

THE ROLE OF PAI LEARNING IN SHAPING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER IN THE DIGITAL AGE: INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-BASED MEDIA

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Abstract

In the digital age marked by advances in information technology, PAI learning plays an important role in shaping students' religious character. This study aims to explore how the integration of artificial intelligence (AI)-based media can improve the effectiveness of PAI learning and support the development of students' religious character. The methods used in this study are literature review and qualitative analysis of various relevant sources. The results of the study indicate that the application of AI can enhance students' engagement in cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, which positively impacts the cultivation of religious character. However, the use of AI must be supported by a strong Islamic value and ethical framework, content monitoring, and teacher involvement as moral role models. With an integrative and targeted learning model, the combination of PAI and AI-based media can be an effective strategy to address the challenges of the digital age and strengthen students' religious identity sustainably.

Keywords: PAI Learning, Religious Character in the digital era, Artificial Intelligence

Abstrak

Dalam era digital yang ditandai dengan kemajuan teknologi informasi, pembelajaran PAI memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana integrasi media berbasis kecerdasan buatan (AI) dapat meningkatkan efektivitas pembelajaran PAI dan mendukung pengembangan karakter religius siswa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah studi literatur dan analisis kualitatif terhadap berbagai sumber yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan AI dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam aspek kognitif, afektif, dan perilaku, yang berdampak positif pada pembinaan karakter religius. Namun, pemanfaatan AI harus didukung oleh kerangka nilai dan etika Islam yang kuat, pengawasan konten, serta keterlibatan guru sebagai teladan moral. Dengan model pembelajaran yang integratif dan terarah, kombinasi PAI dan media berbasis AI dapat menjadi strategi efektif untuk menghadapi tantangan era digital dan memperkuat identitas religius siswa secara berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran PAI, Karakter Religius di era digital, Kecerdasan Buatan

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought major changes to the world of education, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Technological developments, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), offer new opportunities for the learning process, but at the same time

pose challenges in shaping students' religious character. The rapid development of digital media has made information more accessible, but it also presents content that has the potential to erode moral and religious values if not filtered wisely (Aziz, 2024).

IR has a central role in instilling the values of faith, morals, and worship. Through PAI learning, students are expected to be able to internalize religious values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and social awareness (Kasnuri, 2025). However, in the digital age, this role faces serious challenges due to the proliferation of instant content, a fast-paced culture, and a decline in students' concentration in understanding profound values. Therefore, innovative learning strategies are needed that can combine the power of technology with Islamic educational principles.

The integration of AI-based media is one potential innovation. AI technology can facilitate personalized PAI learning, provide materials according to students' needs and abilities, and create interactive and adaptive learning simulations (Nurhayati, 2024). Through learning data analysis, AI can help teachers accurately evaluate student progress and provide recommendations for relevant follow-up material.

Research results show that the use of AI applications such as *Socratic* and *Quillionz* in madrasah Aliyah is able to increase student engagement in cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects by more than 36%–38% (Alamin et.al, 2025). This improvement occurs because learning becomes more contextual, interesting, and responsive to student needs. Thus, AI can act as a partner for PAI teachers in developing effective teaching methods.

However, the use of AI in PAI learning still requires a strong Islamic value and ethical framework. Without adequate control, the use of technology can actually lead to digital dependence and reduce human interaction between teachers and students (Nadlif & Supriyadi, 2025). Therefore, an integrative learning model is needed that utilizes the advantages of AI while still maintaining the essence of spirituality, social interaction, and character building.

Based on these conditions, this research is important to explore the role of PAI learning in shaping students' religious character through the integration of AI-based media. The focus of the study is directed at implementation strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the potential for developing learning media that is not only adaptive to technological developments but also in line with the objectives of Islamic education. This integration is expected to address the challenges of the digital era while strengthening students' religious identity.

METHO

The type of research applied in this study is literature research, which involves the use of literary sources. The objects of this study include various types of materials, such as books, encyclopedias, scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, documents, and research reports from previous researchers (Zed, 2014). The approach used in this study is qualitative and descriptive, where the data collected is in the form of words or images.

The data analysis technique used is documentation (Sugiyono, 2025). The data obtained is then analyzed using a descriptive content analysis approach. The analysis was carried out by carefully reading each piece of literature, identifying important themes, classifying data based on similarities in issues, and interpreting the meaning contained in the text. The results of the analysis aim to provide a comprehensive and critical overview of the role of PAI learning in shaping students' religious character in the digital age with the integration of artificial intelligence-based media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2. PAI Learning in Character Building

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has a strategic role in shaping the character of students, especially amid the challenges of globalization marked by rapid technological and information developments. PAI is not only oriented towards the transfer of religious knowledge, but also instills moral, ethical, and spiritual values that form the foundation of noble behavior in everyday life. The PAI learning process covers cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions aimed at shaping individuals who are faithful, pious, and noble in character in accordance with the objectives of national education (Syamsul & Kurniawan, 2021).

Character building through PAI is carried out by integrating Islamic teachings into contextual and applicable learning activities. Character traits such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect for others are developed through habituation and internalization of values. PAI teachers serve as role models (*uswah hasanah*) who demonstrate behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings, because role modeling has a strong influence on students' moral development (Alim, 2020). In addition, the use of active learning methods such as discussions, case studies, and problem-based learning can increase students' critical understanding of religious teachings while strengthening their commitment to practicing them (Hasanah & Fadilah, 2022).

Amidst the challenges of the digital era, PAI learning requires innovation to reach a generation that is familiar with technology. The integration of digital media, including the use of artificial intelligence-based learning platforms, can facilitate students in accessing religious material interactively. This technology can also help teachers monitor the development of students' understanding and behavior, making character building more measurable. However, the use of technology must be accompanied by supervision and guidance so that the content accessed is in accordance with Islamic values (Fathurrahman, 2023).

The Implementation of PAI in character building also requires synergy between schools, families, and the community. A conducive and consistent learning environment in applying religious values will strengthen the internalization of character built in schools. For example, habitual programs such as praying in congregation, reading the Qur'an, social activities, and community service are real means for students to practice Islamic values in their daily lives (Ramli, 2019).

Thus, PAI learning is not merely the teaching of religious material, but a process of continuous value transformation. The success of PAI learning in shaping character is largely determined by the quality of teachers, learning methods, appropriate technological support, and the involvement of all relevant parties. The religious character that is formed will be an important provision for students in facing the dynamics of modern life, which is full of moral and ethical challenges. Therefore, strengthening PAI learning needs to be a priority in the education system so that future generations have a solid moral foundation and are able to become agents of positive change in society.

2. Religious Character in the Digital Age

Character is usually used to describe things that are different from one another, and sometimes it is also used to describe common traits that distinguish one person from another. According to Prayitno and Afriva in Badry, character is a human trait of persistence (a quality demonstrated in actions) that serves as the basis for behavior influenced by standards, values, and conventions (Badry & Rahman, 2021).

Terminologically, character is defined as human traits in general that depend on one's own life factors. Literally, "character" is the quality or strength of a person's mental or moral character, morals, or manners, which is a unique personality that distinguishes one person from another. In Indonesian, "character" refers to the psychological traits, morals, and manners that distinguish one person from another, as well as one's nature and disposition (Haryati, 2017).

Religious means belief in God. In this case, people believe without doubt that God has all power. This loyalty requires the submission of the soul and body. Someone who has high religious values will minimize actions that cause sin. Conversely, someone who has low religious values tends to be more likely to commit sins (Nafisa & Savira, 2021).

Agus Wibowo defines religious character as an attitude or behavior that is obedient to religious teachings, tolerant of religious practices, and harmonious with others (Wibowo, 2012). Those with religious character act and behave in accordance with what is taught in school. According to various perspectives, religious character is an attitude that can absorb religious teachings and show obedience and devotion to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, and is influenced by a person's desire and effort to be closer to God by maintaining religious teachings. The digital era is generally defined as a condition of life or an era in which technology has made all activities that support life and learning easier. The digital era is also described as a replacement for past technologies that make life more practical and contemporary (Basori, 2021).

The digital era has brought profound transformations in various aspects of life, including in religious understanding and practice (Oktavia & Khotimah, 2023). Digitalization affects religious values, both in terms of the substance of teachings, worship practices, and the way people interpret their religious life. Since the internet began to grow rapidly, there has been a major change in the way religious communities access and disseminate religious teachings. In the past, religion was mostly practiced in physical spaces such as

mosques, churches, or other places, with religious leaders as the main authority in conveying teachings. Now, with the existence of various digital platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and religion-based applications, anyone can access lectures, discussions, or religious studies without being limited by space and time. This makes it easier for individuals to learn about religion more freely, but at the same time opens up variations in the interpretation of religious teachings that can be more free and personal.

Digitalization also facilitates the emergence of a more pluralistic understanding of religion (Cantwell & Rashid, 2015). People who are connected to various online communities can easily discuss differences in religious views and even interact with those who have different beliefs (Latipah & Nawawi, 2023). The importance of religious character in the digital age is as a moral and spiritual fortress in facing the challenges and conveniences offered by technological advances. Religious character helps individuals to filter accurate information, avoid negative content, and behave well in online interactions. In addition, religious character also strengthens self-identity and provides a strong foundation for making wise decisions in the virtual world.

3. Challenges of Religious Character in the Digital Age

Character education in the current digital age faces complex challenges due to rapid technological developments and dynamic social changes. One of the main problems is the ease of obtaining information, which is not always beneficial. It is very possible for students to be exposed to various materials that conflict with the moral principles and characteristics that the education system seeks to instill. Seto Mulyadi states that the digital era is characterized by the high dependence of children and adolescents on digital devices in various aspects of their lives, such as playing, learning, and socializing (Mulyadi, 2020). By identifying the specific effects of excessive dependence on electronic devices and the internet, Sudarwan Danim reinforces this argument. These effects include a lack of communication skills, low levels of empathy, and a lack of social skills (Danim, 2021).

The challenges of religious character in the digital age are very complex and require attention from many people, such as families, schools, and communities. It is important to develop effective strategies to overcome these challenges, such as providing relevant religious education, creating a supportive environment, and being a good role model for the younger generation. With the right approach, religious character can be maintained even amid the rapid and diverse flow of information.

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Based Media

Artificial Intelligence (AI) based media refers to tools, devices, or platforms that utilize artificial intelligence technology to manage, process, and present information automatically and adaptively according to user needs. In the context of learning, AI-based media not only functions as a tool for delivering material, but also as a system capable of analyzing user interaction data to provide a more personalized and effective learning experience (Zawacki-Richter et.al, 2019). The main advantage of this media lies in its

ability to integrate machine learning and natural language processing algorithms to understand user patterns, preferences, and needs in real time.

One of the characteristics of AI-based media is its interactive and adaptive nature. This media is able to adjust the level of difficulty of the material, presentation methods, and learning strategies based on the user's learning achievements. For example, an AI-powered e-learning platform can provide additional material recommendations for students who are having difficulty with certain topics, or offer more challenging tasks for students who have already mastered the basic material (Holmes et al., 2021). This makes AI-based media a differentiated and inclusive learning tool, capable of catering to the diverse learning styles of students.

In addition, AI-based media can also be integrated with learning analytics technology. Through big data analysis, AI systems are able to provide accurate reports on learners' learning progress, predict potential difficulties, and provide appropriate intervention recommendations (Ifenthaler & Yau, 2020). This integration is not only beneficial for learners, but also for educators in designing more effective learning strategies. From a pedagogical perspective, AI-based media supports the 21st-century learning paradigm that emphasizes data-driven learning, personalization, and global collaboration. For example, AI-based chatbot applications can provide 24/7 tutoring services, answer students' questions directly, and provide automatic feedback on assignments or exercises (Lu et.al, 2023). In fact, AI can be used to automatically generate new learning content, such as material summaries, interactive simulations, and exam questions tailored to students' competency levels. However, the use of AI-based media also faces challenges. These include the potential for algorithmic bias that can affect recommendations or learning outcomes, user data privacy issues, and technological infrastructure limitations in some regions (Bai & Wang, 2022). Therefore, the use of AI-based media needs to be balanced with strict ethical policies and regulations to ensure fairness, security, and sustainability in education.

CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious character in a digital era fraught with moral and ethical challenges. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based media offers significant opportunities to strengthen this role through personalized, adaptive, and interactive learning. AI technology enables teachers to accurately monitor student progress, provide tailored materials, and create contextual learning experiences. Research shows that the application of AI can increase student engagement cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally, thereby having a positive impact on religious character building. However, the use of AI must be accompanied by a strong Islamic value and ethical framework, content supervision, and teacher involvement as moral role models. With an integrative and targeted learning model, the combination of PAI and AI-based media can be an effective strategy to address the

challenges of the digital age while strengthening students' religious identity in a sustainable manner.

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