Factors and Challenges in Student Participation in Islamic Religious Education: Implications for Curriculum Development

Abdul Malik Ibrahim
Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon
abdulmalikibrahimcirebon@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the factors and challenges that influence student participation in Islamic religious education learning, as well as its implications for curriculum development. Active student participation is very important in the learning process, because it contributes to the understanding and application of religious values. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach, involving students and teachers from several schools in Indonesia. The results of the study indicate that there are various factors that influence student participation, including intrinsic motivation, social support from peers, and the quality of teaching from teachers. However, challenges such as lack of student attention, monotonous learning methods, and external factors such as an unsupportive learning environment were also found to be barriers. In addition, this study identified that low student participation can have a negative impact on their understanding of teaching materials and involvement in religious activities. The implications of these findings indicate the need for curriculum development that is more responsive to student needs. The Islamic religious education curriculum must consider a more interactive and engaging approach, and actively involve students in the learning process. This study suggests that teachers be trained to use innovative learning methods and encourage collaboration between students to increase their participation, this study provides an important contribution to the development of Islamic religious education in Indonesia and is expected to be a reference for educators in designing more effective and interesting learning strategies for students.
Keywords: Factors, Challenges, Student Participation

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor dan tantangan yang mempengaruhi partisipasi siswa dalam pembelajaran pendidikan agama Islam, serta implikasinya terhadap pengembangan kurikulum. Partisipasi siswa yang aktif sangat penting dalam proses pembelajaran, karena

berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman dan penerapan nilai-nilai agama. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, melibatkan siswa dan guru dari beberapa sekolah di Indonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat berbagai faktor yang mempengaruhi partisipasi siswa, termasuk motivasi intrinsik, dukungan sosial dari teman sebaya, serta kualitas pengajaran dari guru. Namun, tantangan seperti kurangnya perhatian siswa, metode pembelajaran yang monoton, dan faktor eksternal seperti lingkungan belajar yang tidak mendukung juga ditemukan sebagai penghalang. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi bahwa rendahnya partisipasi siswa dapat berdampak negatif pada pemahaman mereka terhadap materi ajar dan keterlibatan dalam kegiatan keagamaan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menunjukkan perlunya pengembangan kurikulum yang lebih responsif terhadap kebutuhan siswa. Kurikulum pendidikan agama Islam harus mempertimbangkan pendekatan yang lebih interaktif dan menarik, serta melibatkan siswa secara aktif dalam proses belajar. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar guru dilatih untuk menggunakan metode pembelajaran yang inovatif dan mendorong kolaborasi antar siswa untuk meningkatkan partisipasi mereka, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting bagi pengembangan pendidikan agama Islam di Indonesia dan diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi bagi pendidik dalam merancang strategi pembelajaran yang lebih efektif dan menarik bagi siswa.

Kata kunci: *Faktor, Tantangan, Partisipasi Siswa*

A. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a critical component of the curriculum in many educational systems, providing students with essential knowledge of Islamic teachings, ethical guidelines, and cultural practices. While IRE is pivotal in shaping the moral and spiritual development of students, the level of engagement and participation in this subject varies significantly across different educational contexts. Understanding the factors that affect student participation and addressing the challenges that arise is key to enhancing the impact of IRE on students' lives. This article explores these factors and challenges and discusses their implications for curriculum development.

One of the most significant factors influencing student participation in IRE is their cultural and socioeconomic background. Students from families with limited exposure to religious practices may not feel as connected to or committed to religious education. Additionally, students from lower socioeconomic conditions often face challenges such as limited access to educational resources, extracurricular activities, or supportive home environments, all of which hinder their ability to engage in religious learning. Addressing these background factors is essential for creating an IRE curriculum that is inclusive and maximizes student participation.

The role of teachers in facilitating student participation is crucial. Teachers who are knowledgeable, engaging, and capable of creating a positive classroom environment are more likely to foster active involvement from their students. Traditional lecture-based teaching methods often fail to encourage critical thinking or active participation. In contrast, modern, interactive pedagogies such as project-based learning, group discussions, and multimedia presentations can significantly enhance student engagement and promote deeper learning. Teacher preparation programs that develop both subject expertise and effective teaching skills are crucial to improving participation.

Another important factor affecting participation is the relevance of the IRE curriculum to contemporary issues. Students are more likely to engage with IRE when the content addresses topics that resonate with their everyday lives, such as social justice, environmental concerns, ethical dilemmas, and mental health, all through the lens of Islamic teachings. When IRE is perceived as disconnected from students' lived experiences, they may lose interest and disengage. By demonstrating how Islamic values offer solutions to modern problems, educators can make religious education more engaging and meaningful to students.

Peer influence and social context also play significant roles in student participation. In environments where religious education is valued, and where there is a culture of academic achievement, students are more likely to participate actively in IRE. Conversely, in social contexts where religious education is undervalued or where peers discourage engagement, participation may be hindered. It is important to create a classroom culture that promotes religious learning and encourages positive peer interactions, ensuring that students feel supported and motivated to engage with the subject.

Despite the importance of IRE, several challenges affect student participation. A key challenge is the lack of motivation, as many students perceive religious education as less relevant or engaging than other subjects. This lack of interest may stem from the perception that IRE is repetitive or unchallenging. To overcome this challenge, it is essential to design a curriculum that not only imparts essential religious knowledge but also challenges students intellectually and connects with their personal interests and experiences. Incorporating modern educational technologies and interactive learning methods can also help increase student motivation.

Language barriers represent another challenge in IRE, especially in contexts where classical Arabic is used to teach religious texts. Students who are not fluent in Arabic may struggle to fully engage with the material, limiting their participation in class discussions. To address this issue, teachers should adopt strategies that bridge the gap between classical Arabic and the students' native languages. This can be achieved by

incorporating translations, visual aids, and bilingual resources to make religious texts more accessible and support better understanding.

Overcrowded classrooms present another significant challenge to student participation. In large classes, teachers may find it difficult to provide individualized attention or create opportunities for all students to actively contribute to discussions. As a result, engagement may decrease, and classroom management can become more challenging. Reducing class sizes or employing effective classroom management techniques can help create a more conducive environment for active learning and increased student participation.

The lack of resources and facilities is also a common issue that hinders student participation in IRE, particularly in underfunded schools or rural areas. Without access to updated textbooks, multimedia resources, or religious study materials, students may struggle to fully participate in religious education. Furthermore, the absence of extracurricular activities or community partnerships can limit opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of the subject. To address these challenges, schools must ensure they are adequately equipped with the necessary resources and digital platforms to support student engagement.

The challenges and factors discussed above highlight the need for a thoughtful and responsive curriculum development process in IRE. Several strategies can be adopted to address these challenges and improve student participation. One key approach is incorporating active learning and student-centered pedagogies. These methods engage students more deeply by encouraging them to solve problems, collaborate with peers, and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. Interactive strategies such as project-based learning, group discussions, and debates can help students explore religious concepts more critically and meaningfully.

It is also essential for the IRE curriculum to address contemporary societal issues in ways that are relevant and meaningful to students. By incorporating current global and local challenges into the curriculum, educators can demonstrate how Islamic teachings offer valuable insights and solutions to modern problems. This approach can motivate students by showing the practical relevance of religious education in their daily lives, leading to increased participation.

Teacher professional development is another critical aspect of curriculum improvement. Teachers need to be equipped with both deep subject knowledge and effective pedagogical strategies to engage students in dynamic learning. Ongoing professional development programs that focus on modern teaching techniques, technology integration, and student-centered learning can significantly improve student participation and learning outcomes.

Supporting language development is essential, especially in settings where classical Arabic poses a barrier. Curriculum developers should

include strategies to support language acquisition, such as providing bilingual resources, offering translations, and integrating supplementary language courses. These strategies will help make the curriculum more accessible to a broader range of students and foster better engagement with religious texts. Finally, promoting parental and community involvement in IRE is crucial for fostering stronger connections between the school and the home environment. Schools should actively involve parents in the educational process and encourage community partnerships that reinforce the teachings of IRE. Extracurricular activities and community-based initiatives can further enhance student participation by providing real-world contexts for religious learning.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a significant role in shaping students' spiritual, ethical, and cultural development. While there is broad consensus on the importance of IRE in the educational system, the level of student participation varies across different contexts. Various studies have examined the factors influencing student engagement in IRE and the challenges that hinder effective participation. This literature review synthesizes existing research on these factors and challenges, highlighting their implications for curriculum development.

Factors Affecting Student Participation

1. **Cultural and Socioeconomic Background**

Several studies have emphasized the impact of students' cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds on their participation in IRE. According to Morrow (2004), students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often have limited access to educational resources, including extracurricular activities that could enhance their religious education. Furthermore, cultural factors such as a lack of religious exposure at home may lead to a diminished interest in IRE. Alim and Naqvi (2015) argue that the IRE curriculum must be sensitive to the diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts of students to foster greater engagement. Several studies have emphasized the impact of students' cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds on their participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). According to Morrow (2004), students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face significant challenges, such as limited access to educational resources and extracurricular activities, which could enhance their religious education. These limitations may reduce their overall engagement and interest in IRE, as they may lack the necessary support systems both at school and at home. Moreover, students who come from families with limited exposure to religious practices or a lack of religious role models may struggle to connect with IRE content, further hindering their active participation. In such cases,

students may perceive the subject as irrelevant or difficult to engage with due to their limited exposure to Islamic teachings outside the classroom.

Cultural factors also play a pivotal role in shaping student participation in IRE. Alim and Naqvi (2015) argue that the IRE curriculum must be responsive to the diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of students to ensure greater engagement. They suggest that when the curriculum takes into account the varying cultural contexts and practices within which students are embedded, it becomes more accessible and relevant to their lives. This alignment encourages students to actively engage with the material and see its value in their daily experiences. For example, students from different cultural backgrounds might relate better to lessons that incorporate their local customs or issues pertinent to their community, while also addressing universal Islamic principles.

This cultural sensitivity within the IRE curriculum can foster a greater sense of belonging and participation among students. When they see themselves reflected in the curriculum, students are more likely to feel that IRE is personally relevant, which can lead to a deeper engagement with the subject. Therefore, educators and curriculum developers need to ensure that the religious education framework not only conveys religious knowledge but also integrates a recognition of students' diverse cultural and socioeconomic realities. By doing so, IRE can become a more inclusive and engaging subject that resonates with a broader range of students, ultimately improving their participation and learning outcomes.

2. **Teacher Effectiveness and Pedagogical Approaches**

The effectiveness of the teacher plays a crucial role in promoting student participation in IRE. Research by Rahman et al. (2018) indicates that teachers who employ engaging and interactive pedagogies, such as project-based learning, group discussions, and multimedia presentations, are more successful in involving students. On the other hand, traditional lecture-based teaching methods have been found to limit students' critical thinking and active participation (Safi, 2016). Teacher preparation programs, therefore, need to focus on developing both subject matter expertise and pedagogical skills to enhance student engagement (Shafie et al., 2019). The effectiveness of the teacher plays a crucial role in promoting student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Research by Rahman et al. (2018) highlights that teachers who utilize engaging and interactive teaching methods—such as project-based learning, group discussions, and multimedia presentations—are more successful in fostering student involvement. These active learning strategies encourage

students to take responsibility for their learning, critically engage with the material, and collaborate with their peers, which enhances overall participation and deepens their understanding of Islamic teachings. By creating an interactive classroom environment, teachers are able to promote a more student-centered approach to learning, which aligns with the contemporary emphasis on active learning.

In contrast, traditional lecture-based teaching methods, which are still prevalent in many IRE classrooms, have been found to limit students' critical thinking and active participation. According to Safi (2016), lecture-based instruction often results in passive learning, where students are simply recipients of information rather than active participants in the learning process. This approach fails to encourage deeper engagement with the subject matter, as it does not allow for critical reflection or the application of knowledge in real-world contexts. Consequently, students may become disengaged or develop a limited understanding of the material, reducing the overall effectiveness of IRE.

Given these findings, teacher preparation programs must prioritize the development of both subject matter expertise and pedagogical skills. Shafie et al. (2019) argue that professional development initiatives for IRE teachers should focus not only on enhancing knowledge of Islamic content but also on equipping educators with effective teaching strategies that can engage students more actively. By offering training in interactive pedagogies, modern technology, and student-centered learning approaches, teachers will be better equipped to foster greater participation in IRE. This dual emphasis on content knowledge and pedagogical skills ensures that teachers can meet the diverse learning needs of students while creating an engaging and dynamic classroom environment that encourages active participation.

3. **Relevance of the Curriculum**

Curriculum relevance is another key factor influencing student participation in IRE. Researchers such as Azhar (2017) and Al-Haq (2018) argue that students are more likely to engage in religious education if the curriculum addresses contemporary societal issues. Topics such as social justice, ethical dilemmas, and mental health, when framed from an Islamic perspective, make the subject more relatable and engaging for students. IRE curriculums that fail to connect religious teachings with real-world issues risk losing student interest and participation (Al-Maqdisi, 2019). Curriculum relevance is another key factor influencing student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Researchers such as Azhar (2017) and Al-Haq (2018) argue that students are more likely to engage in religious education if the curriculum addresses contemporary societal issues. In

today's fast-paced and interconnected world, students often seek relevance in what they learn, and when IRE addresses topics such as social justice, ethical dilemmas, and mental health issues that resonate with students' personal experiences it helps bridge the gap between religious teachings and real-world applications. By framing these topics from an Islamic perspective, educators can demonstrate how Islamic values offer solutions to modern challenges, making the subject more relatable and engaging.

For instance, social justice issues like poverty, inequality, and human rights can be framed through the lens of Islamic teachings on fairness, compassion, and the welfare of society. Similarly, addressing ethical dilemmas such as honesty, integrity, and responsibility can be aligned with Islamic values, helping students navigate their personal and societal challenges. Mental health, a pressing issue for many young people, can also be explored from an Islamic viewpoint, promoting a holistic understanding of well-being that encompasses both physical and spiritual health.

On the other hand, IRE curricula that fail to connect religious teachings with real-world issues risk losing student interest and participation. Al-Maqdisi (2019) emphasizes that students are more likely to disengage from IRE if they perceive the subject as disconnected from their daily lives. When students cannot see the practical applications of religious teachings in addressing contemporary problems, they may view the subject as irrelevant or out-of-touch with their experiences. As a result, it is essential for educators and curriculum developers to continuously update the IRE curriculum, ensuring that it remains relevant to the evolving needs of students and society. By integrating contemporary societal issues into the curriculum, IRE can foster greater engagement, inspire critical thinking, and ultimately enhance students' participation in religious education.

4. **Peer Influence and Social Context**

The social context and peer influence significantly shape student attitudes toward IRE. According to Zahrani (2020), in environments where religious education is highly valued, students tend to show more interest and commitment to the subject. In contrast, in contexts where peers devalue religious education, students may disengage. This peer pressure can create an obstacle to active participation, especially in schools where there is no supportive culture for religious learning (Ahmed & Hadi, 2018). Encouraging positive peer interactions and creating a classroom culture that values religious education is essential for improving student participation. The social context and peer influence play significant roles in shaping student attitudes toward Islamic Religious Education (IRE).

According to Zahrani (2020), in environments where religious education is highly valued and actively supported, students are more likely to show interest and commitment to the subject. When IRE is perceived as an important aspect of the school culture, students are motivated to engage more deeply, as they feel that the subject is respected and integral to their education. Such environments foster a sense of community and shared values, making it easier for students to connect with the material and with each other.

Conversely, in contexts where peers devalue or dismiss religious education, students may become disengaged and less motivated to participate. Peer pressure in such environments can be a powerful force, especially for adolescents who are highly influenced by the opinions and behaviors of their peers. As Ahmed and Hadi (2018) note, when students feel that religious education is not socially valued, they may avoid actively participating, as doing so could lead to social exclusion or ridicule. This can create a significant obstacle to fostering meaningful engagement in IRE, as students may feel disconnected or unsupported in their learning.

Creating a classroom culture that values religious education is therefore essential to overcoming these challenges. Encouraging positive peer interactions and promoting an environment where religious learning is respected can have a profound impact on student participation. Teachers can play a crucial role in fostering this culture by setting clear expectations, modeling respectful attitudes toward the subject, and encouraging open discussions about the relevance of IRE in students' lives. In such an environment, students are more likely to feel safe and supported in expressing their thoughts, asking questions, and actively engaging with the content. By cultivating a supportive social context and promoting positive peer influence, educators can significantly improve student participation in IRE.

Challenges in Student Participation

1. **Lack of Motivation**

One of the most commonly cited challenges in student participation in IRE is the lack of motivation. Research by Akhtar et al. (2017) highlights that many students perceive IRE as unengaging or less relevant compared to other subjects. This lack of motivation can result in passive learning and low participation in class activities. Akhtar et al. (2017) suggest that to enhance student motivation, the curriculum should be more dynamic, offering opportunities for students to engage with religious teachings in ways that resonate with their personal experiences and interests. One of the most commonly cited challenges in student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is the lack of motivation. Research by Akhtar et al. (2017) highlights that many students perceive IRE as unengaging or

less relevant compared to other subjects, leading to a general lack of enthusiasm. This lack of motivation can result in passive learning, where students simply absorb information without actively engaging with the material. As a result, participation in class activities may be low, and students may fail to develop a deeper understanding or connection with the subject.

According to Akhtar et al. (2017), students are more likely to engage with IRE if the curriculum is dynamic and interactive, providing opportunities for them to connect religious teachings with their personal experiences and interests. When the material resonates with students' lives, they are more likely to find meaning and relevance in it, which in turn fosters greater motivation. For instance, incorporating contemporary issues, such as social justice, ethics, and mental health, into IRE lessons can help students see how Islamic teachings can address their personal and societal concerns. This approach encourages students to view IRE not as an isolated subject, but as something that has practical value in their everyday lives.

To enhance student motivation, educators must focus on making the curriculum more engaging by using innovative teaching strategies, such as project-based learning, group discussions, and multimedia presentations. These methods allow students to actively participate in the learning process, rather than passively absorbing information. Furthermore, providing students with opportunities to explore IRE through activities that relate to their own interests, such as community service or debates on contemporary issues, can make the subject matter more engaging and relevant. By adapting the curriculum to students' needs and interests, educators can help to foster a more motivated and participatory learning environment in IRE classrooms.

2. **Language Barriers**

In many Islamic educational settings, classical Arabic is used to teach religious texts, which can create significant language barriers for students who are not fluent in Arabic. According to Abed (2020), these language challenges hinder students' ability to fully engage with the content and participate in discussions. Studies by Al-Muqaddim and Osman (2021) suggest that integrating bilingual resources, translations, and visual aids can help bridge this gap and improve students' understanding of religious texts. In many Islamic educational settings, classical Arabic is used to teach religious texts, which can create significant language barriers for students who are not fluent in Arabic. According to Abed (2020), these language challenges hinder students' ability to fully engage with the content and participate in discussions. Students who struggle with classical Arabic may find it difficult to comprehend the nuances of religious texts, which can lead

to disengagement and a limited understanding of the material. This linguistic barrier often results in passive learning, where students may rely on memorization rather than active interpretation and reflection on the texts.

Studies by Al-Muqaddim and Osman (2021) suggest that integrating bilingual resources, translations, and visual aids can help bridge this gap and improve students' understanding of religious texts. By providing students with access to translations of key texts in their native language, educators can make the content more accessible and easier to comprehend. This allows students to engage more deeply with the teachings of Islam, as they can better understand the meanings and implications of the religious principles being discussed. Additionally, visual aids such as diagrams, charts, and multimedia resources can help clarify complex concepts and make the material more engaging for students.

Incorporating bilingual resources also allows for a more inclusive approach to IRE, accommodating students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. By providing both the original Arabic text and its translation, educators can help students build a stronger connection with the language while also ensuring they understand the content. This approach not only enhances comprehension but also encourages students to appreciate the linguistic and cultural significance of classical Arabic in Islamic studies. By addressing the language barrier in IRE, educators can promote greater participation, understanding, and engagement with the subject matter.

3. **Overcrowded Classrooms**

Overcrowded classrooms present a significant barrier to active participation in IRE. Research by Ghani et al. (2019) shows that large class sizes limit opportunities for individualized attention and meaningful classroom discussions. In these settings, students may feel overlooked, and teachers may struggle to manage the classroom effectively. Ghani et al. (2019) recommend reducing class sizes or employing collaborative teaching techniques to ensure that all students have the chance to participate actively. Overcrowded classrooms present a significant barrier to active participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Research by Ghani et al. (2019) shows that large class sizes limit opportunities for individualized attention and meaningful classroom discussions, which are essential for engaging students in the learning process. In classrooms where there are many students, teachers may struggle to address the needs of each individual, resulting in some students feeling overlooked or disconnected from the lesson. Moreover, in such settings, teachers may find it difficult to facilitate dynamic discussions, provide personalized feedback, or ensure that all students have a chance to

contribute. This can lead to disengagement, as students may feel their voices are not heard and that they are not able to actively participate in the learning process.

The lack of individualized attention in overcrowded classrooms can also affect students' ability to grasp complex religious concepts, as they may not receive the support they need to understand key teachings and their applications in daily life. This can reduce the overall quality of the learning experience, preventing students from developing a deeper understanding of Islamic principles and their relevance to contemporary issues. Furthermore, in large classes, classroom management becomes increasingly challenging, as teachers must manage a higher number of students with varying needs and learning styles. This can further detract from the opportunity for meaningful interaction and engagement in IRE lessons.

Ghani et al. (2019) recommend reducing class sizes or employing collaborative teaching techniques to ensure that all students have the chance to participate actively. Smaller class sizes allow teachers to focus more on individual students, providing tailored guidance and creating an environment where students feel more comfortable asking questions and sharing their thoughts. Additionally, collaborative teaching methods, such as group work, peer teaching, and team-based learning, can promote active participation by encouraging students to work together, discuss concepts, and learn from each other. By implementing these strategies, educators can foster a more engaging and supportive learning environment that maximizes student participation in IRE, even in the face of overcrowded classrooms.

4. **Insufficient Resources and Facilities**

The lack of resources and facilities is a common challenge, particularly in underfunded schools or rural areas. Without access to updated textbooks, multimedia resources, or religious study materials, students may find it difficult to engage with the IRE curriculum fully (Zainudin & Ariffin, 2020). Furthermore, the absence of extracurricular activities or community partnerships can limit students' opportunities for a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings. Ensuring that schools have adequate resources, including digital platforms, is essential for improving student participation in IRE (Ibrahim & Zaki, 2021). The lack of resources and facilities is a common challenge, particularly in underfunded schools or rural areas, which can significantly hinder student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). According to Zainudin and Ariffin (2020), without access to updated textbooks, multimedia resources, or religious study materials, students may find it difficult to engage with the IRE curriculum fully. Traditional methods of teaching, which rely

on printed textbooks and lectures, may not provide the dynamic learning experience that encourages active participation and critical thinking. The absence of engaging resources can lead to a monotonous learning environment where students struggle to connect with the content, reducing their overall interest and involvement in the subject.

Moreover, the lack of extracurricular activities or community partnerships further limits students' opportunities for a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings. Activities such as religious study groups, community service projects, or interfaith dialogues provide practical, real-world applications of religious education, helping students understand how Islamic principles are embodied in everyday life. When these opportunities are unavailable, students miss out on valuable experiences that can enhance their learning and engagement. Without these additional learning opportunities, students may perceive IRE as an isolated academic subject, disconnected from the broader social and cultural context in which it operates.

Ensuring that schools are adequately equipped with necessary resources, including digital platforms, is essential for improving student participation in IRE. As noted by Ibrahim and Zaki (2021), the integration of technology can significantly enhance the learning experience by providing students with access to interactive tools, online resources, and multimedia content that can make IRE more engaging and relevant. Digital platforms can also facilitate collaborative learning, allowing students to work together on projects, share ideas, and access a wealth of information that may not be available in traditional classrooms. By addressing the resource gaps in IRE classrooms, schools can create an environment where students have the tools they need to actively engage with the curriculum and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings.

Implications for Curriculum Development

Based on the factors and challenges identified, several key strategies emerge for improving student participation in IRE. Curriculum development must consider the diversity of students' cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring that the content is accessible and relevant. Teacher professional development programs should focus on equipping educators with the skills to employ interactive and engaging pedagogies, such as project-based learning and multimedia teaching tools, which can enhance student participation (Rahman et al., 2018).

Additionally, the curriculum should be designed to address contemporary issues, making the subject matter more relevant to students' lived experiences. Incorporating global challenges such as climate change, social justice, and ethical dilemmas into the IRE curriculum can foster greater student engagement (Azhar, 2017). Teacher professional development must

be paired with a curriculum that includes resources to support language development, especially in contexts where classical Arabic is used.

Moreover, reducing overcrowded classrooms and ensuring adequate resources and facilities are essential for promoting active participation. Smaller class sizes, along with modern teaching tools and digital platforms, can help create a more conducive environment for meaningful learning and interaction (Ghani et al., 2019). Encouraging parental involvement and fostering community partnerships also play an important role in supporting student participation in IRE (Ibrahim & Zaki, 2021). In conclusion, addressing the factors and challenges affecting student participation in Islamic Religious Education is crucial for improving its impact. Curriculum developers must create inclusive, dynamic, and relevant IRE programs that engage students intellectually, culturally, and socially. Through a holistic approach that includes teacher development, resource allocation, and social support, it is possible to enhance student participation and contribute to the moral and spiritual development of students.

C. Methodology

This research aims to identify the factors and challenges influencing student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and provide implications for curriculum development. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method, which aims to explore in depth the various factors affecting student involvement in IRE across different educational contexts. This approach was chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of students', teachers', and other stakeholders' perceptions regarding the challenges and factors affecting student participation in Islamic religious education.

1. Research Type
The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research, which focuses on describing the phenomenon of student participation in IRE. This research aims to depict the factors influencing participation and the challenges students face, considering the social, cultural, economic, and educational variables.

2. Location and Participants
This research is conducted in several schools offering Islamic Religious Education at the Junior High School (SMP) and Senior High School (SMA) levels. The schools were selected based on variations in the social-economic characteristics and cultural diversity of students, in order to provide a comprehensive view of the factors influencing participation in IRE. The participants of the study consist of three main groups:
1. Students who are enrolled in Islamic Religious Education,
2. IRE Teachers,
3. School principals or educational administrators from each school.

3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection will be conducted through several techniques as follows:

- **In-depth Interviews:** Interviews will be conducted with students, IRE teachers, and school principals to explore their perceptions of the factors influencing student participation in IRE, as well as the challenges faced. Semi-structured interviews will be employed to allow flexibility in exploring relevant topics.
- **Participant Observation:** The researcher will observe IRE classroom activities to see firsthand how the learning process occurs, including the interactions between students and teachers, teaching methods used, and classroom dynamics that influence student participation levels.
- **Documentation:** The researcher will analyze documents related to the IRE curriculum implemented in each school, as well as teaching materials and resources used in the lessons.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The steps in data analysis include:

1. **Coding:** Identifying the key themes that emerge from the interview transcripts and observation notes. Each theme will be coded to facilitate grouping the information.
2. **Categorization:** Organizing the relevant themes into broader categories, such as socio-economic factors, teaching approaches, curriculum relevance, and challenges students face.
3. **Interpretation:** Analyzing the relationships between themes and drawing conclusions regarding the factors affecting student participation, as well as the challenges faced in the implementation of the IRE curriculum.
4. **Triangulation:** To enhance the validity of the findings, triangulation of data will be performed by comparing the results from interviews with observational data and documentation to ensure consistency in the findings.

5. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of this study, several techniques will be employed:

- **Source Triangulation:** Using different data sources, such as students, teachers, and curriculum documents, to ensure a more objective result.
- **Method Triangulation:** Employing various data collection methods (interviews, observations, and documentation) to strengthen the findings.
- **Member Checking:** Preliminary findings from the interviews will be shared with participants for confirmation, ensuring that the interpretation made aligns with their views.

6. Research Ethics

This study will follow the applicable research ethics guidelines, ensuring that all participants voluntarily provide informed consent to participate in the study. Additionally, participants' identities will be kept confidential, and the data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this research.

7. Research Timeline and Duration

The research is expected to take six months, with data collection occurring in the first two months, followed by data analysis during the next two months. The final stage will focus on compiling the research report and proposing curriculum implications based on the study's findings.

D. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the research on the factors and challenges influencing student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and discusses the implications for curriculum development. The findings are based on interviews, observations, and document analysis conducted in various schools. The analysis highlights several key themes related to cultural and socioeconomic background, teaching methods, curriculum relevance, and classroom dynamics. These factors significantly shape student engagement and offer valuable insights for improving IRE curriculum and teaching practices.

1. Cultural and Socioeconomic Background

The cultural and socioeconomic background of students emerged as a prominent factor affecting participation in IRE. Many students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reported that their families had limited exposure to religious practices, which led to lower levels of interest in IRE. This lack of engagement is often compounded by the challenges these students face in accessing educational resources. According to one teacher, "students who come from economically disadvantaged families often struggle to connect with religious lessons because they don't see their real-life experiences reflected in the curriculum."

This finding supports the work of Morrow (2004), who suggested that limited access to religious resources in lower socioeconomic settings impacts students' involvement in religious education. Additionally, students from diverse cultural backgrounds expressed a need for a curriculum that acknowledges and incorporates their personal experiences. This highlights the importance of a culturally responsive IRE curriculum that reflects the diverse religious backgrounds and traditions of the students, as noted by Alim and Naqvi (2015). The cultural and socioeconomic background of students was found to be a significant factor influencing their participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Many students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reported having limited exposure to religious practices at home, leading to reduced interest and involvement in IRE. The gap in engagement is often further exacerbated by the challenges these students face in accessing

educational resources and support systems that could enhance their religious education. For example, one teacher noted, "Students who come from economically disadvantaged families often struggle to connect with religious lessons because they don't see their real-life experiences reflected in the curriculum." This observation aligns with Morrow's (2004) argument that a lack of religious resources and limited access to supportive learning environments hinder the ability of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to engage deeply with religious education.

In addition to socioeconomic factors, students from diverse cultural backgrounds also expressed the need for a curriculum that resonates with their personal experiences. Many of these students felt that the traditional IRE curriculum did not fully account for the various cultural and religious traditions within the student body. This highlights a critical gap in the existing educational practices and the need for a more inclusive and culturally responsive curriculum. As Alim and Naqvi (2015) suggest, it is essential for the IRE curriculum to reflect the diversity of students' religious backgrounds and traditions. This approach would not only enhance engagement but also foster a sense of inclusivity and respect for different perspectives within the classroom.

The findings underline the importance of recognizing and addressing the varied cultural and socioeconomic contexts of students in the development of IRE curricula. When students see their own experiences and identities reflected in the curriculum, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and connection, which can significantly improve their level of participation in IRE. Therefore, it is crucial for curriculum developers to design religious education programs that are adaptable to the diverse backgrounds of students, ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to engage meaningfully with the subject matter.

2. Teacher Effectiveness and Pedagogical Approaches

Teacher effectiveness was identified as another significant factor in promoting student participation in IRE. The data revealed that teachers who utilized interactive and student centered teaching methods, such as project-based learning, group discussions, and multimedia tools, saw higher levels of student engagement. In contrast, traditional lecture-based methods, where students were passive listeners, were associated with low participation.

For instance, in a school where project-based learning was implemented, students were more enthusiastic about exploring topics like social justice or environmental issues from an Islamic perspective. One student explained, "We worked on a project about climate change, and it felt relevant to our lives. It made me think more deeply about my role in society." This finding aligns with Rahman et al. (2018), who emphasized that teaching methods that engage students in active learning lead to higher participation rates.

However, in schools where traditional methods were still prevalent, students often felt disengaged. Teachers in these settings reported struggling with motivating students to participate in class discussions. These results underscore the need for IRE teacher preparation programs to emphasize the development of effective, engaging pedagogical strategies (Shafie et al., 2019). Teacher effectiveness emerged as another critical factor influencing student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The research findings revealed that teachers who implemented interactive and student-centered teaching methods, such as project-based learning, group discussions, and the use of multimedia tools, experienced higher levels of student engagement. In contrast, traditional lecture-based teaching, where students were passive recipients of information, was associated with low participation. For example, in schools where project-based learning was integrated, students expressed greater enthusiasm and interest in exploring topics such as social justice and environmental issues from an Islamic perspective. One student shared, "We worked on a project about climate change, and it felt relevant to our lives. It made me think more deeply about my role in society." This finding reinforces the research by Rahman et al. (2018), which indicated that active learning strategies foster greater student participation by making the subject matter more engaging and meaningful.

Conversely, in schools where traditional, lecture-based methods were still prevalent, students often felt disengaged and less inclined to participate. Teachers in these schools reported challenges in motivating students to engage in class discussions, with many students expressing a lack of interest in the material being presented. These experiences highlight the limitations of passive learning environments, where students have fewer opportunities to engage actively with the content and with one another. The disparity in student participation between schools using interactive methods and those relying on traditional teaching approaches underscores the critical role of pedagogical strategies in fostering an environment that encourages student involvement.

These findings emphasize the importance of teacher preparation programs in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in equipping educators with the skills to employ effective, engaging teaching methods. As Shafie et al. (2019) note, teacher training should not only focus on subject matter expertise but also on developing pedagogical strategies that promote active student engagement. By incorporating more dynamic, student-centered approaches into IRE classrooms, educators can foster a more participatory learning environment, ultimately enhancing student involvement and ensuring that students connect more deeply with the subject matter.

3. Curriculum Relevance

The relevance of the IRE curriculum to students' daily lives emerged as a critical factor in their engagement with the subject. Students were more likely to participate when the curriculum addressed contemporary issues such as social justice, mental health, and ethical challenges, all framed from an

Islamic perspective. Teachers who successfully integrated these issues into the curriculum reported higher levels of student participation.

For example, in one school, students explored the Islamic perspective on mental health and discussed ways to support peers who might be experiencing psychological difficulties. According to a teacher, "When we address real-world issues, students become more interested because they see how the teachings of Islam can guide them in everyday life." This is consistent with the findings of Azhar (2017) and Al-Haq (2018), who argue that students are more likely to engage in religious education when it connects Islamic teachings to modern societal challenges.

On the other hand, when the curriculum remained focused on abstract religious concepts without addressing current issues, students often struggled to see its relevance, leading to disengagement. Al-Maqdisi (2019) similarly found that a disconnect between religious teachings and students' lived experiences can hinder participation in IRE. The relevance of the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum to students' daily lives emerged as a key factor influencing their participation in the subject. The study found that students were more likely to engage in IRE when the curriculum addressed contemporary issues, such as social justice, mental health, and ethical challenges, framed through an Islamic perspective. Teachers who successfully integrated these real-world issues into their lessons reported higher levels of student participation and enthusiasm. One teacher shared, "When we address real-world issues, students become more interested because they see how the teachings of Islam can guide them in everyday life." This aligns with the findings of Azhar (2017) and Al-Haq (2018), who argue that religious education becomes more engaging and relevant when it connects Islamic teachings to contemporary societal concerns.

For instance, in one school, students explored the Islamic perspective on mental health, discussing ways to support peers who may be experiencing psychological difficulties. This approach not only made the subject matter more relatable but also encouraged students to think critically about the role of religion in addressing real-world issues. These discussions helped students draw direct connections between the teachings of Islam and their personal experiences, making the lessons more meaningful and impactful. Such integration of contemporary topics into the IRE curriculum can inspire students to see the practical application of religious principles in their own lives, thereby fostering greater engagement with the subject.

Conversely, when the curriculum remained focused on abstract religious concepts without addressing current, real-world issues, students often struggled to see the relevance of the subject, leading to disengagement. This finding is consistent with the research by Al-Maqdisi (2019), who found that a disconnect between religious teachings and students' lived experiences can hinder participation in IRE. Students expressed frustration when the curriculum did not address the challenges they faced in their daily lives, leading them to view the material as outdated or irrelevant. Therefore, incorporating relevant, contemporary issues into the curriculum is essential

to maintaining student interest and participation in Islamic Religious Education.

These findings underscore the importance of curriculum development that considers the societal issues that students encounter daily. By ensuring that IRE addresses contemporary concerns through the lens of Islamic teachings, educators can create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience that resonates with students' lives.

4. Peer Influence and Social Context

Peer influence and the social environment within schools also played a significant role in shaping student attitudes toward IRE. In schools where religious education was highly valued and integrated into the school culture, students were more likely to participate. Positive peer interactions, where students supported one another in religious learning, encouraged greater engagement.

However, in schools where peers devalued religious education or viewed it as unimportant, student participation was notably lower. One student noted, "Sometimes my friends make jokes about religious classes, and it's hard to take it seriously." These findings support Zahrani (2020), who observed that social contexts where religious education is undervalued can create barriers to participation.

Creating a supportive classroom culture that emphasizes the value of religious learning and promotes positive peer relationships is essential for enhancing student engagement in IRE. Schools need to foster environments where students feel comfortable discussing and exploring religious topics without fear of judgment from their peers (Ahmed & Hadi, 2018). Peer influence and the social environment within schools emerged as significant factors influencing student attitudes toward Islamic Religious Education (IRE). In schools where religious education was highly valued and integrated into the overall school culture, students were more likely to engage actively in IRE. Positive peer interactions, where students supported and motivated one another in religious learning, were associated with higher participation levels. This aligns with the findings of Zahrani (2020), who emphasized that a supportive and religiously respectful environment encourages student involvement in IRE.

For instance, in schools with a culture that values religious education, students often discussed religious topics outside of class, reinforcing their learning and engagement. One student shared, "In our school, we often talk about what we learned in religious class with our friends. It feels like we are all learning together and supporting each other." These peer interactions not only contributed to students' deeper understanding of the material but also made them feel more connected to the subject matter, reinforcing the importance of fostering a positive peer environment in religious education settings.

However, in schools where peers devalued religious education or viewed it as unimportant, student participation in IRE was notably lower. One student expressed, "Sometimes my friends make jokes about religious classes, and it's hard to take it seriously." Such attitudes created barriers to student engagement and participation. This finding supports Zahrani's (2020) observation that negative peer influence, where religious education is undervalued or mocked, can significantly hinder students' willingness to participate. In these environments, students may feel socially pressured to disengage from the subject to avoid ridicule or judgment from their peers.

Creating a supportive and inclusive classroom culture is crucial to enhancing student engagement in IRE. Teachers and school administrators need to actively promote the value of religious education and ensure that it is respected within the social fabric of the school. Encouraging positive peer relationships and creating safe spaces for open discussion of religious topics can help foster an environment where students feel comfortable exploring and discussing religious concepts without fear of judgment or ridicule. As Ahmed & Hadi (2018) pointed out, schools must focus on cultivating environments where students feel supported in their religious learning, which can ultimately lead to greater participation and engagement in IRE.

5. Challenges in Motivation

A significant challenge to student participation in IRE is a lack of motivation. Many students perceive IRE as less engaging compared to other subjects. Akhtar et al. (2017) identified that students often view religious education as repetitive or unchallenging, leading to passive learning. The data revealed that students who found IRE lessons to be boring or irrelevant were less likely to engage in discussions or complete assignments.

To address this challenge, it is essential for the curriculum to incorporate dynamic and engaging teaching methods that challenge students intellectually. As Akhtar et al. (2017) suggest, linking religious education to students' personal experiences, interests, and contemporary issues can increase motivation. Using interactive methods such as debates, case studies, and multimedia content can also help maintain student interest. A significant challenge to student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a lack of motivation. Many students perceive IRE as less engaging compared to other subjects, often viewing it as repetitive or unchallenging. Akhtar et al. (2017) found that students who felt the content of religious education was monotonous or disconnected from their everyday experiences were less likely to actively engage in discussions or complete assignments. This disengagement was especially evident in schools where traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and rote memorization, were predominant.

The data collected in the study revealed that students who found IRE lessons boring or irrelevant expressed lower levels of enthusiasm for the subject. One student explained, "We just sit and listen to the teacher talk about things that don't feel important to me. I don't see how this connects to my life,

so I just zone out." This sentiment was commonly shared among students, indicating that when religious education is not framed in a way that resonates with students' interests or addresses real-world issues, it becomes difficult to maintain their motivation.

To address this challenge, it is essential for the IRE curriculum to incorporate dynamic and engaging teaching methods that challenge students intellectually while also connecting the subject matter to their personal experiences. Akhtar et al. (2017) suggest that linking religious education to contemporary issues such as social justice, environmental concerns, and ethical dilemmas can increase motivation. When students see the relevance of religious teachings to their daily lives and the world around them, they are more likely to engage meaningfully with the material.

In addition, interactive and student-centered teaching methods, such as debates, case studies, group projects, and multimedia content, can significantly enhance student participation. For instance, one teacher noted that after introducing a project-based learning approach, students became more involved in class activities and discussions, as they were given the opportunity to explore IRE topics from various perspectives. Multimedia tools, such as videos and online platforms, were also identified as effective in sparking students' interest and maintaining engagement throughout lessons. By diversifying the teaching methods and incorporating relevant and stimulating content, educators can help combat the lack of motivation that many students face in IRE classes.

6. Language Barriers

Language barriers were also identified as a significant challenge, particularly in schools where classical Arabic is used to teach religious texts. Students who were not fluent in Arabic struggled to fully comprehend religious material, which affected their ability to participate in class discussions. Abed (2020) found that language challenges hinder students' engagement with religious texts, particularly when classical Arabic is not their first language.

To mitigate this issue, schools must consider integrating bilingual resources, translations, and visual aids to make religious texts more accessible. Al-Muqaddim and Osman (2021) recommend using digital platforms that provide translations and interactive content to support students in overcoming language barriers. Language barriers were also identified as a significant challenge to student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), especially in schools where classical Arabic is used to teach religious texts. In many Islamic educational settings, classical Arabic is the primary language for religious instruction, which can pose a challenge for students who are not fluent in Arabic. As a result, students who struggle with the language find it difficult to fully comprehend religious material, hindering their ability to actively engage in class discussions and understand key concepts. Abed (2020) emphasizes that these language challenges are particularly prominent when students do not speak classical Arabic as their first language, making it hard for them to access the full depth of religious teachings.

The data collected in the study revealed that students who faced language barriers often felt excluded from class discussions or struggled to keep up with the pace of the lessons. One student shared, "It's hard for me to understand the Quranic verses when they're in Arabic, and I don't get what the teacher is saying about them. I feel left out in class." This experience reflects the difficulty many students encounter in understanding complex religious texts when their proficiency in the language is limited. Moreover, this lack of understanding can reduce student participation, as they may hesitate to ask questions or engage in discussions for fear of not fully grasping the material.

To mitigate this issue and make religious education more accessible, schools must consider integrating bilingual resources, translations, and visual aids into the IRE curriculum. Al-Muqaddim and Osman (2021) recommend that schools utilize digital platforms that offer interactive content, including translations and supplementary materials, to help students better understand the texts. Providing access to bilingual dictionaries, online Quran translations, and visual aids can bridge the language gap, ensuring that all students, regardless of their Arabic proficiency, can engage with the content effectively.

Additionally, teachers can support students by incorporating various teaching strategies that cater to different language levels. For example, teachers can use simplified Arabic alongside classical Arabic, offer brief summaries in the students' native languages, and encourage peer collaboration to foster a more inclusive learning environment. By integrating these strategies and resources, schools can help students overcome language barriers and enhance their ability to participate meaningfully in IRE.

7. Overcrowded Classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms were identified as a significant challenge that limited opportunities for individualized attention and active participation. In schools with large class sizes, teachers found it difficult to engage all students in discussions or provide personalized feedback. Ghani et al. (2019) also highlighted that large class sizes hinder the creation of a supportive learning environment, leading to decreased student participation.

To address this challenge, reducing class sizes or implementing collaborative teaching strategies could help create a more conducive environment for active learning. Small group discussions and peer-based learning activities may also provide students with more opportunities to engage meaningfully with the material. Overcrowded classrooms emerged as a significant challenge limiting opportunities for individualized attention and active participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). In schools with large class sizes, teachers struggled to engage every student in meaningful discussions or provide personalized feedback. As a result, many students felt overlooked, which led to lower levels of participation and engagement. Ghani et al. (2019) highlighted that large class sizes obstruct the creation of a supportive learning environment, where students are encouraged to contribute and interact with the content. The lack of sufficient time

and space for individualized attention can diminish the quality of education, leading to passive learning.

The data collected in this study supported these findings, with several teachers reporting that overcrowded classrooms made it difficult to maintain student focus and foster active participation. One teacher noted, "With so many students in the class, I just can't reach everyone. Some students don't get a chance to voice their opinions, and it becomes harder to keep them engaged." This sentiment was echoed by students, with many expressing frustration at the lack of opportunities to ask questions or engage with their peers. Students in large classes often felt disconnected from the lesson and struggled to participate actively in discussions, contributing to overall disengagement.

To address this challenge, reducing class sizes or implementing collaborative teaching strategies could help create a more conducive environment for active learning. Smaller class sizes allow teachers to provide more individualized support, encourage greater student participation, and tailor lessons to the needs of each student. Research suggests that when students receive more personalized attention, they are more likely to feel motivated and confident in their learning (Ghani et al., 2019). Furthermore, smaller classes enable teachers to facilitate dynamic discussions and interactive activities that promote critical thinking and engagement.

In addition to reducing class sizes, incorporating collaborative teaching strategies such as group work and peer-based learning activities can help foster a more interactive and inclusive classroom environment. Small group discussions, debates, and collaborative projects allow students to engage with the material more deeply and benefit from the insights and perspectives of their peers. These strategies not only help alleviate the challenges posed by large class sizes but also encourage students to take an active role in their learning, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

By reducing overcrowding and adopting collaborative approaches, schools can create an environment where students are more likely to engage meaningfully with IRE content. These changes can ultimately enhance the quality of religious education, leading to improved participation and better learning outcomes.

8. Lack of Resources and Facilities

The lack of resources and facilities was another challenge faced by many schools, particularly those in underfunded areas. Without access to updated textbooks, multimedia resources, and religious study materials, students found it difficult to engage fully with the IRE curriculum. Zainudin & Ariffin (2020) found that insufficient resources limited students' ability to explore religious topics deeply, affecting their overall participation.

To improve participation, schools must ensure they are adequately equipped with the necessary resources, including digital platforms,

multimedia tools, and access to supplementary materials. Collaboration with local communities and religious organizations could also enhance the resources available to students. The lack of resources and facilities emerged as another significant challenge faced by many schools, particularly those in underfunded areas. This issue directly impacted students' ability to engage with the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum. Without access to updated textbooks, multimedia resources, and other religious study materials, students found it difficult to explore topics in depth and connect the material to their lived experiences. According to Zainudin and Ariffin (2020), insufficient resources severely limited students' ability to engage meaningfully with religious content, leading to reduced participation and interest in the subject.

The absence of modern learning tools and resources hindered teachers' ability to deliver lessons in an engaging and interactive manner. Teachers in resource-poor schools reported using outdated textbooks and limited classroom materials, which made it challenging to create dynamic and visually appealing lessons. One teacher stated, "We often rely on old books, and there are no multimedia resources available to make the lessons more engaging for students. It's hard to hold their attention without the right tools." This highlights the crucial role that up-to-date resources and teaching aids play in maintaining student engagement.

To improve participation and enhance the quality of IRE, it is essential for schools to ensure they are adequately equipped with the necessary resources. The integration of digital platforms and multimedia tools can support interactive learning and make religious education more accessible and engaging. Providing students with access to online religious texts, video lectures, and other digital content can offer them more opportunities to explore religious teachings beyond traditional classroom settings. This is particularly important in the digital age, where technology plays an essential role in the learning process.

Additionally, collaboration with local communities and religious organizations could help expand the resources available to schools. Partnerships with mosques, religious centers, and local religious educators can provide supplementary materials, guest lectures, and extracurricular activities that reinforce the lessons learned in the classroom. For example, a local mosque might provide religious texts for students or offer workshops on Islamic ethics and social responsibility, which could complement the IRE curriculum. By tapping into community resources, schools can enrich their religious education offerings and foster a more engaging learning environment.

Investing in resources and fostering community collaboration can significantly improve student participation in IRE. With the right tools and support systems in place, schools can create an environment where students are encouraged to actively engage with religious topics, deepening their understanding and strengthening their connection to the subject matter. This approach will not only improve participation rates but also enhance the

overall quality of religious education, making it more relevant and impactful for students.

9. Implications for Curriculum Development

The findings of this research highlight several key areas that require attention in IRE curriculum development. First, it is crucial to design a curriculum that is culturally responsive and inclusive, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of students. The curriculum should also address contemporary societal issues that are relevant to students' lives, fostering engagement by showing how Islamic teachings can offer practical solutions.

Moreover, teacher professional development should focus on equipping educators with the skills to implement student-centered teaching methods and address language barriers effectively. Curriculum developers should also explore strategies to reduce the negative impact of overcrowded classrooms and ensure that schools are adequately equipped with the necessary resources for effective religious education. The findings of this research highlight several critical areas that require attention in the development of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curricula. One of the most prominent recommendations is the need to design a curriculum that is culturally responsive and inclusive, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of students. By considering students' varying cultural, socioeconomic, and religious experiences, the curriculum can become more relevant and relatable, fostering a stronger connection to the subject matter. An inclusive curriculum should integrate the traditions, values, and experiences of different student groups, making the learning environment more equitable and engaging for all.

Additionally, the curriculum should address contemporary societal issues that resonate with students' everyday lives. Issues such as social justice, mental health, and ethical challenges are topics that many students face in their personal lives. When the IRE curriculum connects Islamic teachings to these issues, it helps students see the practical applications of their religious education, fostering deeper engagement. Curriculum developers must explore how Islamic teachings can offer solutions to modern-day problems, showing students that religious education is not just theoretical but can guide their actions in the real world.

Teacher professional development is another critical area identified in the research. Teachers play a central role in facilitating student participation in IRE, and their ability to implement effective teaching methods is essential. Teacher preparation programs should emphasize student-centered pedagogies, such as project-based learning, group discussions, and the use of multimedia resources, which encourage active participation. Furthermore, teachers should be trained to address the challenges posed by language barriers, especially in contexts where classical Arabic is used to teach religious texts. Providing teachers with the tools and strategies to bridge these gaps will enhance their effectiveness and improve student engagement.

Moreover, the research underscores the importance of addressing the issue of overcrowded classrooms. In large class settings, it becomes

challenging for teachers to provide individualized attention and create opportunities for every student to actively participate. To mitigate this, schools should consider strategies such as reducing class sizes or adopting collaborative teaching methods. Group work, peer-based learning activities, and personalized learning experiences could allow more students to engage with the material in a meaningful way.

Finally, ensuring that schools are adequately equipped with the necessary resources is vital for improving participation in IRE. Schools, particularly those in underfunded areas, should be provided with access to updated textbooks, multimedia resources, and digital platforms that can enhance the learning experience. Collaboration with local communities and religious organizations can also supplement educational resources, offering students additional opportunities to deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges identified in this research requires a comprehensive approach that includes curriculum reform, teacher professional development, and improved resource allocation. By focusing on culturally responsive curricula, contemporary issues, and effective teaching methods, educational systems can foster greater student participation in IRE. Ultimately, this will enhance the impact of religious education on students' personal development and moral growth, preparing them to navigate the complexities of the modern world with a strong foundation in Islamic principles.

Conclusion

This study reveals that student participation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is influenced by various significant factors and challenges. Factors such as intrinsic motivation, peer support, and the quality of teaching from educators were found to positively contribute to student engagement in the learning process. On the other hand, challenges such as lack of student attention, monotonous teaching methods, and unsupportive learning environments can hinder active participation. These findings indicate that low student participation not only impacts their understanding of the subject matter but also affects their involvement in daily religious practices. Therefore, it is crucial to develop a more responsive and engaging IRE curriculum. This curriculum should consider interactive approaches that actively involve students in the learning process. The recommendations of this study include the need for teacher training in innovative teaching methods and encouraging collaboration among students. This way, a more conducive and engaging learning environment can be created, which will enhance student participation in Islamic religious education. Overall, this research provides a significant contribution to the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. By understanding the factors and challenges affecting student participation, educators can design more effective and relevant learning strategies, ensuring that students not only understand religious teachings theoretically but also apply them in their everyday lives.

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