

Enhancing Interest and Creativity in Akidah Akhlak Learning through Animated Videos

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Abstract: This study examines the implementation of animated video media in Akidah Akhlak learning and its effect on enhancing students' interest and creativity at MTs Arrohmah. The research responds to the growing demand for engaging, relevant digital media in the modern classroom to improve instructional quality and foster moral character. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected from students and teachers through observation, interviews, and documentation. Findings reveal that animated videos improved students' attention, enthusiasm, and independent learning, while stimulating creative thinking and idea generation. They also simplified the understanding of abstract Akidah Akhlak concepts and promoted interactive, dynamic classroom engagement. Unlike previous studies that predominantly applied animated media in science or language learning, this research uniquely focuses on its integration into Islamic moral education at the madrasah level. This approach contributes an innovative and practical framework for leveraging digital animation to boost interest and creativity in religious education, supporting more meaningful and enjoyable learning in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Media, Islamic Education, Qualitative Research, Student Engagement

A. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI), particularly the subject of Akidah Akhlak, plays a fundamental role in shaping students' character, moral values, and faith. In the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) setting, this subject aims not only to transfer Islamic knowledge but also to internalize virtues in students' daily lives. Despite its significance, classroom practice often faces challenges due to conventional, teacher-centered approaches dominated by lectures and textbook reading. Such methods frequently fail to engage students actively, making it difficult for them to fully understand abstract religious concepts. According to Putri and Kholik (2024), these traditional strategies reduce participation and interest. In today's digital era, students are accustomed to visually stimulating, interactive learning experiences, creating a pressing need for innovative teaching methods that match their expectations and cognitive preferences.

Although educators recognize the importance of engaging instructional media, research exploring technology-based innovations in Akidah Akhlak remains limited. In particular, there is insufficient evidence on the use of animated videos to present abstract Islamic concepts in more concrete and relatable ways. Many students find it challenging to connect doctrinal teachings to practical moral behavior when learning relies solely on lectures. While animated videos have been used in other educational contexts, there is little understanding of how students perceive such media in religious studies or whether it can stimulate creativity and independent learning. This gap limits the development of empirically supported strategies to integrate multimedia effectively in value-based Islamic education, especially for addressing complex spiritual themes within MTs classrooms.

Research in other disciplines demonstrates the pedagogical value of animated videos. For example, Fahmi et al. (2024) and Melati et al. (2023) found that animations help simplify complex materials, boost motivation, and improve retention. Nasution et al. (2022) observed increased attention, participation, and achievement among students using animated media, while Ali and Jumaria (2024) noted its role in creating immersive, enjoyable learning environments. Internationally, Mayer and Moreno (2003) and Homer et al. (2008) highlight that multimedia learning enhances conceptual understanding and learner engagement. However, most studies focus on subjects such as science, language, or mathematics, leaving the role of animated videos in Islamic moral education largely unexplored. This underlines the need to investigate how animation can be adapted to the distinct pedagogical goals of Akidah Akhlak.

The theoretical foundation of this study is rooted in Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory (2009), which asserts that learners gain a deeper understanding from words and visuals combined than from words alone. Principles such as coherence, signaling, and modality emphasize how animations can reduce cognitive overload and highlight essential content. Additionally, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978) supports the idea that animated media, when used in interactive classroom contexts, can foster dialogue, collaborative reflection, and deeper moral reasoning. By integrating these theories, this research positions animated videos as a pedagogically sound tool for making abstract Akidah Akhlak concepts more accessible while simultaneously encouraging higher-order thinking and creativity among students.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of animated videos in enhancing student interest and creativity in Akidah Akhlak lessons at MTs Arrohmah. Specifically, the research aims to determine whether animated videos can increase students' attention, enthusiasm, and independent learning behaviors. It also explores how such media facilitate understanding of abstract religious concepts and stimulate creative thinking in applying moral values. By focusing on a subject that is inherently values-driven and often perceived as difficult to visualize, this study

introduces animated video as a promising instructional innovation bridging the gap between traditional Islamic education and contemporary digital learning preferences.

This research addresses several key questions: How does the use of animated video media influence students' interest in learning Akidah Akhlak? In what ways do animated videos affect students' creativity in expressing and applying moral teachings? How do students and teachers perceive the role of animated videos in simplifying abstract religious concepts? What potential challenges arise in implementing this medium in MTs classrooms? These guiding questions are designed to produce insights that are both theoretically valuable and practically applicable for improving Islamic religious instruction through digital innovation.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both scholarship and educational practice. Academically, it fills a crucial gap in research on technology-enhanced religious education by offering empirical data from the MTs context. Practically, it provides a model for integrating animated videos into Akidah Akhlak lessons, making them more relatable and engaging for digital-native learners. The findings are expected to benefit teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers by demonstrating how multimedia tools can modernize character education without compromising its core values. Ultimately, this research advocates for harmonizing timeless Islamic principles with innovative pedagogical approaches to create more meaningful, enjoyable, and impactful learning experiences in the 21st century.

B. Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore students' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of animated video media in Aqidah Akhlak lessons. As Creswell (2020) notes, a qualitative approach is well-suited for uncovering rich, in-depth insights into subjective meanings that cannot be fully captured by numerical data. The descriptive design allowed the researcher to present the learning process as it occurred naturally, without experimental manipulation, thereby preserving the authentic classroom context. The primary goal was to understand how animated videos influence students' interest and creativity during lessons. This approach also enabled the study to interpret not only observable behaviors but also the underlying reasons for students' responses. Thus, the qualitative design ensured that the findings reflected genuine classroom experiences and student perspectives.

The research was conducted at MTs Arrohmah, a private Islamic junior high school that has integrated animated videos into its Aqidah Akhlak curriculum. The site was chosen because it had prior experience implementing digital learning media, making it an ideal context for investigating the impact of animated videos. The primary participants were eighth-grade students who had engaged with animated video-

supported lessons for at least one semester. They were selected purposively based on criteria such as active participation, communication ability, and willingness to share honest feedback. Additionally, the Aqidah Akhlak teacher participated as a supporting informant, offering professional observations and reflections that enriched the dataset. This deliberate participant selection ensured that the research captured relevant and context-specific experiences.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the learning process, the study used three primary data collection tools: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted across multiple class sessions to capture behavioral indicators of interest, participation, and creativity. Semi-structured interviews with both students and the teacher explored perceptions, motivations, and personal experiences with the animated videos. Documentation included lesson plans (RPP), animated video samples, and examples of students' work. This multi-method approach facilitated triangulation, ensuring that the data were rich, credible, and representative of the real classroom setting.

Table 1. Summary of Data Collection Tools

Data Collection	Tool	Purpose	Instrument/Format
Classroom Observation		To record student engagement, participation, and creative activities	Structured observation checklist
Semi-Structured Interview		To explore perceptions, feelings, and experiences with animated videos	Interview guide with open-ended questions
Documentation		To support and contextualize findings	Lesson plans, video samples, students' work

Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2018) model, which involves three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction entailed selecting, summarizing, and coding key information from observations, interviews, and documents. The reduced data were organized into thematic categories such as "enhanced interest," "creative contributions," and "conceptual understanding." These themes were displayed in narrative form to highlight relationships and emerging patterns. The final conclusions were derived after careful verification, including multiple readings and cross-referencing between data sources to ensure accuracy.

Credibility was strengthened through methodological triangulation, comparing and cross-validating findings from different tools. By being present in the classroom, the researcher could observe firsthand the nuances of students' emotional responses, interactions, and engagement with animated media. This immersive approach allowed for a holistic account of how animated video media influenced learning in Aqidah Akhlak lessons. The methodological rigor of this study ensures that its findings not only inform teaching practice at MTs Arrohmah but also contribute meaningfully to the growing literature on technology integration in Islamic education.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

This study aims to thoroughly describe the implementation of animated video media in Aqidah Akhlak learning and analyze its impact on students' interest and creativity at MTs Arrohmah. The main focus of this research is to examine how animated videos are used by the teacher during the learning process and how students respond to them, both in terms of their interest in the material and their creative thinking abilities. To obtain comprehensive data, the researcher employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through various techniques, including direct observation of the learning process in the classroom, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, questionnaires to understand students' perceptions, and document analysis of learning materials such as lesson plans and teaching resources. Through this data triangulation, a complete overview was obtained of the role of animated videos in improving the quality of Aqidah Akhlak learning at the madrasah tsanawiyah level.

1. The Implementation of Animated Videos in Learning

Based on observations conducted during three Akidah Akhlak lessons at MTs Arrohmah, it was evident that the teacher consistently used 5-10 minutes animated videos at the beginning of the lesson as a learning stimulus. The videos featured engaging Islamic content, presenting illustrations of teenage Muslim characters dealing with everyday moral conflicts that are familiar to students, such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. The use of these videos was intended to build students' emotional and cognitive engagement so that they could more easily grasp the values being conveyed. The teacher explained that after the video was shown, the lesson continued with class discussions and group reflections, where students were encouraged to voice their opinions, share personal experiences, and draw moral lessons from what they had watched.

Collected documentation, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and clips of the videos used, showed that the use of animated videos was not merely an add-on but had been systematically integrated into the teacher's instructional strategies. The teacher consciously selected this medium to address the challenges of teaching Akidah Akhlak, especially when dealing with Generation Z students, who tend to be more responsive to visual and digital media. The use of animated videos was considered an effective way to overcome the boredom of conventional lessons and to encourage greater interest and creativity among students. With this approach, the teacher hoped that Akidah Akhlak lessons would become more lively, enjoyable, and meaningful for students.

2. Students' Responses to the Animated Videos

The interview results with 12 students showed that most of them found it easier to understand Akidah Akhlak material when it was delivered through animated videos. Students mentioned that visual elements such as moving images, sound, and engaging storylines helped them concentrate better and kept them from feeling bored during the lesson. They also felt more interested in participating because the media resembled the kinds of content, they watch every day outside of school. Some even said that watching animated videos in class felt like watching a short, meaningful movie rather than an ordinary lesson. This indicates that animated videos function not only as a visual teaching aid but also as a way of creating an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience. Students felt emotionally more connected to the material, making it easier for them to understand and remember the values conveyed through the videos. One eighth-grade student stated: *Usually, Akidah Akhlak lessons are boring, but with animated videos, I feel more enthusiastic. The pictures are funny and the stories fit with our daily life.*

The teacher also noted that after using animated videos in Akidah Akhlak lessons, student participation increased significantly. Before the use of this media, students tended to be passive, mostly listening without asking questions or giving responses. However, since animated videos were introduced as a lead-in to the material, the classroom atmosphere has become much livelier. Students appear more confident in asking questions, sharing their opinions, and responding to questions from the teacher and their peers. During group discussions, students showed greater active involvement, such as exchanging ideas, engaging in healthy debates, and drawing conclusions together. The teacher observed that the visualized stories in the animated videos helped students better grasp the context of the material, which in turn sparked their curiosity. Thus, animated videos not only enhance students' cognitive understanding but also support their affective and social development by encouraging more dynamic interaction throughout the learning process.

3. Improvement in Students' Interest and Creativity

After the implementation of animated videos in Akidah Akhlak lessons, questionnaire results indicated a significant increase in students' interest and creativity. Prior to using this media, many students appeared less focused during lessons, showed signs of boredom, and only a few displayed enthusiasms to ask questions or participate in discussion. Moreover, the ideas they shared during group work were often limited and monotonous. However, after several sessions supported by animated videos, a noticeable shift took place. Students became more enthusiastic in following the lessons, paid close attention to the video content, and felt more confident to voice their opinions and ideas. The engaging visuals, relatable everyday stories, and dynamic use of audio-visual elements made them more involved in the learning process. Animated videos successfully sparked students'

curiosity, encouraging them to think more creatively and participate more actively in class.

This improvement can be seen in various aspects, such as:

Table 2. Before-After Using Animated Videos

Indicator	Before Using Animated Videos	After Using Animated Videos
Focus/Attention	Students had poor focus and were easily distracted	Students were more focused and paid better attention to the material
Enthusiasm in Learning	Students seemed unmotivated and less interested	Students were more enthusiastic and eager to participate in the lesson
Independent Learning	Students often waited for instructions	Students began to learn independently and explore on their own
Creative Ideas in Discussions	Students rarely shared their thoughts	Students became more confident in sharing diverse ideas
Originality of Ideas and Responses	Student responses were mostly uniform and limited	Student responses were more varied and original
Seeing Material from Different Perspectives	Students struggled to view material from other perspectives	Students showed greater flexibility in their thinking and understanding

Based on the observations and analyzed questionnaire data, it can be concluded that the use of animated videos in Akidah Akhlak lessons has a positive impact on improving the quality of students' learning processes. This medium successfully captures students' attention right from the beginning of the lesson, helping them stay more focused and actively engaged in classroom activities. The appealing visuals and contextual narration not only make abstract concepts easier to understand, but also spark students' interest in learning. Furthermore, animated videos stimulate their curiosity and encourage creative thinking, making them more confident in sharing their ideas.

More than just individual progress, this medium also promotes a more collaborative learning environment. After watching the videos, students tend to participate more actively in discussions, whether in small groups or in whole-class settings. The teacher noted a significant increase in students' willingness to express their opinions, especially when posed with open-ended questions that encourage moral reflection. This indicates that animated videos are not only effective as a teaching tool for delivering content, but also as a catalyst for social interaction and character development within the context of religious education.

Discussion

This study shows that using animated videos in Aqidah Akhlak lessons at MTs Arrohmah has a very positive impact on increasing students' interest and creativity. Data gathered through observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation show that students responded enthusiastically to this learning medium. From the beginning of the lessons, the animated videos successfully captured students' attention, making them feel more focused, curious, and involved in learning the

material. This outcome aligns with Mayer's (2009) multimedia learning theory, which states that combining visual and audio elements enhances students' understanding because the brain processes information more effectively. Moreover, in Aqidah Akhlak lessons—which often seem abstract and monotonous—the videos create a refreshing, enjoyable classroom atmosphere. They simplify students' understanding of moral and religious concepts so that students can grasp them more easily and apply the lessons to their daily behavior. Overall, animated videos serve as a powerful tool for making Aqidah Akhlak lessons more engaging and meaningful.

Besides improving students' interest, the animated videos also help encourage creativity during Aqidah Akhlak lessons. Students become more active, especially during class discussions, and they feel more confident expressing their thoughts. The moral stories in the videos depict everyday conflicts, allowing students to analyze situations and generate new ideas. This process sharpens their critical thinking and creativity, as they reflect on alternative solutions and relate the videos' content to their personal lives. Teachers have observed that students now dare to voice their opinions more freely and contribute unique ideas. This matches Vygotsky's (1978) view that learning is most effective through social interaction in contexts relevant to students' lives. Hence, animated videos do more than improve students' understanding of concepts; they also provide a participatory learning experience that nurtures creativity. By engaging students emotionally and intellectually, this approach enhances their character and supports their holistic development in Aqidah Akhlak classes.

The animated videos used in Aqidah Akhlak lessons at MTs Arrohmah were also carefully designed so that they fit the students' daily contexts. These videos tell simple stories about honesty, compassion, friendship, responsibility, and other moral teachings, which students can easily recognize and relate to their own surroundings. Every character, setting, and conflict is close to the students' everyday experiences, so they not only comprehend the concepts intellectually but also appreciate their relevance in practice. This method successfully bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-life application. Teachers noted that students paid close attention to every scene because the visual and auditory elements kept them interested. Arsyad (2019) also supports this by emphasizing that engaging multimedia helps students absorb material more effectively. Overall, the careful design of these animated videos ensured that the lessons felt less abstract and more concrete, making the learning process deeper, more personal, and more enjoyable for all students.

Responses from students further support these findings. Questionnaire and interview data revealed that most students felt more interested and enthusiastic when animated videos were introduced into their Aqidah Akhlak lessons. Many students stated that lessons became livelier and more enjoyable, which increased

their desire to participate in class. They rarely felt bored, as the combination of visuals, sound, and relatable stories created a rich and pleasant learning environment. Ahmad (2019) states that interest is a psychological factor that encourages students to focus and actively participate, which clearly happened in this study. Moreover, many students said they began to explore the moral messages outside class as well, such as discussing them with friends or looking up related stories at home. This indicates that animated videos successfully sustained students' interest beyond the classroom, allowing the learning process to have a deeper and more lasting impact on their character and moral awareness.

Nevertheless, this study also acknowledges some important limitations that must be considered. The research was conducted at only one school with its specific cultural and technological environment, so the findings cannot necessarily be generalized to all schools. Additionally, the study was relatively short-term, which limited the opportunity to assess long-term character development after using animated videos. Future research could address these issues by including a larger number of schools, especially those with different technological conditions or cultural contexts. Longitudinal research would also help evaluate the sustained impact of this media on students' behavior and attitudes. Moreover, future studies might explore integrating interactive elements into animated videos, such as quizzes and puzzles, to enhance student participation and creativity further. Schools could also involve parents more actively so that they can support students' learning at home. By improving these areas, Aqidah Akhlak lessons can become more effective, engaging, and transformative for students.

D. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, the use of animated videos in teaching Akidah Akhlak at MTs Arrohmah has a significant positive impact on enhancing students' learning interest and creativity. Animated videos successfully capture students' attention from the beginning of the lesson, motivate them to participate more actively, and encourage them to engage in discussion, critical thinking, and independent learning. Moreover, this medium helps students better understand moral concepts, relate them to real-life situations, and develop their character and empathy. Thus, animated videos serve not only as a visual aid but also as an innovative instructional tool that supports students' intellectual and emotional development.

The findings indicate that visual-based learning media, such as animated videos, offer an effective and meaningful way to create enjoyable learning experiences, especially for subjects that require affective and reflective engagement like Akidah Akhlak. By presenting moral and spiritual values through engaging and contextual visual stories, this media not only simplifies concept comprehension but also fosters character development and critical, reflective thinking. Hence, the implementation of

engaging, interactive, and relevant digital media is highly recommended to enhance the quality of learning in the digital era.

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