

Inquiry Learning as a Manifestation of Hadith Reception on Questioning in Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract: Islamic Religious Education often relies on a one way teaching pattern that significantly limits student participation and questioning, despite the Islamic scholarly tradition highly valuing questioning as mandated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, this study aims to describe the practice of inquiry learning in Islamic Religious Education and analyze these pedagogical practices as a practical reception of the hadith regarding questioning. Utilizing a qualitative field study design, data were collected through classroom observations and in-depth interviews with teachers, which were subsequently analyzed using a living hadith perspective. The findings reveal that inquiry learning serves as a transformative mechanism, shifting the hadith on questioning from a mere normative text into a tangible cultural behavior of dialectical questioning within the classroom. Teachers effectively act as mediators who enliven the hadith's mandate by facilitating problem-based stimuli and dialogue spaces. As a contribution, this study offers a practical pedagogical model for educators to seamlessly integrate fundamental Islamic scholarly values into daily teaching. Furthermore, the findings imply a critical need for a paradigm shift in religious education methodology, moving from dogmatic-reproductive transmission toward an inquiry-based framework to foster a dynamic learning environment.

Keywords: Inquiry Learning; Islamic Religious Education; Living Hadith; Questioning

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction in schools generally continues to demonstrate a tendency toward the dominance of teacher-centered learning (Risana et al., 2025). In practice, the learning process often operates in a one way direction, where the teacher serves as the primary source of information while students act as passive recipients of the material. This condition potentially inhibits the development of students' critical and reflective thinking skills, which are essentially crucial parts of the IRE learning objectives, particularly in understanding religious values more meaningfully and deeply. To address this, structured pedagogical interventions that actively stimulate student questioning, such as probing-prompting methods, are highly required to shift the dynamic from passive to active learning (Anwar & Yulianti, 2017). Furthermore, approaches that align with the students' cognitive processes are essential to maximize their learning activities (Ibrahim, 2019). Whereas, Islam emphasizes the importance of the thinking and questioning process to acquire knowledge, which is inherently part of the goal of IRE itself (Fikri & Munfarida, 2023).

Based on classroom observations, questioning activities at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang have not yet emerged naturally from the students themselves; rather, they are more frequently triggered by teacher instructions. Most students tend to wait for further explanation from their teacher instead of posing questions about the material being studied. This fact indicates that the space for dialogue in IRE learning remains very limited, causing the knowledge construction process through student exploration and curiosity to be obstructed. Furthermore, this limitation in the culture of questioning implies a religious understanding that is "dogmatic reproductive," where learning emphasizes rote memorization over deep meaning making. Consequently, students are more inclined to adopt religious teachings as closed doctrines accepted passively, without undergoing a process of dialectic, reasoning, and critical reflection. This situation reinforces the need for a learning approach capable of facilitating active engagement, where questioning is positioned as the main entry point for acquiring a more meaningful religious understanding.

Conceptually, inquiry learning emphasizes student centered learning through a process of investigation, question formulation, and systematic answer seeking (Prasetyo & Rosy, 2020). This approach views questioning as the primary gateway to gaining understanding. Even within the perspective of Islamic education itself, the activity of questioning holds a significant position, as reflected in the Hadith of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), which encourages his followers not to hesitate in asking for explanations regarding matters they do not yet understand or comprehend substantially. Thus, inquiry learning is understood as a learning approach that places questions as the starting point of learning, encouraging students to perform exploration, reasoning, and reflection systematically. Accordingly, the principles of inquiry learning possess a value alignment with Islamic teachings regarding how knowledge is acquired.

While several previous studies have examined the implementation of inquiry learning in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction, their analyses remain predominantly descriptive and heavily focused on improving student activeness and cognitive learning outcomes. For instance, existing literature highlights the model's capacity to enhance student interaction and structured exploration (Mahbubah & Masnawati, 2024), as well as its contribution to improving higher-order thinking skills (Sukawati et al., 2023). Despite confirming the participatory benefits of inquiry learning, these previous studies conceptually treat the method purely as a modern

instructional tool. Consequently, a critical research gap emerges: previous pedagogical evaluations largely overlook the underlying theological dimensions, leaving a scarcity of research that connects inquiry learning practices with the reception of Islamic scholarly traditions. Therefore, this study departs from previous cognitive-centric evaluations by exploring inquiry learning not merely as an instructional strategy, but as a contextual manifestation of *living hadith* regarding questioning within the classroom.

All these articles focus on the application of inquiry learning in IRE with an emphasis on improving student activeness and learning outcomes; however, few have directly linked it to Hadith studies as a foundation of values or Hadith reception. Hadith studies regarding questioning are generally directed at textual analysis and normative meaning content. On the other hand, *Living Hadith* studies have developed in examining religious practices, yet their application in formal learning contexts, specifically regarding pedagogical strategies in IRE classrooms, remains relatively limited.

Based on this review, there is a scarcity of research that directly connects inquiry learning practices in IRE with the concept of hadith reception regarding questioning. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to interpret the pedagogical practice of inquiry learning as a structural manifestation of *Living Hadith*. Theoretically, the inquiry method is purposefully chosen as the primary representation of hadith reception because its core epistemological design which heavily emphasizes investigation, question formulation, and systematic answer seeking most comprehensively accommodates the hadith's mandate to combat ignorance through questioning. Through this theoretical alignment, inquiry learning is no longer positioned merely as an alternative secular instructional tool, but rather as the most precise pedagogical vessel to systematically transform the textual message of the hadith into a tangible culture of dialectical questioning within the contemporary classroom. Therefore, based on the background above, this study aims to examine inquiry learning practices in IRE as a manifestation of the reception of the Hadith on questioning. Specifically, the purposes of this research are: (1) to explore how the concept of questioning in the Hadith of the Prophet (Saw) is relevant to IRE learning; (2) to describe how the practice of inquiry learning is carried out in IRE instruction at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang; and (3) to analyze how such pedagogical practice can be understood as a form of Hadith reception regarding questioning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative field research design to comprehensively examine inquiry learning practices in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). To analytically bridge these pedagogical practices with theological values, this research operationalizes the *Living Hadith* framework as its primary reception analysis tool. Referring to Suryadilaga (2014) perspective, this framework is specifically utilized to analyze how the hadith transcends its rigid normative textual boundaries to become a living value actively manifested within educational behaviors. Technically, this reception analysis is conducted by confronting the empirical data of classroom interactions with the hermeneutic understanding of the hadith's mandate regarding questioning, thereby explicitly mapping how classical texts are contextually received and practiced in a modern setting.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang, a junior high school deliberately selected for its active implementation of question-based and dialogical IRE instruction. Describing the context of this specific educational level is crucial for reception analysis; the junior high school environment, characterized by its adolescent student demographic, presents unique psychological and cognitive transitional phases that directly influence how the culture of dialectical questioning is adopted or resisted. The primary object of this study is the actualization of inquiry learning, focusing on teacher-student interaction patterns and the evolving questioning culture. To gather authoritative data, the research subjects comprised IRE teachers and students. These informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2019), carefully chosen based on their direct involvement and relevance to the dialogical learning process.

The research procedures were systematically executed, starting with primary data collection through direct field observations of the inquiry stages and in-depth interviews exploring the participants' pedagogical and psychological motives. Subsequently, the collected data were examined using a qualitative descriptive analysis (Saleh, 2017). This analytical procedure rigorously followed sequential stages: data reduction to filter pedagogical behaviors relevant to hadith reception, and data display to structure the patterns of inquiry learning. Crucially, during the conclusion drawing phase, the synthesized field data was not merely descriptively summarized but deliberately confronted with the hermeneutic substance of the hadith on questioning. Finally, the validity of the data was firmly ensured through source and technique triangulation to guarantee the credibility of the research findings

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Implementation of Inquiry Learning in the Classroom

Based on empirical field observations, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction systematically employs an inquiry learning approach to deconstruct traditional, teacher-centered paradigms (Minhaji et al., 2022; Safkolam et al., 2023). Specifically, direct classroom observations reveal that teachers do not immediately deliver learning materials in their entirety at the beginning of the lesson. Instead, the observational data demonstrates that the teacher strategically initiates the learning process by providing contextual triggering questions as a cognitive stimulus (Kasman & Rahman, 2023). This specific pedagogical finding shows that students are given the opportunity to observe, discuss, and seek relevant information independently (Zahro & Nasikhin, 2023). Consequently, the findings indicate that learning materials are organically constructed through a structured process of question and answer and group collaboration (Kasman & Rahman, 2023). The structured findings of these observations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Observation Results of Inquiry Learning Implementation

Learning Phase	Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Observation Findings
Problem Presentation	Teacher presents contextual problems related to	Students listen and respond to the problems.	Students begin to engage in learning.

Learning Phase	Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Observation Findings
	IRE material.		
Observation	Teacher provides reading materials and directions for students.	Students observe and record important information.	The learning process proceeds collaboratively.
Question Formulation	Teacher provides opportunities for students to ask questions.	Students pose questions related to observed and recorded material.	Questions begin to emerge, though not all students participate yet.
Information Collection	Teacher facilitates student group discussions.	Students seek answers through discussion.	Discussions proceed actively.
Communicating Results	Teacher directs presentations for each group.	Students present discussion results.	Two way interaction occurs; learning becomes lively and dialogic.
Reflection	Teacher provides reinforcement and clarification.	Students conclude learning outcomes.	Student understanding becomes more directed.

Source: *Researcher Observation Data*

During this process, the data indicates that the teacher provides gradual guidance tailored to student needs. Rather than supplying immediate final answers when students encounter conceptual difficulties, the teacher offers analytical clues. Crucially, in depth interviews reveal that this pedagogical choice is deeply driven by an understanding of Islamic scholarly values rather than mere technical compliance with modern curriculum standards. As explicitly articulated by an interviewed IRE teacher: "We encourage them to investigate and ask questions not simply because the school curriculum demands active learning, but because we want them to realize that in Islam, questioning is the ultimate cure for ignorance, just as the Prophet taught." This empirical evidence proves that inquiry learning is practically applied to encourage students to be actively involved in discovering the deep meaning of IRE materials.

Dynamics of Student Questioning Activities

The observational data demonstrates a progressive evolution in the dynamics of student questioning activities throughout the instructional phases (Aiyetoro et al., 2024; Beltrano, 2023). Initially, the questioning behaviors were strictly foundational, limited to students requesting basic explanations regarding unfamiliar terms or concepts (Aiyetoro et al., 2024). However, as the collaborative inquiry deepened, the empirical findings highlight an epistemological shift: students began to formulate higher-order inquiries, linking abstract IRE concepts with personal experiences or their socio-religious realities (Mamali, 2023; Rahman, 2021). The data on the categorization of student questioning activities is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Student Questioning Activities in IRE Learning

Form of Questioning Activity	Description of Research Findings
Students ask about concepts	Students request explanations regarding terms or materials being studied.
Students ask based on concepts	Student questions are linked to daily life.
Follow up questioning	Questions begin to emerge after group discussions.
No questioning	Some students tend to be passive.

Source: *Researcher Data*

Despite this positive progression, the findings indicate that dialectical engagement is not universally adopted (Moslimany et al., 2024; Nuruzzaman et al., 2023). A segment of students tended to remain silent, passively following the discussion flow (García-Allén et al., 2024; Nuruzzaman et al., 2023). This specific empirical condition suggests that a robust questioning culture is heavily contingent upon psychological confidence factors (García-Allén et al., 2024; Kurniawan & Zulkarnain, 2023) and deeply ingrained prior learning habits (Hamdeh, 2024; Madkur & As'ad, 2024).

Psychological Barriers and Pedagogical Strategies

In depth interviews uncover profound psychological and pedagogical dimensions regarding questioning activities. IRE teachers view the inquiry learning approach not merely as an instructional tactic, but as a crucial medium to facilitate deep meaning-making. Teachers analytically recognize that cultivating the courage to ask requires a gradual habituation process. As articulated by an IRE teacher: "If I just tell them to ask, not all students are brave. But if we go through discussion first, their questions usually start to appear." This perspective is strongly corroborated by student informants, who reported a significant reduction in psychological barriers when situated within group dynamics. The opportunity to question peer-to-peer made them feel more involved. However, underlying fears of posing "inappropriate" questions still existed. One student stated: "In group discussions, I am braver to ask because it is not directly to the teacher."

To navigate the identified psychological barriers, empirical findings show that IRE teachers implement specific pedagogical strategies. Primarily, teachers utilize open-ended prompts that accommodate a multiplicity of valid responses, effectively

preventing cognitive dead-ends (Qin et al., 2025; Ramasamy & Zainal, 2023; Soysal, 2021). Additionally, teachers intentionally allocate extended durations for intra-group discussions before requiring public presentations (Tengberg et al., 2023; Zheng & Shi, 2025). Crucially, the teachers demonstrate a consistent attitude of openness and appreciation toward every student inquiry (Cui & Teo, 2023; Vrikki et al., 2025). By validating all responses without immediate critical judgment, teachers successfully cultivate a psychologically safe learning atmosphere (Caño & Alonso, 2025; Patel, 2024).

Student Responses and Structural Constraints

The implementation of these dialogical strategies generally elicited highly positive responses from the students. Both observational and interview data converge to show that students exhibit heightened engagement and intellectual courage compared to their behavior in conventional, unidirectional settings. Students explicitly acknowledged that active participation made IRE instruction substantially more engaging (Cao & Liu, 2024; Zhong et al., 2025). However, the study also identified structural constraints, primarily the limited instructional time (120 minutes), which restricts the depth of the exploration and reflection phases (Tengberg et al., 2023; Zheng & Shi, 2025). Addressing this temporal constraint remains a critical necessity to ensure the inquiry process optimally and consistently enlivens the classroom culture.

DISCUSSION

Inquiry Learning as a Manifestation of Hadith Reception

Substantially, the analytical synthesis of these empirical findings indicates that the practice of inquiry learning at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang transcends its function as a modern pedagogical tool; it operates as a practical reception of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) hadith regarding questioning. The Islamic scholarly tradition, as narrated by Abu Dawud, explicitly states:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : أَلَا سَأَلُوا إِذْ لَمْ يَعْلَمُوا؟
فَإِنَّمَا شِفَاءُ الْعِيِّ السُّؤَالُ رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ ٣٣٦ وَابْنُ مَاجَةَ ٣٨٦١

Meaning: "Why did they not ask when they did not know? Verily, the cure for ignorance is questioning." (Narrated by Abu Dawud from Jabir).

Analytically, this hadith is no longer treated merely as a passive normative text, but is dynamically received as a practical pedagogical solution to combat intellectual stagnation (Wahyu, 2022). This theological mandate is explicitly reflected in the observed questioning activities within the IRE classroom (Sserwadda & Musoke, 2024). Rather than remaining passive recipients of closed dogmas, students empirically demonstrated a progressive evolution in their questioning behavior—shifting from requesting basic conceptual clarifications to formulating contextual inquiries linked to their daily lives (Aiyetoro et al., 2024; Beltrano, 2023). This tangible classroom activity serves as direct empirical evidence of the hadith's reception (Aiyetoro et al., 2024). Consequently, the implementation of inquiry learning functionally actualizes the Prophet's mandate to eradicate ignorance through structured and continuous student questioning (Mamali, 2023; Wahyu, 2022).

Theological Validity of Questioning Dynamics

Viewed through the Living Hadith theoretical framework proposed by Suryadilaga (2014), these dialectical activities represent the vital transformation of

textual mandates into living, cultural values within a contemporary social context. This analytical perspective critically addresses the research gap left by previous pedagogical studies. While earlier research by Mahbubah and Masnawati (2024) and Sukawati et al. (2023) successfully verified the efficacy of inquiry learning in enhancing student interaction and higher-order thinking skills, their analyses remained strictly confined to secular pedagogical paradigms. The present study elevates this discourse by demonstrating that the questioning behaviors fostered by inquiry learning possess profound theological validity. The varying levels of questioning dynamics – from basic conceptual inquiries to contextual problem solving – reflect the gradual internalization of the hadith's values. This aligns perfectly with the assertion by Fikri & Munfarida (2023) that critical thinking is inherently embedded within Islamic educational objectives.

Teachers as Mediators of Living Hadith

These strategic pedagogical choices underscore the profound role of the IRE teacher as a true mediator of Living Hadith. Providing gradual clues rather than instant answers mirrors the prophetic tradition of cautiously addressing inquiries. In addition to the hadith on questioning, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also issued a warning regarding the danger of speaking or answering without a basis of knowledge:

مَنْ أَفْتِيَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَانَ إِثْمُهُ عَلَى مَنْ أَفْتَاهُ . رواه أبو داود

Meaning: "Whoever gives a fatwa (religious opinion) without knowledge, then the sin is upon the one who gave the fatwa." (Narrated by Abu Dawud).

This theological caution contextualizes the teachers' strategy of guiding students to independently discover answers, ensuring that the epistemological process remains rigorously controlled. In the Living Hadith context, the teacher transcends the role of a mere textual transmitter; they become an active agent who "enlivens" the hadith by establishing a psychologically safe space, replicating the Prophet's inclusive approach to dialogue. Inquiry learning acts as a dual-mechanism: it directly structures questioning activities while fundamentally shaping the students' psychological comfort.

Pedagogical Implications and Structural Restructuring

Based on these empirical findings, the implications of inquiry learning for IRE extend beyond theoretical alignment into practical pedagogical restructuring. Since the observational data demonstrates that students' questioning logically evolves from basic conceptual clarifications to contextual socio-religious inquiries only when stimulated by problem-based triggers, IRE curricula must practically integrate these contextual triggers rather than relying on direct dogmatic transmission (Calvit & Ford, 2023; Karam, 2021). Furthermore, the interview findings indicating that students face psychological fears of posing "inappropriate" questions directly to the teacher highlight a crucial practical implication: educators must systematically incorporate collaborative group discussions to serve as a psychologically safe dialectical buffer (García-Allén et al., 2024; Sulé et al., 2022). Finally, the identified structural constraint regarding the limited 120-minute instructional time empirically suggests that school policymakers need to reevaluate time allocation for IRE, ensuring that the exploration and reflection phases of inquiry learning can be executed without rushing (Nuruzzaman et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2023). Therefore, this study practically implicates that enlivening the hadith's

mandate on questioning requires both tactical pedagogical adaptation and tangible structural curriculum support (Arslan & Whitehead, 2022; Ramasamy & Zainal, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that addressing the dogmatic stagnation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) requires an epistemological return to the prophetic tradition of questioning. The findings demonstrate that the hadith's mandate – which positions questioning as the ultimate cure for ignorance – is highly relevant to IRE. In practice, this mandate is effectively operationalized through structured contextual problem stimuli, collaborative observations, and dialogical spaces, successfully transforming students from passive recipients into active truth-seekers. Furthermore, the pedagogical practice of inquiry learning structurally operates as a tangible manifestation of living hadith. Through this framework, IRE teachers transcend their traditional roles as mere information transmitters to become active theological mediators who enliven the hadith's values by fostering a psychologically safe dialectical culture.

As a practical contribution and strategic implication for Islamic education policy, this study highlights the critical need to systematically institutionalize inquiry-based frameworks within the curriculum. It is imperative to allocate highly flexible instructional durations to accommodate deep dialectical reflections, moving permanently away from rigid, one-way dogmatic transmission. Finally, for further research in the field of hadith-pedagogy integration, future studies should empirically investigate the living reception of other educational hadiths across diverse academic tiers and explore how various modern instructional models can be epistemologically rooted in authentic prophetic traditions.

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