning has an important role in shaping the character and personality of students who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. The basic concept of PAI learning emphasizes on the goal of instilling Islamic values through a comprehensive and holistic approach, covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. However, conventional methods in PAI learning often face challenges, such as lack of interest and involvement of students because the methods are monotonous and less relevant to daily life. Therefore, the use of innovative methods is very important to make PAI learning more interactive and fun, so that students are more motivated and interested in learning the material. Games and ice breakers are effective tools in PAI learning, where games can convey religious concepts in an interesting and fun way, while ice breakers help to dilute the atmosphere and increase student engagement in the learning process. The integration between games and ice breakers provides a fun and meaningful learning experience, thus increasing the understanding and internalization of Islamic values in students. Thus, the basic concept of PAI learning that combines innovative methods can be a solution to create a more effective, relevant, and meaningful learning process for students.

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