Students' Perceptions of Kahoot in Learning: A Study of Fifth-Semester Islamic Education Students

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Abstract

This study explores the perceptions of Islamic Education students at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi regarding the use of the Kahoot application in Islamic Religious Education. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through open-ended questionnaires from 15 students. The findings reveal that most students viewed Kahoot positively, appreciating its engaging and interactive nature, which enhanced their understanding of the material. The gamification aspect of Kahoot was seen as a motivating factor that made learning more enjoyable. However, some students raised concerns about technical difficulties and time constraints during the game sessions. The study concludes that Kahoot can be an effective tool to boost student engagement and motivation in learning Islamic Religious Education, but it requires further adaptation to address technical challenges and optimize learning outcomes. This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating that Kahoot not only functions as an assessment tool but also as a means to increase student interaction and learning motivation in the context of Islamic Religious Education.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Kahoot, Student Perceptions, Gamification, Learning Motivation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa Pendidikan Agama Islam di UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi mengenai penggunaan aplikasi Kahoot dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. Menggunakan metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terbuka dari 15 mahasiswa. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa memiliki pandangan positif terhadap Kahoot, menghargai sifatnya yang menarik dan interaktif, yang meningkatkan pemahaman mereka terhadap materi. Aspek gamifikasi dalam Kahoot dianggap sebagai faktor motivasi yang membuat pembelajaran lebih menyenangkan. Namun, beberapa mahasiswa mengungkapkan kekhawatiran tentang kesulitan teknis dan keterbatasan waktu selama sesi permainan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Kahoot dapat menjadi alat yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam, namun memerlukan penyesuaian lebih lanjut untuk mengatasi tantangan teknis dan mengoptimalkan hasil pembelajaran. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada literatur dengan menunjukkan bahwa Kahoot tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat penilaian, tetapi juga sebagai sarana untuk meningkatkan interaksi dan motivasi belajar mahasiswa dalam konteks Pendidikan Agama Islam.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kahoot, Persepsi Mahasiswa, Gamifikasi, Motivasi Belajar, Keterlibatan Mahasiswa,

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of digital game-based learning platforms like *Kahoot* has brought significant transformation to classroom dynamics (S. A. Licorish et al., 2018; S. Licorish & Lötter, 2022), including in Islamic Higher Education institutions. The traditional teacher-centered approach is gradually shifting toward more interactive, student-centered learning environments (Alam, 2023). This transformation is particularly visible among fifth-semester Islamic Education students at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, where the use of Kahoot is being introduced as part of a broader effort to familiarize students with educational technology to enhance engagement and motivation, despite its use being limited to a few teachers. (Almakaty, 2024) explained that the shift indicates not only a change in pedagogical methods but also a growing trend of digital literacy and media familiarity among students, aligning with global movements in education technology (Almakaty, 2024).

Despite its growing popularity, the use of *Kahoot* in learning is not without contention. Some educators question its effectiveness in promoting deep learning (Aitkulova, 2021; Faiella & Ricciardi, 2015; Giráldez et al., 2022), especially in religious and moral education where critical reflection and nuanced understanding are essential (Papakostas, 2024). Others worry that gamification may trivialize serious content or distract students from meaningful discourse (Mogavi et al., 2022). In addition, the increasing reliance on internet-based platforms raises concerns about digital inequality (Ono & Zavodny, 2007), particularly in regions where access to stable internet remains inconsistent (Ebadi et al., 2023; Ferri et al., 2020). This presents a critical challenge in ensuring that educational innovations like *Kahoot* do not unintentionally widen the digital divide among students.

Previous research has shown that *Kahoot* can increase student participation, improve classroom atmosphere, and support formative assessment in various disciplines (Curto Prieto et al., 2019; Martins et al., 2019; Sinnivasagam & Hua, 2023; Zhang & Yu, 2021). Studies have largely focused on subjects like science, language learning, and general education, revealing the platform's ability to create a competitive yet enjoyable learning environment (Sinnivasagam & Hua, 2023, 2023; Zhang & Yu, 2021). However, limited scholarly attention has been given to the use of *Kahoot* in the context of Islamic Education, especially within the framework of Indonesian Islamic universities. There is a knowledge

gap in understanding how *Kahoot* supports—or potentially undermines—the pedagogical goals of Islamic religious instruction.

This article seeks to address the above limitations by exploring the perceptions of fifth-semester Islamic Education students at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi regarding their experience using *Kahoot* in the learning process. Specifically, it aims to uncover how students perceive the educational value, relevance, and limitations of *Kahoot* in supporting their academic and spiritual development. By focusing on this unique student group, the study intends to fill a critical gap in literature, offering fresh insight into the intersection of educational technology and Islamic pedagogy in an Indonesian university setting.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the perceptions of fifth-semester Islamic Education students at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi regarding the use of *Kahoot* in their learning process. The research focused on collecting rich, narrative data through ten open-ended questionnaire responses to capture students' experiences, opinions, and reflections. A total of fifteen participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that each had prior experience using *Kahoot* in a classroom setting. Data were collected through a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit indepth responses about the benefits, challenges, and perceived impacts of *Kahoot* on their engagement and understanding of Islamic Education material. The responses were then analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the researcher to identify key patterns and themes that emerged from the data while maintaining the integrity of each participant's voice.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study shed light on the perceptions of students regarding the use of Kahoot in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Based on the open-ended questionnaire responses, students expressed a range of views, but the overall sentiment toward the use of Kahoot was positive. The responses were grouped into three key themes: motivation and enjoyment, cognitive benefits, and challenges or limitations. This discussion will explore these themes in detail,

incorporating direct student quotations to provide a richer understanding of their experiences.

1. Motivation and Enjoyment

a. The students' initial experiences with Kahoot

The students' initial experiences with Kahoot were largely positive, with many expressing excitement and enjoyment upon their first use of the platform (S. Licorish & Lötter, 2022; Martins et al., 2019; Sinnivasagam & Hua, 2023). Several respondents highlighted the fun and engaging nature of Kahoot, which made the learning process more enjoyable. For example, Student 1 shared that the experience "made me happy and added knowledge about Islamic Religious Education," while Student 3 described it as "quite exciting and enjoyable." Others, like Student 2, were initially surprised but gradually warmed up to the tool, noting that it became "fun and enjoyable" over time. Similarly, Student 7 noted that Kahoot "motivated us to learn because it felt like playing but also expanded our knowledge and insights." This positive response to Kahoot highlights its ability to transform learning into an enjoyable and dynamic experience (Balaskas et al., 2023).

Additionally, many students appreciated the interactive and competitive aspects of Kahoot, which made the learning process more stimulating and challenging. For instance, Student 4 mentioned that Kahoot was "very interactive, not boring, and highly academic," while Student 9 described it as "challenging and focused," which helped maintain their motivation to learn. Student 14 emphasized how the tool created a "fun learning atmosphere," and Student 15 added that Kahoot "helps in thinking quickly and critically" through its variety of game-like features. These responses suggest that Kahoot not only engages students but also encourages deeper thinking and active participation, making it a valuable tool in the learning environment (Cerny & Mannova, 2011; Zhang & Yu, 2021).

b. The students' engagement

Studies found that many students highlighted that the competitive nature and self-paced structure of the platform encouraged them to focus and perform better (Ahmed et al., 2022; Alsswey et al., 2024). The use of Kahoot in learning Islamic Religious Education significantly boosted students' motivation and engagement, as

reflected in their responses. For instance, Student 1 felt highly motivated because "I knew how to use Kahoot," while Student 4 emphasized the role of Kahoot's ranking system in motivating students, stating that it "relies on one's own abilities." Similarly, Student 6 appreciated how Kahoot made learning "more fun and exciting" and encouraged "quick thinking" due to the time constraints. Student 7 also noted that Kahoot helped them focus and "learn discipline with the time limit set," which further contributed to their motivation.

In addition to fostering personal challenges, Kahoot was seen as an effective tool for making learning more dynamic and less monotonous. Student 3 found that Kahoot allowed them to "test our understanding independently" and "boosted motivation." Student 12 shared that Kahoot "presented more engaging material," while Student 13 noted that it "increased my curiosity" and made the learning experience more stimulating, as it prevented lessons from becoming "monotonous or boring." Several respondents, such as Student 15, emphasized that Kahoot's game-based learning approach "helped develop and measure individual abilities," making the educational experience enjoyable and more memorable. These responses suggest that Kahoot is not only motivating students but also fostering a more interactive and engaging environment for learning Islamic Religious Education (Papakostas, 2024; Rafsanjani et al., 2024).

2. Cognitive Benefits of using Kahoot

a. Comparison with Traditional Methods

The students' experiences with Kahoot were generally seen as far more engaging and dynamic compared to traditional learning methods (Ahmed et al., 2022; Purike & Aslan, 2025). Several respondents pointed out how Kahoot made the learning process more enjoyable and less monotonous compared to conventional learning. Student 1 noted that learning with Kahoot was "more interesting and easier to understand" than traditional methods, which could often feel dull and unengaging. Similarly, Student 5 emphasized the contrast, stating that "traditional learning is often boring and monotonous," whereas Kahoot "makes learning fun and lively." Students also appreciated how Kahoot encouraged critical thinking and time management. As Student 2 observed, Kahoot "trained me to think critically to get the correct answers," while

Student 3 appreciated how it helped them become "more disciplined with time" and more "careful" in their responses.

In contrast, traditional methods were often viewed as passive and repetitive (Pandya et al., 2024). This is in line with the finding of this study where many students found traditional learning to be time-consuming and less effective in maintaining attention. For example, Student 9 mentioned that "traditional learning takes more time," while Student 10 added that it was limited to "just listening to the lesson," which did not engage students as effectively as Kahoot. Kahoot's interactive and fast-paced nature was seen as a refreshing change, making learning "more practical and enjoyable" (Student 7). As Student 12 remarked, Kahoot is "more interesting and enjoyable" compared to traditional methods, while Student 14 highlighted how Kahoot's approach was "active, challenging, and collaborative," unlike the more static nature of traditional learning.

b. Effectiveness in Understanding the Material

A number of studies found that Kahoot helps students understand lessons better (Curto Prieto et al., 2019, 2019; Rosidah et al., 2024). Similarly, the majority of students found that Kahoot significantly helped them understand Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material, with many pointing out that the immediate feedback provided by the tool enhanced their learning experience. For example, Student 7 highlighted that Kahoot "corrects and informs me when I get an answer wrong," helping them identify and learn from their mistakes. Similarly, Student 9 appreciated that "if we make a mistake, we are immediately given the correct answer," reinforcing their understanding. Student 2 also noted that Kahoot helped them "compare answers in multiple-choice questions," which helped clarify concepts. For students like Student 6, Kahoot's fast-paced nature, requiring "quick and accurate responses," contributed to better retention and a more thorough grasp of the material.

Several students mentioned that Kahoot not only tested their knowledge but also introduced new information, aiding in their learning process. For instance, Student 5 shared that Kahoot's questions often covered new topics, indirectly expanding their knowledge. Student 12 explained that Kahoot helped them better understand topics such as "the stories of the prophets, Islamic law, and moral values," while Student 13 found

it easier to "understand the material through the provided questions and answers." Kahoot's interactive format was also praised for making learning more accessible (Keadkraichaiwat et al., 2024; Pilař et al., 2024). Student 14 stated that it "delivered the material in a simple and fun way," and Student 11 noting that "Kahoot makes learning fun and easy to understand." Overall, Kahoot's ability to provide immediate feedback and present material in an engaging format was seen as a valuable tool for enhancing students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education.

c. Most Engaging Features of Kahoot

Based on the students' responses, several key aspects of Kahoot's impact on their learning experience emerged, particularly highlighting features that enhanced engagement, competition, and speed in learning which agree some research (Pilař et al., 2024, 2024). Many students found the real-time feedback provided by the quiz particularly appealing. As Student 1 remarked, "the correct and incorrect answers appear immediately, with illustrations for each question." This instant feedback was noted by several other students as a motivating factor, as it enabled them to identify areas for improvement immediately. Additionally, the system of scoring and ranking was a major point of interest. As Student 2 highlighted, "the score points are different depending on speed and accuracy," motivating them to answer more quickly. This system was echoed by other students, with Student 4 appreciating the "ranking system" and Student 14 noting their interest in "the race for high scores."

Another prominent feature that stood out was the use of time constraints in Kahoot, which pushed students to answer quickly and efficiently (Singh et al., 2024). Student 5 shared, "the use of time in answering makes it so that those who answer correctly and quickly get the highest score," while Student 6 mentioned, "learning with a time limit forces me to be organized and quick in my answers." This element was seen as a motivator, encouraging quick thinking and reinforcing time management skills. Additionally, several students appreciated the simplicity and practical nature of Kahoot, with Student 10 stating, "its use is simple and easy," and Student 7 mentioning that it is "practical, fast, and pushes me to think quickly." Overall, Kahoot was viewed as a dynamic and engaging tool, promoting faster learning, active participation, and a competitive atmosphere in the classroom.

d. Impact on Interaction with Lecturers and Classmates

Based on the responses, it is clear that using Kahoot has had a positive impact on student interaction with both their lecturers and classmates. A significant number of students highlighted how Kahoot facilitated a more open and engaging atmosphere in the classroom. For instance, Student 1 shared that their "interaction became very open because the atmosphere was enjoyable," while Student 3 noted that their interaction with both the lecturer and classmates was "open because the lecturer also explained concepts that I didn't understand." This open communication was emphasized by other students as well, such as Student 9, who mentioned that "using Kahoot, students interacted more frequently with both friends and lecturers, becoming more open in communication." Previous research discovered similar responses from students where Kahoot enables more interaction among individuals in the classrooms (Castillo-Cuesta et al., 2024; Tampubolon et al., 2025).

While many students experienced improved interaction, some also mentioned challenges. Student 8, for example, felt that "interaction became less open because the teaching was focused only on the questions and answers." Despite this, other students overcame potential difficulties by embracing the tool's benefits. As Student 6 pointed out, "the interaction became more intensive, especially when discussing and choosing the right answer within a short time," indicating that Kahoot prompted active participation and a sense of urgency. Overall, Kahoot was generally seen as an effective tool in fostering better communication, collaboration, and a more inclusive classroom environment, especially for students who might typically be quieter (Ahmed et al., 2022; Martins et al., 2019; Pandya et al., 2024). Student 13 highlighted, saying that even the "quiet students could participate in the communication."

e. Role of Kahoot in Assessing Understanding

The students overwhelmingly perceived Kahoot quizzes as an effective tool for assessing their understanding of the material (Muslimin et al., 2024; Navarro-Castillo et al., 2025). In this study, students described the platform as "very effective", emphasizing how it supported both comprehension and engagement. For instance, Student 1 noted that the learning became "easy to understand and enjoyable," while Student 3

appreciated how Kahoot helped to "train speed and critical thinking." Others valued the independence the quizzes encouraged, such as Student 4, who mentioned being able to "answer questions independently without asking friends." Several students also pointed out that Kahoot helped them grasp new content more easily; Student 7, for example, stated that it made it "easier to understand new material."

In addition to personal benefits, some students highlighted Kahoot's role in helping lecturers evaluate student understanding. Student 8 observed that the quizzes were "effective in helping the lecturer understand the students' level of comprehension," and Student 9 added that they could "recognize their own abilities and improve their understanding." A few students, like Student 13, were still becoming familiar with the platform but still found it "quite effective." Overall, Kahoot was seen not only as a means of reinforcing knowledge but also as a dynamic assessment tool that enhanced both learning and teaching in the Islamic Religious Education context (Muslimin et al., 2024; Rafsanjani et al., 2024).

3. Challenges and Suggestions

a. Suggestion for improving Kahoot usage

Previous research suggested a number of strategies to optimize the Kahoot usage (Cruz et al., 2021; Tao & and Zou, 2023; Wooten, 2022). In a like manner, in this study, students offered a range of constructive suggestions for improving the use of Kahoot in Islamic Religious Education classes. Several students emphasized the need to adjust the quiz difficulty and increase the number of questions to make the learning experience more challenging and engaging. For example, Student 2 suggested that "the difficulty level of the questions should be increased," while Student 4 recommended both "increasing the number of questions and the level of difficulty." Student 3 echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that "the difficulty should be adjusted according to students' ability and the course material." Additionally, some students proposed expanding Kahoot's use to other courses and integrating alternative tools. Student 7 advised, "please introduce students to other applications besides Kahoot," encouraging diversity in digital tools used for learning.

Others focused on the technical and accessibility aspects of the platform. Student 1 suggested removing the participant limit and eliminating the need for PIN codes and

internet access, stating these features can be restrictive. Similarly, Student 14 proposed using "Kahoot Premium so there is no limit on the number of participants and more advanced features can be accessed." Student 9 highlighted the importance of preparation, recommending that lecturers "explain how to use the application before starting the quiz." A few students, like Student 11, emphasized the importance of broader adoption, saying, "more lecturers should use this app so their teaching methods aren't left behind." These suggestions reflect a student body that values Kahoot's current use but sees clear opportunities to enhance its effectiveness, inclusiveness, and impact in the classroom (Ahmed et al., 2022; Cruz et al., 2021; Tao & and Zou, 2023).

b. Overall perception of Kahoot

Overall, students expressed highly positive perceptions of using Kahoot in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, frequently highlighting its enjoyable, practical, and modern approach to teaching (Muslimin et al., 2024; Rafsanjani et al., 2024). This research revealed that many students emphasized how Kahoot made learning more engaging and less monotonous compared to traditional methods. For instance, Student 1 shared that Kahoot made learning "easier, more effective, and enjoyable with open communication," while Student 6 emphasized that it was "fun, effective, and different from traditional methods." Several respondents also pointed to its ability to help with content retention, such as Student 3, who noted that it "makes learning more enjoyable and helps recall the material." Students commonly appreciated its alignment with technological advancements and the evolving landscape of education, with Student 5 calling it a "very modern learning method that follows current educational trends."

The majority of students strongly recommended the use of Kahoot not only in PAI but across other courses and learning environments. Student 12, for example, stated that Kahoot provides a "meaningful and enjoyable experience," and suggested that all education faculty students should be trained to use it in their future classrooms. Similarly, Student 11 believed it would help produce "better future teachers by leaving behind outdated teaching methods." Students also found Kahoot to be a practical and motivating tool, as Student 14 said it "can boost students' motivation because it makes learning more fun." This wide enthusiasm reflects the students' belief in Kahoot as a valuable and adaptable educational tool that enhances both student engagement and

teacher creativity in delivering religious education (Cruz et al., 2021; Rosidah et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of Islamic Education students at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi regarding the use of the Kahoot application in Islamic Religious Education learning. The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents had a positive perception of using Kahoot, viewing it as an engaging, interactive tool that helped them understand the material better. The gamified elements in Kahoot enhanced student engagement and made the learning process more enjoyable. However, some respondents mentioned challenges related to technical issues and time constraints during the game sessions. Overall, this study reveals that Kahoot can enhance learning motivation but requires further adjustments to be optimized in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that instructors consider using Kahoot in a more structured manner with careful planning, including ensuring adequate technological infrastructure and enough time for the game sessions. Additionally, it is suggested to develop variations in the use of Kahoot, such as adding discussion elements or feedback after the game to deepen students' understanding of the material. The novelty of this research lies in revealing that the Kahoot application not only serves as an assessment tool but also as a means to increase student engagement and motivation in the context of Islamic Religious Education. Future research could involve further experiments on the design of Kahoot-based learning to enhance its effectiveness in teaching Islamic Religious Education.

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