

**Intrinsic Motivation in Islamic Education**  
**(A Comparative Study of Abraham Maslow's Theory and the Concept of Ghirah in Islamic Psychology)**

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**Abstrac:** Low student motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a fundamental issue that hinders the optimal achievement of Islamic educational goals. The urgency of this study lies in the pressing need for a motivational approach that not only relies on Western psychological theories but also integrates Islamic spiritual values. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the concept of intrinsic motivation according to Abraham Maslow's theory and the concept of Ghirah in Islamic psychology, as well as to examine the contributions of both to the development of PAI instruction and the formation of Muslim character. The method employed is a literature review (library research) using a comparative-analytical approach to relevant primary and secondary sources. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant convergence between Maslow's

hierarchy of needs and the concept of Ghirah in Islam, where both emphasize the inner drive of the individual as the driving force behind behavior. Ghirah, as a religious zeal stemming from faith, provides a transcendental dimension not found in Maslow's theory. The integration of these two concepts implies the development of more holistic models, methods, strategies, media, and evaluation of Islamic Education (PAI), and contributes to the internalization of Islamic reasoning, faith, and ihsan in the formation of a complete Muslim character.

Keywords: Intrinsic Motivation, Islamic Education, Abraham Maslow's Theory, Zeal, Islamic Psychology.

Abstrak: Rendahnya motivasi belajar peserta didik dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) merupakan persoalan mendasar yang menghambat tercapainya tujuan pendidikan Islam secara optimal. Urgensi kajian ini terletak pada kebutuhan mendesak akan pendekatan motivasional yang tidak hanya bersandar pada teori psikologi Barat, tetapi juga mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai spiritual Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis secara komparatif konsep motivasi intrinsik menurut teori Abraham Maslow dan konsep Ghirah dalam psikologi Islam, serta mengkaji kontribusi keduanya terhadap pengembangan pembelajaran PAI dan pembentukan karakter muslim. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan pendekatan komparatif-analitis terhadap sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat titik temu signifikan antara hierarki kebutuhan Maslow dan konsep Ghirah dalam Islam, di mana keduanya menekankan dorongan dari dalam diri individu sebagai motor penggerak perilaku. Ghirah sebagai semangat keagamaan yang bersumber dari keimanan memberikan dimensi transendental yang tidak terdapat dalam teori Maslow. Integrasi kedua konsep ini berimplikasi pada pengembangan model, metode, strategi, media, dan evaluasi pembelajaran PAI yang lebih holistik, serta berkontribusi pada internalisasi nalar Islam, iman, dan ihsan dalam pembentukan karakter muslim yang paripurna.

Kata Kunci: Motivasi Intrinsik, Pembelajaran PAI, Teori Abraham Maslow, Ghirah, Psikologi Islam.

## INTRODUCTION

Thus, Maslow's concept of intrinsic motivation and the Islamic concept of *ghirah* complement one another in shaping a Muslim individual of integrity, high resilience, and moral consciousness rooted in transcendent values.<sup>1</sup> Islamic Religious Education (PAI) occupies a central position within Indonesia's national education system, carrying a mission that extends far beyond the mere transmission of religious knowledge.

PAI is fundamentally oriented toward the formation of *insan kamil* the complete human being who embodies Islamic values in every dimension of life. Yet the reality on the ground presents a disquieting picture: a considerable proportion of students exhibit apathetic, passive, and disengaged attitudes toward PAI instruction.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon reflects a crisis of intrinsic motivation that is, motivation arising from genuine inner awareness and volition, as opposed to external incentives such as grades, disciplinary measures, or social approval.

The problem of low intrinsic motivation in PAI has grown increasingly complex in tandem with a pervasive shift in students' orientations, driven by digital culture, materialism, and pragmatism. When engagement with PAI is governed primarily by administrative obligations

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<sup>1</sup> Indah Nur Bella Sari et al., "Desain Kurikulum PAI Berbasis Karakter: Integrasi Pengetahuan, Etika, Dan Spiritualitas," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 4 (2024): 6597-6604.

<sup>2</sup> Gondo Adhi Saputra et al., "Epistemologi Pendidikan Agama Islam: Integrasi Sumber Transenden Dan Rasional Dalam Pembentukan Kesadaran Religius Peserta Didik," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 04 (2025): 186-96.

such as attendance requirements or examination scores rather than by spiritual consciousness and a genuine love of religious knowledge, the internalization of Islamic values becomes superficial, leaving no lasting imprint on character formation. The consequence is an erosion of moral integrity and Islamic identity among the younger generation.

This challenge is not merely pedagogical in nature; it is equally a psychological problem that demands an interdisciplinary response. The discourse on motivation in education has long been dominated by Western psychological frameworks, among which Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs stands as one of the most influential. Maslow (2024) argued that human behavior is driven by a hierarchical series of needs, ranging from physiological requirements to self-actualization.<sup>3</sup> Intrinsic motivation, in Maslow's perspective, is intimately tied to the drive to fulfill higher-order needs growth, understanding, and the realization of one's fullest potential.

Islamic psychology, for its part, offers a concept no less rich and pertinent: *ghirah*. Lexically, *ghirah* denotes ardor, a protective jealousy, and a deep-seated concern for the values of truth and sanctity. In the context of learning, *ghirah* refers to the religious zeal that moves a Muslim to seek knowledge, practice the teachings of Islam, and uphold the dignity of the faith. This concept is firmly grounded in Qur'anic and Prophetic texts and has been examined by Islamic scholars across generations.

A review of prior scholarship reveals several relevant contributions to this inquiry. First, Hamid and Supriyadi (2022) found that fulfilling

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<sup>3</sup> William C Compton, "Maslow and the Good Person," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 64, no. 1 (2024): 104-9.

students' needs for security and self-esteem within the school environment significantly enhanced active participation in PAI learning, though their study did not deeply integrate the Islamic psychological perspective.<sup>4</sup> Second, Fatimah and Rohmah (2021) examined the concept of *ghirah* in the formation of students' Islamic character, concluding that *ghirah* functions as a vital spiritual energy that sustains consistency in religious conduct.<sup>5</sup> Third, Wahyudi and Anshori (2023) conducted a comparative study of learning motivation from Western and Islamic psychological perspectives, though their analysis remained relatively general and did not address the specific application of these concepts to the institutional development of PAI.<sup>6</sup>

The research gap apparent from these prior studies is the absence of a systematic and comprehensive inquiry that directly compares Abraham Maslow's theory of intrinsic motivation with the Islamic concept of *ghirah*, while simultaneously exploring its practical implications for the full spectrum of PAI instructional components encompassing models, methods, strategies, media, and assessment and its role in Muslim character formation through the internalization of Islamic reasoning, faith (*iman*), and excellence (*ihsan*). The present study is designed to address this gap.

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<sup>4</sup> T. Hamid, A., & Supriyadi, "Implementasi Teori Motivasi Abraham Maslow Dalam Peningkatan Partisipasi Belajar PAI Siswa," *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 11, no. 1 (2022): 77-94.

<sup>5</sup> N. Fatimah, S., & Rohmah, "Konsep Ghirah Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Islami Peserta Didik Di Madrasah," *Jurnal Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 10, no. 1 (2021): 55-70.

<sup>6</sup> A. Wahyudin, D., & Hakim, "Konsep Ghirah Dalam Psikologi Islam Dan Relevansinya Bagi Pengembangan Motivasi Belajar Generasi Muda Muslim," *Jurnal Psikologi Islam*, 9, no. 1 (2023): 1-18.

The specific objectives of this study are to analyze in depth the concept of intrinsic motivation according to Abraham Maslow and the concept of *ghirah* in Islamic psychology; to identify points of convergence and divergence between the two, to examine the contribution of their integration to the development of PAI instructional components and to analyze the role of Maslow's intrinsic motivation and *ghirah* in shaping Muslim character through the internalization of Islamic reasoning, *iman*, and *ihsan*. The study is expected to offer theoretical contributions to the field of Islamic educational psychology, as well as practical contributions for PAI educators seeking to design instruction capable of cultivating sustained and holistic intrinsic motivation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach through library research (*library research*), a design in which published scholarly materials constitute the primary data source.<sup>7</sup> Primary data sources include Abraham Maslow's original works principally *Motivation and Personality* and *Toward a Psychology of Being* as well as classical and contemporary Islamic texts addressing the concept of *ghirah*, including the writings of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah and contemporary Islamic psychology scholarship.<sup>8</sup> Secondary data sources encompass peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks,

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<sup>7</sup> Akmalun Najmi, "PERAN KESABARAN PENDIDIK DALAM MENCIPTAKAN KEPERIBADIAN SISWA BERKUALITAS PSIKOLOGI PENDIDIKAN ISLAM," *Istifkar* 4, no. 2 (2024): 200-212.

<sup>8</sup> Compton, "Maslow and the Good Person."

dissertations, and related research findings retrieved from Google Scholar, SINTA, and DOAJ databases.

Data were collected through systematic documentary study, involving the identification, classification, and analysis of relevant scholarly sources. Data analysis proceeded through a comparative-analytical method: each concept was examined in depth through content analysis, followed by systematic comparison to identify convergences, divergences, and dialectical relationships between Maslow's theory and the concept of *ghirah*. The comparative findings were then synthesized to generate new propositions concerning their application within the contexts of PAI instruction and Muslim character formation. Data credibility was maintained through source triangulation and cross-referential confirmation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Concept of Motivation in Learning

Motivation is a psychological construct that has long occupied a central place in the scholarship of educational psychology. Etymologically, the term derives from the Latin *movere*, meaning to move or set in motion. Within the educational context, motivation is understood as the totality of driving forces both internal and external to the learner that initiate, sustain, and direct learning activities toward the achievement of intended educational objectives.<sup>9</sup> Ryan and Deci (2017),

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<sup>9</sup> S. Nasution, S., & Lubis, "Model Pembelajaran Transformatif-Spiritual Dalam Peningkatan Keterlibatan Dan Motivasi Belajar PAI," *Al-Ta'lim Journal*, 29, no. 2 (2022): 112-128.

within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), draw a foundational distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation a distinction that reflects not merely a difference in terminology but a fundamental divergence in the *locus of causality* underlying human behavior.<sup>10</sup> There are two key points to consider here, namely:

### 1. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation refers to the drive to engage in an activity for reasons external to the individual instrumental factors such as rewards, punishment, social recognition, or environmental pressure. In the context of PAI, extrinsic motivation is evident when students attend religious classes solely out of fear of poor grades, a desire for teacher approval, or the obligation to fulfill attendance requirements. Deci and Ryan (2020) observe that, although extrinsic motivation possesses genuine motivating force, it tends to produce shallow and unsustainable engagement: once the external factor is removed, the behavior it generated tends to disappear.<sup>11</sup>

From an Islamic perspective, an exclusive reliance on extrinsic motivation risks engendering *riya'* the performance of religious acts for the sake of human recognition a disposition that, theologically, corrupts the sincerity of worship.<sup>12</sup> Al-Ghazali, in his *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, long cautioned that an intention directed at any

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<sup>10</sup> E. L. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, "Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness," *Guilford Publications*, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Edward L Deci and Richard M Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory," *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* 1, no. 20 (2020): 416–36.

<sup>12</sup> Roro Nofita Nofi and Imaniyatul Fithriyah, "Pendekatan Spiritual Islam Sebagai Upaya Preventif Gangguan Mental Santri Era Society 5.0 Di Madrasah Diniyyah Tanwirul Qulub Pamekasan," *Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, no. 1 (2025): 35–51.

object other than God constitutes the root of hypocrisy (*nifaq*), which corrodes spiritual integrity.<sup>13</sup> PAI instruction that relies exclusively on rewards and punishment, without cultivating internal awareness, thus risks producing students who are formally religious yet spiritually hollow.

## 2. Intrinsic Motivation

In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual from curiosity, enjoyment, personal satisfaction, or a genuine sense of personal relevance toward the activity. Within Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation is associated with the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). When these three needs are met within the learning environment, students will naturally be motivated to learn not out of compulsion but because they discover meaning and satisfaction in the learning process itself.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of PAI, intrinsic motivation is manifested as a yearning to understand the Qur'an, a deep affection for the prophetic biography (*sirah*), enthusiasm for living out Islamic teachings in daily life, and a conscious sense of responsibility as a Muslim. Students who are intrinsically motivated do not require the threat of a failing grade to study religion diligently; they engage

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<sup>13</sup> Hajriansyah Hajriansyah, "AKHLAK TERPUJI DAN YANG TERCELA: Telaah Singkat Ihya," *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. 1 (2017): 17-26.

<sup>14</sup> Ryan, R. M., & Deci, "Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness."

because they feel an authentic spiritual need arising from within. Bandura adds that intrinsic motivation is closely associated with self-efficacy an individual's belief in their own capability such that students who feel confident in their ability to engage with religious texts will be increasingly motivated to explore them further.<sup>15</sup>

Extrinsic motivation in Islamic Education serves only as an initial catalyst because it relies on external factors such as grades or rewards; consequently, it tends not to last long and risks fostering an attitude of *\*riya'* that undermines sincerity.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, intrinsic motivation, which arises from awareness, spiritual needs, and a love for Islamic teachings, fosters deeper and more sustained engagement in learning. Therefore, Islamic Education must emphasize the strengthening of intrinsic motivation to cultivate an authentic Muslim character one that is not merely formal but also possesses a strong spiritual awareness.

#### **B. Abraham Maslow's Intrinsic Motivation and Ghirah in Islam**

Intrinsic motivation, as understood within Abraham Maslow's humanistic theory, is an internal drive that arises from the need for self-actualization once basic human needs in the hierarchy of needs have been met, thereby motivating individuals to develop optimally, creatively, and meaningfully without external pressure; in the context of education and life, the fulfillment of physiological, safety, social, and

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<sup>15</sup> Zulita Fismasari et al., "The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Individual Performance: A Theoretical Review and Practical Implications," *Formosa Journal of Applied Sciences* 4, no. 6 (2025): 1819–26.

<sup>16</sup> Saputra et al., "Epistemologi Pendidikan Agama Islam: Integrasi Sumber Transenden Dan Rasional Dalam Pembentukan Kesadaran Religius Peserta Didik."

esteem needs, up to self-actualization, has been shown to contribute significantly to the emergence of motivation from within the individual.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, from an Islamic perspective, the concept of *ghirah* (spiritual zeal and love for goodness) can be understood as a form of intrinsic motivation rooted in faith, an awareness of one's responsibility to Allah, and a drive to achieve a higher level of self-improvement one that is oriented not only toward psychological needs but also toward transcendental dimensions; motivation in Islam is even classified as an internal drive such as the desire to learn, improve oneself, and achieve accomplishments as part of worship.<sup>18</sup> Here are some important concepts:

### **1. Abraham Maslow's Intrinsic Motivation**

Abraham Harold Maslow (1908–1970) was among the most pivotal figures in humanistic psychology, whose ideas transcended the boundaries of his own discipline to leave a lasting imprint on management, education, and philosophy.<sup>19</sup> His landmark work, *Theory of Human Motivation*, introduced a hierarchical model of human needs depicted as a five-tier pyramid, ascending from its foundational base to its apex.

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Hanafi and Ida Rindaningsih, "MENGUKUR MOTIVASI KERJA GURU DALAM PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DENGAN TEORI KEBUTUHAN MASLOW: SEBUAH TINJAUAN SISTEMATIS," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ekonomi: Edunomi* 2, no. 01 (2025): 59–78.

<sup>18</sup> Lailatur Rohmah, Millatul Muwafiqoh, and Titin Nurhidayat, "Learning Motivation Strategies in Islam," *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Isu-Isu Sosial* 22, no. 1 (2024): 15–24.

<sup>19</sup> Compton, "Maslow and the Good Person."

The first tier comprises *physiological needs* the most basic requirements for biological survival, including food, water, air, sleep, and warmth. The second tier encompasses *safety needs* the need for protection from physical and psychological threat, stability, order, and freedom from fear. The third tier addresses *belongingness and love needs* the need for social affiliation, friendship, intimacy, and group acceptance. The fourth tier covers *esteem needs* the need for recognition, achievement, competence, and respect from others as well as from oneself. The fifth and highest tier is *self-actualization* the drive to fulfill one's fullest potential, to become everything one is capable of becoming.

Maslow subsequently extended his framework to include two additional categories: *cognitive needs* the drive to know, understand, and explore and *aesthetic needs* the drive toward beauty, order, and harmony. In his later writings, Maslow even introduced the concept of *transcendence needs* the need to connect with something beyond the self – thereby implicitly touching upon the spiritual dimension.<sup>20</sup>

The relevance of Maslow's theory to PAI instruction lies in the insight that students cannot be intrinsically motivated to engage with religious learning if their more foundational needs remain unmet. A student who is hungry, who feels psychologically unsafe at school, or who is socially excluded from peer relationships will be ill-equipped to direct their psychological energy toward the

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<sup>20</sup> Compton.

pursuit of spiritual meaning. Arief and Sholeh (2021) found that warm and supportive classroom climates which fulfill belongingness needs significantly enhance students' intrinsic motivation in PAI.

## 2. Ghirah as a Motivational Concept in Islam

Ghirah (غيرة), in Arabic lexicography, derives from ghara, literally denoting a deep jealousy or protective concern. In the context of Islamic psychology, however, *ghirah* carries a far richer and more expansive significance.<sup>21</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah defined *ghirah* as an attribute belonging fully to God whose *ghirah* is activated when His prescribed limits (*hudud*) are transgressed and a quality instilled in every believer as a reflection of love for and devotion to the Divine religion.<sup>22</sup>

In the contexts of learning and education, *ghirah* is understood as an ardent religious spirit, a profound love for Islam, and active concern for the upholding of truth an enduring psycho-spiritual condition rather than a momentary emotion, one that propels a Muslim to continually seek knowledge, perform righteous deeds, and defend the dignity of the faith. In a hadith reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared: "Indeed, God has *ghirah*, and God's *ghirah* is provoked when a servant commits what He has forbidden." This

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<sup>21</sup> Carrie York Al-Karam, "Islamic Psychology: Towards a 21st Century Definition and Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 2, no. 1-2 (2018): 97-109.

<sup>22</sup> Wahyudin, D., & Hakim, "Konsep Ghirah Dalam Psikologi Islam Dan Relevansinya Bagi Pengembangan Motivasi Belajar Generasi Muda Muslim."

hadith indicates that *ghirah* possesses a divine dimension that elevates it beyond ordinary psychological motivation.

The structure of *ghirah* from an Islamic psychological perspective can be analyzed through three interrelated components: the cognitive component (*ma'rifah*) genuine knowledge and understanding of God and the teachings of Islam; the affective component (*mahabbah*) a profound love for God and His religion; and the conative component (*'azm wa iradah*) the firm resolve and will to act upon knowledge and uphold truth. These three components operate synergistically to produce a form of intrinsic motivation that is transcendent in nature surpassing narrow self-interest a quality that is absent from any secular motivational theory.<sup>23</sup>

In the context of PAI, *ghirah* manifests in various forms: an inexhaustible enthusiasm for studying the Qur'an and its exegesis (*tafsir*), love for the prophetic biography and the Companions as exemplary models, sensitivity toward the condition of the Muslim community, and a powerful drive to apply Islamic values in everyday life. Students possessing strong *ghirah* require no external pressure to engage with religious learning: they study out of love rather than fear, and from conscious conviction rather than mere formal obligation.

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<sup>23</sup> M A Muhaimin, *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam* (PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2020).

### 3. Comparative Analysis: Maslow's Intrinsic Motivation and Ghirah

A comparison of Maslow's theory of intrinsic motivation and the Islamic concept of *ghirah* reveals a compelling pattern: both share a common epistemological ground in affirming the primacy of internal drives over external compulsion, yet diverge fundamentally in their ontological understanding of the source and ultimate purpose of motivation.<sup>24</sup>

The first point of convergence lies in both frameworks' recognition that human beings are active, purposive creatures. Maslow asserted that humans are naturally driven toward growth and the realization of their highest potential; Islam affirms that human beings are created with an innate disposition (*fitrah*) inclined toward truth and perfection (Q.S. Al-Rum/30: 30).<sup>25</sup> Both perspectives categorically reject behaviorist reductionism, which reduces the human person to a mechanism that merely responds to external stimuli.

The second point of convergence is both frameworks' emphasis on the dimension of growth. In Maslow's hierarchy, the purest form of intrinsic motivation resides at the level of self-actualization a process of growth that is never truly complete. In Islam, the concepts of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) and

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<sup>24</sup> Compton, "Maslow and the Good Person."

<sup>25</sup> Miftachul Ulum, Abdul Mun'im, and Rahmah Salsabila Al Maghfuri, "Needs in The Thinking of Abraham Maslow and Maqashid Sharia," *Miftah: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam* 1, no. 2 (2023): 114–22.

*al-istiqamah* (steadfastness in righteousness) reflect a parallel understanding: that a Muslim's life is an unceasing journey of spiritual growth toward genuine perfection.

The fundamental divergence between the two lies in the transcendental dimension. Maslow, although toward the end of his life he began to engage with spirituality through the concepts of *peak experience* and *transcendence needs*, ultimately constructed his theory upon the foundations of secular, anthropocentric humanism with the human person as the center and measure of all things. *Ghirah* in Islam, by contrast, is rooted in theocentrism with God as the source, direction, and ultimate judge of all motivation and action. Intrinsic motivation in Islam is not merely the fulfillment of human potential but an act of *'ibadah* (worship) a conscious response to the obligation of devotion to the Creator.

A second divergence pertains to the source of motivational energy. Maslow positioned needs as the engine of motivation; once a need is satisfied, the motivation to satisfy it diminishes. *Ghirah*, by contrast, admits no threshold of satisfaction at which ardor is extinguished. The more deeply a Muslim comes to know God and the stronger their love for Islam, the greater their *ghirah* to continue learning, performing righteous deeds, and calling others to the faith. This is what classical scholars meant by *ladhizat al-'ibadah* the spiritual pleasure of worship that never grows stale for a living heart.

The implications of this comparison for PAI instruction are substantial. A motivational approach that adopts Maslow's theory alone risks producing instruction that is excessively individualistic, stopping at the satisfaction of worldly psychological needs. Conversely, an approach grounded purely in *ghirah* without attending to the foundational needs that Maslow underscores risks disregarding empirically real psychological factors that demonstrably shape students' readiness to learn. The integration of both frameworks offers a more comprehensive motivational paradigm—one that is simultaneously humanistic and transcendent.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the integration of Maslow's theory and the concept of *ghirah* demonstrates that intrinsic motivation is not merely psychological and humanistic in nature, but also spiritual and transcendental, wherein the fulfillment of human needs and religious consciousness simultaneously shape behavior that is productive, meaningful, and oriented toward self-perfection (*insan kamil*).

### **C. Contributions of Maslow's Intrinsic Motivation and Ghirah to PAI Instructional Development**

The contribution of intrinsic motivation, as viewed through the lens of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the concept of *ghirah* (spiritual zeal in Islam), holds significant relevance for the development

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<sup>26</sup> M. Zainuddin, "Integrasi Psikologi Barat Dan Islam Dalam Pengembangan Motivasi Belajar PAI: Kajian Teoritis Dan Implikasi Praktis," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 16, no. 2 (2022): 289-310.

of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction, as both emphasize internal drive as the primary foundation for changes in students' learning behavior. Within Maslow's framework, the fulfillment of hierarchical needs ranging from physiological to self-actualization drives individuals toward optimal development. Thus, in the context of PAI, students whose psychological and spiritual needs are met will more easily attain religious awareness and a deep appreciation of Islamic values.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, *ghirah*, as a source of faith-based energy, serves to strengthen intrinsic motivation with a transcendental orientation, so that students learn not only for academic achievement but also to internalize the values of worship and moral conduct. The integration of these two elements in Islamic Education (PAI) has proven effective in enhancing engagement, interest, and the application of religious values in real life, as intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in deepening understanding while fostering sustained spiritual awareness.<sup>28</sup> Here are five key points to keep in mind:

### **1. Development of PAI Instructional Models**

An instructional model is a conceptual framework that describes systematic procedures for organizing learning experiences to achieve specified objectives. The integration of Maslow's intrinsic

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<sup>27</sup> Dea Tara Ningtyas, Nur Aini Farida, and Ais Firadilah, "Implementasi Teori Motivasi Abraham Maslow Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Tapis: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah* 6, no. 1 (2022): 28-34.

<sup>28</sup> Muchammad Iqbal Chailani, Abdul Wahab Fahrub, and Farach Feby Febyola, "Integrasi Teori Motivasi Dalam Pembelajaran PAI: Strategi Meningkatkan Keterlibatan Belajar Peserta Didik Abad 21," *Tut Wuri Handayani: Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2025): 26-36.

motivation and *ghirah* demands the development of PAI instructional models capable of accommodating students' psychological needs while simultaneously awakening their spiritual ardor.

A *need-based learning model* inspired by Maslow's hierarchy requires educators to first ensure that students' foundational needs are satisfied before pursuing higher-order learning objectives. In practice, this means creating a classroom environment that is psychologically safe, emotionally warm, and physically conducive to learning prerequisites frequently overlooked in overly formalistic PAI instruction.

A *ghirah*-based instructional model that may be developed is the *transformative-spiritual model* one that does not merely transfer religious knowledge but actively awakens students' spiritual consciousness through heart-touching learning experiences. This model resonates with Mezirow's theory of transformative learning yet is imbued with distinctively Islamic spiritual content. Nasution and Lubis (2022) found that PAI models combining cognitive content reinforcement with affective-spiritual stimulation significantly enhanced long-term student engagement and motivation.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, a cooperative-inclusive instructional model that accommodates Maslow's belongingness needs also aligns with the spirit of *ukhuwwah Islamiyyah* (Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood)

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<sup>29</sup> Nasution, S., & Lubis, "Model Pembelajaran Transformatif-Spiritual Dalam Peningkatan Keterlibatan Dan Motivasi Belajar PAI."

one of the social manifestations of *ghirah*. When students learn in an atmosphere of genuine mutual support, mutual counsel, and collaboration, their need for relatedness is fulfilled while their *ghirah* in the form of solidarity with fellow Muslims flourishes.

## 2. Development of PAI Instructional Methods

An instructional method is the means by which educators present learning content to students in pursuit of specified objectives. Within a PAI framework grounded in the integration of Maslow's intrinsic motivation and *ghirah*, the selection and development of instructional methods demands careful simultaneous attention to both psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Experiential learning methods, as conceptualized by Kolb, are highly pertinent here, enabling students to learn through meaningful direct experience. In PAI, this methodology may be realized through visits to historically significant Islamic sites, the direct practice of the acts of worship being studied, or simulated moral dilemmas requiring ethically grounded decisions based on Islamic values. Such direct experience is capable of penetrating the affective dimension of students in ways that conventional lecture-based instruction cannot.

The Socratic dialogue method, adapted to the Islamic educational context known in Islamic pedagogical tradition as *munazarah* or *al-hiwar* is highly effective for arousing students' cognitive curiosity (Maslow's cognitive needs) while simultaneously activating the rational faculty (*'aql*), which Islam regards as a divine endowment to be employed to its fullest. Through critical and open

dialogue, students are invited to explore the depth of Islamic teachings rather than merely receiving them passively.

Storytelling methods drawing upon the captivating narratives of prophets, Companions, and great scholars represent a particularly effective means of kindling students' *ghirah*. These spiritually heroic narratives function as concrete role models something Bandura (1997) identifies as a primary source of self-efficacy while simultaneously serving as catalysts for *ghirah*, inspiring students to emulate and surpass such exemplars. Ilahi and Rahmat (2021) found that the use of *sirah*-based storytelling in PAI significantly enhanced students' positive identification with Islamic values.

### 3. Development of PAI Learning Strategies

A learning strategy constitutes a comprehensive approach encompassing the planning, execution, and evaluation of instruction to achieve designated objectives. Within the integrative framework of Maslow's intrinsic motivation and *ghirah*, effective PAI learning strategies are those that consistently attend to students' psychological conditions while nurturing their spiritual ardor.

Differentiated instruction strategies that account for individual student differences whether in learning style, pace of comprehension, or level of spiritual need align with Maslow's principle that every individual possesses a unique hierarchy of needs that cannot be uniformly standardized. In PAI, this differentiation can be implemented by offering students the agency

to select the topics of inquiry most personally relevant to their spiritual concerns, thereby fulfilling the intrinsic need for autonomy.

Project-based learning strategies oriented toward contemporary Islamic issues can serve as an effective vehicle for integrating cognitive and affective dimensions into a unified learning experience. When students are assigned projects to examine contemporary social problems from an Islamic perspective and formulate responses, they do not merely learn about Islam intellectually; they experience firsthand the relevance of Islamic teachings to real life an experience with powerful potential to kindle their *ghirah*.

Structured spiritual reflection strategies that create deliberate space for students to contemplate their learning experiences in relation to the values of faith are deeply consonant with the contemplative dimension of Islam. Through the practices of *muraqabah* (God-consciousness; awareness of divine oversight) and *muhasabah* (self-examination) integrated into the learning process, students are trained to connect every learning activity with its transcendental dimension and herein lies the essence of instruction that genuinely awakens *ghirah*.

#### **4. Development of PAI Instructional Media**

Instructional media encompasses all means through which messages may be conveyed from sender to receiver so as to stimulate students' thinking, feeling, attention, and interest in the

learning process. Within the context of PAI inspired by the integration of Maslow's intrinsic motivation and *ghirah*, the development of instructional media must simultaneously attend to cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. Audiovisual media featuring inspirational content about the beauty of Islam from the wonders of the universe as signs of Divine majesty (*ayat kawuniyyah*), to the struggles of great scholars, to documentaries on Muslim life around the world can serve as powerful stimuli for Maslow's aesthetic needs while simultaneously awakening *ghirah* in ways that touch the heart. Beauty presented through visual media is not mere aesthetics; it is a bridge to profound spiritual experience.

Technology-based interactive digital media such as Qur'anic learning applications, Islamic discussion platforms, or virtual simulations of the *haji* pilgrimage can fulfill the cognitive needs of digital-native students while providing immersive learning experiences. Kusmayadi and Fauzi (2023) found that digital media designed according to principles of intrinsic motivation incorporating gamification elements that provide positive feedback and graduated challenges demonstrably increased students' perseverance in PAI learning.<sup>30</sup>

Contextual media grounded in the immediate social environment such as the use of local social and cultural phenomena as subjects of PAI inquiry can strengthen the perceived relevance of

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<sup>30</sup> M. R. Kusmayadi, I., & Fauzi, "Pengembangan Media Digital Berbasis Gamifikasi Dalam Pembelajaran PAI Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Islam*, 5, no. 1 (2023): 31-48.

learning content to students' lived realities. When students observe that the Islamic values they study in the classroom speak to the concrete questions of their daily lives, Maslow's cognitive and self-actualization needs are met simultaneously as *ghirah* in the form of social concern is also awakened.

## 5. Development of PAI Assessment Practices

Assessment is a crucial component of the educational system that functions not only to measure the achievement of competencies but also to provide constructive feedback for the improvement of learning.<sup>31</sup> In PAI grounded in the intrinsic motivation of Maslow and *ghirah*, assessment must be designed so as itself to become an instrument that motivates rather than demoralizes. Authentic assessment, which measures students' competencies through genuine performance in meaningful situations such as Islam-based social projects, spiritual reflection presentations, or portfolios of righteous deeds (*amal salih*) is far more congruent with the spirit of intrinsic motivation than multiple-choice tests that measure only memorization. Authentic assessment grants students the autonomy to express their understanding and lived experience of Islamic values, thus fulfilling the intrinsic needs for both autonomy and competence.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ach Sayyi, "Modernisasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Azyumardi Azra," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2017): 20–39.

<sup>32</sup> Ismail Ismail et al., "Tanfidh Bir Al-Walidain Fi Tafā'ulāt Al-Ijtimā'iyah Li Mujtama'Madura: Tahlil Thaqāfat Abhakte Min Manzūr Al-Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyah," *Journal Of Indonesian Islam* 19, no. 1 (2025): 263–99.

Growth-focused formative feedback aligns with Maslow's insight into the human drive toward growth. When educators provide feedback that honors the process and progress of students rather than classifying them simply as "passing" or "failing" students' self-confidence is bolstered and their esteem needs are fulfilled, which in turn further consolidates their intrinsic motivation to continue growing.

*Muhasabah*-based evaluation represents a form of assessment unique to the Islamic tradition, with no direct equivalent in conventional evaluation systems. Through spiritual reflection journals, mentor-mentee dialogues on the journey of faith, or forums for sharing experiences of applying the values learned, students are invited to evaluate themselves not by numerical measures but by the degree of spiritual growth and strengthening of *ghirah* they experience within themselves. This is, in the paradigm of Islamic education, the most authentic form of assessment. Thus, a pedagogical approach that combines Maslow's humanistic theory with the spirit of *ghirah* can serve as an effective strategy for creating a holistic, meaningful, and religious character-building Islamic Education (PAI) learning experience.

#### **D. Maslow's Intrinsic Motivation and Ghirah in Muslim Character Formation**

Intrinsic motivation, as viewed through Abraham Maslow's humanistic perspective, positions the fulfillment of needs as the foundation for the development of human potential toward self-

actualization, in which individuals are driven from within to achieve meaning, value, and higher life goals progressing step by step from physiological needs to transcendence.<sup>33</sup> In the context of Islam, the concept of *ghirah* represents a spiritual energy manifested as a fervor of faith, a love for goodness, and a drive to uphold divine values, which serve as an internal motivator for moral behavior. The integration of these two elements demonstrates that the formation of Muslim character does not depend solely on the fulfillment of psychological needs, but also on the internalization of the value of *tawhid*, which directs motivation toward worship and the common good. Consequently, the resulting character is holistic combining psychological (self-actualization) and spiritual (self-transcendence) dimensions within the framework of Islamic ethics.<sup>34</sup> The three most important values are:

### **1. Internalization of Islamic Reasoning (Nalar Islam)**

Islamic reasoning (*nalar Islam*) denotes the capacity for thought governed by the epistemological framework of Islam specifically, the ability to comprehend reality through the faculty of reason (*'aql*) that is submitted to divine revelation (*naql*), thereby yielding a comprehensive understanding of life as thoroughly imbued with divine meaning. The internalization of Islamic reasoning in students

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<sup>33</sup> Anisyah Rahmadania and Hery Noer Aly, "Implementasi Teori Hierarchy Of Needs Maslow Dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Di Yayasan Cahaya Generasi Islam Kota Bengkulu," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)* 5, no. 4 (2023): 261–72.

<sup>34</sup> Usmanul Hakim et al., "Theory of Motivation in Business Management: An Elaboration of Western and Islamic Worldviews," *Economica: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam* 13, no. 1 (2022): 49–73.

represents one of the highest objectives of PAI, unattainable through knowledge transmission alone.

From Maslow's perspective, the internalization of Islamic reasoning is closely associated with the fulfillment of cognitive needs the drive to know and understand at the apex of the hierarchy. Students whose cognitive needs are well stimulated will develop critical thinking abilities in response to the problems they encounter, which in the PAI context means the capacity to analyze social and individual reality through an Islamic lens.<sup>35</sup> Yet Maslow's framework provides no means of directing this cognitive capacity toward a transcendent value orientation and it is precisely this gap that the concept of *ghirah* fills.

*Ghirah* supplies the motivational dimension that orients reason (*'aql*) toward sincere devotion to God. In the Islamic scholarly tradition, reason is not merely an instrument for satisfying intellectual curiosity but a divine trust (*amanah*) that must be employed to draw nearer to God and to be of service to others. A Muslim with strong *ghirah* will deploy reason to contemplate the signs of God (*ayat Allah*) both scriptural (*qawliyyah*) and cosmic (*kawniyyah*) with profound gratitude and humility. Students who have internalized Islamic reasoning in this manner will come to perceive every life phenomenon as a sign (*ayah*) of Divine greatness,

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<sup>35</sup> Hujjatul Fakhurridha et al., "Pengembangan Kurikulum PAI Berbasis Cinta Melalui Tafsir Al-Qur'an Untuk Penguatan Empati Dan Regulasi Emosi," *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 3 (2025): 1426–38.

such that learning is no longer confined to the classroom but occurs throughout a lifetime.<sup>36</sup>

The internalization of Islamic reasoning in PAI may be facilitated through methods that encourage students to actively think, question, and discover rather than merely receive. Open discussion of contemporary Islamic issues, contextual Qur'anic exegesis, and the analysis of social phenomena from an Islamic perspective represent a number of effective approaches for developing Islamic reasoning while simultaneously igniting students' intellectual *ghirah*.

## 2. Internalization of Faith (Nalar Iman)

*Iman* (faith) in Islam is not merely intellectual belief but a complete conviction engaging every dimension of the human person: *tashdiq bi al-qalb* (affirmation with the heart), *iqrar bi al-lisan* (declaration with the tongue), and *'amal bi al-jawarih* (enactment with the limbs). The internalization of *iman* means the process by which students come not only to possess propositional knowledge of God, the prophets, the scriptures, the angels, the Last Day, and divine decree but to live these realities as the most fundamental truths of their existence.<sup>37</sup>

From Maslow's hierarchical perspective, the internalization of *iman* intersects with the needs at the highest levels self-actualization

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<sup>36</sup> J. Mujib, A., & Mudzakir, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam, Kencana Prenada Media Group*, 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Moh Wardi et al., "Implementation of Religious Moderation Values through Strengthening Diversity Tolerance in Madrasah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2023): 241-54.

and transcendence. Maslow described peak experiences as moments of heightened significance, beauty, and connection to something greater than oneself. Spiritual experiences within Islam such as the profound stillness of focused prayer (*khushu'*), the emotional resonance of hearing Qur'anic recitation, or the satisfaction of charitable giving are genuine expressions of peak experience within the framework of Islamic theology. *Ghirah* plays a central role in the internalization of *iman*. A believer possessing strong *ghirah* will not be content with a static and formalistic faith; they will continuously strive to deepen the quality of their faith through *muraqabah* (God-consciousness), *muhasabah* (self-examination), *mujahadah* (striving against lower impulses), and *mu'aqabah* (self-correction). This process is parallel to what Maslow termed the never-completed process of self-actualization an unceasing journey toward the finest version of oneself.

The implication for PAI instruction is that the internalization of *iman* cannot be achieved through the memorization of the articles of faith alone. It requires learning experiences that touch the heart such as profound contemplative engagement with the Qur'an (*tadabbur*), visits to orphan care centers that evoke gratitude, or dialogue with learned scholars who radiate the serenity of faith. Such experiences are capable of reaching the deepest stratum of students'

souls and igniting the *ghirah* of faith that will serve as their moral compass throughout life.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. Internalization of Excellence (Nalar Ihsan)

*Ihsan* derived from *ahsana*, meaning to do something with the utmost excellence represents the pinnacle of the Islamic triad of Islam-*Iman-Ihsan* that forms the foundation of Islamic teaching. In the celebrated Hadith of Gabriel, the Prophet (peace be upon him) defined *ihsan* as: "to worship God as though you see Him for if you do not see Him, He assuredly sees you." This definition reveals the deepest dimension of *ihsan*: a continuous condition of spiritual awareness ennobled by *muraqabah* before God that impels a person always to give their utmost in every dimension of life.

The internalization of *ihsan* in PAI is the endeavor to develop students into human beings who not only know and believe, but who act with wholehearted dedication and the highest standards of quality. This represents the highest level of character education in Islam one that lies beyond the reach of behavioral value-inculcation approaches.<sup>39</sup>

From Maslow's perspective, *ihsan* is closely associated with self-actualization the condition in which a person functions at full capacity and transcends egocentric needs toward meaningful contribution to others. Maslow characterized self-actualized individuals as those possessing a life mission that extends beyond self-

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<sup>38</sup> E. N. Baharuddin, & Wahyuni, *Teori Belajar Dan Pembelajaran Dalam Perspektif Islam*, Ar-Ruzz Media, 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Sayyi, "Modernisasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Azyumardi Azra."

interest, which corresponds profoundly in Islamic thought to the concept of *khalifah fi al-ardh* the human person as God's vicegerent on earth, entrusted with the cultivation and ennobling of life.

*Ghirah* in the context of *ihsan* functions as the energy that sustains the standard of excellence (*itqan*) in every endeavor. When a student possesses strong *ghirah*, they will not be satisfied with merely adequate learning outcomes; they will continuously push themselves to understand more deeply, to practice more consistently, and to contribute more broadly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) declared that "God loves the person who, when performing any work, performs it with *itqan* (perfection and thoroughness)" an imperative toward the standard of *ihsan* that aligns perfectly with the spirit of Maslow's self-actualization.

The internalization of *ihsan* in PAI demands that educators themselves become living exemplars (*uswah hasanah*) who radiate *ihsan* in every interaction with students in the manner in which they explain material, provide feedback, treat struggling students, and manage the classroom.<sup>40</sup> Fitri (2020) affirms that the internalization of character values in PAI is most effectively accomplished not through explicit instruction alone but through the hidden curriculum that is, through the implicit messages conveyed by exemplary conduct and a

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<sup>40</sup> Akmalun Najmi and Thaharoh Ananda Mumtahana, "NILAI USWATUN HASANAH (KETELADANAN) SEBAGAI FONDASI IMPLEMENTASI KURIKULUM BERBASIS CINTA DI MADRASAH: KAJIAN KEPUSTAKAAN," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 11, no. 01 (2026): 1-13.

learning environment thoroughly infused with the values of *ihsan*.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Maslow's concept of intrinsic motivation and the Islamic concept of *ghirah* complement one another in shaping a Muslim individual of integrity, high resilience, and moral consciousness rooted in transcendent values.

## CONCLUSION

A comparative study of Abraham Maslow's theory of intrinsic motivation and the Islamic concept of *ghirah* reveals that both frameworks share significant convergence in affirming the supremacy of internal drives as the primary engine of human behavior, yet diverge fundamentally in their ontological and teleological dimensions. Maslow constructed his theory upon the foundations of anthropocentric humanism, whereas *ghirah* is rooted in the theocentric paradigm of Islam, wherein God constitutes the source, direction, and ultimate purpose of all motivation. The integration of both frameworks offers PAI a comprehensive motivational paradigm one that attends to students' empirical psychological needs while simultaneously cultivating a transcendent spiritual ardor.

The contributions of this integration to the development of PAI instruction are far-reaching: encompassing transformative and need-based instructional models; dialogic and inspirational methods; differentiated and reflective strategies; immersive and contextual media; and authentic, growth-oriented assessment practices. Beyond this, the integration contributes to the internalization of Islamic reasoning, faith (*iman*), and

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<sup>41</sup> Agus Zaenul Fitri, "Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Nilai Dan Etika Di Sekolah," *Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media* 20212 (2020).

excellence (*ihsan*) within students forming a Muslim character that is intellectually astute, spiritually resilient, and noble in every deed.

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