
Fostering motivation to learn islamic cultural history through the role-playing method

Ahmad Zubaidi*, M. Fajri Ainul Yakin

Universitas Nurul Jadid, Paiton Probolinggo, Indonesia

e-mail: edi@unuja.ac.id.

*Corresponding Author.

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the application of the role-playing method in enhancing students' learning motivation in the subject of Islamic Cultural History at MTs Darul Hikmah, Paiton, Probolinggo. Learning motivation is a critical factor influencing the success of education, especially in subjects requiring an understanding of history and culture. The role-playing method was chosen because it provides an interactive learning experience, allowing students to delve deeper into the material through role simulation. This research employs a qualitative approach with a classroom action research (CAR) method. The research subjects consisted of 30 eighth-grade students at MTs Darul Hikmah. These students were selected as they represent a diverse group with varying levels of learning motivation and understanding of Islamic Cultural History. Data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The findings indicate that the implementation of the role-playing method significantly improved students' learning motivation. This was evident from students' active participation during lessons, improved comprehension of the material, and their enthusiasm in performing assigned roles. Additionally, the method encouraged good collaboration and communication among students. The conclusion of this study is that the role-playing method is effective in enhancing motivation to learn Islamic Cultural History. Therefore, this method is recommended for broader application by educators, particularly in subjects requiring conceptual and contextual understanding.

Keywords: Fostering Motivation; Islamic Cultural History Through; Role-Playing Method

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Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that is intelligent, of good character, and broad-minded (Zubaidi & Nadifah, 2023). One of the key components of education is the study of history, including Islamic Cultural History (Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam or SKI). SKI not only provides insights into the development of Islamic civilization but also instills noble values that serve as the foundation for daily life (Rusydi, 2021). However, in reality, SKI learning is often considered less engaging by some students, resulting in low motivation to learn.

Learning motivation is one of the critical factors that determine the success of the learning process (Miftahussaadah & Subiyantoro, 2021). Students with high motivation tend to be more active, enthusiastic, and eager to participate in learning (Zubaidi et al., 2024). Conversely, a lack of motivation can lead to students being passive, unfocused, and unable to maximize their understanding of the material being taught. At MTs Darul Hikmah in Paiton, Probolinggo, similar challenges are faced, particularly in the SKI subject. Based on initial observations, some students demonstrate a lack of interest and active involvement during the learning process. This situation highlights the need for more innovative and engaging teaching approaches.

One teaching method that can be applied to address this issue is the role-playing method. This method directly involves students in learning through role simulations, allowing them to experience a more tangible and interactive learning process (Adawiah & Qomariyah, 2023). Role-playing provides space for students to develop creativity, practice teamwork, and enhance their understanding of the material being studied (Yulianto et al., 2020). Additionally, this method can create an enjoyable learning environment, motivating students to be more active and engaged.

In the context of SKI learning, role-playing can be used to depict historical events, significant figures, or the development of Islamic culture in a dramatic manner. Through this method, students not only learn cognitively but also experience the learning process affectively and psychomotorically. Consequently, they are expected to more easily understand the material while internalizing the values contained within it.

At MTs Darul Hikmah Randutatah Paiton in Probolinggo, several issues have been identified. First, students find Islamic Cultural History lessons boring. Second, they are not very active during learning sessions. Third, students tend to listen passively while the teacher talks instead of actively engaging. Fourth, students fail to cultivate interest, speaking skills, and communication abilities due to the teacher's ineffective teaching approach. Fifth, students show little interest in the subject, leading to disruptive behavior such as playing and joking during class. As a result, many students achieve poor learning outcomes, with their scores falling below the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM). To address these problems, teaching methods that enable active student participation must be implemented. One of these methods is the role-playing model.

The application of the role-playing method at MTs Darul Hikmah is a relevant choice, considering the characteristics of students who tend to respond more positively to practical and interactive learning. Furthermore, the school environment that supports innovative teaching methods is a crucial factor in successfully implementing this approach. This study aims to explore the extent to which the application of the role-playing method can enhance students' motivation in learning SKI. It also seeks to provide practical recommendations for teachers in designing more effective and engaging teaching strategies.

Research on the role-playing method in teaching Islamic Cultural History (SKI) has been conducted previously, such as the study titled "The Effectiveness of the Role-Playing Method in Improving Student Achievement in the Subject of Islamic Cultural History" (Usman et al., 2024). This study explores the potential of the role-playing method as an innovative teaching approach in Islamic Cultural History (SKI). The results show that this method provides students with enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences, contributing positively to their academic achievements. The findings significantly contribute to the development of effective and relevant teaching strategies to support SKI learning.

Another study with the title "The Implementation of the Role-Playing Method to Improve Student Achievement in Islamic Cultural History at Grade XI of MAN 2 Langkat" (Adinda Triska, 2024) focuses on implementing the role-playing method to enhance student performance in SKI. This research, conducted among grade XI students of MAN 2 Langkat, reported a significant improvement in student achievement by 80%. It reinforces the evidence of the role-playing method's effectiveness as a teaching strategy that positively impacts academic outcomes.

In addition to complementing the aforementioned studies, this research focuses primarily on improving students' learning motivation through the role-playing method in the subject of Islamic Cultural History (SKI), while the previous studies emphasized improving students' academic achievement. Using the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, this study explores how the application of the role-playing method not only influences academic outcomes but also fosters students' emotional and social engagement, such as better collaboration and communication skills. Another novelty of this research lies in the reflective analysis conducted during each cycle of learning,

which allows for continuous improvement to address initial implementation challenges, such as students' understanding of role scenarios.

Furthermore, this study expands the contribution of the role-playing method by highlighting how this approach creates a fun and contextually relevant learning atmosphere, especially in schools facing challenges such as low interest in learning and passive student behavior. This research also adds value through its empirical analysis of grade VIII students at MTs Darul Hikmah, Paiton, Probolinggo, who have unique characteristics that require practical and interactive learning methods. Therefore, this research not only strengthens previous findings but also offers a new perspective on applying the role-playing method to address specific challenges in SKI education.

Thus, this research is expected to make a tangible contribution to improving the quality of SKI learning at MTs Darul Hikmah while serving as a reference for other educators in implementing role-playing methods in various subjects. Additionally, the findings of this study are anticipated to help students better appreciate and understand the history of Islamic culture as an integral part of their identity, thereby fostering the emergence of a generation that is broad-minded, of good character, and deeply connected to Islamic cultural heritage.

This research offers a unique contribution through its contextual implementation, focusing on a school community with specific needs for innovative approaches, such as addressing boredom in learning and rekindling students' interest in the history of Islamic culture through role simulation. Moreover, the research stands out in its use of cyclical learning reflection to overcome initial obstacles—a strategy that may be less commonly applied in similar studies using the same approach.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective, which is to improve students' learning motivation through the application of the role-playing method. The research involves a class of 30 grade X students in a vocational high school. These students were chosen as subjects due to their diverse levels of motivation, as observed from their classroom participation and academic performance. Additionally, this class was selected based on the recommendation of the school counselor, who identified it as having notable diversity in learning styles and engagement levels, making it an appropriate context for implementing and evaluating the role-playing method. The research is conducted in several cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. During the planning stage, the researchers design role-playing activities, prepare materials, and set measurable objectives for each cycle. In the implementation stage, these activities are carried out in the classroom, with the teacher facilitating students' participation. The observation stage involves monitoring students' engagement and interactions during the activities, as well as collecting qualitative data through field notes and interviews. Finally, in the reflection stage, the data are analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the methods used and to identify areas for improvement, which then inform the planning of the next cycle.

Data analysis techniques are applied through a systematic process. Qualitative data obtained from interviews, field notes, and observations are analyzed using a three-step approach: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, relevant information is selected, filtered, and grouped according to the research focus, such as changes in students' learning motivation. Next, the summarized data are presented in the form of tables, diagrams, or narratives to provide a clear overview of the findings. The researchers then use the presented data to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the role-playing method and changes in students' learning motivation. This technique is conducted iteratively in each cycle to ensure that the analysis results reflect the changes occurring throughout the research process..

Results and Discussion

The research findings show that the application of the role-playing method significantly improved students' learning motivation in the SKI subject. The main findings based on data analysis are as follows:

Table 1. The Impact of Role-Playing Method on Students' Learning Motivation in SKI Subject

No.	Finding	Description
1	Increased Learning Motivation	Based on the survey results, there was a 25% increase in students' learning motivation scores after the implementation of the role-playing method. Data on motivation scores were obtained through a combination of questionnaires and observations. The questionnaire, which was distributed to students before and after each cycle, measured key aspects of motivation such as interest in learning, perseverance in completing tasks, and participation in group activities. Observational data was collected by monitoring students' behavior during role-playing sessions, including their enthusiasm, engagement, and willingness to collaborate with classmates. The combination of these methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the changes in students' learning motivation. Students showed higher enthusiasm and active participation in learning, which was evident from the observational findings.
2	Active Student Engagement	Observations showed that students were more engaged in learning, actively discussing, collaborating, and playing roles according to the scenario. They also became more confident in expressing ideas.
3	Understanding of the Material	Interviews with teachers and students revealed that the role-playing method helped students better understand the SKI material by connecting abstract concepts to real-life situations.
4	Enjoyable Learning Environment	Documentation in the form of photos and videos indicated a lively and enjoyable learning atmosphere, reducing the boredom typically experienced with conventional methods.
5	Reflection and Improvement	Initial challenges, such as students' lack of understanding of the scenario, were addressed through reflection and improvement, including clearer guidelines and brief practice sessions before the activity.

Overall, the results of this study show that the role-playing method is effective in improving students' learning motivation. The implementation of this method not only helps students understand SKI material more deeply but also creates an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, this method is recommended for broader application in SKI learning as well as other subjects.

The findings of this study indicate that the application of the role-playing method can effectively improve students' learning motivation. In this method, students are given the opportunity to take on specific roles related to the learning material. This provides a deeper and more contextual learning experience, allowing students to better understand the concepts being studied. This method also creates an enjoyable and interactive learning environment, which ultimately encourages students to become more engaged in the learning process.

These findings align with Vygotsky's constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning (Suardipa, 2020). According to Vygotsky, students learn optimally through cooperation with peers and guidance from teachers. In the context of this research, role-playing enables students to collaborate in understanding historical events or other material (Yen et al., 2015). Through role simulations, students not only memorize facts but also understand the underlying concepts and perspectives. Vygotsky's theory is evident in the way students engage in

meaningful cooperation during role-playing activities. For example, students work together to plan their roles, share ideas, and solve problems collectively while acting out scenarios. This collaborative process allows them to build on each other's knowledge and experiences, fostering deeper understanding and critical thinking skills. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding the interaction to ensure that the learning objectives are achieved.

Furthermore, the improvement in students' learning motivation can also be explained by Maslow's theory of needs, particularly in relation to esteem needs. In the role-playing method, students are given important roles that make them feel valued and recognized by their peers and teachers (Hamzah et al., 2023). Recognition of their contributions in the simulation boosts their self-confidence, which in turn motivates them to participate more actively in learning activities. This confidence becomes an important foundation for their future academic success (Lin et al., 2022).

Observations during the research showed that students involved in role-playing tended to show higher enthusiasm compared to traditional teaching methods. They appeared more active in discussions, asked questions, and responded to the material being discussed. This active participation is an indicator of increased learning motivation, which also supports the development of students' communication and teamwork skills. Thus, the role-playing method not only impacts academic understanding but also contributes to the development of students' social skills.

Additionally, Kolb's experiential learning theory is also relevant to the findings of this research. According to Kolb, effective learning occurs when students go through a learning cycle that involves concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. In role-playing, students directly experience historical events through the roles they play, reflect on their experiences, and connect them to the concepts being taught (Suleman, 2024).

The enjoyable learning environment also contributes to the success of the role-playing method. According to Deci and Ryan's intrinsic motivation theory, a learning environment that supports basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness can enhance students' intrinsic motivation. In role-playing, students feel more autonomous as they have control over the roles they play, feel competent through their active contributions, and feel connected to their peers through collaboration within groups (Oga-Baldwin, 2015). The atmosphere of the classroom changes significantly with this method. Students often wear simple costumes or use props related to their roles, adding an element of creativity and excitement to the activity. The dramatization of scenarios brings the material to life, making the learning process more dynamic and engaging. Additionally, applause and positive feedback from both peers and teachers create a supportive and celebratory environment, boosting students' confidence and enthusiasm. These changes make the classroom feel more interactive and lively, fostering a sense of joy and active participation among students.

Challenges that arose in the early cycles, such as students' lack of understanding of the role scenarios, highlight the importance of thorough preparation in the application of this method. This is in line with the principles of instructional design, which emphasize the need to provide clear guidance and support to students during the learning process. With improvements made in subsequent cycles, these challenges were successfully addressed, thus maximizing the effectiveness of the role-playing method.

The researcher found that this role-playing technique improved students' learning outcomes. Role-playing is an innovative and effective learning method. It engages and enlivens the subject matter effectively, making it more memorable and impactful. The role-playing method helps students understand the material more easily. Eighth-grade students are well-suited to this method because it is simple and easy to understand. The question-and-answer sessions with the Islamic Cultural History teacher and the eighth-grade students indicate that students' learning outcomes improved after role-playing was applied (Asnas, 2024). Additionally, role-playing in the classroom showed that students

performed well in their assessments. Observing how well students understand the material they are being taught is one of the best ways to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness. Role-playing helps eighth-grade students at Darul Hikmah learn better.

Overall, the findings of this study support various educational theories that emphasize the importance of active involvement, real-life experience, and a supportive learning environment in improving student motivation and understanding. Therefore, the role-playing method can be considered an effective and relevant approach for application in the teaching of Islamic Cultural History as well as other subjects. Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers integrate role-playing activities into their lessons to promote student engagement and deeper understanding. Teachers should ensure that students are given enough freedom to express their creativity while being guided in how to effectively collaborate with peers. Additionally, teachers can enhance the learning experience by incorporating props, costumes, and dramatization, which will make the material more engaging and relatable. It is also suggested that teachers provide continuous positive feedback and encourage peer recognition to build students' confidence and motivation. These strategies can create a more interactive and dynamic classroom environment, fostering both motivation and learning..

Conclusion

This study concludes that the role-playing method can significantly improve students' learning motivation through an approach that involves real-life experiences and social interaction. By taking on roles that are relevant to the learning material, students find it easier to understand concepts in depth and contextually, which makes the learning process more meaningful.

Moreover, the application of this method meets students' esteem needs, as outlined in Maslow's theory. By feeling valued and recognized during the learning process, students become more confident and motivated to actively participate. This increase in motivation has a positive impact not only on academic aspects but also on the development of social skills such as communication and teamwork.

By integrating constructivist theory and basic human needs, the role-playing method proves to be an effective teaching strategy for creating an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, this method can be widely adapted in various educational contexts to support holistic and student-centered learning.

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