

Innovative Learning Strategies To Enhance Student Engagement In Islamic Education: A Case Study Of MdtA Bustanul Ulum Marendal

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of innovative learning in increasing students' learning interest at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal. The background of this study is the tendency of decreasing students' learning interest due to learning methods that are less varied and less appropriate to children's characteristics based on Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory. This type of research uses a qualitative method with a qualitative descriptive research approach, involving informants consisting of 3 teachers and 9 students. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, which are then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. This study provides new insights into how innovative learning models are applied in Islamic non-formal education (MDTA) in Indonesia, an area that is still underexplored in the current literature. The results show that teachers at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal have implemented innovative learning, among which are: 1) It begins with reading a prayer together, and every Friday all students gather in the yard to read prayers and recite sholawat together. 2) innovative learning through Islamic stories, linking the exemplary stories of the Prophet with moral values. The aim is to build an emotional connection between students and the material. 3) Practice-based worship learning. Students role-play the situations of ablution and prayer in groups, accompanied by direct feedback from the teacher. 4) Qur'an learning activities. Students are divided into small groups, each studying a portion of a verse and then teaching it to their peers. This implementation significantly increases students' interest in learning, as indicated by their enthusiasm, activeness, and better understanding of the material. However, challenges such as the school's limitations in providing training and professional development for teachers, limited learning tools, and less supportive classroom conditions are still encountered. This study recommends further development of education to provide facilities and teacher training to optimize innovative learning in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping the personality, mindset, and skills of the next generation of the nation (Kamila, 2023). In the context of Islamic education, the existence of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) becomes an integral part of instilling Islamic values from an early age. MDTA is not only tasked with delivering religious material cognitively but also with internalizing spiritual, ethical, and Islamic character values within the students (Amanah et al., 2022). In carrying out this function, the success of the learning process is heavily determined by the strategies used by the teacher in delivering the material. One important aspect that influences the success of the educational process is students' interest in learning, which serves as the driving force in achieving learning objectives.

Interest in learning is a person's tendency to pay attention to and engage in learning activities actively and continuously with enjoyment (Kurniasari et al., 2021). In the teaching and learning process, students who have a high interest in learning will demonstrate active participation, strong motivation, and more optimal learning outcomes. Conversely, a low interest in learning can result in passive behavior, indifference to the lesson material, and even become an obstacle to students' academic success (Tunu et al., 2025).

The reality faced at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal shows that some students experience a decline in interest in participating in learning activities. This can be seen from symptoms such as a lack of student attention during lessons, unstable attendance rates, as well as minimal initiative in asking questions or engaging in discussions during the learning process. One of the main factors influencing this low interest in learning is the use of conventional and less varied teaching methods (Bohari, 2022). Teachers tend to use a one-way lecture approach and demand memorization, which is less capable of stimulating students' active engagement. Such an approach is not relevant to the characteristics of young children who prefer learning activities that are visual, kinesthetic, and participatory (Ananda et al., 2024). Therefore, an update in learning practices at MDTA is needed through a more innovative and adaptive approach to the needs and learning styles of students. Innovative learning is an approach that emphasizes creativity, collaboration, active student engagement, as well as the use of technology and engaging learning media (Zakwan & Marzuki, 2024). Innovative learning can create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, motivate students to be active, and improve learning outcomes (Hamzah et al., 2025).

Several previous studies have shown that the implementation of innovative learning significantly impacts increasing students' interest and learning outcomes. For example, a study conducted by Andriyani (Andriyani et al., 2024) shows that the use of interactive learning media can increase student participation and enthusiasm in the learning process. Another study by Putra (Putra et al., 2024) also emphasizes that a game-based learning approach is very effective in increasing the engagement of early childhood students in madrasahs. These findings provide an empirical basis that innovation in learning is not merely a trend, but an urgent necessity to improve the quality of education, especially in Islamic educational institutions.

Unlike previous research, this study offers a novelty by contributing to the development of Islamic education studies, particularly in primary-level learning within the madrasah diniyah environment. Practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for teachers, madrasah principals, and policymakers in designing learning strategies that are more contextual, creative, and positively impact the quality of Islamic education. Furthermore, the findings of this research can serve as a reference for other educational institutions in developing learning models that are relevant to the needs of young Muslim generations in the current era of digital and social transformation. Based on the background above, this study aims to answer the following questions: (1) to describe the implementation of innovative learning at MDTA, (2) to analyze its impact on students' interest in learning, and (3) to identify supporting and inhibiting factors.

METHODS

This methodology uses a qualitative descriptive approach, which is highly suitable for exploring the implementation and impact of innovative learning. Conducted over two months (June to August 2025) at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal, the study involved three teachers and nine students as informants, ensuring a focused sample. In addition, informants were selected because they were considered highly credible, so the information obtained is relevant to the research topic and can provide the necessary insights. The direct involvement of informants is also a supporting factor in their selection, as this will facilitate the collection of rich and in-depth data. Data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation is very appropriate for capturing nuanced insights. Before the interview was conducted, several steps had been prepared by the researcher, including determining the purpose of the interview, preparing relevant and structured questions while remaining flexible to capture important information that might be missed. The researcher prepared 15 questions for teacher informants and 10 questions for student informants, building rapport with the interviewees, actively listening to responses from the informants, noting the interview results, and then analyzing the results carefully and comparing them with other collected data. The use of the Miles and Huberman interactive model for data analysis, combined with data triangulation obtained from sources, methods, and timing as well as informant selection, enhances the accuracy and validity of the research. The analysis used is narrative analysis. One of the main strengths of narrative analysis is its ability to explore the personal and social context of the subjects' experiences. Thus, the data obtained is expected to validly and reliably illustrate how innovative learning is implemented and to what extent it impacts students' learning interest at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal was established based on the local community's concern about the importance of Islamic religious education from an early age. Initially, learning to recite the Quran was only conducted simply at the home of one of the residents, but over time, more and more children participated, and their enthusiasm for learning increased. Seeing this need, community leaders along with parents eventually agreed to establish a formal Islamic kindergarten (madrasah diniyah) so that children could learn religion in a more structured way. Since then, MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal has grown and developed into what it is today. The main purpose of establishing this MDTA is to provide comprehensive Islamic religious education to children in the Marendal area and its surroundings.

This is supported by the informant's statement: "We want to ensure that children are not only able to read Hijaiyah letters and the Qur'an, but also understand the values of Islamic teachings in daily life. Through this madrasa, we hope the younger generation grows to become individuals with noble character, a love for religion, and a strong foundation of faith from an early age."

Programs Held by MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal

At MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal, daily activities are conducted from 07:30 to 09:30. The day begins with a joint prayer session, creating a spiritual atmosphere that fosters togetherness and devotion among students. Every Friday, all students gather in the courtyard to recite prayers and send blessings collectively, reinforcing their sense of unity and spiritual connection. Learning activities at the school are designed to be innovative and meaningful. One of the key approaches is the use of Islamic stories, where the exemplary lives of the Prophets are linked with moral values. This method aims to build students' emotional engagement with the material, allowing them to internalize lessons of faith and ethics more deeply. In addition, worship-based practical learning is an

integral part of the program. Students practice acts of worship such as ablution and prayer through role-playing activities conducted in groups. During these sessions, teachers provide direct feedback, helping students refine both their understanding and performance of Islamic rituals. Qur'an learning is also a central focus of the curriculum. Students are divided into small groups, each responsible for studying specific verse segments. Afterward, they share what they have learned by teaching their peers. This peer-teaching model not only enhances comprehension but also strengthens students' confidence and collaborative spirit in learning the Holy Qur'an.

Learning Method

MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marechal Teacher States: "Some innovative methods I have applied include learning through play, such as Islamic quizzes, hijaiyah card games using the TGT or Card Short method, and creating small discussion groups. I have also used the Islamic storytelling method, where children listen to stories of the prophets and are then asked to retell them in their own style. Additionally, I use media such as speakers to help memorize certain lessons so that children do not get bored and find it easier to learn and memorize. This makes the children more active and not just passively receiving the material." Reasons informants choose innovative learning methods according to themselves "i choose this method because children basically enjoy playing and storytelling. So, by combining elements of entertainment and education, the learning process becomes more enjoyable. Children do not feel burdened and actually become more enthusiastic about participating in lessons. I believe that if the learning process is made interesting, their understanding of the material will also be deeper and longer-lasting"

Teaching Approach

The learning process at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marechal also incorporates several effective pedagogical approaches. First, a humanistic and contextual approach is applied, where the learning material is closely connected to students' daily experiences. This method helps students understand that Islamic values are not merely theoretical but can be practiced in everyday life. It fosters a sense of relevance and personal connection between what they learn in class and their real-world behavior. Second, a collaborative and participatory approach is implemented, encouraging students to actively interact and work together in groups. Through discussions, peer teaching, and teamwork, students develop social and communication skills while deepening their understanding of the material. This approach nurtures mutual respect, cooperation, and collective problem-solving—key values in Islamic education. Third, students are encouraged to learn through hands-on practice. They engage directly in activities such as simulating worship practices, storytelling performances, and other practical exercises. By experiencing the learning process firsthand, students not only grasp the material more effectively but also develop confidence and responsibility in applying Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

Material Relevance

The learning materials used at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marechal are designed to be highly relevant and aligned with students' needs and developmental levels. The Islamic stories presented in class are carefully chosen to match the MDTA curriculum and are simplified so that children can easily understand the moral values contained within them. Through these stories, students not only gain knowledge about the lives of the prophets and righteous figures but also learn to apply these values in their daily behavior. The Qur'anic reading materials are also tailored to each student's memorization level. This differentiated approach ensures that every learner progresses according to their own ability while still supporting the school's annual learning targets. Students are guided gradually, verse by verse, allowing them to strengthen both their reading fluency and their spiritual connection with the Qur'an. In addition, the worship materials taught are highly relevant to students' real lives, especially in fostering consistent daily worship habits. Lessons on ablution, prayer, and

other acts of devotion are not only delivered theoretically but also practiced directly. This relevance to everyday practice helps students internalize Islamic values and develop discipline, sincerity, and spiritual awareness in performing their religious duties.

Learning Media

Based on the teacher's statement, it can be concluded that MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal utilizes a variety of educational media to enhance students' understanding and engagement in learning. The teacher frequently employs educational posters with Islamic themes, short videos about the stories of the prophets, hijaiyah letter teaching aids, and magnetic whiteboards. Additionally, the teacher often creates homemade learning cards or simple visual materials to support classroom activities. These media are particularly effective for students with visual learning styles, helping them grasp concepts more easily and enjoyably. From the interview, it can be summarized that the learning media used at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal include several categories. First, Islamic storybooks, whiteboards, and character images are used to visualize Islamic stories, making abstract values more concrete and engaging. Second, in Qur'anic learning, teachers use the Qur'an itself, cards containing verses, and whiteboards to facilitate reading, memorization, and comprehension. Third, for worship practice, teachers make use of wudu teaching aids, prayer mats, and instructional videos that demonstrate how to perform acts of worship properly. These diverse learning tools support a more interactive, visual, and experiential learning process that aligns with the needs of young learners.

Student Involvement

Student involvement at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal shows positive development, although it still varies among individuals. Many students are already active in classroom activities, participating in discussions and responding to the teacher's questions. However, there are still some who tend to be passive, primarily because they feel shy or hesitant to express their thoughts openly. Teachers continue to encourage these students through supportive and inclusive strategies to help build their confidence. Overall, student participation has increased noticeably, particularly since the implementation of group-based learning activities. Working collaboratively with peers has proven to be motivating for students, allowing them to share ideas and learn from one another in a relaxed environment. This approach not only enhances their engagement but also strengthens their sense of teamwork and social interaction. Furthermore, almost all students become actively involved during practical and enjoyable learning sessions, such as role-playing worship practices or storytelling exercises. The hands-on and interactive nature of these activities keeps students interested and excited about learning, fostering a classroom atmosphere that is both lively and meaningful.

Teaching Evaluation

The teacher of MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal stated, "I evaluate from several aspects, such as the increase in students' enthusiasm for learning, their exam results, and changes in classroom behavior. If the children appear more enthusiastic, more active in discussions, and their grades improve, that already serves as an indicator of success. Additionally, I often reflect to continuously improve the teaching approaches I use." "I usually approach the student personally, trying to understand the reasons why they are not active. Then I find out their interests and try to relate the lessons to things they like. Sometimes I also give them certain roles in group activities so that they feel involved and more confident. After evaluation, challenges and obstacles in implementing innovative learning are naturally found. "Of course, there are several difficulties we face, such as limitations in teaching aids or learning media, as well as classroom conditions that sometimes do not support certain methods. In addition, high student enthusiasm can also be a challenge, because sometimes they become too noisy and difficult to manage. However, all of these can still be overcome with the right and patient approach."

One of the supporting factors in its implementation is that schools and the government provide training for teachers, which aligns with the informant's statement: "Alhamdulillah, we have participated several times in training from the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as workshops

organized by the madrasah communication forum at the sub-district level. These trainings have been very helpful for us as teachers in updating our teaching methods and learning about various new approaches that suit the character of today's children.”

Discussion

Implementation Of Innovative Learning At MDTA

Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) is a level of non-formal religious education equivalent to primary education (elementary school or equivalent) that provides Islamic religious instruction to children of elementary school age. The word “Takmiliyah” comes from Arabic, meaning “complementary,” so MDTA is understood as an educational institution that complements the religious lessons provided in formal schools. (Nurasyiah et al., 2024). MDTA is usually held in the afternoon after students participate in learning activities at formal school (Irawan et al., 2021). Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, particularly Article 30 paragraphs (1) and (2), which explains that religious education can be organized through formal, non-formal, and informal channels (Kuat et al., 2024). Berdasarkan regulasi ini, MDTA menjadi lembaga pendidikan nonformal yang has official recognition and is directly supervised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

MDTA serves as a community-based religious education center. Its presence is crucial in shaping Islamic character in children from an early age, preventing moral crises and the decline of young people's ethics, and providing intensive and practical Islamic religious education. (Wisda, 2023). This is in line with Surah Al-Mujadalah verse 11 as follows:

O you who have believed, when it is said to you, 'Make room in assemblies,' then make room; Allah will make room for you. And when it is said, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those of you who have believed and those who were given knowledge in degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do. (Kemenag RI, 2019).

It is explained in the Tafsir al-Azhar that the meaning of 'Allah will raise the ranks of those who seek knowledge and believe' is that Allah loves those who are faithful and seek knowledge. (Hamka, 2015). Therefore, as Muslims, we are obliged to seek knowledge so that our lives are guided. The presence of MDTA provides a place for children in the surrounding area to acquire knowledge. Although it is non-formal, its existence is crucial in shaping a generation with good character and religious values. It requires synergy between the government, the community, and educational institutions to continuously develop MDTA so that it can meet the challenges of the times without losing its essence as grounded Islamic education.

In the modern educational world, the demand for the quality of learning requires a more creative, adaptive, and contextual approach to the needs of students. (Amelia, 2023). One approach considered capable of addressing this challenge is innovative learning. In general, innovative learning can be understood as a teaching and learning process that emphasizes creativity, novelty, and student activeness in the learning process, thereby creating a more meaningful, enjoyable, and effective learning experience. (Sufyanah et al., 2023). Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, in this section the researcher will explain how innovative learning is implemented at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal. The implementation will be described starting from planning, execution, to evaluation.

Innovative Learning Planning

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, teachers at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal understand that children basically enjoy playing and storytelling. Therefore, they choose methods that combine elements of entertainment and education, making innovative learning necessary in the classroom learning process. Innovative learning is also often

associated with the principle of student-centered learning, where students are no longer positioned as passive objects receiving information, but as active subjects engaged in building knowledge. (A. Salsabila, 2024). In this approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator who helps students explore, discover, and construct understanding through hands-on experiences. According to Slavin (2009), innovation-based learning is more effective in building students' intrinsic motivation compared to traditional methods that rely solely on lectures or memorization. (Nur'aini et al., 2024). This aligns with learning theories that emphasize the importance of considering the cognitive and affective development of early childhood when designing learning activities (for example, Piaget's theory of cognitive development and the concept of the zone of proximal development, which suggests learning that is challenging yet attainable for students with assistance)(Nainggolan & Daeli, 2021).

Piaget (Piaget, 1952), In theory, it is proposed that children learn different stages of development. Early childhood (around 2-7 years old) is at the Preoperational stage. At this stage, children tend to think concretely and egocentrically. They learn better through play, using symbols, and interacting directly with objects around them. Conventional learning methods that focus on lectures or abstract material are not in line with the characteristics of this stage. As a result, children have difficulty understanding the concepts presented and feel bored, causing their interest in learning to decrease.

Thus, it can be concluded that innovative learning is a form of learning that combines teacher creativity, active student participation, and the use of varied strategies and media to create a learning process that is enjoyable, meaningful, and contextual. Within this framework, innovation is not only technical-methodological in nature, but also involves a shift in the learning paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered. The Prophet Muhammad also made great efforts to ensure that learning was not boring, as stated in the Hadith narrated by Ahmad no. 3406.:

حَلَسْنَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ إِدْرِيسَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْأَعْمَشَ يَرْوِي عَنْ شَقِيقٍ قَالَ كَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ إِذَا خَرَجَ إِلَى الْمَلِكِ يَقُولُ إِنِّي لَأُخْبِرُ بِمَا كَانَكُمْ وَمَا يَنْعُنِي أَنْ أَخْرُجَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا كَرَاهِيَةً أَنْ أُمْلِكُكُمْ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَتَخَوَّلُنَا لِمَوْعِظَةٍ فِي الْأَمِّ كَرَاهِيَةَ السَّامَةِ عَلَيْنَا

Abdullah bin Idris has narrated to us, he said, I heard Al-A'masy narrating from Syaqiq, he said, Abdullah once came to us and said, Indeed I have been informed of your presence, and nothing prevents me from coming to meet you except the fear of boring you. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to intersperse giving advice every day, he feared it might weary us. (Hanbal, 2001).

The main characteristics of innovative learning according to Novela (2024) include:

1. Method Flexibility: Not limited to a single method, but combining several approaches according to the characteristics of the material and the students.
2. Utilization of Media and Technology: Integrating relevant learning media, including digital technology, to create engaging visualizations and simulations.
3. Increased Student Participation: Encouraging active student involvement in discussions, hands-on practice, and group work.
4. Material Contextualization: Relating learning material to students' daily lives so that it is easier to understand and more relevant.
5. Authentic Assessment: Using forms of assessment that focus not only on the final results but also on the students' learning process.

Implementation of Innovative Learning

Based on the results of observations conducted by the researcher on teachers at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal, learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal has implemented innovative teaching conducted by teachers to enhance students' interest in learning. Regarding the results of

interviews conducted by the researcher with teachers, there are several innovative learning methods that teachers have applied to students to increase their interest, including the following:

- a. **Game-Based Learning:** This supports the concept that games can enhance students' intrinsic motivation and engagement in the learning process. (Nurishlah et al., 2023).
- b. **Cooperative/Group Learning:** This method encourages social interaction in accordance with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. (Salsabila & Muqowim, 2024).
- c. **Story-Based Learning (Storytelling):** This approach makes children more active and attentive, and helps transform abstract concepts into more concrete and engaging ones. Stories can also build empathy and an understanding of values. (Kurdi, 2024).
- d. **Use of Visual and Audio-Visual Media:** These visual media enrich the learning experience and facilitate understanding (Sulistio & Mustofa, 2024). This media preparation is very helpful for children who learn visually, supporting the learning style theory (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) which indicates that the use of various media can accommodate different student learning preferences. (Nilakandi & Irnawati, 2025).

Innovative Learning Evaluation

Then, from the results of interviews conducted with teachers, they explained that evaluating the success of innovative methods can be seen from the results of increased student motivation, exam results, and changes in classroom behavior. If students are more enthusiastic, actively participate in discussions, and show improved grades, these become indicators of success. Teachers also engage in reflection to continuously improve their teaching approaches. This demonstrates a formative approach to evaluation oriented towards continuous improvement.

Analysis of Its Impact on Students' Learning Interest

The initial observations and interviews conducted by the researcher at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal revealed that some students were initially passive, shy, and less responsive during classroom activities, while others were noticeably lagging behind in their understanding. This condition indicates that before the implementation of innovative teaching methods, students' learning interest had not yet reached an optimal level. Based on motivation theory, such a lack of interest may stem from insufficient fulfillment of students' needs for autonomy, competence, or relatedness (Yanti et al., 2025). In other words, students may not have felt fully engaged, capable, or connected to the learning process, leading to lower motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

After the introduction of innovative learning methods, significant progress was observed in the development of students' learning interest. One of the most visible changes was the increase in enthusiasm and enjoyment during lessons. Students expressed happiness in attending classes at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal because they could meet friends and engage in enjoyable, dynamic lessons. The classroom atmosphere became more lively, and students actively responded to the teacher's questions. Many students showed excitement, especially during game-based learning or storytelling sessions, which made the learning process more appealing and far from monotonous.

In addition, there was a noticeable increase in students' activeness. They became more confident in asking questions, expressing opinions, and even performing in front of the class—something that was rarely seen before. Students who were once shy began participating actively, which is a strong indicator of growing learning interest. This transformation reflects a deeper level of engagement, where students not only enjoy the process but also develop the courage and willingness to take part in classroom interactions.

Students also showed a clear preference for innovative learning methods. They expressed particular enjoyment when lessons involved interactive activities such as games, quizzes, drawing, visual aids, videos, and memorization competitions. Collaborative activities like group discussions and teamwork were also highly favored, as they allowed students to learn together and share ideas.

According to the teachers, students found it easier to understand the material when lessons were presented in creative and hands-on ways, such as through play or practice-based learning. This preference demonstrates that innovative methods have effectively nurtured students' intrinsic motivation, making them eager to learn without external pressure.

Finally, there was a marked improvement in students' understanding and memory. Teachers observed that when lessons were supported with visual aids such as pictures or presented through playful and practical activities, students could grasp the concepts more quickly and retain the information longer. The enjoyable nature of the learning process enhanced both comprehension and memorization, indicating that innovation in teaching not only increases interest but also improves academic outcomes. Overall, these findings show that the implementation of innovative learning methods at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marechal has successfully transformed the learning environment into one that is more engaging, participatory, and effective in fostering students' enthusiasm and achievement.

There is a fundamental difference between innovative learning and conventional learning. Conventional learning, which tends to use the lecture method, positions the teacher as the sole source of knowledge and students as passive recipients of information. Its main focus is on memorization and one-way transfer of material.

Conversely, innovative learning is student-centered, positioning them as active participants in the learning process. Teachers act as facilitators who encourage creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. This approach utilizes various methods and media to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment, thereby not only increasing interest but also deepening students' understanding.

Interest in learning comes from two words, namely interest and learning. (Neliwati et al., 2023). Thus, learning interest is the students' attraction to learning activities, shown through their desire, attention, and involvement in the learning process. Suharni (2021) It is stated that learning interest is the tendency and high enthusiasm or strong desire in students to engage in learning activities. Learning interest is not merely liking a certain subject, but also reflects the active involvement of students in participating in the learning process as a whole. Learning interest becomes a very important aspect because it can motivate a person to continue learning, and learning or seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim, as stated in the hadith narrated by Ibn Majah no. 219 as follows:

It means: Katsir bin Syinzhir narrated to us from Muhammad bin Sirin from Anas bin Malik, who said, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim." (Ibnu Majah, 2004).

Students who possess a high level of learning interest generally exhibit several distinctive characteristics that reflect their engagement and motivation in the educational process. According to Siburian et al. (2023), students with strong learning interest tend to show high attention to lessons, indicating that they are focused and actively listening during class. They also demonstrate active involvement in learning activities, not only by participating in discussions but also by contributing ideas and asking questions. Another key trait is their persistence in completing tasks, as such students are usually determined to finish their assignments thoroughly and on time. Moreover, they display a strong desire to explore further information beyond what is provided by the teacher, showing curiosity and a genuine thirst for knowledge. Finally, they experience a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction during the learning process, perceiving learning as an exciting and meaningful activity rather than an obligation.

Learning interest, however, does not emerge in isolation it is influenced by various internal and external factors. Internally, students' personal needs, intrinsic motivation, physical and psychological conditions, curiosity, and prior learning experiences play crucial roles in shaping their enthusiasm for learning (Nasution et al., 2025). For example, students who feel confident and capable are more likely to engage deeply in learning activities. On the other hand, external factors also have a significant impact. The family environment, including parental support and home conditions, greatly affects

students' motivation and consistency in learning. The school environment, encompassing the role of teachers, peers, and the overall classroom climate, also contributes to the level of comfort and enthusiasm students experience. Additionally, teaching methods, especially those that are varied, interactive, and student-centered, help maintain students' interest by preventing monotony. The availability of learning media and adequate facilities further enhances engagement by making lessons more dynamic and accessible (Masfufah et al., 2023).

Indicators of students' learning interest can be observed through several observable behaviors and attitudes. As stated by Mawardi (2024), these indicators include sustained attention and focus during lessons, visible enthusiasm in classroom participation, and an active response to teachers' questions or instructions. Students with high learning interest also demonstrate a consistent willingness to complete assignments punctually and diligently. Moreover, they tend to seek additional sources of knowledge, such as reading books or exploring other learning materials related to the topic being studied. These indicators not only reflect students' motivation but also serve as valuable benchmarks for teachers to assess and enhance the effectiveness of their teaching strategies.

In conclusion, students' learning interest is a multidimensional construct shaped by a combination of personal and environmental factors. Recognizing and fostering these elements—through supportive teaching practices, engaging media, and nurturing environments—can significantly strengthen students' motivation, participation, and academic success in institutions like MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal.

Supporting And Inhibiting Factors

The supporting and inhibiting factors of the implementation of innovative learning conducted by teachers to increase students' learning interest are as follows:

Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Innovative

Learning From the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the supporting factors for the implementation of innovative learning conducted by teachers to students in increasing their interest in learning include several factors, namely the support of parents/students who help by providing simple learning aids at home and getting involved in project assignments such as Islamic crafts or collages. Parental involvement reinforces the idea that the learning process does not only occur at the madrasah, in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory, which emphasizes the influence of environmental systems on child development. (Aliim & Darwis, 2024). Selain itu Guru berperan sebagai fasilitator yang membuat suasana belajar menyenangkan, memberikan cerita, hadiah kecil, dan pujian. Hal ini sejalan dengan fi In addition, teachers act as facilitators who create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, provide stories, small gifts, and praise. This is in accordance with the words of Allah in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِهِمْ لَّيَّ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ لِمُهْتَدِينَ

Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has gone astray from His way, and He is most knowing of who is rightly guided. (RI, 2019).

Ibn Kathir's exegesis of Surah An-Nahl verse 125, which highlights three methods of da'wah, such as the principle of bil hikmah, wal mau'izhatil hasanah, and wajadilhum billati hiya ahsan, concludes the interpretation of this verse with the statement that Allah SWT is All-Knowing of who strays from His path and who is guided. This serves as a reminder for da'is that their duty is only to convey the message, while guidance is entirely in the hands of Allah. (Katsir, 2012). The exegesis is closely related to the role of teachers in education. Teachers act as facilitators who encourage students to think critically, argue politely, and respect differing opinions, so that the learning process becomes

dialogical and collaborative, rather than merely passive absorption of information. Thus, this verse serves not only as a guide for preaching but also as a comprehensive pedagogical guideline for every educator. This effective management maintains order even when student enthusiasm is high, supporting a conducive learning environment. (Ula & Rohman, 2024).

Factors Hindering the Implementation of Innovative Learning

Based on the results of interviews conducted by the researcher with teachers, in addition to the supporting factors mentioned above, there are also inhibiting factors faced by teachers in implementing innovative learning, which are as follows:

Despite the positive developments in learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal, several obstacles still challenge the implementation of innovative teaching methods. One of the primary issues is the limited availability of teaching aids and media. Although teachers demonstrate creativity by making their own instructional materials, the lack of more complete facilities—such as projectors and advanced visual aids limits the full potential of interactive and engaging learning experiences. Teachers hope for better-equipped classrooms to further enhance the quality and effectiveness of their teaching. Another challenge arises from less supportive classroom conditions. Certain teaching methods require a flexible and adaptable classroom layout, yet sometimes the physical environment does not fully accommodate diverse learning activities. According to Setiyawati et al. (2025), a classroom designed to support multiple learning styles can significantly improve the effectiveness of innovative approaches, allowing students to move, collaborate, and engage in hands-on activities more freely.

Additionally, high student enthusiasm while generally positive can sometimes become a challenge for classroom management. Energetic and lively students may become noisy or difficult to control, requiring teachers to have strong management skills to maintain order without stifling engagement. A further obstacle is the lack of support from the Madrasah and the principal. In some cases, a principal who is less open to new teaching ideas can limit opportunities for teachers to innovate. Supportive leadership is essential for creating a conducive environment that encourages creativity and experimentation in teaching methods.

Lastly, there is a noticeable lack of training and professional development opportunities for teachers. Limited access to workshops and training programs from the Ministry of Religious Affairs or the Madrasah Communication Forum restricts teachers' exposure to new teaching strategies and innovative approaches. As noted by Kinanthi et al. (2024), professional development is crucial for enabling teachers to update their methods, adapt to students' needs, and implement effective learning innovations. Addressing these challenges is vital to ensure that innovative learning practices can be applied consistently and effectively, ultimately enhancing students' engagement and academic outcomes.

In the context of MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal, efforts to increase students' learning interest need to be carried out in a planned and sustainable manner. Teachers, as learning facilitators, are required to have creativity in designing learning that is not only informative but also inspirational and applicable. However, until now, there have not been many studies specifically examining how innovative learning is implemented in MDTA. The lack of literature and documentation on innovative learning practices in MDTA poses a particular challenge in developing contextual and effective Islamic education strategies.

In fact, implementing innovative learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal is not easy. The problems encountered in implementing innovative learning to increase interest in learning, particularly for students at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal, are that teachers face challenges such as limited resources, inadequate learning facilities to support the implementation of innovative learning in the classroom, and differences between the teaching methods of senior teachers who only use methods like lectures and younger teachers who have many ideas for designing innovative learning. Another problem is the lack of training provided to teachers in implementing innovative learning, as not all teachers have the same competence in applying this new approach. Therefore,

efforts to increase students' learning interest through learning innovation become a struggle that requires planned and sustainable support, not just an idea, but also a reality that must be confronted with careful strategy and training..

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of innovative learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal is effective in increasing students' interest in learning. This improvement is evident from the students' enthusiasm, activeness, and preference for various learning methods such as educational games, group discussions, Islamic stories, and the use of visual media. Support from the school principal, teacher training, and parental involvement are key factors in the successful implementation of this program.

Nevertheless, there are challenges such as limited learning media and classroom conditions that need to be improved for future optimization. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that MDTA Bustanul Ulum 1 Marendal continue to develop and enrich the innovative learning methods that have been implemented. The school can work on adding more comprehensive learning facilities and media. In addition, continuous professional development for teachers, particularly in the use of technology and effective classroom management strategies, is highly recommended to maximize the potential of innovative learning and maintain high student engagement. The results of this study are expected to complement the lack of literature and documentation on innovative learning practices in MDTA in developing contextual and effective Islamic education strategies. This study recommends further development in the field of education to provide facilities and teacher training to optimize innovative learning in the future.

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