

The Utilization Of Artificial Intelligence In Strengthening Islamic Religious Education In The Digital Era To Enhance Student's Religious Literacy

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489	Education in the digital age faces challenges in integrating technology into learning, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which often struggles to adapt traditional methods to technological advancements. One such innovation is artificial intelligence (AI), increasingly used in education, including at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol, to enhance students' religious literacy. This study aims to explore the experiences of teachers and students using AI in PAI education and assess its impact on religious literacy. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data gathered through in-depth interviews with five teachers and ten students, along with classroom observations.
KEYWORD	The findings reveal that while AI enhances personalized learning and accessibility to religious content, it also raises concerns about technological dependency and the validity of information being taught. These results underscore the importance of teachers in mediating technology use to ensure religious understanding is not solely based on technology but retains the necessary spiritual depth through direct interaction.
Artificial Intelligence, Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Digitalization Era, Religious Literacy.	This study contributes to social constructivism theory by expanding the understanding of AI as an educational tool in religious education, providing practical insights for developing more effective technology-based curricula. The policy implications emphasize the need for teacher training and oversight of digital content in religious education. Additionally, this study opens doors for further research into the long-term effects of AI in religious education across various socio-cultural contexts.

1. Introduction

Education in the digital age faces significant challenges in integrating technology into effective and meaningful learning processes. One of the areas most profoundly impacted by this digital revolution is Islamic Religious Education (IRE), which often struggles to align traditional teaching methods with the rapid technological advancements. One notable technological innovation emerging in this context is artificial intelligence (AI), which is increasingly being utilized across various sectors, including education (Sadatul Kahfi dkk., 2025). At SMA Negeri 1 Sojol, for example, AI is being implemented in IRE lessons

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with the aim of enhancing students' religious literacy. However, despite the promising potential, this implementation raises a range of questions and challenges for both teachers and students.

Initial observations and exploratory interviews with several teachers and students at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol reveal a degree of ambiguity regarding the use of AI in IRE instruction. Some teachers view AI as a useful tool for providing more interactive and diverse explanations to students, while others question whether this technology can replace the depth of learning that occurs through direct interaction. Meanwhile, students expressed great enthusiasm for the incorporation of new technologies into the classroom, yet many admitted struggling to grasp the deeper meanings of religious teachings through digital platforms.

This phenomenon underscores the urgent need to further explore how the use of AI in IRE instruction influences students' religious literacy, from both the teachers' and students' perspectives. While there is an abundance of research examining the application of AI in education in general, studies focusing on its role in Islamic religious education, particularly in enhancing religious literacy, remain scarce on a global scale (Huang dkk., 2021). This gap in the literature highlights the need for further exploration, especially regarding the understanding and experiences of both students and teachers in utilizing AI within religious education.

Recent studies on AI in education have primarily concentrated on the application of technology within general educational contexts, often overlooking the social experiences and meanings perceived by individuals engaged in religious education (Degni, 2024). This gap in the literature calls for more in-depth research into how the use of AI influences the social dynamics and religious experiences of students, an aspect that has frequently been neglected in prior studies.

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of both teachers and students in utilizing AI for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol, while also examining its impact on students' religious literacy. The primary focus of this research is to investigate how AI may influence students' understanding and application of Islamic teachings in their daily lives, as well as how teachers perceive and experience this technology in the teaching process. Employing a qualitative case study approach, this research is expected to offer theoretical insights that expand the discourse on the integration of technology in religious education, as well as provide practical contributions to the development of curricula and policies for more effective religious education in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

Recent research on the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), has highlighted AI's potential to enhance learning quality and religious literacy. (Miftahul Huda & Irwansyah Suwahyu, 2024) argue that AI, through tools such as machine learning, chatbots, and augmented reality, can offer personalized and adaptive learning experiences, strengthen religious understanding, and support the development of students' religious competencies, although challenges such as technological dependency and privacy concerns remain. (Inggi Turnando dkk., 2025) discuss AI implementation in Indonesian schools, emphasizing that successful integration requires policy support, teacher training, and adequate infrastructure, as digital divides and limited human resources pose significant barriers. Meanwhile, (Sabila & Mutrofin, 2023) underscore the role of digitalization in enhancing Islamic literacy among youth, particularly through social media platforms like TikTok, which facilitate interactive and effective religious outreach, albeit with the need for careful monitoring of harmful content and misinformation. Critically, this body of literature illustrates that while AI and digital technologies can broaden access to religious education and literacy, there remains a research gap regarding the subjective experiences of teachers and students using AI within local socio-cultural contexts. Accordingly, the present study aims to explore the experiences, meanings, and impacts of AI use in IRE at a senior high school as a case study, contributing both theoretical insights and practical guidance for technology-based religious literacy development in the digital era.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore and understand the experiences of both teachers and students in utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol. The case study method was selected due to the highly contextual nature of the topic, focusing on a specific situation: the implementation of AI in religious education at a senior high school. By using a case study, this research is able to delve deeply into the

understanding, experiences, and perspectives of participants regarding this phenomenon, within a localized context that, while limited in scope, provides rich insights (Ilhami dkk., 2024).

The participants in this study include both IRE teachers and students from SMA Negeri 1 Sojol. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which targets individuals with direct experience using AI in IRE instruction. For teachers, the inclusion criteria were those actively involved in teaching IRE with the integration of AI in their curriculum. For students, the inclusion criteria required that they had participated in IRE lessons incorporating AI for at least one semester. A total of 5 IRE teachers and 10 students participated in the study.

The data for this research were gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the experiences, views, and perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the implementation of AI in PAI education, providing participants with the opportunity to discuss their experiences openly. Observations were made during AI-enhanced lessons to observe the dynamics between teachers and students and how AI was applied within the context of religious education. Furthermore, relevant documents, such as teaching materials and school policies on AI in education, were examined. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and supplemented with the relevant documents for thorough analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Drawing on a case study approach examining the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol, the findings highlight two central themes that capture the experiences, meanings, and social dynamics of both students and teachers. This analysis combines classroom observations, supporting documents, and recent literature on AI in education as well as on religious literacy.

4.1 Transformation of Learning Experiences through AI

The findings indicate that AI has the capacity to foster adaptive and personalized learning experiences, in contrast to conventional methods that are often rigid and static. Through the application of AI, instructional content can be tailored to align with each student's abilities and specific needs, thereby creating a more interactive and flexible learning process. This approach further enhances student engagement in grasping key concepts of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), even though it simultaneously raises ethical concerns regarding the potential overreliance on technology. Such a phenomenon illustrates the paradox of modernization, where AI facilitates personalized learning while also generating tension between technological convenience and the depth of spiritual understanding. These insights are consistent with previous literature that emphasizes both the advantages and the risks associated with reliance on AI in religious education.

4.2 Digitalization of Religious Literacy and Emerging Social Challenges

The emphasis is placed on the role of digital media, including AI, as a tool for enhancing religious literacy. The integration of such technology allows students to access content related to fiqh, prayers, and other religious teachings in a flexible manner, both during and outside of class hours, thereby making the learning process more continuous and personalized. However, the digitalization of religious literacy also brings forth social challenges, particularly concerning the validity of information and the potential for technological misuse. Both teachers and students must exercise discretion in their use of digital media, ensuring that access to information does not lead to misunderstandings, while still prioritizing character education and social responsibility. This aligns with the findings of (Sabila & Mutrofin, 2023), who highlight the importance of supervision and guidance when using digital media for religious education purposes.

Overall, these two themes are interconnected, illustrating that the transformation of learning experiences through AI directly impacts students' religious literacy. AI functions not only as a technical tool but also as a medium for social interaction that introduces emotional and ethical complexities. This process creates a reflective space for both teachers and students to navigate the dynamics of digitalizing religious education, while also offering opportunities for the development of more effective, technology-based religious literacy in the digital age.

Therefore, AI in PAI education facilitates a constructivist learning approach by offering adaptive learning experiences, supporting the development of knowledge within students' ZPD, and enhancing digital religious literacy. However, it still emphasizes the teacher's role as a critical and reflective knowledge mediator.

5. Conclusion

This research identifies two key themes in the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol: the transformation of learning experiences through AI and the digitalization of religious literacy, along with the social challenges it entails. The findings suggest that AI enhances personalized and adaptive learning but also raises ethical and social concerns, including issues of technological dependency and the uncertainty of information. While AI enables more flexible access to religious knowledge, it creates a tension between the convenience of learning and the depth of religious comprehension. This study introduces new perspectives within the context of Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist theories, illustrating how AI functions as a digital scaffold that supports students within their zone of proximal development. Moreover, it underscores the importance of supervision and guidance in managing religious literacy to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the information. In summary, this research enriches constructivist theory, contributes to the ongoing discourse on technology in religious education, and offers practical implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers interested in leveraging technology to enhance religious literacy in the digital era.

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