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# STUDENT INVOLVEMENT WITHIN ISLAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION: FOR A FUTURE PROFESSION

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article was to explore student involvement in teaching and learning, focusing on the experiences of third-year students in the Indonesian Islamic Education Study Program teacher program. Student involvement was defined as having three aspects: students exhibit active classroom participation, students influence the curriculum design, and students feel they are part of the community. The findings were reported based on interview studies and process analysis, the involvement of learning methods, and the motivation for student involvement. The findings revealed that students had multiple understandings of student involvement and that the level of involvement depended on student and lecturer involvement, expectations, and responsibilities. Student lecturers also linked student involvement to the use of teaching methods, learning, and their future professions as teachers of Islamic religious education. Students mainly discussed intrinsic motivation (beneficial for learning) for student involvement, but traces of altruistic motivation (civics

learning) were also observed. Extrinsic motivation (university benefits), however, was absent. Voices of resistance to student involvement were also present; these students preferred lecturer-led education and were unaccustomed to high levels of involvement. Student understanding of engagement challenges the lecturer–student role in the education of teachers in Islamic religious education specifically, and in Islamic higher education in general. Acknowledging students' diverse understanding of student involvement is important. Overall, based on student experience, involvement creates participation and the motivation to study here and now and for future professions. Studies show that student involvement has inherent value beyond the benefits of measurable outcomes, in which the use of teaching, engagement, and learning methods for future professions is promoted.

**Keywords:** *Involvement, Learning Methods, College Motivation, Islamic Religious Education Teacher Profession.*

## A. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explore the involvement of students in the Islamic religious education study program in teaching and learning, focusing on the experiences of third-year students in the Islamic religious education teacher education program of Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia. Student involvement is defined as students who are active and participate in class, affecting curriculum design and the feeling of being part of the community (Yang, 2018; Ha, 2018; Groccia, 2018; Masika & Jones, 2016; Zepke, 2015). This article poses the following three research questions: how is the student involvement process, with a focus on teaching and learning in Islamic religious teacher education programs, defined? What are the benefits and challenges of engaging student teaching methods in Islamic religious teacher education? How can students' experiences of their involvement in the teaching and learning process

be understood in terms of motivation to promote student involvement in Islamic religious teacher education?

The focus on student involvement is particularly relevant for teachers and students because they, in their future professions, are expected to promote active involvement among their students (National Education Standards Agency, 2015). However, a risk is processed: students involved and active in Islamic higher education are often perceived as ubiquitous, positive, and unproblematic, with the underlying assumption that observable and public student actions are desirable and other more passive actions, such as listening and thinking, are not signs of engagement (Page & Chahboun, 2019; Gourlay, 2015). In addition, the active participation and involvement of students in their Islamic education have a selective affinity with the mastery of teaching methods while being an important factor in measuring quality. Such trends can be linked to marketization, with a focus on performance, individualization, competition, and the successful future employability of students (Whitt, 2016; Zepke, 2015; Sukenti, Tambak, & Siregar, 2021). Therefore, mastery of an integrative-interconnected teaching method of student involvement in Islamic higher education can risk marginalization (Aalai, 2020; Bergmark & Westman, 2016).

In addition to questioning the concept of student involvement, research has called for additional studies in higher education, exploring student involvement based on student engagement experiences of teaching methods (Zembylas, 2020) or collecting qualitative data not only on measurable outcomes of student engagement, related to selective affinity among students, student participation, and

involvement in Islamic education (Daniels & Hebard, 2018; Zepke, 2015) but also in the process by which the attitudes and experiences of those involved are applied to the future (Stein, 2019).

Researchers have emphasized student involvement links, for example, students and lecturers working in partnership, students having a curriculum that creates a curriculum with lecturers; and students who act as agents of educational change (Daniels & Hebard, 2018; Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Zembylas, 2020; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Geron & Levinson (2018) underlined that the active involvement of students, in class, in curriculum management, or in partnerships with other stakeholders can increase the competence of critical active teaching methods and student social welfare beyond measurable results and high achievement. This holistic view aligns with those of Virtanen, et al. (2018), which emphasize a sense of belonging as part of student engagement, characterized by feelings of being included and accepted by others, that is, belonging to a community of practice through collaboration and communication with peers.

Encouraging students' active involvement in learning methods and curriculum design may require re-examining the roles of lecturers and students, affecting social relations and—thus—hierarchies (Dunn & Kennedy, 2019). Islamic higher education is based on the perspective of university lecturers, who determine students' priorities, learning objectives, and lesson plans to achieve those objectives (Popenici & Kerr, 2017; Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry, 2016). The culture of dominating lecturers in Islamic higher education learning methods can hinder the development

of new roles for teachers and students and provide a view of Islamic education from another perspective. The organizational structure can also hinder student involvement (Bovill et al., 2016). However, the roles of traditional lecturers and students should be challenged, a task that "encourages the greater use of dialogical, scientific, and applicative teaching methods than the memorization process" (Bovill et al., 2016).

The motivation to work with the involvement of Islamic students in Islamic higher education is extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic. Extrinsic motivation involves students' rights to participate in decisions that affect them, as stated in higher education policies in various countries (Karabulut-Ilgu, Cherrez & Jahren, 2018; Seale, Gibson, Haynes, & Potter, 2015). Justification for promoting student engagement that is compatible with cultural diversity (Albrecht & Karabenick, 2018 Lizzio & Wilson, 2009). Student involvement improves achievement and the level of study completion, central factors in measuring quality (Broucker, De Wit, & Verhoeven, 2018; Carey, 2013). However, this positive impact of student involvement can also be viewed as measurable benefits (grades, graduation) for the students, not merely for the university. Intrinsic motivation can describe the activities of students engaged in learning that promote their learning, development, and motivation. The justification for promoting student engagement is that they must study independently, beyond the pass and completion rates (Bond, Buntins, Bedenlier, Zawacki-Richter, & Kerres, 2020; Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Lizzio & Wilson, 2009). Opportunities for student involvement during their education at universities contribute to their understanding and ownership of the

learning process (Kaplan, Garner & Brock, 2019; Bovill & Bulley, 2011).

Altruistic motivation can be understood as student involvement in higher education, which refers to academic acceptance, where students learn about learning methods. Students are considered partners, with a commitment to learning and practicing the steps of the teaching method—or the socialization of learning models (Arseven, 2018; Bond, et al. 2020). The lecturers' understanding of the teaching method and its implementation in learning was poor and questionable, resulting in a problem: the success of teaching education was threatened. This emphasizes the question of how teaching methods are perceived and practiced in education, where it is important that students' voices are heard and that their active involvement develops. The justification for promoting student engagement is its long-term benefits for society (Rankin & Brown, 2016).

The research reported in this article is based on interviews conducted in 2021 within the Islamic religious education study program of Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia. We used opportunistic participant selection based on availability (Bryan, 2011). We invited students from Indonesia and other countries, namely, Thailand and Cambodia, to enroll in the Islamic religious education study program. Twenty-eight students aged from 20 to 25 years volunteered to participate: from Indonesia, ten females and nine males; from Thailand, four females and two males; and from Cambodia, two females and one male. In the invitation and during the interview, we emphasized that the focus of

this study was their experiences with student involvement in teaching and learning in Islamic religious teacher education thus far. The limited number of participants and the limited background of the participants are limitations of this research. However, we linked the national case to the literature from an international perspective, and the findings are presented in the international context.

The author conducted semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). The interviews focused on exploring experiences related to student involvement and influencing decision-making in teaching and learning during Islamic religious teacher education, the relationship between student involvement and learning in the use of teaching methods, and suggestions on how to increase student involvement in Islamic religious teacher education. Remaining open to the student experience while considering the aims and objectives of the research is important; therefore, clarifying follow-up questions were asked. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian. Each interview lasted between 30 and 50 minutes and was transcribed into other words in the original language, Indonesia. Student statements cited in the findings section have been translated into English. In accordance with ethical law (Government of Indonesia, 2009), informed consent was obtained from students. All participants were informed that they had the right to stop their participation in this research without reason and that empirical data would be confidential.

We used latent content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The overall unit of analysis was student involvement in teaching and learning in Islamic religious teacher education based on students' experience. The unit of meaning was

based on research questions and defined as "the process of student involvement in Islamic religious education teacher programs in teaching and learning," "the challenges of the benefits and challenges of student involvement in the use of learning methods in Islamic religious teacher education," and "motivation to promote student involvement in higher education." The units of meaning serve as guiding principles because they assist in the condensation phase, comparing similarities and differences and finding patterns in empirical data. In the abstraction phase, themes that emerged were formulated. To understand the experiences of Islamic education students regarding their participation in teaching and learning and involvement in the use of teaching methods, we posit that advancing beyond individual experiences and focusing on the collective understanding of research topics is necessary. This finding contains three themes, with underlying objectives, explored as follows.

## B. Diverse Understanding of Student Involvement in Islamic Religious Teacher Education

The first theme describes students' diverse understanding of the concept of student involvement in teaching and learning in the Islamic religious teacher education program. Student involvement influences decision-making and ownership—interrelated concepts. *The first aspect* explains that students express various views on what is involved in student involvement. Some students could not separate the meaning of student involvement and the influence on decision-making: "I think they are very connected, influence decisions and participation" (infroman 4), "When

you can make an impact, you feel involved" (informan 6). Other students separated the concepts: "[Involvement means] You can participate in education, perhaps in planning, implementation, and assessment," (5) and "Engagement is also open in front of buildings or built" (informan 2). Involvement is related to feelings of inclusion, including, and being important as a student; this phenomenon is exemplified in the following quote:

> ... involvement, it feels more like you belong... I feel valued when I come to class (informan 10).

Some students considered that the influence on decision-making was related to having the opportunity to influence decisions made by others. "That we can have an impact [on study guidelines] even if we don't know the content" (informan 12). Students exemplified the influence on decision-making as having choices regarding literature, schools of religion, work and examination schedules, and forms: "Choosing what chapters to read, who to work with" (informan 1), and "often, we can influence schedule and time, tables… we can also affect the date of the assignment" (informan 3). In addition, evaluation was highlighted as a form of participating in decision-making. "After several classes, we were invited to write reflections on what is good and bad... which entails some sort of influence" (informan 11). Unlike the aforementioned quote, some students also thought that the lecturer had to decide and plan the lecture, leaving the decision-making to the lecturer.

> In lectures, there is less room [for influence], it should be decided in advance. Meanwhile, we students don't

> know the content of the lecture, the lecturers have to decide... then the students have different opinions, so I think it's good because it's decided... often, it's better for the lecturer to choose (informan 10).

Sometimes students felt that they were considered demanding by the lecturer when they asked for influence on decisions or wanted to increase the participation level in the class, illustrated by the following conversation:

> Students... we feel like the whining class, who is always complaining and grumbling and... 'this is too much work and that...' Researcher; So you have hopes and a desire to participate and when you state that you are being seen as a whiny? Is that, how should I understand what you are saying? Right on, and you experience yourself as a whiny student. That's right (informan 5).

Islamic religious education students have various understandings of student involvement, where active involvement in Islamic religious education activities affects decision-making, and ownership is interrelated. This understanding is closely related to their backgrounds, namely, their various schools of origin.

*The second aspect* emphasizes the understanding of Islamic religious education students regarding what type of education they experience as involvement. Students value a variety of instruction with a clear design and orientation toward goals essential to student involvement. "We vary the class [referring to a specific lecture], we have different ways of working... you can see that it was carefully planned. And I have missed it in many other lectures" (informan 2).

The working methods included exercises for practicing teaching methods and skills and reflecting on roles and responsibilities as future teachers (e.g., exercises using teaching methods); forms of dialogue, discussion, and group work; and creative teaching methods (e.g., the inquiry method and group work). The students highlighted the discussion method as important from an engagement perspective but emphasized the importance of preparing students and lecturers who attended as moderators.

> Dialogue, discussion, and argumentation are examples of methods that increase student involvement in class, which demands that Islamic religious education students be prepared, but also that lecturers ask follow-up questions as well as open, exploratory, and problematized questions, increasing the level of discussion... lecturers need to be present in group discussions (informan 9).

Inquiry methods and group work are examples of working with methods that provide opportunities for participation, engagement, and lecture activities. "In these cases, you know the experiences and questions of all the other students, it results in a high participation rate" (informan 5), and "Do you take it seriously [role playing] it is... a good job to determine something. At the same time, it was fun and enjoyable. You must not underestimate the fact that there is fun in your education... it gives joy and you learn more" (informan 2). Creative learning methods are often used in the education of Islamic religious teachers and are good examples in behavior, speech, and developing higher order thinking skill. The use of teaching methods applied by lecturers becomes a very superior value in lectures to become Islamic

religious teachers in the future: "It provides an opportunity to understand others. I can see what other people have learned… There are other benefits that cannot be counted, it has more to do with how you are as a person (informan 3). Other students described how the group work expanded their thinking about alternative perspectives: "I have learned that you can approach situations from many angles, which I tested in role playing … experience: there is not only one way, there are many" (informan 1). Thus, engagement in education involves various instructions and actively participation in various educational activities through different work methods.

### C. Involvement of Teaching Methods, Expectations, and Responsibilities of Students and Lecturers

The second theme reveals strategies that students' deemed necessary to increase involvement. *The first aspect* is the importance of lecturers' openness, flexibility, and complete release of control and their ability to understand students, connect with them, and build relationships with them to create an open climate. In addition, students' attitudes and involvement were emphasized. Student involvement, according to these students, was closely related to the teaching method of the lecturer: "It [the level of involvement] depends on which teaching method the lecturer teaches [the lecture]" (informan 2). The relational ability of using teaching methods in lecturers' lectures was considered important for student participation, for example, the willingness of lecturers to be authentic and correct without formal distance. Students emphasized the importance of feeling safe or secure and getting to know people through learning methods.

For example, they should interact methodologically with undertaking quality learning to share thoughts and questions in developing divergent thinking.

> You have to be private without being personal. You don't need to distance yourself from students, in fact, you don't have to do anything else. We need to learn now if you can share things (informan 12).

Another aspect of lecturer relationship skills that students value and emphasize is lecturer care. "As a student, you would appreciate it when a professor cared about... getting in touch before officially emphasizing that he was continuing the course (informan 9).

> [I] have to create a tolerant atmosphere where you can express different thoughts... If you feel you have the right to interrupt or the right to express your opinion or ask a question, you are more involved, then if you feel it every time I say something which is difficult for lecturers because they want to stick with their plans (informan 1).

In addition, the flexibility and distribution of part of the control as perceived by students was a strategy or method for creating an open climate. They wanted teachers to frame and provide a structure for learning situations and teaching methods while being open to students' suggestions and needs.

> The teacher has planned a learning method [to demonstrate] these strength points and we will follow that order, and there is no room to talk about what we experienced as difficulties... I think some lecturers have had a hard time letting go of that control (informan 4).

Students perceive the task of Islamic university lecturers working with student involvement is demanding. This perception was observed because Islamic higher education is highly regulated by an external Islamic ideological power and framework, which sometimes makes things difficult, because many problems have been resolved. "It is difficult to talk about the effects of decision-making because there are so many things that were resolved beforehand, but lecturers can, however, be flexible within certain frameworks" (informan 6). This demanding task is also related to the lecturer and their experiences. Flexibility, in this case, is related to the courage to let go of control and be vulnerable.

> As a human being, it requires life experience, Islamic ideology, inner strength and desire. You have to be able to show vulnerability if you want to be able to invite students to be a part of everything, if you want to negotiate everything, if you don't want to take on the usual [lecturer] role in Islam (informan 11).

Regarding the significance of students' attitudes and involvement in creating a participatory climate, the results showed that although students wanted to influence and participate in promotion agreements, they sometimes resisted granting permission when the workings of the course were unfamiliar.

> When something differs from tradition, we are very skeptical at first. What is this? How does it work? But when you try it, you realize it's fun, that you learn a lot, like when we worked with cases and studied groups. It's not something we are used to... you are very attached to the structure you are used to (informan 8).

Thus, the attitude, willingness, and involvement of lecturers and students emerge as important things to create a participatory climate in the classroom.

*The second aspect* concerns the lecturers' responsibilities to be goal-oriented and provide a clear introduction and student responsibilities. The responsibilities of lecturers are, for example, a variety of knowledge and their great involvement; understanding what is difficult and new for students; implementing Islamic values in student life; teaching students about faith and piety and planning for it; and aligning course material with the objectives of lectures and Muslim goals, namely, fear Allah.

In the following quote, two Islamic religious education students stated the importance of lecturers sharing their knowledge and involvement: "[T] he most importantly with a lecturer is sure that you are really interested in what you are doing, because it spreads to the class" (informan 12) and "[I] feel much more meaningful when a lecturer burns his spirits, and you feel that you also want to learn it, because this is what the lecturer thinks is important" (informan 5). Therefore, a lecturer can act similarly to a machine, combining their knowledge of content and lectures with an orientation toward a Muslim life goal, ensuring learning and student engagement. In addition, the students emphasized how the responsibility of the lecturer must be accompanied by the responsibility of the student's faith.

> It is important that students of Islamic religious education are responsible for having read, and are able to have involvement to get the most out of Islamic religious education teacher education,

> and lecturers must take responsibility for thinking that the new material being learned... lecture material, good discussion and share your thoughts and understanding of Islamic values as well as test understandings if you don't have time (informan 1).

Many students stated that the responsibility for learning faded in the situation where students should participate, regarding content, theory, and critical analysis. "This does not mean that its involvement and influence makes Islamic religious education lecturers leave students alone in class. They have to be there and make problems part of the instruction or seminars" (informan 9).

The results showed how parents emphasized the different personalities of students as something that affected their ability to participate in activities. Therefore, students felt that lecturers should be responsible for creating opportunities for all students. Lecturers should be active in the lecture process and seminars, allowing silent voices to be heard.

> R Are you saying that the demands are high enough for you to take personal responsibility?

> S Well, personally, I don't think, because I don't know, but I think for many other people, it's hard [to be involved]. For example, in a seminar, there are many [students] who cannot graduate and still graduate. Personally, I think it is the responsibility of Islamic religious education lecturers to support and strengthen them, because it is not because they have not read. They could be very prepared, but they didn't say anything because they didn't have any questions. I thought it odd that the lecturer didn't take over the situation and put it in. It can be done in a pedagogical way, without showing a person (informan 15).

> Some students called for other ways to participate, except to be in the spotlight in class, "[Y] or not to be seen and heard, there must be other ways of engagement" (informan 19).

Another type of lecturer responsibility was the responsibility for clear, distinct recognition when starting to broaden student engagement because such situations may feel very unsafe for students. Students perceived that some lecturers had ambitions to create opportunities for student engagement but failed: "Afterwards playing with taking involvement can set the turn to be" (informan 28), and "Many students are from a tradition where everything is done, what you have to do, in different paces. The transition can be very difficult, to learn to think for oneself, which is suddenly required" (informan 27).

The following quote describes a lecture in which I/he felt excluded and was able to contribute to Islam in the aspect of influence.

> Well, they [the lecturers of Islamic religious education] invited the previous students, at the right time, to a meeting where we participated in planning [lessons] and examinations. How do we check it? What is a reasonable amount of work in terms of reading? Does this look like good literature? (informan 26).

Students were tasked with educational accountability in encouraging engagement in education. In addition, the involvement and knowledge of lecturers and their expectations of students were significant in developing students' thinking and skills. Lecturer knowledge is a

scientific responsibility and prophetic mission that must be conducted jointly with students.

## D. Student Involvement and its Relation to Future Learning and Teaching Professions

The third theme examines whether students perceive engagement as important to their learning, and if so, in what ways involvement enhances student learning. Lecturer expectations are important for student learning. *The first aspect* shows the ways in which students attribute importance to lecturer expectations, which are related to student engagement, motivation, and learning methods. Professors' "participation in learning methods and you try to do it yourself too, because it is a big difference whether you expect someone to fail or it has to be in some way - it often becomes that way" (24). Likewise, other students described the expectations of lecturers as a driver for learning: "If a teacher expects something from me, I want to achieve it. It's like a carrot [not a stick] in another way, this lecturer is watching me and wants me to appear" (20). According to students, Islamic religious education lecturers often expect them to be willing to work hard for the education they have chosen and paid for. Some students are disappointed with their fellow students for not being involved and working hard because both groups are part of the same learning environment.

> They [Islamic religious education lecturers] assume that when you are there on a voluntary basis, when you pay for your education, when you take out a loan you expect them [Islamic students] to do their job and look for it. However, unfortunately, humans don't work that way (1).

According to students of Islamic religious education, low expectations affected their motivation to be actively involved, affecting learning. The level of involvement that should have been high between lecturers and students was only at a theoretical level. Students are considered human beings who do not have the knowledge that the lecturers will teach.

> In this last lecture, I felt like they [Islamic education lecturers] thought we were children, they talked to us like that, and: 'Do you know how to reference properly?' Well, it feels like... I mean, I've read three years and years at this Islamic university, I know how to reference... about us as if we knew nothing. This is not fun (18).

Students described feelings of degradation, such as a lack of knowledge and competence, which generated other negative feelings. Feelings of inferiority were sometimes observed as a reaction to the treatment of some lecturers who did not understand the student's condition. Sometimes the Islamic mission of the lecturers was not observed to be based on their interactions with students.

*The second aspect* highlights the relationship between student participation and learning. This stands out in the following quotations, where students answered the researchers' questions on the solutions in which students have found engagement relevant to learning: "Experience is that you learn more when you are engaged" (10) and "strong engagement means you tackling assignments so that you learn something, profitably collaborating with other students... that you are responsible for your own learning and for graduating college" (15). Other students stated the relationship between

engagement and learning in terms of self-development and learning to increase confidence.

> It is more useful for me to discuss with others, think hard. And I think I was a much calmer person before, when I was in my first year [Islamic religious education teacher training]. I have to contribute to various discussions, but then, I don't know when it actually happened, but, better like "hello, I want to say something" (10).

The students also linked their learning in Islamic religious education teacher education with teachers who work as teachers in the future. How this education organizes mapmakers to research the competencies of professional Islamic religious education teachers. For example, an opportunity to practice teaching:

> S: If you are thinking about Islamic religious education teacher education, I believe it is important for you there to learn how to teach... You must be involved... R: To promote collaboration—do I understand you correctly? S: No, not collaboration, but to practice your future teaching profession. If I am going to teach in a class, where there are 25 students, it would be foolish to practice with a class [in Islamic religious education teacher education] rather than teaching two people. Teaching in small classes with a limited number of students leads to more engagement with students (24).

Involvement involves teaching methods of Islamic religious education teacher education and is a central part of the teaching mission for students. The students provided examples of understanding involvement in schools that were not free from barriers, which meant that they needed to be

flexible in their roles as teachers of Islamic religious education and adapt to their students.

> S: They [students] can be involved in deciding the teaching method... But it is part of the [national] curriculum that students must join in the influence. You have to take as much as you can so that the students can have an influence in that moment. But it may be easier if you feel that it is about tailoring teaching by group. R: What are the main obstacles, as you can see? S: For the former, it takes time from teaching, to decide what to do. Do you mean the process? S: Yes, and that students do not know what they are going to learn so how can they know. That's another thing. And the third thing is that they [the students] want different things, so what I do when some people want to do it this way and others want it another way. Who is allowed to have influence? (3).

Students found that the engagement methods used during their Islamic religious education teacher education supported them in their development toward becoming professional Islamic religious education teachers.

> R: Do you think that handling cases on assignment invites involvement? S: Yes, the inquiry method is great. We are always faced with cases that are reasonable to expect in the teaching profession. When faced with such cases in Islamic religious education professional education, you don't have to go to education, you can act professionally because you get the opportunity to try... You have read something in literature, and then you can also apply your knowledge (12).

The quote emphasizes the relationship between Islamic religious education teacher education and teaching practice:

the two contexts need to be harmonized. However, some students emphasized that learning did not presuppose an influence on their decision-making but an active involvement in their learning process:

> I don't depend too much on influence to study, I can take lectures as they are without having any influence at all, learning what other people have decided. But wanting to actively learn... at the same time I can learn all by myself, read a book and then you are not very participatory, or... it depends on how you define engagement (14). There were also some critical voices about student engagement and connections to future teaching. '[I] don't need time from instruction, students don't know what they are going to learn so how can they know [how to work]; if they suggest different things, who will decide?' (15). Student involvement can be considered as difficult, which implies that student lecturers need to develop competence in negotiating between different perspectives in teaching (7).

## E. Discussion

The findings showed that the students had a mixed understanding of student involvement and that the level of involvement depended on student management, expectations and responsibilities, *da'wah* and student expectations. Lecturers and students also attributed student participation to their future learning and professions as teachers, beyond measurable outcomes, for example, grades and degree completion.

Students describe different components such as belonging, being active participants in education, preaching

in developing Islamic campuses, and influencing decision-making, which supports findings in the literature in the field (Hill, Witherspoon & Bartz, 2018; Bovill, 2014; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Students can affect their education at different phases of their education: planning, implementing, and evaluating. The students described a strong relationship between engagement and learning in general, and especially for their future profession as teachers of Islamic religious education. Strategies to promote engagement in Islamic religious teacher education are described as the involvement, hope, *da'wah*, and responsibility of faculty and students, heavily dependent on openness and flexibility (Masturin, Ritonga, & Amaroh, 2022). The themes of shared responsibility and shared engagement have also been emphasized in the literature, for example, Unwin, Rooney & Cole (2018) and Cook-Sather (2015) have emphasized values, including student experience and educational perspectives. In addition, students have indicated that participatory education values collaborative learning and a variety of teaching methods and is important for a multidimensional view of learning (Palomin, 2020; Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Groccia, 2018; Tambak, Ahmad, & Sukenti, 2020). This multidimensional view of learning sometimes contradicts contemporary linear ideas of learning in Islamic higher education, which may result in higher ratings of students in Islamic higher education (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Westman & Bergmark, 2018; Hamzah, et al., 2022; Sukenti, Carlina & Tambak, 2020). In such a view, allowing multiple voices to be heard and appreciating diversity is central, emphasizing that learning occurs in a social and physical context where individual experiences are

valued, as well as all aspects of human beings, not merely cognition. To include multiple perspectives in teaching and learning, lecturers must be aware of the diverse needs and relationships of student-seeking and diversity and embrace diversity as a resource (Lodge, Alhadad, Lewis, et al., 2017; Tambak & Sukenti, 2020). From the two principles taught by the Al-Quran it is very clear to us that diversity (plural) is a sunnatullah and a gift from the Almighty. Societal pluralism is one of the main characteristics of a multicultural society like Indonesia (Nurhayati, 2023; Medina, 2023; Muhlisin, Kholis, & Rini, 2023).

Although most students found that participation was compatible with learning and development, aspects of resistance to student involvement were also observed. This decrease showed that students did not perceive student engagement as a completely benign concept; they associated challenges with it. Students questioned that student engagement must be an active, public act in which strategies to promote participation can involve means other than participatory, interactive classroom activities. This similarity is consistent with a recommendation from Gourlay (2015) to critically review signs of engagement. According to students, some reasons, for example, not wanting to influence decision-making, were due to the lack of certain lecture experiences or traditional views on the roles of lecturers and students. The student–lecturer role view is related to different, sometimes conflicting, expectations and responsibilities for the education process on campus. Many faculty and students are uncomfortable when inviting students to take an active role and perceive this process as emotionally and intellectually

challenging (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Cook-Sather, 2014). Working with student engagement requires a new way of thinking about the roles of students and lecturers (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Cook-Sather, 2014; McMahon & Zyngier, 2009). Bovill (2014) suggested that student involvement does not necessarily reduce the proficiency of lecturers but should consider campus in "facilitator learning."

Here the involvement must be packaged and formed between students and lecturers. Because this is related to the role of humans as caliphs in advance (leaders) (Tambak & Sukenti, 2020; Mulyana, Kurahman, & Fauzi, 2023). On the other hand, in Ali, Chaudhary, & Islam (2023) view, this involvement is related to Islamic teachings which state that the best people are those who benefit others. Here students must involve themselves in learning activities and management, because it is also related to worship of Allah SWT.

Islamic students mainly discussed the intrinsic motivation for student participation, focusing on inherent Islamic values. They viewed participation as beneficial for their learning, civilization and development, and involvement in their Islamic studies. The assumptions underlying intrinsic motivation show a multidimensional view of learning and emphasize the values of Islamic democracy (Halomoan, Moeis, & Yakubu, 2023; Abdelkader, 2023; Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Westman & Bergmark, 2018; Tambak, et al., 2022). Cook-Sather et al. (2014) claimed that when students are involved in their education, involved is the willingness and motivation to approach deep learning, as well as the responsibility for their learning through autonomy and agency in terms of

choice and control in learning. Learning methods that use dialogues and the ability to participate in a discussion are ways for students to be active in the learning process (Bovill et al., 2011), described by students as important.

The empirical data also showed traces of altruistic motivation because students linked engagement with their future profession as teachers of Islamic religious education. This phenomenon is of particular relevance because the students will work as teachers of Islamic religious education with a mission to promote Islamic values and enable moral, active citizenship, which is especially important in a global society where quality education that promotes moral implementation is under threat (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009; Zepke, 2018; Karim, 2022). Involvement of students in future professional development requires the development of moral values or in Amril's (2017) persfective *makarim sharia*. Students must link their participation today with the mastery and application of *makarim sharia* values for future professional success. The content of *makarim sharia* as a foundation for professional Islamic teachers is an attitude that will not distance itself from the praiseworthy qualities of Allah SWT such as wisdom, kindness, generosity, knowledge and forgiveness. *Makarim sharia* in the teacher profession is an act aimed at anyone who has the praiseworthy qualities of Allah SWT, such as wisdom, judgment, *hilm. 'ilm* and *'awf*, even though the qualities of Allah SWT are far more noble than His qualities in humans (Amril, 2017; Tambak, Ahmad, & Sukenti, 2020). Extrinsic motivation for student participation was "not a question" for students because they never expressed the idea that universities would benefit

from having engaged education or that such motivation was related to individual student benefits, such as increased levels of achievement, learning methods, and high completion.

## F. Conclusion

To conclude, we found that acknowledging students' diverse understanding of student involvement is important. Overall, based on student experience, student involvement creates engagement in the use of teaching methods and motivation to learn in the here and now and for the future teaching profession of Islamic religious education. Also important is to emphasize that students focus on intrinsic and altruistic motivation. This study showed that student involvement has inherent Islamic values compared with measurable outcomes, with the value of using teaching methods, engagement, and learning for future professions being promoted. This is particularly relevant for student lecturers because of its central role in the future Islamic religious education profession to promote engagement for their students. Also important is that student involvement penetrates the strategy of organizing Islamic religious education teacher education into an ongoing process and is not based on the involvement of individual lecturers. Because student involvement is a contemporary issue in Islamic higher education, we hope that our research deepens the understanding of the concepts in Islamic religious education teacher education that can influence the context and other Islamic higher education programs in Indonesia. The Islamic religious education teacher program must be designed to produce high-quality Islamic religious education teachers.

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