

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF DIGITAL DISRUPTION

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ABSTRACT

Digital disruption has fundamentally changed the landscape of education. Islamic Religious Education (IRE), as a subject that focuses on character building and spiritual morality, faces a double challenge: adapting to technology while preserving Islamic values amid the rapid flow of information. This study aims to analyse in depth the main challenges faced by PAI learning in the era of digital disruption and formulate effective innovative strategies. The challenges identified include the digital competency gap among teachers, the polarisation of religious understanding (radicalism and liberalism) facilitated by digital platforms, and the issue of data privacy ethics in learning. The proposed strategies include the development of a PAI curriculum based on digital literacy and artificial intelligence (AI) ethics, enhancing teacher professionalism through interactive digital pedagogy training, and implementing a *blended-synchronous* learning model that integrates direct spiritual experiences with digital simulations. This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach based on literature studies and educational policy analysis. The results show that the success of PAI in the digital era is highly dependent on the cultural transformation of educational institutions, not merely the adoption of hardware.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Digital Disruption, Learning Strategies, Digital Competence, Digital Ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Education is at the heart of civilisation development, and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping the moral, spiritual, and social identity of students in Indonesia. In the 21st century, the 4.0 industrial revolution and the phenomenon of digital disruption have created an inevitable wave of change, forcing all sectors, including education, to adapt.

Digital disruption, characterised by the speed, scope and depth of transformation driven by technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), *Big Data* and the *Internet of Things* (IoT), has both positive and negative consequences for PAI. On the one hand, technology offers unlimited opportunities for personalised learning, access to rich religious resources and global collaboration. On the other hand, it poses serious challenges, particularly regarding the authenticity of teaching sources, the spread of unverified religious information (*hoaxes* and radicalism), and a shift in value orientation from face-to-face interaction to virtual interaction. This study aims to: 1) comprehensively analyse the internal

and external challenges faced by PAI learning as a result of digital disruption. 2) formulate adaptive and innovative pedagogical, curricular, and institutional strategies to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of PAI in the future. 3) provide policy recommendations for stakeholders in order to strengthen digital-based PAI and morality. The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to bridge the gap between the demands of the digital age and the essence of PAI, which emphasises spiritual experience, morals, and social interaction. Without the right strategy, PAI risks losing its relevance or, worse, becoming a medium for spreading extreme or superficial understandings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Disruption in the Context of Education

Digital disruption is defined as a fundamental change that occurs when new technologies replace established technologies, processes, or services. In education, disruption manifests itself as a shift from *teacher-centred* and physical classroom-based learning models to *student-centred*, personalised, and *ubiquitous learning* (learning anywhere and anytime). Key concepts in educational disruption are *Massive Open Online Courses* (MOOCs), *Personalised Learning*, and the implementation of AI for adaptive assessment and feedback. Disruption requires educators to not only be conveyors of knowledge but also facilitators, designers of learning experiences, and curators of credible digital content.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Core Values

PAI aims to develop individuals who are faithful, pious, noble in character, and proficient in science and technology. The main pillars of PAI include the Qur'an and Hadith, Fiqh, Aqidah, and Akhlak. The challenge for PAI in facing disruption is to maintain the integrity and depth of religious understanding, given that digital platforms tend to present religion in an instant, textual, and fragmented manner, which has the potential to ignore the historical and philosophical context of Islamic teachings.

Integration of Technology in PAI Learning

Previous studies show that technology integration in Islamic Education is often still at the substitution level (replacing blackboards with projectors) and augmentation (using e-books), and has not yet reached the modification or redefinition level that fundamentally changes the essence of learning tasks (SAMR Model). The digital literacy of Islamic Education teachers is a key determining factor in the transition to transformative technology integration. A clear framework is needed to measure not only technical skills, but also the pedagogical, ethical, and digital security competencies of PAI teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review (*library research*) and policy analysis. The primary data sources consist of reputable national and international scientific journals related to Islamic Education, Digital Disruption, Digital Pedagogy, as well as relevant policy documents from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

The data analysis procedures carried out by the researcher included: 1) Data collection, gathering and identifying key literature using predetermined keywords. 2) Data reduction, filtering and classifying data based on two main themes: challenges and strategies for PAI learning. 3) Data presentation, where data is presented in the form of descriptive-analytical narratives that describe the relationship between digital disruption and its implications for PAI. 4) Drawing conclusions by synthesising literature findings to formulate a comprehensive strategic framework.

The validity of the findings is supported by triangulation of theoretical data sources and cross-comparisons between education policies related to digitisation. This approach enables the formulation of strategies that are not only academically relevant but also practically implementable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. CHALLENGES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL DISRUPTION

Digital disruption has given rise to four main clusters of challenges for Islamic Religious Education: Teacher Pedagogy, Curriculum-Materials, Infrastructure-Access, and Values-Ethics.

The Gap in Teachers' Pedagogical and Digital Competencies in Islamic Religious Education

Most Islamic Education teachers, especially the older generation, face significant difficulties in effectively adopting learning technologies. This challenge is not only a matter of operating hardware, but more profoundly a shift in the teaching paradigm. Islamic Education teachers tend to use traditional lecture models that are difficult to maintain in an interactive digital environment. Three main competency issues have been identified: first, low technical literacy. Lack of mastery of software and e-learning platforms (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom, religious simulation platforms). Second, Stagnant Pedagogical Innovation, the inability to design learning activities that utilise technological features to achieve complex PAI objectives, such as instilling values of honesty or spirituality. *Third*, Resource Curation. Difficulties in sorting and validating religious resources on the internet, which have the potential to use biased, *hoax*, or even contradictory sources to the national religious consensus (*manhaj*).

Religious Ideological Polarisation and the Threat of Digital Radicalism

The internet is a free market for ideologies, including religious ideologies. PAI faces competition from extreme religious narratives (radicalism) and overly liberal narratives, both of which are often presented in a more attractive and viral digital format than official PAI material in schools. *First*, radicalism. Social media platforms have become an effective channel for rapid and covert indoctrination. Students are exposed to rigid, exclusive interpretations of religion, which sometimes contain violence, contrary to the principle of Islam *as rahmatan lil alamin* (a blessing for all creation). *Second*, Liberalism. On the other hand, exposure to highly permissive and critical content without an adequate basis in religious knowledge can cause doubt (scepticism) and erode the foundations of faith that have been instilled. *Third*, Religious Authority. Digital disruption has undermined the traditional authority of teachers and clerics, replacing them with *influencers* or digital religious *public figures*, whose scientific validity is not always proven.

The Inability of the PAI Curriculum to Adapt to Digital Ethics

The current PAI curriculum does not explicitly include Digital Ethics and Digital Citizenship competencies as core material. However, issues such as *cyberbullying*, privacy violations, digital plagiarism, and internet addiction are pressing contemporary moral issues. First, PAI material still focuses too much on the ritual dimension (Fiqh) and does not emphasise the muamalah (social interaction) dimension in the digital context. *Second*, the development of AI requires PAI to discuss new moral issues, such as ethical responsibility in the use of technology and the theological implications of artificial intelligence, which are completely absent from the conventional syllabus.

Infrastructure and Technology Access Gap (Digital Divide)

Despite the ongoing expansion of digitalisation, the infrastructure gap between urban and rural areas, as well as between favoured and marginalised schools, remains a fundamental obstacle. PAI that relies on advanced technology risks being exclusive and inaccessible to all students, which in turn widens the gap in the quality of education.

B. INNOVATIVE PAI LEARNING STRATEGIES

To overcome the above challenges, PAI must adopt four pillars of transformative strategy: Curriculum, Teachers, Pedagogy, and Value Ecosystem.

Curriculum Transformation: PAI Based on Digital Literacy and AI Ethics

The PAI curriculum must be revitalised to explicitly include digital dimensions: first, Integration of Religious Media Literacy. PAI material must teach how to verify hadith and

religious information on the internet, identify ideological bias, and understand social media algorithms that influence religious views. *Second*, Digital Ethics Module. The development of a special module on *Digital Etiquette* (Digital Ethics), covering: social media fiqh (the obligation to maintain a good name, the prohibition of *gossip*), the concept of privacy in Islam and the context of digital data protection, as well as moral responsibility for content created and shared online. *Third*, PAI and Contemporary AI Issues: Incorporating philosophical and theological discussions about Artificial Intelligence, including issues of creation, machine morality, and the role of humans in the era of automation, as part of Islamic Beliefs and Philosophy.

Enhancing the Professionalism of PAI Teachers: Interactive Digital Pedagogy

Islamic Education teachers must be encouraged and facilitated to transform from mere users to content designers and interactive facilitators. 1) TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) training. Training should focus on how to integrate technology to enrich PAI content (e.g., using virtual simulations for the Hajj pilgrimage or 3D models of historic mosque architecture). 2) Digital Practitioner Community. Establishment of an online community of PAI teachers to share best practices, develop digital resources, and collectively address ideological issues that arise on digital platforms. 3) PAI Digital Competency Certification. Provision of special certification for teachers who successfully master and implement innovative digital-based PAI learning models.

Implementation of a Holistic Blended-Synchronous Learning Model

The most effective pedagogical strategy is the *Blended Learning* model, which not only combines online and offline learning, but also synchronises virtual and spiritual experiences. 1) Asynchronous Model (Content Enrichment). Students independently access lecture materials (short videos), infographics, and quizzes on the e-learning platform. This content must be visually appealing and tailored to the learning style of Generation Z. 2) Synchronous Model (Value Reinforcement). Use virtual face-to-face sessions (Zoom/Meet) for in-depth discussions, instilling values through *role-playing* or digital ethics case studies, and personal spiritual guidance. 3) Experiential Learning. Offline (face-to-face) activities focus on spiritual and social experiences (joint worship practices, social service), while technology is used as a tool for documentation, reflection, and evaluation.

Strengthening the Institutional Digital Ecosystem

Educational institutions must build an ecosystem conducive to digital PAI: 1) School Religious Platform. Schools must provide a curated, secure, and credible digital platform as

the main source of religious content, which serves as a bulwark against misleading information. 2) Ethical BYOD (*Bring Your Own Device*) Policy: Develop clear guidelines on the use of digital devices in the school environment, emphasising discipline and ethics in accessing PAI content. 3) K- ultisectoral Collaboration: Collaborate with IT experts, psychologists, and digital content creators to produce high-quality, visual, and engaging PAI materials without compromising their depth.

CONCLUSION

Digital disruption is an inevitability that must be addressed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) with transformative, rather than reactive, measures. The biggest challenge for PAI does not lie in the technology itself, but rather in the inability of human resources (teachers) and the curriculum to adapt to the rapid pace of change, as well as the risk of increasingly massive religious ideological polarisation in the digital space.

The most effective strategy is to *reframe* PAI as a subject that combines spiritual depth with digital ethics skills. This includes revitalising the PAI curriculum to include Digital Ethics and AI Philosophy, improving the competence of PAI teachers through focused TPACK training, and implementing a *Blended-Synchronous* learning model that prioritises the cultivation of character in the real and virtual worlds. The future success of PAI will be largely determined by its ability to produce a generation that is not only technologically proficient, but also steadfast in faith and noble in digital ethics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that: 1) The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs: Immediately develop and implement a detailed Digital PAI Teacher Competency Framework, including minimum standards for TPACK mastery and religious content curation. The PAI curriculum needs to be reviewed to include Digital Ethics and *Cyber-Akhlaq* material as core competencies. 2) Educational Institutions: Allocate adequate budgets not only for infrastructure, but also for the development of interactive and engaging digital PAI content. Schools are advised to form a Religious Digital Literacy Task Force to monitor and combat the spread of extremist ideology among students. 3) PAI Teachers: Apply the principle of *lifelong learning* () by actively participating in digital training and joining professional communities to continuously update pedagogical and technical knowledge.

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