

TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

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Abstract - The development of information technology has driven significant changes in the implementation of Islamic religious education at various levels. This study aims to conceptually explain how digital media and technology platforms influence the effectiveness, quality, and innovation in the creation of religious materials. Using a literature study approach, an analysis of relevant theoretical and empirical findings from various academic publications was conducted. The results of the study indicate that digital technology opens up new space in religious education that is more open, interactive, and personal. However, challenges also arise in the form of unverified religious information, the potential for spiritual banality, and weak media literacy among students. Therefore, Islamic religious education in the digital era must adapt epistemologically and pedagogically in order to meet the demands of the times. A contextual curriculum, digitally capable teachers, and family and community participation are key components in building relevant and meaningful religious education. This study provides a contextual contribution to the formulation of technology-based religious education policies and the importance of strengthening ethical values in the use of digital media.

Keywords: islamic religious education, digital media, learning transformation, information technology, religious literacy, online interaction, pedagogical innovation

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the last two decades has created major changes in the way individuals access, manage, and share religious knowledge. Amid the dynamics of digital globalization, Islamic religious education cannot be separated from the process of transforming media and learning methods. Digital devices such as learning applications, video platforms, and social media are now part of the educational ecosystem that has penetrated spiritual spaces. The adaptation of Islamic education to this technology opens up wide opportunities to reach the younger generation who were born and raised in a digital atmosphere, while also testing the resilience of the traditional approach that has been dominant so far (Salsabila et al., 2022).

In formal schools, the delivery of Islamic religious education has begun to integrate technology as a means of increasing the effectiveness of conveying Islamic values. Teachers are no longer the only source of knowledge, but have shifted to being facilitators who direct students in exploring material through various online sources. The emergence of interactive media such as learning videos, e-modules, and online discussion forums has opened up wider participation in the learning process. This condition requires Islamic religious education to move adaptively without sacrificing the substance of knowledge and spiritual values that are its foundation (Mansir, 2022).

However, the penetration of digital technology also brings its own challenges. Not all religious content circulating in digital media has scientific validity and conformity with the principles of Islamic moderation. The uncontrolled flow of information has the potential to form biased religious understanding, especially for students who do not yet have critical digital literacy skills (Zahid & Darmawan, 2025). In many cases, social media becomes an open space for the spread of exclusive doctrines, which are contrary to the spirit of tolerance and inclusivity in Islamic education. Therefore, the urgency of formulating an innovative and structured approach in Islamic religious education is becoming increasingly apparent (Dalimunthe et al., 2023).

Specifically, Islamic religious education in the digital era does not merely adapt to tools, but must also reformulate its pedagogical approach (Mufidah, 2022). Efforts are needed to make technology a learning partner that strengthens the spiritual, ethical, and religious qualities of students. Innovation in delivery methods not only demands the digital competence of teachers, but also the development of materials that are contextual and relevant to the lives of today's students. From here, the study of the dynamics and implications of digitalization in Islamic religious education becomes significant to be explored more deeply scientifically.

Islamic religious education in Indonesia, despite its rapid development, still faces major challenges in uniting the substance of Islamic knowledge with digital-based learning methodology. According to Zuhairini (1993), the effectiveness of Islamic religious education lies in the strength of internalization of values, not just the delivery of material.

In practice, many teachers still make religious education a formal routine without paying attention to the transformative aspects of the material being taught. On the other hand, students tend to consider religious education not contextual to the reality of their digital lives.

Social media, which has a broad influence on the mindset of adolescents, is often not integrated with the religious education system in schools. This creates a dualism of values that confuses students, between the religious values they learn formally and the digital content they consume every day. Based on Madjid's analysis (1997), Islamic education should be able to answer the needs of the times without losing its theological roots. However, in implementation, there are still many curriculum policies that fail to bridge these two poles systematically.

In the school environment, the weak digital literacy of teachers is a crucial factor that slows down the transformation of religious education towards a more relevant direction. According to Tilaar (2000), national education that is not adaptive to technological developments will lag behind in quality and substance. This is reflected in the lack of digital pedagogical training for religious teachers, as well as the lack of supporting facilities in schools outside big cities. As a result, efforts to build an interactive and contextual religious learning ecosystem are often hampered by limited institutional capacity.

Serious attention to this dynamic is significant, because Islamic religious education is an instrument for forming noble values in the national education system. When digital transformation is not balanced with the arrangement of religious education methods, the potential for a value crisis among students will be even greater. Therefore, a systematic and critical literature review is needed to understand how technology and social media influence the development of Islamic religious education, as well as how innovations in delivering material can be developed in accordance with the demands of the times and the character of modern students.

This condition raises one main question: how do digital technology and social media actually influence the form, method, and meaning of Islamic religious education in the lives of today's students. This study aims to critically examine the impact of advances in digital technology and social media on the development of Islamic religious education, as well as to identify innovative approaches that can be used in delivering religious materials. The results of this study are expected to be a conceptual reference for educators, policy makers, and researchers in designing Islamic education curricula and methods that are adaptive, substantive, and contextual to the digital reality of today's students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative literature review approach, focusing on theoretical exploration, empirical findings, and academic reflections related to the development of Islamic religious education in the digital era. Literature review was chosen because this topic has been widely studied through scientific journals, research reports, academic books, and reflective articles from various disciplines such as Islamic education, educational technology, and digital media studies. The first step is carried out by identifying relevant scientific sources, followed by a critical evaluation process of the validity, relevance, and scientific contribution of each publication. This study is based on the interpretive principle, where secondary data is positioned as a conceptual foundation for building a new understanding of the relationship between digitalization and religious education.

Data collection was conducted through systematic searches of scientific databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and ProQuest, with inclusion criteria including: published in the period 2010–2024, having direct relevance to the issue of digitalization in religious education, and written by academics from credible institutions. Furthermore, data analysis was conducted using thematic synthesis techniques that allow researchers to categorize issues, trends, and implications from previous findings. This literature study refers to the theoretical approach developed by Creswell (2007) in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* and Hart (1998) in *Doing a Literature Review*, which emphasizes the importance of mapping ideas and critical dialogue between texts as the basis for forming scientific arguments. In this way, this study not only reproduces ideas, but also presents an original perspective on the issue of religious education in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Islamic religious education in the digital era has undergone a significant transformation along with the penetration of information technology in learning activities. Digital technology allows for expanded access to religious materials that were previously limited by space and time. Online platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive Al-Quran applications, and video-based preaching channels have become new mediums for conveying spiritual values that are more personal and flexible. According to Hussin (2018), the integration of technology in religious education not only increases the accessibility of learning, but also enriches pedagogical methods with a multimodal approach. This allows students to experience a more varied, interactive, and participatory learning experience.

However, the use of digital technology in religious education also presents an epistemological dilemma. Social media functions as a channel for spreading *da'wah*, on the other hand it has the potential to erode the depth of religious understanding if information consumption is done superficially and quickly. As noted by Campbell (2010), there is a

tendency towards hyperreality in the consumption of religious information in digital media, where the substance of teachings can be replaced by visual symbols that prioritize aesthetics over theological reflection. This challenge demands strengthening of religious digital literacy that not only masters technology, but also understands the values, ethics, and objectivity of information sources.

Religious teachers in schools have a strategic position in bridging technology and the substance of Islamic teachings. In the study of Anderson and Dron (2011), it was stated that the success of online learning is largely determined by three aspects: cognitive, social, and teacher presence. Religious teachers no longer act as the sole source of knowledge, but as facilitators who guide students to navigate and evaluate religious information available online. This process requires the readiness of teachers' digital competence and the courage to transform from an instructional approach to a contextual and reflective approach.

One of the innovative approaches that emerged was the use of digital storytelling as a method of internalizing Islamic values. This media is able to build emotional closeness between students and moral values through stories that are relevant to everyday life. According to Robin (2008), digital narratives increase students' cognitive and affective involvement, while strengthening critical thinking skills in understanding universal Islamic values such as justice, compassion, and honesty. The use of this approach requires new pedagogical skills, including technical skills in media production and adaptive curriculum integration.

Furthermore, social media such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have begun to be utilized as a means of creative preaching by young educators and preachers. This phenomenon creates a new space for the younger generation to engage in more open and communicative religious discussions. A study by Nomani (2011) shows that digital preaching carried out inclusively and dialogically can reduce the distance between the millennial generation and Islamic values that are often considered outdated or normative. However, its effectiveness still depends on the quality of the content and the educational intentions of the creator.

Social media platforms, particularly YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, have experienced exponential growth as primary channels for content sharing in the digital era. These platforms are now utilized not only for entertainment but also as tools for education and Islamic preaching (dakwah), especially among younger generations. YouTube, with its long-form video format, enables preachers to deliver Islamic teachings in a more in-depth and structured manner, complete with visualizations, detailed explanations, and interactive Q&A sessions. This approach not only attracts a broader audience but also offers a more varied and comprehensive opportunity for religious learning.

TikTok, on the other hand, has emerged as a favored platform for Generation Z and millennials due to its short-video sharing feature and sophisticated recommendation algorithm. These features allow religious messages to easily reach diverse segments of society in a short amount of time. Many young preachers leverage TikTok to convey Islamic messages through creative, educational, and accessible content, such as scriptural quotes, daily advice, and exemplary stories of the Prophet, all presented in a concise, engaging format that can be easily shared by other users.

Instagram offers a distinctive approach to digital dakwah by capitalizing on visual strengths through photos, infographics, and features such as Stories and Reels. Accounts dedicated to dakwah frequently blend Islamic motivational quotes, brief explanations of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), or spiritual reflections in formats that are succinct and easily accessible. The presence of comment features, direct messaging, and interactive polling further enables audiences to engage directly with preachers, fostering closeness and deepening religious understanding. According to research by Nomani (2011), dialogic and open digital dakwah can bridge the psychological gap between Islamic values and millennial mindsets.

The success of Islamic preaching on social media is reinforced by remarkably high user statistics. Data from We Are Social (2023) notes that YouTube is used by more than 2 billion active users globally, TikTok exceeds 1 billion, and Instagram has reached similar figures. In Indonesia, the usage of these platforms ranks among the highest in the world, with the majority of users coming from adolescent to young adult groups. This situation presents a significant opportunity for the inclusive dissemination of Islamic values while simultaneously enhancing religious literacy among digital natives.

Nevertheless, there are significant challenges concerning the validity and depth of religious content on social media. The popularity of viral content does not always equate to educational or theologically sound religious materials. The phenomenon of misleading information in digital dakwah has become increasingly concerning in line with the rapid increase in religious content on social media. Many content creators exploit the popularity of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram to attract public attention, often presenting religious messages without an adequate understanding of Islamic teachings. Such content frequently relies on personal interpretation, out-of-context scriptural excerpts, or trends created solely for virality, posing risks of spreading narrow, incorrect, and even misleading understandings.

The consequences of misleading digital dakwah are serious. Incorrect religious information can lead to communal division, escalate intolerance, and foster takfiri practices—that is, the act of declaring others outside the faith without justifiable theological grounds. Frequently, these misleading yet viral contents are more readily accessed and believed by laypeople with limited religious literacy, as they are packaged attractively, concisely, and sensationally. This reality presents a major challenge for religious authorities, educational institutions, and credible preachers in safeguarding the purity of teachings and the unity of the Muslim community in the digital space.

To address this issue, there is an urgent need for verification mechanisms for digital dakwah content. Religious authorities and digital literacy communities can play pivotal roles by providing clarification channels, content validation labels, and building supervision networks involving scholars, academics, and media practitioners. Public education on the importance of fact-checking, authoritative references, and recommendations for credible Islamic channels is crucial. Moreover, encouraging values of transparency and accountability among content creators is vital to ensuring that each circulated religious message can be scientifically and morally accounted for (Arifin & Darmawan, 2021).

Simultaneously, religious media literacy should be systematically instilled, both through formal education in schools and madrasahs and through training programs within online and offline communities. This literacy aims to equip the community with the skills to assess the veracity of information, distinguish between authentic teachings and merely sensational content, and foster a culture of critical consumption of digital dakwah. By strengthening both literacy and verification mechanisms, society can serve not only as passive consumers but also as filtering agents and guardians of Islamic orthodoxy in the digital sphere.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of Islamic preaching on social media depends largely on the quality, educational intent, and competence of the content creators. Preachers who can optimally utilize technology, package religious teachings creatively and dialogically, and actively address audience aspirations tend to garner trust and build robust online communities. Collaboration among platforms, educational institutions, and religious leaders is also essential to maintaining a healthy and responsible digital dakwah ecosystem amidst the fast-paced flow of information in the social media era.

There are still many Islamic educational institutions that are not ready to integrate technology comprehensively due to limited infrastructure, conservative curriculum, and lack of teacher training. Data from Albiruni (2010) states that most religious schools in rural areas face obstacles in accessing technology, both in the form of hardware and internet networks. This condition requires policy interventions based on digital equality and strengthening media literacy competencies in all elements of the school (Zahid & Darmawan, 2025).

Furthermore, evaluation of technology-based religious learning outcomes also needs to be designed adaptively. Conventional memorization-based evaluation models do not adequately reflect the true internalization of values. In the revised Bloom framework by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), evaluation of religious education should measure the affective dimensions and metacognitive skills through a portfolio approach, written reflection, and social religious projects. Thus, students not only know Islamic teachings, but are also able to display Islamic attitudes in social life.

Religious learning in the digital era is also closely related to the dynamics of multiculturalism and plurality of interpretations. Social media allows exposure to various religious views from various schools of thought, which can enrich insight as well as trigger confusion if not accompanied. Therefore, it is important for the religious curriculum to instill the values of inclusivity, tolerance, and critical understanding of the various interpretations of Islam. As emphasized by Ramadan (2012), advanced Islamic education is education that is able to dialogue with the times without losing its spiritual substance.

The role of the family in digital religious education also cannot be ignored. Parents are now required to be active partners in their children's online learning process, as well as filters of values for the religious content consumed. Research by Livingstone and Helsper (2007) found that active parental involvement in the use of technology has a significant impact on children's ethical and religious attitudes. Therefore, religious education is not enough to be done in the classroom, but must be contextualized into family and social life synergistically.

In order to strengthen the validity of religious information circulating in the digital space, value-based information literacy is needed. This literacy includes the ability to evaluate sources, recognize ideological bias, and identify the scientific authority behind religious content. UNESCO (2008) encourages information literacy as a 21st-century competency that must be internalized in all subjects, including religion. Today's Islamic religious education can no longer ignore the dimension of media literacy.

Changes in the way of learning in the digital era also require a renewal of the spiritual approach. Spirituality is no longer taught as a mere dogma, but as a process of forming the meaning of life that is relevant to digital reality. Teachings such as patience, gratitude, and sincerity need to be linked to the dynamics of digital life such as cyberbullying, gadget addiction, and social media pressure (Pramudya & Mardikaningsih, 2021). This reflective spiritual approach is in line with Fromm's (1950) idea of education as a means of psychological and spiritual liberation.

Innovation in religious education also requires support from religious institutions that are progressive towards technology. Mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and madrasahs need to utilize digital media as a means of outreach, counseling, and community strengthening. For example, organizing online studies, application-based religious consultations, and creating educational content that can be widely accessed. In this case, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and digital communities is crucial.

The utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) in Islamic religious education is beginning to exhibit positive trends across various regions of the world. The emergence of dakwah chatbots, AI-based fatwa consultation applications, and classical Islamic literature recommendation systems significantly enriches learning methods that were previously reliant on conventional approaches. Dakwah chatbots enable users to interact directly and seek religious guidance at any time and place, while AI-driven fatwa consultation applications provide responsive and personalized religious legal advice, leveraging comprehensive datasets and advanced algorithms to offer direction.

AI-supported recommendation systems for classical Islamic texts also present novel experiences in sourcing authoritative religious learning materials. By analyzing user preferences, level of understanding, and specific needs, AI is able to recommend relevant and trustworthy literature. This development democratizes access to Islamic knowledge, especially among younger generations who are more familiar with digital technology. Through semantic and interactive search features, the study of classical religious texts becomes more accessible, structured, and engaging, without sacrificing the depth of the teachings.

Nevertheless, the integration of AI into the domain of religious education presents several serious challenges, particularly in relation to the accuracy and authenticity of religious information. Not all AI systems have access to valid databases or are connected to reliable sources, which can result in interpretive bias or the dissemination of erroneous information. Continuous oversight, regular updates, and the active involvement of religious scholars are indispensable in the development of AI systems, so as to maintain the authenticity of dakwah and fatwa consultations, ensuring they remain aligned with correct and responsible teachings.

Beyond issues of validity, ethical considerations constitute a primary concern in the digitalization of religious education utilizing AI. Religious learning experiences should not fall into mere commercialization or the exploitation of user data for business gain. Business models that commodify spirituality risk obscuring the fundamental objectives of dakwah, namely, nurturing the community in authentic religious understanding and practice. Consequently, every digital dakwah application or system must possess a clear ethical framework—encompassing data management, algorithmic transparency, and periodic audits of religious content.

Nasr (2002) emphasizes that knowledge and technology must be situated within spiritual and ethical frameworks, rather than being regarded merely as rational products or commercial tools. In the context of AI, this principle dictates that every innovation must reinforce moral responsibility, uphold informational justice, and safeguard the sanctity of religious values. AI-based religious education holds the potential to serve as a vital bridge between tradition and technological advancement, provided it is consistently underpinned by noble intentions and strict ethical supervision.

Therefore, the implementation of AI in religious education should be pursued judiciously—integrating technological excellence with spiritual depth and moral principles. Collaboration among IT experts, religious scholars, educational administrators, and regulatory authorities is essential to ensure that technological progress genuinely enriches and preserves the integrity of religious education. Only through ethical commitment can AI become an instrument of enlightenment, empowerment, and guardian of Islamic scholarly authority amidst digital transformation (Syahrizal et al., 2023).

The future of Islamic religious education within the digital landscape necessitates more than just technological adaptation. It calls for a dynamic and flexible curriculum that is responsive to rapid societal changes, diverse learners' backgrounds, and evolving modes of knowledge engagement. This flexibility enables educational institutions to continuously update content and instructional methods, ensuring relevance and resonance with the needs of digital-native generations. By doing so, religious education becomes not merely a static transmission of tradition but a living process, capable of integrating technology's benefits while remaining anchored in authentic values (Salsabila et al., 2022).

Equally important is the development of sophisticated pedagogical strategies that transcend didactic approaches. Leveraging digital platforms, educators can create interactive, dialogic, and student-centered environments where critical inquiry and reflective practices flourish. Such sophistication in pedagogy not only enriches students' intellectual engagement but also supports their emotional and spiritual development. Through multimedia resources, collaborative projects, and real-world explorations, religious education can foster a deeper comprehension of Islamic teachings and their relevance to contemporary life (Huda et al., 2022).

Central to achieving these goals is the synergy between all educational stakeholders—teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers, technologists, and religious authorities. Effective collaboration ensures that the integration of technology in religious education is both purposeful and ethically sound. It also facilitates shared responsibility in shaping an educational ecosystem where students are empowered to seek knowledge, question responsibly, and uphold moral values. This synergy transforms the educational space into a community of learners, where collective wisdom and mutual respect underpin the pursuit of spiritual and intellectual excellence.

Ultimately, Islamic religious education in the digital era must advocate an epistemological transformation that repositions students as active co-constructors of meaning. Education should be oriented not only toward the delivery of content, but toward nurturing awareness, integrity, and ethical commitment as religious global citizens. By empowering students to engage with the sources, principles, and practices of Islam in a critical and meaningful way, religious education can produce individuals who are rooted in faith yet equipped for the complexities of global society—individuals who are committed to ethical action, intercultural dialogue, and lifelong spiritual growth.

CONCLUSIONS

The Surabaya City Bapenda has implemented various strategies to improve employee performance in order to optimize public services and bureaucratic efficiency. An integrated and sustainable approach involves human resource development policies, appropriate personnel systems, effective performance management, as well as rewards and

recognition for achievements. Creating a supportive work environment, investment in development, and collaboration between employees are also an integral part of the strategy. By implementing this strategy, it is hoped that the Surabaya City Bapenda can achieve optimal public service goals and improve the welfare of employees and society as a whole.

Suggestions that can be given to organizations are to perfect and improve public services by all tax officers in order to increase taxpayer awareness in reporting and paying taxes. The tax apparatus in the city of Surabaya should further improve its performance in carrying out its duties and functions as well as possible so that it can develop local revenue, especially from the tax sector.

The suggestion from this study is the need for policies that support ethical technology integration in Islamic religious education, including strengthening value-based digital literacy. In addition, further research is needed that examines the effectiveness of technology-based religious learning models empirically, both from cognitive and affective aspects. Religious education in the digital era requires progressive institutional transformation, so that it can produce a generation that is religious, critical, and technologically literate in a balanced manner.

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