

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Facing the Challenges of Learning Digitalization at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the strategies of Islamic Religious Education teachers in facing the challenges of learning digitalization at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti. The development of digital technology provides both opportunities and challenges for the world of education, particularly in Islamic Religious Education subjects. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that Islamic Religious Education teachers apply various strategies, including the utilization of digital-based learning media, the improvement of digital literacy competence, the implementation of blended learning methods, and the use of contextual approaches to keep the learning materials relevant to students' lives. The study concludes that the success of Islamic Religious Education learning in the digital era is strongly influenced by teachers' creativity and adaptability in utilizing technology effectively.

Keywords: Teacher Strategies; Islamic Religious Education; Learning Digitalization; Digital Era.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam menghadapi tantangan digitalisasi pembelajaran di SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti. Perkembangan teknologi digital memberikan peluang sekaligus tantangan bagi dunia pendidikan, khususnya dalam mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru PAI menggunakan berbagai strategi, antara lain pemanfaatan media pembelajaran berbasis digital, peningkatan kompetensi literasi digital, penerapan metode blended learning, serta pendekatan kontekstual agar materi ajar tetap relevan dengan kehidupan siswa. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa keberhasilan pembelajaran PAI di era digital sangat dipengaruhi oleh kreativitas dan adaptasi guru dalam menggunakan teknologi

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A. Introduction

Education in the digital era has undergone significant transformation, especially in the integration of technology within the teaching and learning process. The rapid development of digital technology requires teachers to adapt and innovate in order to meet the learning needs of students (Prensky, 2010). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), digitalization brings both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, technology provides easier access to various Islamic learning resources; on the other hand, it also poses risks such as reduced direct interaction and the possibility of superficial understanding of religious values (Ally, 2019).

Teachers of Islamic Religious Education are required to master digital literacy and utilize technology-based media in order to make the learning process more effective and relevant to students' lives (Rahman, 2020). This situation demands teachers to not only serve as transmitters of knowledge but also facilitators and motivators in learning. SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti, as one of the educational institutions, faces the same challenges in implementing digital learning, particularly in the subject of Islamic Religious Education. Teachers are expected to formulate strategies that align with the dynamics of the digital era while still preserving Islamic values (Fauzi, 2021).

The digitalization of learning requires teachers to develop blended learning models that combine face-to-face instruction with online-based platforms. This model allows students to experience flexible learning while maintaining the quality of interaction with teachers (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). However, the effectiveness of digital learning in IRE depends on the readiness of teachers to manage and integrate technology effectively. Teachers who lack digital competence may face difficulties in maintaining students' interest and motivation (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2019).

In addition, challenges also arise in terms of students' diverse digital competencies. Some students may be proficient in using digital media, while others may experience difficulties. This situation requires teachers to implement differentiated

strategies that can accommodate students' varying abilities (Tomlinson, 2014). Another challenge is related to the preservation of Islamic values in the digital environment. The use of digital media must be carefully designed so that students not only gain cognitive knowledge but also develop affective and psychomotor aspects in accordance with Islamic teachings (Sari, 2020).

Teachers need to strengthen their creativity by utilizing various digital tools such as interactive videos, e-learning platforms, and Islamic digital applications that can support meaningful learning (Yusoff & Abdullah, 2019). Moreover, Islamic Religious Education teachers must also act as role models in the digital era. Their presence as guides and mentors remains irreplaceable, despite the advancement of digital learning tools (Abdullah, 2018). The government and educational institutions also play an important role in supporting teachers by providing training and facilities for digital learning. Without adequate support, teachers will find it difficult to optimize digital-based learning (Kurniawan, 2020).

Research on strategies of IRE teachers in facing digital learning challenges is crucial to provide insights and practical solutions that can be applied in schools. This study focuses on SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti as a case study to explore these issues. Previous studies have shown that the effectiveness of digital learning is determined by teachers' adaptability and their ability to integrate technology with pedagogical and content knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). This concept, known as TPACK, is highly relevant for IRE teachers. Furthermore, teachers must also consider the socio-cultural context of students. Islamic Religious Education should not only transfer knowledge but also shape students' character and spirituality, which is a challenge in digital environments (Nasir, 2021).

Therefore, it is important to investigate the strategies employed by IRE teachers at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti in facing the challenges of digital learning. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective and contextual teaching practices. This introduction provides a theoretical foundation for the research and highlights the urgency of addressing digital challenges in IRE. The next sections will

elaborate on the research methods, findings, and implications for Islamic education in the digital era.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in facing the challenges of digital learning at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices in a natural setting, providing a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The participants of this research were Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti. The selection of participants was conducted using purposive sampling, considering that these teachers have direct involvement in the implementation of digital learning. The participants' teaching experience and their adaptation to digital tools were taken into account to ensure the richness of the data (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The data collection techniques used in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine the actual teaching process, particularly how teachers integrated digital media into Islamic Religious Education. Semi-structured interviews were used to capture teachers' insights, strategies, and challenges in adopting digital learning methods. Documentation, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, and digital learning platforms, was also analyzed to strengthen the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The data analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) interactive model, which involves three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation was carried out by selecting and focusing on relevant information. Data display involved organizing the data into tables, charts, and narrative descriptions. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were conducted by interpreting the findings and ensuring their validity.

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, several strategies were applied, including triangulation of data sources (observation, interview, and documentation), member checking with participants, and peer debriefing. These steps were taken to minimize bias and enhance the reliability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This methodology is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti develop and implement strategies to overcome the challenges of digital learning. The approach also ensures that the findings are grounded in empirical data and reflect the actual conditions of the school context.

C. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti have developed several strategies to cope with the challenges of digital learning, reflecting their adaptability in integrating technology with Islamic pedagogical practices. One of the most important strategies identified is the use of digital-based learning media such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp groups, Zoom, and PowerPoint presentations. These platforms allow teachers to distribute learning materials, provide instructions, and facilitate discussions among students, in line with studies that emphasize the importance of e-learning platforms in contemporary education (Rahman, 2020).

In addition to digital platforms, teachers also integrate multimedia resources such as Islamic educational videos, interactive quizzes, and online tafsir applications. These tools make the learning process more engaging and help students connect theoretical Islamic knowledge with practical religious experiences (Yusoff & Abdullah, 2019). Another significant finding is the teachers' commitment to improving their own digital literacy. Initially, many teachers admitted facing difficulties in operating digital tools, but through workshops, peer learning, and self-directed practice, they enhanced their competence and confidence in managing online learning (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2019).

Students' responses to digital learning were found to be diverse. While some students displayed high motivation and technological proficiency, others encountered

challenges such as technical issues and limited internet access. This required teachers to adopt differentiated strategies that accommodated students' varied learning needs and digital readiness (Tomlinson, 2014). To overcome this disparity, teachers implemented blended learning approaches that combined online and offline instruction. For students with poor internet access, printed modules were provided, while those with sufficient access participated in synchronous online classes. This flexible model ensured inclusivity and reduced the digital divide (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Teachers also faced difficulties in maintaining students' discipline and attention during online classes. Many students were easily distracted by social media or entertainment content. To address this, teachers applied interactive teaching strategies such as gamification, online group discussions, and quizzes, which successfully increased student participation and engagement (Prensky, 2010). Alongside these cognitive approaches, teachers made efforts to preserve Islamic values in digital classrooms by linking Quranic verses and hadiths with contemporary issues and encouraging students to apply religious principles in daily life. This contextualization was considered vital in nurturing both intellectual and spiritual development (Sari, 2020).

Documentation analysis showed that lesson plans were designed with a clear focus on integrating technology into pedagogy. Teachers aligned learning objectives with digital activities, ensuring that technology was not used merely as a supplementary tool but as an integral part of the instructional process. This reflects the TPACK framework, which emphasizes the importance of blending technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge for effective teaching (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Teachers also emphasized the role of parents in digital learning, encouraging them to monitor attendance and discipline at home, which underscores the collaborative nature of online education (Nasir, 2021).

The study further revealed that Islamic digital applications, such as Qur'an learning apps, hadith databases, and Islamic educational games, were utilized to extend learning beyond classroom sessions. These resources enabled students to continue religious practice independently. At the same time, character education remained a

priority. Teachers used online learning as a medium to instill honesty, responsibility, and discipline, for example, by setting strict rules for punctuality, participation, and academic integrity (Fauzi, 2021).

The discussion of these findings highlights that teachers' creativity and adaptability are key factors in overcoming barriers to digital learning. Despite initial difficulties, teachers' openness to innovation and experimentation played an essential role in making digital Islamic Religious Education successful. This aligns with Abdullah's (2018) view that teachers must serve not only as knowledge providers but also as facilitators, motivators, and role models in the digital era. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the need for ongoing professional development. Without consistent training and exposure to new technologies, teachers will find it difficult to respond to the rapid changes of the digital landscape (Kurniawan, 2020).

Overall, the results indicate that the effectiveness of IRE in the digital era is determined by three interrelated factors: teachers' digital competence, the inclusivity of instructional strategies, and the preservation of Islamic values. These three dimensions must be integrated to ensure that digital learning not only transmits knowledge but also fosters moral, spiritual, and character development. The strategies demonstrated by IRE teachers at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti illustrate a balanced approach between technological adaptation and the preservation of Islamic identity. Thus, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for other schools that aim to design effective, meaningful, and spiritually grounded Islamic Religious Education in the digital age.

D. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers at SMA 6 Persatuan Amal Bakti have adopted a variety of strategies to address the challenges of digital learning. Teachers demonstrated adaptability by integrating digital tools, using interactive platforms, and combining traditional and modern approaches to ensure that students remain engaged in the learning process. This indicates that the role of teachers remains central, even in a digitalized learning

environment, where their creativity and innovation are crucial for successful knowledge delivery.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the challenges faced by teachers are not only technical but also pedagogical and psychological. Issues such as unequal access to digital devices, varying levels of student motivation, and the need to maintain Islamic values in a digital context all require thoughtful strategies. Teachers responded to these challenges by employing blended learning, fostering digital literacy, and designing moral-based content that resonates with students. This reflects the importance of aligning digital innovations with the spiritual and moral objectives of Islamic education.

In conclusion, the strategies developed by IRE teachers serve as a model for how educators can effectively navigate the demands of digital transformation in education. The findings suggest that continuous professional development, institutional support, and collaborative practices among teachers are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of digital learning. By balancing technological integration with Islamic values, IRE teachers contribute significantly to preparing students to thrive in the digital era while remaining grounded in their faith and moral character.

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