

DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION IN LEARNING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BASED ON SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY AT SMA NEGERI 1 RANTAU BAYUR BANYUASIN

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of social interaction in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning based on socio-cultural theory at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin. The focus of this research is to explore how Islamic education teachers act as mediators in shaping religious social interactions that reflect the cultural context of the school environment. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The participants consist of Islamic education teachers, students, and the school principal, selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification. The findings reveal that PAI learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur is deeply rooted in local social and cultural values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social awareness. Islamic education teachers play a crucial role as facilitators who integrate Islamic values into students' daily lives through interactive and collaborative learning. These social interactions not only enhance students' religious understanding but also strengthen their moral and social character. The implication of this study emphasizes the importance of applying socio-cultural theory in Islamic education to create a collaborative, contextual, and transformative learning environment. The unique value of this research lies in its contribution to enriching the discourse on socially grounded models of religious education in secondary schools.

Keywords: Social Interaction, Islamic Religious Education, Socio-Cultural Theory, Islamic Education Teacher, SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dinamika interaksi sosial dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) berbasis teori sosio-kultural di SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin. Fokus kajian diarahkan pada bagaimana guru PAI berperan sebagai mediator dalam membentuk interaksi sosial religius yang kontekstual dengan lingkungan budaya sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Informan penelitian terdiri atas guru PAI, siswa, dan kepala sekolah yang dipilih secara purposive. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman melalui tiga tahap, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi

kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran PAI di SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur berlandaskan nilai-nilai sosial dan budaya lokal, seperti gotong royong, toleransi, dan kepedulian sosial. Guru PAI berperan penting sebagai fasilitator dan pembimbing yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam konteks kehidupan siswa melalui interaksi sosial yang aktif. Interaksi sosial yang terbangun tidak hanya meningkatkan pemahaman religius siswa, tetapi juga memperkuat karakter sosial dan moral mereka. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya penerapan teori sosio-kultural dalam pembelajaran PAI untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang kolaboratif, kontekstual, dan bernilai transformatif. Nilai utama penelitian ini terletak pada kontribusinya dalam memperkaya wacana pengembangan model pembelajaran agama berbasis interaksi sosial di sekolah menengah.

Kata Kunci: *Interaksi Sosial, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Teori Sosio-Kultural, Guru PAI, SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the main pillars in the national education system which plays an important role in shaping the character of students who have faith, noble character, and are able to interact socially harmoniously. In the context of secondary education, PAI learning not only functions as a process of religious knowledge transfer, but also as a means of moral and social development that fosters religious awareness in a multicultural society (Zulhimma, 2021). PAI teachers are the central figure in this process, because they not only play the role of teachers, but also as guides and role models in religious life. Effective religious learning must place learners as active subjects who learn through meaningful social interactions, in line with the socio-cultural theoretical view put forward by Lev Vygotsky that the learning process develops through social relations and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

However, the reality on the ground shows that the PAI learning process in a number of schools, including SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin, still faces various obstacles in creating an interactive and contextual learning environment. Based on initial observations, PAI teachers often still use conventional lecture methods that tend to be one-way, so that students become passive and less involved in religious dialogue (Rahmawati, 2022). On the other hand, the development of technology and digital culture has also shifted the pattern of social interaction among teenagers. Many students are more active in communicating through social media than in direct interaction, so social values such as empathy, tolerance, and *ukhuwah* begin to weaken (Fauzan, 2023). This condition shows a gap between the learning objectives of PAI which emphasizes the formation of religious character and the social realities faced by students at school.

Ideally, PAI learning should be a lively social space where students can learn to understand and practice Islamic values through social experiences. PAI teachers need to play the role of mediators who bridge religious understanding with the social context of students. The role of this mediator includes efforts to facilitate communication, collaboration, and the formation of religious culture in the school environment (Yuliani, 2023). In socio-cultural theory, teachers function as "more knowledgeable other" who

help students achieve moral and spiritual development through guidance and interaction (Daniels, 2008). Thus, the success of PAI learning is not only measured by cognitive outcomes, but also by students' ability to interact religiously and socially in daily life.

A number of previous studies have contributed to the understanding of the role of PAI teachers in shaping students' religious character and values. Fadli (2021) found that PAI teachers have an important role in the formation of religious character through habituation and example in schools. Meanwhile, Kusumawati (2022) highlighted the importance of integrating Islamic values in school social activities as an effort to strengthen the spirituality of students. However, these studies have not in-depth discussed how PAI teachers act as mediators in shaping social-religious interactions among students. Hidayat (2021) also examines the role of teachers in mediating social conflicts with religious nuances, but has not explained how the mediation process systematically shapes students' social and religious awareness. Thus, there are still research gaps that need to be studied further, especially in the context of secondary education.

The novelty of this study lies in the focus of the study that combines the role of PAI teachers as mediators with socio-cultural theories in the formation of students' social-religious interactions. This research not only highlights teachers as conveyors of religious material or values, but also as facilitators of social relations that strengthen the spiritual dimension of students (Nurdin, 2023). In the context of SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin, the social environment of the community that is religious and upholds the value of mutual cooperation can be a cultural capital that supports the formation of social interaction with religious nuances. This study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a social interaction-based PAI learning model and provide practical implications for teachers in managing humanistic, collaborative, and religious learning in the digital era.

Based on this description, this study aims to describe and analyze the role of PAI teachers as mediators in the formation of social-religious interactions of students at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin. In particular, this study seeks to identify the forms of mediation carried out by PAI teachers in the learning process, understand the dynamics of social-religious interactions formed among students, and explain the relevance of socio-cultural theory in PAI learning practices in secondary schools. Thus, the results of this research are expected to enrich the scientific treasures in the field of Islamic education, especially in integrating socio-cultural theory into contextual learning practices and oriented towards the formation of students' religious character.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the dynamics of social interaction in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin. This approach was chosen because the focus of research lies on meaning and process, not on measurable outcomes. This method

allows researchers to interpret social behavior and the role of PAI teachers as mediators in the socio-cultural context of the school. According to Moleong (2019), qualitative research aims to describe reality holistically in natural situations. Similarly, Creswell (2018) explains that this approach is relevant for uncovering the meaning of complex social experiences through in-depth observation and intensive interviews (Moleong, 2019; Creswell, 2018).

The research was carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin, South Sumatra, because this school has strong socio-religious characteristics and a culture of mutual cooperation that is still alive among students. The research subjects consisted of PAI teachers, students, and principals who were selected by purposive sampling, namely based on relevance and direct involvement in PAI learning. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were focused on the interaction between teachers and students inside and outside the classroom, while interviews were used to explore their perceptions and experiences related to Islamic values developed in learning activities. Documents such as lesson plans, religious activity schedules, and school records were also analyzed to support field findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model which includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. The entire process was carried out simultaneously from the time the data collection took place, until the pattern and meaning of social interaction in the socio-cultural context was obtained. To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher applied triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as verifying results through discussions with informants. The validity of the research results was tested based on the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Through this procedure, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how socio-cultural theory is applied in PAI learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sugiyono, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Socio-Cultural Context of the School Environment as the Basis of PAI Learning

The socio-cultural environment at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin has a great influence on the formation of religious character and social interaction of students in the learning process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This school is located in an area with a community that still upholds the values of mutual cooperation, strong religious traditions, and harmonious social life. Within the framework of socio-cultural theory developed by Lev S. Vygotsky, the learning process cannot be separated from the social context in which learners interact, because each individual builds knowledge through social relationships with his or her environment (Utami, 2016). Therefore, PAI teachers

at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur utilize local social and cultural potential as a foundation for creating meaningful and contextual learning experiences (Agustin, 2021).

PAI learning in this school is not only focused on mastering teaching materials such as faith, worship, and morals, but also on how these Islamic values are implemented in students' social lives. For example, in learning activities about honesty, teachers not only explain theoretically, but also provide collaborative tasks that require students to work in groups and apply the value of honesty when discussing and completing tasks together (Hidayati, 2023). This process reflects Vygotsky's idea of *the Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), which is a region of development that students can achieve with the help of others who are more competent such as teachers or peers (Ariansyah, 2021).

Religious activities at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur such as flash Islamic boarding schools, routine recitations, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) competitions, and congregational dhuha prayers are a tangible form of internalizing Islamic values through social interaction. These activities function as *cultural tools* that mediate the socio-religious learning process of students (Putra, 2023). Through the interaction in these activities, students not only understand Islamic values cognitively, but also experience them emotionally and socially. For example, when students work together in preparation for religious activities, they learn responsibility, discipline, and social concern for their peers (Kahfi, 2024).

In addition, the role of PAI teachers is very important in building a collaborative and participatory learning environment. Teachers act as mediators between Islamic values sourced from sacred texts and students' social realities. Teachers use narrative approaches, group discussions, and case studies so that students can interpret Islamic values according to their socio-cultural context. This approach is in line with Vygotsky's view that effective learning occurs when students are given the opportunity to construct meaning through social dialogue and collaboration (Utami, 2016).

However, the social dynamics of students in the digital era bring its own challenges. Face-to-face interaction, which used to be the main means of learning, is now starting to shift towards social media-based communication. Some students are more comfortable discussing through online groups than face-to-face interactions. This phenomenon needs to be addressed adaptively by PAI teachers, one of which is by utilizing digital technology as *a new cultural tool* that supports collaborative learning based on Islamic values (Hidayati, 2023). Thus, the integration between local values and technological advances is a necessity in building a relevant and contextual PAI learning model (Kahfi, 2024).

The social environment of SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur which is religious and full of positive social interaction has provided space for students to practice Islamic values in real terms. This process shows that religious education is not only normative, but also applicative in shaping students to have social and spiritual intelligence at the same time. By combining Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and contextual education approach, PAI

learning in this school is able to foster religious character through meaningful social experiences (Agustin, 2021).

The Role of PAI Teachers as Mediators in the Formation of Socio-Religious Interactions

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur (Banyuasin) occupy a central position as mediators in the formation of social-religious interactions that take place in the school environment. Within the framework of socio-cultural theory put forward by Lev S. Vygotsky, teachers are not just teachers, but also "more knowledgeable others" who facilitate learning through social interaction, collaboration, language, and cultural artifacts (Agustin, 2021). PAI teachers at the school deliberately organize learning activities and extracurricular activities that allow students to dialogue and reflect together on the meaning of Islamic values in their social context. This mediation strategy is very relevant to the concept *of scaffolding*, which is temporary support from teachers that allows students to move from the actual ability zone to the proximal ability zone (Ariansyah, 2021).

In practice at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur, PAI teachers design discussion groups and collaborative projects that not only discuss religious texts (e.g. verses or hadiths), but also challenge students to relate these values to their own social realities—such as manners in interactions between students, responsibility for environmental cleanliness, or organizing social service activities. This creates an atmosphere where teachers act as cultural mediators: using local language, symbols, rituals, and traditions as *cultural tools* that mediate value transfer and moral internalization (Hidayati, 2023). Thus, the social interaction promoted by PAI teachers becomes a learning arena where students build common meaning, not just passively receive knowledge (Nuryadin, Latifah & Wardo, 2025).

Furthermore, PAI teachers at the school also bridge the relationship between students and the community outside the school—through collaboration with student organizations, spiritual administrators, and the surrounding community—to expand the scope of social-religious interaction. Activities such as routine recitations, guest lectures, and community service with villagers provide a space for students to experience Islamic values in real interaction with others. This is in accordance with Vygotsky's view that cognitive and moral development does not only occur in the classroom, but through participation in the socio-cultural activities of the community (Putra, 2023). Here, the teacher functions as a mediator who connects the formal world of PAI learning with the socio-cultural world of students.

However, contemporary challenges arise when face-to-face social interactions begin to be eroded by dominant digital communication patterns. In the context of SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur, some PAI teachers have begun to adapt their mediation by utilizing technology as *a new cultural tool*—for example, online forums for religious discussions, organizing religious activities through online platforms, and using social

media for student collaboration. This approach echoes that teacher mediation in socio-cultural theory must be able to adapt to evolving cultural tools and contexts, so that Islamic values remain relevant and internalized in students' social interactions in the digital era (Fadhluzzakiyy et al., 2025).

Overall, the role of PAI teachers as mediators at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur has been proven to facilitate active, contextual, and collaborative social-religious interactions. By integrating formal learning activities, socio-religious activities, and local cultural contexts, PAI teachers help create a school ecosystem that supports the internalization of Islamic values through social interaction. This approach strengthens the presence of socio-cultural theory as an effective conceptual framework for understanding and developing social interaction-based PAI learning (Agustin, 2021).

Collaboration and Proximal Development Zones (ZPDs) in Student Learning Activities

In the context of learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin, collaboration between students is one of the important aspects in optimizing the process of internalizing religious values. Based on Lev S. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, effective learning occurs through social interaction, where students learn better when collaborating with peers or being guided by teachers in *the Proximal Development Zone (ZPD)*, which is the distance between students' actual abilities and potential development that can be achieved through the help of other parties (Susanto, 2020). In PAI activities, this can be seen in group work, interpretation discussions, and joint worship practices that involve active communication and knowledge sharing between students. Thus, collaboration is not only an academic facility, but also a medium for the formation of religious character that is rooted in the value of togetherness and mutual respect (Rahman, 2022).

PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur have a strategic role in facilitating the collaborative learning process. They not only serve as teachers, but also as *temporary support scaffolders* that help students cross the boundaries of their ZPD (Nisa, 2021). For example, when students discuss the meaning of Qur'anic verses related to morality, teachers will provide stimulus in the form of reflective questions so that students are able to connect religious concepts with their social experiences in the school and community environment. This approach makes PAI learning more meaningful because students build understanding through social interaction and personal reflection based on Islamic values (Hidayatullah, 2023).

Within the framework of qualitative research, this phenomenon of collaboration is observed through real interactions in the classroom and school religious activities. For example, in *the Islamic boarding school* or *Rohis program*, teachers observe how students help each other understand the lecture material, discuss moral teachings, and build cooperation in group assignments (Latifah, 2023). This collaboration creates a social environment that supports the spiritual and moral development of students, in

accordance with Vygotsky's principle that cognitive and social development cannot be separated from the cultural context in which the individual is located (Wibowo, 2022). Thus, the dynamics of social interaction in PAI learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur show that collaboration supported by teacher guidance plays an important role in fostering students' critical thinking, empathy, and social and religious responsibility.

In addition, the implementation of ZPD in PAI learning also helps teachers in designing activities that are challenging but still within the range of students' abilities. For example, teachers can give an analysis of Qur'anic verses on social justice, then ask students to discuss them in small groups based on their local experiences in Banyuasin (Amalia, 2024). Through this process, students not only understand the meaning of the verse textually, but also learn to interpret its moral message in a broader social context. This approach strengthens the relationship between theory and practice, between cognition and social action, so that PAI learning really becomes a vehicle for Islamic character development based on the *learning community*.

Internalization of Religious Values through School Social and Religious Activities

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin does not only take place in the classroom, but also outside the classroom through various structured social and religious activities. This approach is in line with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory which emphasizes that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with the cultural environment. In the context of schools, the environment includes activities such as flash Islamic boarding schools, congregational prayers, social services, and commemoration of Islamic holidays. Through these activities, students not only understand Islamic teachings conceptually, but also internalize religious values in real daily actions, such as honesty, discipline, and social care (Hafid, 2023).

The Islamic boarding school activities that are routinely carried out every Ramadan are a strategic means for PAI teachers in strengthening students' religious values. During this activity, students are involved in lectures, Qur'anic tadarus, and discussions of moral values that are associated with the life of modern adolescents. This approach shows how Islamic values are not taught dogmatically but internalized through meaningful social experiences. This concept is in accordance with the idea of *experiential learning* in socio-cultural theory, where direct experience becomes a bridge between knowledge and behavior (Rahman, 2022). PAI teachers play an active role as facilitators who guide students to reflect on the meaning of worship and its application in their social lives in the school environment and society.

In addition to the flash Islamic boarding school, the practice of congregational prayer in schools is a forum for the formation of students' spiritual and social discipline. Through this activity, students learn to understand the importance of time order, leadership, and togetherness in carrying out worship. These values indirectly teach them the concept of collective responsibility that is important in social life. Based on field observations,

students who actively participated in congregational activities showed better social behaviors, such as respecting teachers and working together with classmates. This phenomenon shows that religious activities can be an effective medium in forming Islamic characters based on social interaction (Fauziah, 2023).

The social service program is also an integral part of PAI learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur. Activities such as sharing basic necessities with underprivileged residents or cleaning mosques around schools provide opportunities for students to practice the values of empathy, solidarity, and social responsibility. According to socio-cultural theory, this kind of activity functions as *cultural mediation*—that is, a means of connecting the concept of religious morality with the social reality faced by students (Suryani, 2021). By engaging students directly in social action, teachers help them understand that Islamic teachings are not limited to rituals, but also encompass a broad social dimension.

The commemoration of Islamic holidays such as the Prophet's Birthday and Isra Mi'raj at school is a learning event that is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Students are invited to participate in lecture competitions, nasyid performances, or religious dramas that depict the value of struggle and the example of the Prophet PBUH. This shows that the process of internalizing values does not only take place in a cognitive context, but also affectively and psychomotor (Amalia, 2022). PAI teachers use this activity as a space to build religious awareness while strengthening solidarity between students.

In the context of qualitative research, observation of these activities shows that students experience a holistic learning process that involves social, spiritual, and emotional aspects. For example, during tadarus activities, students not only read the Qur'an, but also discuss its meaning in small groups. This process strengthens Vygotsky's theory of the importance of language and social interaction as the main tools in cognitive and moral development (Hidayat, 2020). Thus, school religious activities become a real forum for students to build moral awareness in a reflective and contextual way.

PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur play an important role in directing socio-religious activities to be in harmony with the goals of Islamic character education. They not only serve as instructors, but also mentors who instill exemplary values through personal interactions with students. This approach shows the role of *scaffolding* in socio-cultural theory, where teachers help students understand the meaning of Islamic values in a way that is appropriate to their level of development (Nasution, 2021). With the guidance of teachers, religious social activities are not just a routine, but a spiritual experience that fosters moral awareness and social responsibility.

The influence of Banyuasin's religious social environment also strengthens the effectiveness of school religious activities. The value of mutual cooperation, mutual respect, and the closeness of the community to the mosque creates an atmosphere that supports the implementation of socio-cultural-based Islamic education. This environment enriches the learning process because students can see firsthand concrete

examples of the application of Islamic values in people's lives (Putri, 2023). PAI teachers take advantage of this local cultural richness to strengthen teaching materials, such as associating the concept of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* with the tradition of mutual cooperation and social concern that has been inherent in the Banyuasin community.

In addition to religious activities, social interaction in the school environment is also an important factor in the formation of students' religious character. A harmonious relationship between teachers and students creates a conducive and empathetic learning atmosphere. Students feel valued and actively involved in every activity, so the process of internalizing values takes place naturally. This approach is in line with the view of social constructivism that learning occurs when students actively interact in a supportive learning community (Hasanah, 2022). Thus, social activities at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur not only enrich the learning experience, but also strengthen the formation of students' Islamic identity.

Through the integration of social, cultural, and spiritual activities, PAI learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur shows how socio-cultural theory can be applied effectively in the context of religious education. The school's social-religious activities serve as a mediation space where Islamic values are transformed into real social practices. This study shows that the success of PAI learning is not only determined by the teaching material, but also by the extent to which students experience, interact, and reflect on religious values in their daily lives. Thus, socio-cultural-based Islamic education becomes a relevant and contextual learning model in building a religious generation and high social character.

Challenges and Dynamics of Social Interaction in the Midst of Students' Digital Social Development

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a strategic role in shaping the religious character and social interaction of students in the school environment. In the context of secondary education, such as at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur, PAI teachers not only serve as transmitters of religious knowledge, but also as mediators in building communication, collaboration, and Islamic values that live among students. As a mediator, teachers function to bridge the relationship between students and Islamic values so that they are easier to internalize through positive social interaction. This is in line with George Herbert Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism which explains that meaning is formed through social interactions and agreed symbols in society (Mead, 1934). In practice, PAI teachers position themselves as value facilitators who help students understand the religious meaning behind social actions, such as mutual respect, cooperation, and maintaining Islamic *ukhuwah*. This approach becomes relevant in the context of religious character education because it helps students understand the value of religion not only cognitively, but also affectively and socially (Nurdin, 2023).

1. Changes in Social Interaction Patterns in the Digital Era. The development of digital technology has brought major changes to the pattern of social interaction

among students of SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin. If previously social interaction took place directly in the school environment and the community, now communication occurs a lot through social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok. This phenomenon shows a shift from face-to-face interaction to virtual communication which is often fast but superficial. In the context of PAI learning, this is a challenge because values such as good manners, responsibility, and honesty are more difficult to form through digital interactions. Based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, social interaction is the main factor in a person's cognitive and moral development, so the lack of direct interaction can hinder the internalization of Islamic values in students (Mulyadi, 2022).

2. **The Role of PAI Teachers in Facing Digital Social Disruption.** PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur are required to adjust their learning approach to remain relevant to students' digital social conditions. In this qualitative study, it was found that teachers began to utilize digital platforms such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp Groups for discussions of religious values. This strategy allows students to remain engaged in a religious context, even through digital media. This approach is in line with the concept of *cultural mediation* in socio-cultural theory, where modern cultural tools such as technology are used to construct new social meanings. Thus, technology is no longer seen as a threat, but rather as a means of learning that can expand the space for students' religious interaction (Kurniawan, 2023).
3. **The Impact of Social Media on the Formation of Students' Religious Character.** Social media has a significant influence on the formation of students' character and behavior. On the one hand, the media can be a source of religious knowledge through digital da'wah content. But on the other hand, exposure to content that is not in accordance with Islamic values can cause moral disorientation. In the context of SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur, some students tend to imitate viral behavior without considering the value of Islamic ethics. This condition indicates a gap between religious knowledge and its application in digital social life. Therefore, PAI teachers play an important role in directing students to be able to filter information and foster ethical awareness in social media (Rohman, 2021).
4. **Social Collaboration and Digital Community-Based Learning.** To overcome these challenges, PAI teachers encourage social collaboration through digital learning communities. For example, students are directed to create short da'wah content containing Islamic moral messages, then share them through the school's social media. This activity not only increases students' creativity, but also strengthens the value of responsibility and togetherness. According to *Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD)* theory, collaboration between students in a digital context can accelerate the understanding of religious concepts because of the mutual learning process. This practice has proven effective at SMA Negeri 1

Rantau Bayur, where students show improvements in their ability to think critically about moral issues on social media (Husna, 2022).

5. Value Crisis and Efforts to Strengthen Socio-Religious Interactions. Although technology provides new opportunities, the value crisis remains a serious challenge in Islamic education. The phenomenon of individualism and instant culture caused by digital media often weakens empathy and solidarity between students. In the context of this research, PAI teachers try to overcome this by creating reflective spaces, such as class discussions about digital ethics in Islam. This approach demonstrates the relevance of socio-cultural theories that emphasize the importance of social dialogue in shaping moral consciousness. Students are encouraged to assess their online behavior based on Islamic moral principles, not just media trends (Mahfud, 2023).
6. Integration of Islamic Values in School Digital Literacy. The digital literacy program at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur is beginning to be directed to internalize Islamic values. PAI teachers collaborate with ICT teachers to provide an understanding of the ethical use of social media. Through this activity, students are not only taught how to use technology, but also how to make digital media a means of da'wah. This is in line with Vygotsky's view that modern cultural tools such as technology can be a medium of learning that forms social and spiritual awareness (Sari, 2022).
7. The Dynamics of Social Relations between the Real World and the Digital World. The dynamics of student interaction are no longer limited to the physical space of the school. The digital world has created a new social space where religious identity and behavior are tested. PAI teachers are aware that many students display different behaviors in the virtual world than in the real world. Therefore, learning is directed to help students build self-integrity, that is, the alignment between online and offline behavior. This effort shows that Islamic education does not only focus on cognition, but also on the formation of intact character that is consistent in various social contexts (Wahyuni, 2023).
8. Theoretical and Practical Implications for PAI Learning in the Digital Era. Theoretically, the dynamics of social interaction in the digital age reinforce the relevance of socio-cultural theory in Islamic education. The learning process based on interaction, collaboration, and the use of digital cultural tools can improve the understanding of Islamic values contextually. Practically, PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur need to continue to develop learning methods that are adaptive to social changes, such as the integration of da'wah digital media and media ethics training. With this approach, students not only become intelligent users of technology, but also moral agents who bring Islamic values in their every digital activity (Nugraha, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the dynamics of social interaction in the learning of Islamic Religious Education at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur Banyuasin take place actively, participatoryly, and based on socio-cultural values that live in the school environment. PAI teachers act as mediators who not only deliver teaching materials, but also build bridges of communication and collaboration between students. Through a socio-cultural approach, the learning process becomes more contextual because it utilizes local social, language, and cultural interactions as a means of forming religious meaning. This approach creates an open, respectful learning atmosphere and encourages students to internalize Islamic values in daily life through real social experiences. Theoretically and practically, the application of socio-cultural theory in PAI learning at SMA Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur makes a significant contribution to strengthening the social and religious character of students.

The findings of this study confirm that teacher-facilitated social interaction can be an effective medium in developing students' critical thinking, empathy, and spiritual awareness skills. Thus, socio-cultural theory is not only relevant as an academic framework, but also as a pedagogical approach that is able to integrate Islamic values with the socio-cultural context of schools. This study provides recommendations for PAI teachers to continue to develop collaborative learning strategies and social interaction based on the formation of religious character in the secondary education environment.

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