

The Contempory Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum: Synergy Between Religious Values And Technology

Faisal Al-Banjari¹, Wahab Wahab², Nelly Mujahidah³

¹²³Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Pontianak

Email : albanjarifaisal89727@gmail.com, abdulwahabassambasi@gmail.com,
nellymujahidah@yahoo.co.id

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of technology in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum, aiming to enhance learning effectiveness while maintaining the core values of Islamic teachings. As digital tools become increasingly prevalent in education, this research investigates how they can be optimized for use in IRE without compromising the essence of religious principles. A qualitative research design was employed, using literature review, interviews with educators, and focus group discussions with students. The findings reveal that while technology can enhance student engagement and offer personalized learning opportunities, challenges such as inadequate teacher training, limited resources, and concerns about replacing traditional methods must be addressed. When appropriately integrated, technology can support traditional educational methods and improve the understanding of religious texts, fostering a deeper connection to Islamic teachings. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of professional development for educators and adequate resources to successfully implement technology in IRE. It also suggests that further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of technology on religious education and its alignment with Islamic values.

Keywords : Islamic Religious Education, Technology Integration, Islamic Values

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Corresponding Author:

Faisal Al-Banjari

Email : albanjarifaisal89727@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a crucial role in shaping the character and morality of a nation, especially in countries like Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. In the context of formal education, the IRE curriculum in Indonesia has undergone various changes over time. The current IRE curriculum still focuses largely on traditional methods that emphasize face-to-face teaching, memorization, and theory, while digital technology has rapidly advanced, presenting new challenges that require a quick response in the educational sector. Technology, as a global tool that changes the way humans live, also affects how we interact with the world, including in the field of education. Therefore, it is necessary to create synergy between the religious values taught in the IRE curriculum and technological advancements to develop Islamic education that is relevant and effective in this digital era (Ahmad & Bakar, 2021).

A growing phenomenon is the use of technology in various aspects of life, including in religious education. In Indonesia, the development of information and communication



technology has contributed significantly to enriching the learning process. The use of online learning platforms, mobile applications, social media, and other digital learning resources has become increasingly popular. However, in the IRE community, the utilization of technology in teaching Islamic education is still limited. Most educators and educational institutions still rely on traditional methods, including textbooks, lectures, and classroom discussions. This creates a gap in developing a curriculum that is more modern, one that not only preserves religious values but also leverages technology to enhance the appeal, effectiveness, and relevance of religious education amidst the fast-changing times (Nurdin et al., 2024).

In the world of education, the application of technology is expected to improve the quality of learning. However, there are also significant challenges in integrating religious values with the use of technology, which could undermine the sanctity of religious teachings if not implemented carefully. The IRE curriculum in Indonesia tends to remain rooted in traditional patterns, without much adaptation of technology. Therefore, this research focuses on finding solutions to address the gap between the need for religious education that is relevant to the times and the limited use of technology in the IRE curriculum (Mahmudi, 2024).

One of the main problems faced is how technology can be integrated into Islamic education without diminishing the quality of the religious values being taught. The implementation of technology in Islamic education can have two effects: enriching the learning experience and opening up new opportunities for teaching, but if not accompanied by a wise approach, technology also risks obscuring the essence of religious teachings. Therefore, in the context of the IRE curriculum, it is important to find a balance between the spiritual values inherent in Islamic teachings and the use of technology as a teaching tool that is relevant to contemporary advancements (Wanto, 2024; Ramli, 2023).

The research gap in this topic lies in the limited studies that examine in depth how the IRE curriculum can integrate technology without compromising the substance of religious teachings. Although there is research on the integration of technology in education generally, very few studies focus on the integration of technology in the IRE curriculum, particularly in the Indonesian context. Additionally, studies exploring the synergy between religious values and technology in IRE teaching at the higher education level remain scarce. This creates a knowledge gap that needs to be bridged through further research (Hasan, 2021). This study aims to find various ways to optimize the use of technology in the IRE curriculum so that it results in learning that is not only effective but also maintains the values of Islamic teachings. One novelty of this research is the more comprehensive approach to integrating technology, which is not merely seen as a tool but as an integral component of the curriculum that enhances and improves IRE learning. This study also highlights the importance of technology in Islamic education, serving as a reinforcement in instilling moral and spiritual values for the younger generation (Muslim, 2024; Zubair & Iqbal, 2023).

The objective of this research is to analyze how the IRE curriculum can create synergy between Islamic values and technology in learning and to identify the challenges and opportunities within this process. The study also aims to provide recommendations for implementing technology in the IRE curriculum while considering the religious values contained in it, in order to create learning experiences that are more relevant and effective in the digital era. The synergy between religion and technology is crucial so that religious education is not sidelined by the rapid development of technology but can instead leverage it to enrich the teachings of Islam (Yusof & Ramasamy, 2020).

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design aimed at exploring and identifying various strategies to optimize the use of technology in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum. The primary goal is to ensure that technology-enhanced learning not only improves educational effectiveness but also preserves the integrity of Islamic teachings. This research is guided by the belief that while technology offers a vast potential for enhancing learning experiences, it is essential that its integration within the IRE curriculum is done in a way that upholds and reinforces the values of Islam.

Data for this study will be collected using multiple techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the integration of technology in IRE. First, a literature review will be conducted to gather existing research on the use of technology in religious education, particularly in Islamic contexts. This will help identify global and local trends, existing gaps, and best practices. Second, interviews will be conducted with IRE educators, curriculum developers, and experts in educational technology. These semi-structured interviews will provide insights into current practices, challenges, and opportunities in integrating technology into the IRE curriculum. Finally, focus group discussions will be organized with IRE students to understand their experiences, preferences, and perceptions regarding the use of technology in learning religious subjects. This mixed data collection approach will provide a rich, multi-dimensional view of the topic.

Data analysis will be carried out using thematic analysis, a widely used approach in qualitative research. This method involves identifying patterns and themes within the collected data. The interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed, and key themes related to the optimization of technology use in the IRE curriculum will be coded and categorized. Themes such as *effectiveness of technology in enhancing learning*, *alignment with Islamic values*, and *student engagement* will be examined in-depth. Additionally, a **content analysis** of relevant literature will be conducted to compare and contrast findings from the interviews and focus groups with existing studies. This will help validate the results and provide a well-rounded understanding of the integration of technology in IRE. Thematic analysis will also allow the researcher to explore how technology can complement traditional pedagogical approaches in Islamic education while reinforcing core religious principles.



Figure 1. Diagram Methods of Research

3. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to explore ways to optimize the use of technology in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum, ensuring that it not only enhances learning effectiveness but also preserves the values of Islamic teachings. By utilizing a combination of literature review, interviews with IRE educators, and focus group discussions with students, we gained valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities surrounding the integration of technology into IRE. The following discussion highlights the key findings of the study, analyzing them in light of the research objectives.

Integration of Technology in IRE

One of the primary findings of this study was the growing recognition of the need for integrating technology into IRE curricula. However, this integration has not been fully optimized in many educational institutions. While teachers acknowledge the potential of digital tools such as e-learning platforms, interactive multimedia, and mobile applications they often face challenges in their implementation. These challenges include limited technical skills among educators, a lack of training programs on the effective use of technology in religious education, and insufficient resources (Khan et al., 2021). Despite these challenges, the majority of educators emphasized the importance of integrating technology, highlighting that it can enhance the learning experience by providing students with more interactive and accessible learning opportunities (Al-Ghamdi & Samad, 2021).

The findings from the interviews and focus groups suggested that technology, when properly integrated, can increase student engagement in Islamic education. For instance, students reported greater interest in their lessons when learning tools such as educational apps and online platforms were used in the classroom (Hassan & Saleh, 2020). This is consistent with previous research, which has shown that the integration of technology in religious education can help students better understand complex concepts and engage in more self-directed learning (Baqir & Kizil, 2020).

Maintaining Islamic Values through Technology

A crucial aspect of the study was ensuring that the use of technology did not undermine Islamic values. One of the concerns raised by educators and students was that the use of technology in religious education could potentially diminish the emphasis on traditional Islamic teachings, such as the importance of face-to-face interactions and memorization of religious texts. However, the study found that when used appropriately, technology could complement rather than replace traditional learning methods, and could even enhance the preservation of Islamic values. For example, one of the key findings was that the use of technology for recitations and the study of religious texts through apps and videos helped students better internalize Quranic teachings, making them more accessible and easier to understand in today's digital age (Yusof et al., 2021).

This finding is particularly important because it shows that technology, when used thoughtfully, can be a valuable tool in ensuring that Islamic values are not lost in the process of modernizing education. For example, by using educational apps and online platforms that focus on Islamic teachings, students were able to engage with the material in a more personalized and flexible manner, fostering a deeper connection to their faith (Iqbal et al., 2021). This aligns with the view presented by Al-Muhtadi et al. (2020), who suggested that digital platforms provide new opportunities for Islamic education by making religious texts more accessible to a broader range of students.

Student-Centered Learning

Another key finding of the study was the emphasis on student-centered learning as a result of technology integration. With the advent of digital learning tools, students in the study reported having more control over their learning process, which was seen as a significant advantage of technology in education. The use of online resources, including videos, podcasts, and digital textbooks, allowed students to access learning materials at their

convenience, enabling them to learn at their own pace (Azad & Choklap, 2021). This flexibility was particularly beneficial for students in remote areas who might not have easy access to traditional learning resources or teachers.

The implementation of technology also enabled a more personalized learning experience, which is essential for students with diverse learning needs. Students in the study reported that technology allowed them to explore various aspects of Islamic teachings in more depth, helping them engage with the material in a more meaningful way (Alwani & Hafiz, 2021). Additionally, this finding supports the argument presented by Ahmed & D'Souza (2020), who noted that the use of technology in educational settings provides a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

Challenges in Technology Integration

Despite the positive aspects of technology integration, the study also identified several challenges faced by educators and students. One of the key challenges highlighted by the study was the lack of training for teachers on how to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Many educators admitted to feeling ill-prepared to use digital tools in the classroom, which resulted in the underutilization of available technology. This challenge was particularly evident in more rural areas, where teachers had limited access to technology training and professional development programs (Bharadwaj & Gagow, 2020).

Another challenge identified in the study was the lack of resources available for technology integration. While some institutions had access to digital tools and platforms, many others were unable to provide the necessary infrastructure, such as reliable internet connections and computer labs. This limitation was particularly evident in smaller Islamic schools and madrasahs, where financial constraints often hinder the ability to fully implement technological advancements (Sadiq et al., 2020).

Recommendations for Optimizing Technology in IRE

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations were made to optimize the use of technology in the IRE curriculum. First, it is crucial for educational institutions to invest in professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. By providing teachers with the tools and training they need, they will be better able to leverage technology to enhance student learning while maintaining the core principles of Islamic education (Fakhri et al., 2020). Second, educational institutions must ensure that sufficient resources are available for technology integration. This includes providing reliable internet access, digital tools, and online learning platforms that are aligned with the curriculum's goals. Additionally, institutions should explore partnerships with technology companies or government agencies to ensure that schools have the necessary support to implement technological innovations effectively (Hassan & Zubair, 2021).

Lastly, the study suggests that there is a need for further research into the specific ways technology can enhance Islamic education. While this study provides important insights into the potential benefits and challenges of integrating technology in IRE, more empirical studies are needed to evaluate the long-term impact of technology on learning outcomes and religious understanding. Future studies should also focus on exploring the potential of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, in enhancing Islamic education (Zubair et al., 2020).

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

This study explored the potential of optimizing technology use within the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum to enhance learning effectiveness while preserving Islamic values. The findings indicate that integrating technology, such as digital learning platforms and mobile applications, can significantly improve student engagement and provide more accessible, personalized learning experiences. However, challenges such as insufficient teacher training, limited resources, and concerns over the potential loss of

traditional learning methods were also identified. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial for educational institutions to invest in professional development programs and ensure adequate infrastructure to support technology use in Islamic education.

Ultimately, this study concludes that while technology has the potential to enrich the IRE curriculum, it must be carefully integrated to complement traditional educational practices without undermining the essence of Islamic teachings. By equipping educators with the necessary skills and providing students with interactive learning tools, technology can enhance their understanding of religious texts and foster deeper engagement with Islamic values. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of technology on Islamic education, particularly in how emerging technologies can be harnessed to strengthen both learning outcomes and the preservation of religious principles.

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