

# Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies in the Digital Era

**Maria Machdalena Leiwakabessy<sup>1</sup>, Desi Ratnasari<sup>2</sup>, Tri Nurjanah<sup>3</sup>, Imroatul Malikah<sup>4</sup>, Ami Pratiwi<sup>5</sup>, Nabila Rizqi Hanani<sup>6</sup>, Siti Fatimah<sup>7</sup>, Beni Kurniawan<sup>8</sup>, Oky Ristya Trisnawati<sup>9</sup>, Fibriyan Irodati<sup>10</sup>, Maesaroh<sup>11</sup>**

Institut Agama Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen

**Corresponding author**

<sup>1</sup>mariamachdalena27@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to analyze Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in the digital era at SMP N 20 Purworejo. This study uses a qualitative approach, phenomenological type. Data collection techniques in this study uses observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles & Huberman & Saldana model which consists of three steps: data condensation, data presentation, and data verification. The result of this study indicate that digital media used by Islamic Religious Education teachers are, Google Form, YouTube, Quizziz, Canva, projectors, and mobile phones. Challenges in digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning are the lack of facilities and infrastructure and students are easily distracted. The impact of Islamic Religious Education learning that uses digital, students are more updated in receiving information students are more creative, enthusiastic in participating in Islamic Religious Education learning.

**Keywords:** Teacher strategies, Islamic Religious Education learning, digital era.

## Introduction

The purpose of Islamic religious education is to shape learners to possess good character, noble morals, and become individuals who are obedient to Allah SWT. Through this education, it is expected that individuals will gain a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings and be able to apply them in their daily lives. In accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 21 of 2016, Islamic religious education functions to develop a holistic understanding of Islamic teachings so that its values can be genuinely reflected in attitudes and behavior. Based on this regulation, Islamic religious education is expected to serve as a strong moral foundation for the younger generation in facing various challenges of modern life without losing Islamic and humanitarian values. According to Abidin (2020), Islamic religious education is a deliberate effort to prepare learners to recognize, understand,

appreciate, and believe in Islamic teachings comprehensively while respecting people of other faiths. Meanwhile, Zakiyah Daradjat, as cited by Abdul Majid and Dian Andayani, defines Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a process of guiding learners to understand and practice Islam as a way of life (Pandi et al., 2021).

In today's digital era, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) needs to be developed in a more innovative and engaging way so that students do not feel bored during the learning process. Teachers can utilize various modern media such as instructional videos, interactive applications, and other online platforms to deliver the material in a more creative and enjoyable manner. The use of technology not only makes the learning atmosphere more dynamic but also helps students understand Islamic values and teachings more easily and in a context relevant to their daily lives. Through such engaging approaches, it is expected that students' enthusiasm for Islamic education will increase,

making the learning experience more meaningful and impactful.

Digital media itself refers to technology-based tools used to support the learning process, such as applications, instructional videos, and online platforms. Through these media, students can access learning materials anytime and anywhere, making the learning process more flexible and efficient. In addition, the use of digital media makes learning more interactive, engaging, and aligned with the learning styles of today's generation. Therefore, the integration of digital media in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has become one of the key factors for educational success in the modern era, as it can foster learning motivation while deepening students' understanding of Islamic teachings. With appropriate technological support, religious values can be conveyed in a more contextual and comprehensible manner to the younger generation growing up amid digital advancements.

Based on observations conducted with one of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMPN 20 Purworejo, it was explained that digital learning can enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education. According to Mr. Edi Marjudi, SMPN 20 Purworejo has utilized various digital platforms such as online learning applications, PowerPoint presentations, infographics, Google Forms, quizzes, and educational videos to increase students' learning interest and improve the overall effectiveness of the learning process. However, the school still faces several facility limitations, particularly in the use of projectors, as not all classrooms are yet equipped with them, resulting in less optimal digital learning implementation. In addition, students must be closely supervised when using mobile phones in class, as they have not yet developed sufficient self-control in utilizing digital media during the learning process.

This study offers a renewal in developing an innovative concept of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that is oriented toward a humanist-digital approach—a synthesis between Islamic spiritual values and the utilization of modern educational technology. Unlike previous studies that merely focused on the use of digital media as a teaching aid, this research emphasizes the integration of technology as a means of fostering

religious character and strengthening ethical digital literacy. Through this approach, the study provides a new contribution both theoretically and practically in developing a more contextual, relevant, and adaptive model of PAI learning that aligns with the dynamics of the digital era. Furthermore, this study is expected to serve as a reference for educators in designing learning strategies that are not only technologically modern but also spiritually and morally meaningful.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design. According to Sugiyono (2017), phenomenological research seeks to understand the meaning of individuals' lived experiences related to a particular phenomenon by exploring their perceptions, views, and feelings toward the experiences they have undergone. The research was conducted at SMPN 20 Purworejo. The informants in this study consisted of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher of the eighth grade and students from class 8F at SMPN 20 Purworejo. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation.

The data validity technique employed in this study was triangulation. According to Sugiyono (2017), triangulation is a method used to verify the validity of data by utilizing elements outside the data itself to check or compare the obtained information. This technique was applied to ensure that the collected data were more valid and reliable by comparing results from various sources, using multiple data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and documentation, and rechecking the data at different times. The application of triangulation was expected to enhance the credibility of the qualitative research findings and provide a more objective description of the studied phenomenon. Furthermore, data analysis in this study followed the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. According to Sugiyono (2017), qualitative data analysis is conducted before, during, and after the data

collection process through an interactive and continuous cycle among these three stages.

#### 1. Data Condensation

Data condensation is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data obtained from the field. The purpose of this stage is to focus the data on aspects that are essential and relevant to the research objectives.

#### 2. Data Display

After the data were condensed, the researcher presented them in the form of narrative text, tables, charts, or matrices to make the information easier to read and understand.

#### 3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification

At this stage, the researcher interprets the meaning of the presented data, draws preliminary conclusions, and then verifies them with existing evidence to ensure the validity of the results. According to Sugiyono (2017), these three components are interrelated and continuously carried out throughout the research process. Data reduction is conducted by selecting and focusing on essential information, data display is presented through descriptive narration to facilitate understanding, while conclusion drawing is performed based on analytical results that are repeatedly verified in order to obtain findings that are valid and credible.

## Results and Discussion

### Result

Based on the data analysis conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, several important findings were obtained and are presented in this chapter. These findings are organized according to the main themes that emerged from the data, namely: strategies for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era, the impact of digital media, and the challenges encountered. A detailed description of each theme is provided to illustrate the actual conditions observed in the field.

### 1. Strategies of PAI Teachers in Digital-Age Learning

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo, Mr. Edi Marjudi, S.Pd., it was found that the teacher predominantly used the lecture method as the main strategy in delivering the material. Although the digital era has encouraged various innovations in learning, the teacher acknowledged that the implementation of technology is still limited due to students' conditions and the lack of supporting facilities. The teacher explained, "Not all students here are able to use mobile phones for learning, and the school facilities are still quite simple, so I often



prefer to use direct teaching methods in the classroom."

**Figure 1.** Interview activity on Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in the digital era at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo. (Source: Researcher documentation, 2025)

This statement indicates that considerations regarding facilities and control over the use of technology are the main factors influencing the selection of learning strategies.

The lecture method used by the teacher is "interactive and communicative." The teacher strives to create an active learning environment by providing questions, contextual explanations, and real-life examples from students' daily lives. Based on observations, the teacher often relates the teaching material to events close to the students' lives, for example, regarding honesty, discipline, or manners towards others. In an interview, the teacher stated,

"I usually use examples from around them to make it easier to understand, because if it's just theory, children quickly get bored."

This shows that even though the lecture method is used, teachers still try to adapt the approach to the character of the students so that learning is more meaningful.

In addition to lecturing, the teacher also employed question-and-answer strategies and informal discussions to foster student participation. Students were given the opportunity to respond to the teacher's explanations, answer questions, or express their opinions in front of the class. Observations revealed that the learning environment appeared quite active, with some students enthusiastically responding, although others remained passive. The teacher explained that this strategy was implemented so that students would not only listen but also think and speak up.

"If we just lecture all the time, the children can get bored, so I intersperse it with questions and answers to make it more lively," he said.



**Figure 2.** Teacher-student interaction during a light discussion in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. (Source: Researcher documentation, 2025)

To support the learning process, teachers sometimes use simple digital media such as PowerPoint presentations or instructional videos played on a school projector. This media is used according to availability of facilities and time. Observations have shown that students appear more focused and enthusiastic when teachers show videos about the stories of the prophets or other religious topics. A teacher stated,

"If I have the opportunity and the equipment is available, I usually show videos to keep the kids motivated and from getting bored."

However, the teacher also added that limited facilities, such as the number of projectors and internet network, were the main obstacles in implementing digital-based learning routinely.

Overall, observations indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo's digital age still rely on conventional approaches combined with simple media tailored to the school's capabilities and facilities. Teachers strive to adapt their teaching strategies to the students' needs and available resources, while maintaining effectiveness and Islamic values in their learning. Despite limited resources and limited control over device use, teachers demonstrate an adaptive and prudent approach to implementing learning that is relevant to current developments while remaining grounded in the essence of religious education.

## 2. The Impact of Digital Media in Islamic Education Learning

The use of digital media at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo has had a significant positive impact on learning, particularly in improving students' ability to access various materials via mobile phones. An interview with an Islamic Education teacher at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo revealed that,

"All students can access all learning materials from their cellphones and can also search for references from their cellphones."

This demonstrates that digital media has helped students become more independent and active in seeking information. Furthermore, technology makes it easier for students to review material at any time and broaden their horizons through various online learning resources. Thus, digital media has positively contributed to improving the quality of learning at the school.

The use of digital media at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo still has negative impacts, as stated by our resource person, namely,

"Students still lack the ability to use technology wisely. Many students use their phones more often for gaming or accessing social media than for their studies."

This causes a decrease in concentration in learning, a reduction in direct social interaction

in the school environment, and an increase in dependence on the internet.

The negative impact of digital media is also evident in the decline in students' critical thinking skills, as they tend to rely on technology to find answers. Many students prefer to seek instant solutions online without trying to understand or solve problems themselves. Based on interviews, our informants stated that,

"They don't want to think, because they rely too much on technology in the learning process."

The teacher also added that this habit makes students less creative and reluctant to practice deep thinking. As a result, the learning process becomes passive, and learning objectives are not optimally achieved. This highlights the need for teacher guidance to enable students to utilize digital media by encouraging critical thinking and independent learning.

On the other hand, digital media can also increase students' enthusiasm for learning. Material presented through videos, animations, or online platforms makes students more enthusiastic about learning. They become more active in seeking additional information, participating in class discussions, and are encouraged to be creative through technology-based projects or presentations. In this way, digital media not only facilitates access to learning but also makes the learning process more engaging and actively engages students.

While digital media has many benefits, its impact depends heavily on how students use it. Some students still struggle to utilize technology wisely, leading them to engage in less productive uses, such as gaming or excessive social media use. However, for students who are properly guided and instructed, digital media can be an effective, creative, and insight-expanding learning tool. This demonstrates the importance of teacher supervision, guidance, and parental involvement in ensuring optimal use of technology in accordance with educational goals.

### 3. Challenges for Islamic Education Teachers in Learning in the Digital Era

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in the digital era face various challenges in implementing effective and meaningful learning

processes. Technological developments require teachers to adapt to changes in digital-based learning systems and methods. However, not all teachers possess sufficient technical skills to operate digital media in teaching and learning activities. This situation presents a barrier to the implementation of innovative and interactive learning. Therefore, teacher competency development through ongoing training and mentoring is necessary to enable them to utilize technology optimally.

Besides teacher skills, school facilities are also a major challenge in implementing digital learning. Observations at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo revealed that supporting facilities such as internet access, computers, and projectors are still limited. In an interview, Mr. Edi Marjudi, S.Pd., an Islamic Religious Education teacher, stated,

"The school's facilities are inadequate, especially the classroom projectors. Not all classrooms have them, and some are no longer functioning properly, so we have to take turns if we want to use them."

This statement demonstrates that limited resources directly impact the implementation of digital media in learning. As a result, teachers cannot routinely use interactive media and must improvise with simple methods to maintain effective learning.



**Figure 3.** Classroom conditions and digital learning facilities at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo. (Source: Researcher documentation, 2025)

Another challenge faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers is student behavior in utilizing technology, which is not yet fully



directed towards learning. Based on the same interview, Mr. Edi explained,

"Children today are accustomed to using cell phones, but not all of them can use them for useful things."

This situation illustrates that students' digital literacy is still low and requires guidance from teachers. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers need to instill a wise attitude in using technology so that students can distinguish between entertainment and learning. With appropriate guidance, technology can be a tool that strengthens religious understanding and fosters responsible digital behavior.

Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education teachers are also faced with the challenge of upholding Islamic values amidst the rapid flow of digital information. Much content circulating online is inconsistent with Islamic teachings and even has the potential to lead to misunderstandings among students. In an interview, Mr. Edi stated,

"Nowadays, there's a lot of information on the internet that isn't necessarily true, so we need to guide our children so they don't believe things easily and stick to their religious values."

This demonstrates the crucial role of teachers in fostering digital literacy grounded in Islamic values. In this way, Islamic Religious Education teachers serve not only as academic educators but also as moral mentors, guiding students to wisely face the challenges of the digital world.

The final challenge for Islamic Religious Education teachers in the digital age is maintaining a balance between technology utilization and students' spiritual character development. Technology can make learning more engaging, but if not used appropriately, religious values can be neglected. Teachers must be able to integrate digital media with Islamic values to ensure that learning remains spiritually meaningful. With a creative approach, media such as educational videos and Islamic animations can be effective tools for deepening students' understanding. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to continuously adapt and innovate so that religious learning in the digital age continues to

instill the values of faith, morality, and moral responsibility.

## Discussion

### 1. Islamic Religious Education Teacher Strategies for Learning in the Digital Era

Based on observations at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo, the use of digital media in Islamic Religious Education (ISE) learning requires a focused strategy to ensure it serves not only as a means of entertainment but also as a means of improving learning quality. This aligns with the research findings of Faqihuddin and Muflih (2024) in the journal "Digital-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning Media: Analysis of Implementation, Challenges, and Opportunities in Junior High Schools" (UPI Ejournal), which emphasizes the importance of improving teacher competency in utilizing digital technology. Teachers at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo need training to develop digital content that is contextual to student characteristics and to use digital media to enhance social interaction and communication between students. Without teacher preparedness in digital pedagogy, learning strategies in the digital era will struggle to achieve the true goals of ISE, namely character building and strengthening religious values.

Furthermore, interview results indicated that the main obstacle in implementing digital learning strategies at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo was the lack of digital media devices, such as projectors and computers. This condition prevented teachers from fully integrating digital media into the teaching and learning process. This finding aligns with Rohmiati's (2025) research in the journal *The Use of Digital Media in Learning Islamic Religious Education: Opportunities and Challenges* (Jurnal Urwatul Wutsqo), which highlighted limited facilities as the main obstacle to implementing digital media in Islamic Religious Education. Therefore, SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo needs to strengthen collaboration with parents and the community, increase the provision of digital devices, and provide ongoing training for teachers so that learning strategies in the digital era can be effective and support the improvement of the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning.

## 2. The Impact of Digital Media in Islamic Education Learning

Based on interviews with teachers at SMPN 20 Purworejo, Islamic religious education learning in the era of globalization has had a significant positive impact on learning, especially in increasing student independence and activeness. Students are now able to access various materials and search for references via mobile phones, which also makes it easier for them to review the material at any time and broaden their horizons through various sources. In addition, presenting material through videos, animations, or online platforms can increase student enthusiasm, motivation, and participation in the learning process. This is in line with the research of Febrianasari, D., Suriansyah, A., & Rafianti, W. R. (2024). "The Impact of Educational Technology on Student Independence", that digital literacy and educational technology have a positive influence on student learning independence and also increase student motivation and interest in learning because the learning process becomes more interactive and less monotonous.

Digital media also has negative impacts that require vigilance, especially since many students are unable to utilize it wisely. Excessive use of devices for gaming or accessing social media leads to decreased concentration in learning (Zulfa & Mujazi 2022 in the journal "The Effect of Smartphone Use on Student Learning Concentration"). Furthermore, dependence on technology also tends to weaken students' critical thinking skills and creativity, where they prefer instant solutions via the internet and become unwilling to think deeply. Therefore, guidance, intensive supervision from teachers and parents, and education on the productive use of technology are needed so that students can maximize the benefits of digital media in accordance with educational goals.

## 3. Challenges to Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Digital Era

Based on observations at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo, various challenges remain in utilizing digital media for learning. Students are not yet able to use technology correctly and

wisely, so teachers cannot fully trust them to operate digital devices without guidance. Furthermore, schools have not widely used digital-based learning software, so the learning process is still dominated by conventional methods. This situation indicates that student and school readiness for digital learning is still low, both in terms of digital literacy, supporting facilities, and technology use policies. This aligns with the opinion of Dyah Farissa and Budi Haryanto (2023) in the journal "Challenges in Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Digital Era," which states that the development of digital technology should be able to increase learning effectiveness. However, in reality, many obstacles still hinder its implementation, one of which is the low level of digital literacy among teachers and students.

According to the research findings of Farissa and Haryanto (2023), the main challenge in implementing digital media is the lack of skills and readiness of students and educators to use technology optimally. In fact, some teachers still prefer using conventional learning methods over utilizing available digital media, due to limited training and a lack of adequate support facilities. This is in line with the conditions at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo, where students still need guidance in using digital devices to prevent misuse for non-learning purposes. Therefore, collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school is needed to improve digital literacy, expand the use of learning software, and establish more targeted technology utilization policies so that digital media truly becomes a means of improving the quality of student learning.

## Conclusions

Based on the results of research conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation at SMP Negeri 20 Purworejo, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era still faces various challenges, both in terms of strategy, utilization of digital media, and teacher and student readiness. The learning strategies implemented by PAI teachers tend to be

oriented towards conventional methods such as lectures and question and answer sessions, although they have been accompanied by efforts to use simple digital media such as PowerPoint and learning videos. This is due to limited school facilities, such as an inadequate number of projectors and suboptimal internet connections in each class.

The use of digital media has a positive impact on increasing student independence and motivation to learn. Digital media makes learning more engaging, interactive, and relevant to students' lives. However, on the other hand, the use of technology also has negative impacts, such as decreased concentration in learning, increased dependence on the internet, and lower critical thinking skills due to the tendency to seek instant solutions. Therefore, the active role of teachers and parents is needed in providing guidance and supervision so that digital media can be used productively and in accordance with Islamic educational values.

The main challenges in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching in the digital era include limited teacher digital competency, a lack of supporting facilities at schools, and low student digital literacy. PAI teachers are required to continuously improve their skills in operating learning technologies and developing digital content tailored to student characteristics. Furthermore, schools need to provide adequate facilities such as projectors, internet connections, and other learning devices to ensure an optimal and engaging learning process.

The results of this study also show that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era focuses not only on the use of technology but also on instilling Islamic and moral values amidst the rapid flow of global information. Teachers play a crucial role in instilling digital literacy grounded in religious values so that students are not only technologically proficient but also wise and ethical in their use. Therefore, the integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning needs to be directed towards supporting the formation of religious character and moral responsibility in students.

Overall, the success of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era depends heavily on the synergy between teachers, schools,

students, and parents. Improving teacher competency, providing adequate facilities, and fostering ethical digital literacy are crucial factors in creating relevant, adaptive, and meaningful religious education amidst increasingly rapid technological developments.

## References

Journal:

- Hasibuan, N., Lubis, S. A., & Usiono, U. 2023. The concept of Islamic religious education in developing student character in the era of globalization at MAN 1 Padangsidempuan. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(4).
- Prayetno, I. 2025. Challenges and solutions in Islamic Religious Education learning in the digital era. *Journal of Islamic and Socio-Religious Studies*, 2(3), 616-622.
- Putri, R. A. 2023. The Influence of Technology on Learning Changes in the Digital Era. *Journal of Computers and Digital Business*, 2(3), 105-111.
- Faqihuddin, A., & Muflih, A. 2024. Digital-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning Media: Analysis of Implementation, Challenges, and Opportunities in Junior High Schools. *TAKLIM: Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 22(2), 93-108.
- Rohmiati, E. 2025. The Use of Digital Media in Learning Islamic Religious Education: Opportunities and Challenges. *Urwatul Wutsqo: Journal of Educational and Islamic Studies*, 14(1), 33-45.
- Febrianasari, D., Suriansyah, A., & Rafianti, W. R. 2024. The Impact of Educational Technology on Student Independence. *MARAS: Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(4), 2235-2240.
- Zulfa, N. A., & Mujazi, M. 2022. The Effect of Smartphone Use on Student Concentration. *JRTI (Jurnal Riset Aksi Indonesia)*, 7(3), 574-582.
- Farissa, D., & Haryanto, B. 2023. Challenges in Learning Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era. *Pendas: Scientific Journal of Elementary Education*, 10(3).

Book:

- Sugiyono. 2017. *Quantitative, Qualitative, and R&D Research Methods*. Bandung: Alfabeta.