

## **Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies in the Digital Era: Utilization of Social Media and E-Learning**

**Radhika Ananda**

Islamic Religious Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Uin Sheikh  
Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, North Sumatra, Indonesia  
[radhikaanandahutagalung@gmail.com](mailto:radhikaanandahutagalung@gmail.com)

### ***Abstract***

This article discusses Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies in the digital era with a focus on the utilization of social media and e-learning. In a qualitative approach through literature review, it is found that digital technology can be an effective means to deliver Islamic Education materials contextually and interestingly. Social media such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp can be used to spread Islamic values creatively, while e-learning platforms such as Google Classroom and Moodle facilitate flexible and structured learning. Learning strategies that successfully combine pedagogical approaches with technology can improve understanding, shape character and strengthen students' spirituality. However, challenges such as the digital divide and low religious digital literacy require serious attention. Therefore, the active role of teachers as value educators and digital facilitators is needed so that PAI learning remains meaningful and transformative in the midst of modernization.

**Keywords:** Islamic Religious Education, Social Media, E-Learning, Learning Strategy, Digital Era

### **INTRODUCTION**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the important components in the national education system in Indonesia, which aims to form Indonesian people who are faithful, pious to God Almighty, and have noble character. In this context, PAI does not only function as a means of transmitting religious knowledge, but also as a process of internalizing fundamental spiritual, ethical, and moral values in everyday life. Therefore, PAI learning is required to be oriented not only to the cognitive aspects, but also to the affective and psychomotor aspects of students. The challenges in creating meaningful PAI learning are increasingly complex along with the development of technology and the socio-cultural dynamics of students in the current digital era.

The digital era has brought about major changes in various aspects of human life, including in the field of education. Digital transformation requires educators to change conventional approaches to be more adaptive, creative, and technology-based. In the context of learning, this marks a shift from traditional face-to-face learning systems to more flexible, interactive, and online-based learning. One significant change is the increasing use of social

media and e-learning as supporting facilities or primary media in learning activities, including in Islamic Religious Education learning. The use of social media such as YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, to TikTok, as well as e-learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, and other Learning Management System (LMS) applications, have opened up new opportunities in delivering Islamic Religious Education materials that are more relevant to the learning styles of today's students.(Purba et al., 2024).

However, the integration of digital technology in Islamic Religious Education learning is not free from challenges. An appropriate learning strategy is needed so that the use of social media and e-learning is not only a technical tool, but is able to build a deeper, more meaningful learning experience, and in accordance with the goals of Islamic religious education. This strategy includes the selection of appropriate methods, contextual material design, to the management of teacher and student interactions in digital spaces that maintain ethical values and politeness in communication.

Most students today are a digital native generation who have a high dependence on technology, but at the same time do not yet have strong digital literacy and religious literacy. Therefore, the use of digital media in Islamic Religious Education learning must be directed not only to convey information, but also to shape students' religious attitudes and behavior. This is where the importance of a digital-based learning strategy that is still rooted in Islamic values lies, so that technology does not become mere entertainment or distraction, but a means of preaching and strengthening spirituality.

Previous studies have revealed that digital-based learning approaches can increase students' motivation and interest in learning, but their success is largely determined by the strategies used by teachers. Teachers are required to have balanced pedagogical and digital competencies in order to be able to utilize technology optimally in learning activities. Therefore, research and studies on Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in the digital era are very relevant and urgent to be carried out, especially in exploring approaches that are effective, efficient, and in accordance with the context of Islamic education.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore various Islamic Religious Education learning strategies that utilize social media and e-learning in the digital era. The focus of this study is not only on the technical aspects of using digital platforms, but also on the pedagogical approach and Islamic values that must remain the foundation of the learning process. It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the development of adaptive, innovative Islamic Religious Education learning practices that remain rooted in Islamic principles.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This scientific article is written using a qualitative approach with a library research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate for analyzing social and educational phenomena in depth, with a focus on the meaning, interpretation, and conceptual understanding of a problem. In this context, the learning strategy of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the digital era is analyzed through interpretation of various relevant literature sources.

The literature review method is carried out by tracing, reviewing, and analyzing various scientifically accountable literature. The sources of information used include academic books, national and international journal articles, seminar proceedings, research reports, and online scientific articles published by credible institutions or agencies. These literatures are used to build a theoretical framework, find previous empirical findings, and formulate a new synthesis of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in a digital context.

The data collection procedure in this study was carried out through searching scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda Ristekdikti, DOAJ, ScienceDirect, and ResearchGate, using keywords such as "Islamic Religious Education learning strategies," "social media in religious education," "Islamic Religious Education e-learning," and "Islamic education in the digital era." The data obtained were then classified based on themes, compared, and analyzed descriptively-qualitatively.

Data analysis was conducted through content analysis techniques, namely by identifying patterns, themes, and tendencies that emerge from various literature sources. The results of the analysis were compiled to answer the focus of the research, namely how PAI learning strategies are developed through the use of social media and e-learning platforms in facing the challenges and opportunities of the digital era.

With this method, it is hoped that the article can provide a conceptual contribution to the development of innovative, technology-based Islamic Education learning strategies that remain based on Islamic values.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Digital transformation in the world of education has brought significant changes to the learning approach, including in the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Through a literature review conducted, it was found that PAI learning strategies in the digital era include the use of

information technology, especially social media and e-learning platforms, as a means to deliver materials, increase student engagement, and strengthen understanding of religious values.

### **1. Utilization of Social Media as a Means of Religious Education**

Social media has evolved from being a mere communication platform to a digital public space that has a significant influence on the formation of opinions, behavior, and even individual values. In the context of education, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI), social media is not only a means of information, but can also be used as a medium for transforming religious values effectively, quickly, and widely. This is in line with the characteristics of digital native students who tend to be more responsive to visual, audio-visual, and interactive content compared to conventional approaches.(Anshori & Nadiyya, 2023).

Various studies confirm that the use of social media as a means of Islamic Religious Education learning has great potential in increasing student engagement. The use of social media such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp in religious learning provides its own appeal because it is able to convey moral messages and Islamic values in a light but meaningful way. For example, through short Islamic preaching videos, Islamic motivational quotes, or infographic content about noble morals, students can more easily understand and internalize religious values without feeling lectured.(Hanafi et al., 2021).

In addition, social media also opens up a two-way interaction space that is not possible with traditional lecture methods. Teachers do not only deliver material in one direction, but can also build an open dialogue with students through the comments column, discussion forums, or live streaming features. This interaction is important in Islamic Religious Education learning because it allows students to ask questions, discuss, and reflect on Islamic values contextually. Furthermore, teachers can also facilitate project-based learning activities where students are asked to create digital Islamic preaching content as a form of application of the values that have been learned.

However, the use of social media also has challenges. One of the main risks is the potential for students to be exposed to negative content, religious hoaxes, and provocative or intolerant information. Therefore, the Islamic Religious Education learning strategy on social media must be accompanied by adequate guidance and digital literacy. Teachers must play the role of content curators who are responsible for the validity and credibility of the religious information disseminated. Religious digital

literacy is an important aspect so that students are not only technologically savvy, but also wise in sorting information according to moderate Islamic values.

Furthermore, social media can also be a tool to build value-based learning communities. WhatsApp or Telegram groups, for example, can be used as a space for religious questions and answers, character building, and even reminders of worship such as prayer schedules or daily *tadarus*. These activities contribute to strengthening the religious atmosphere amidst a digital life that tends to be secular and pragmatic.

Overall, the strategy for utilizing social media in Islamic Religious Education learning must be designed by considering three main pillars: the relevance of content to students' needs, active and participatory involvement, and supervision of values and ethics in the use of digital media. These three aspects are important foundations so that social media is not only a technical tool, but also an educational vehicle that is able to instill Islamic values contextually and sustainably.

## **2. E-Learning Integration in Islamic Religious Education Learning**

E-learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Edmodo, or Learning Management System (LMS) systems developed by schools or madrasahs have become the main solution in online learning, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. A study by Maulana and Nurfadilah (2022) shows that e-learning in Islamic Religious Education learning provides flexibility in delivering materials, allowing the use of interactive multimedia such as videos, infographics, digital quizzes, and discussion forums. (Baroroh et al., 2024)

Through e-learning, teachers can design flipped classroom-based learning strategies, where students study the material at home through videos or modules, then discuss online to deepen their understanding. This strategy is very suitable for Islamic Religious Education learning because it allows students to reflect on Islamic values more personally before discussing in class forums. (Hanik & Ramadhani, 2021).

However, there is a challenge in the form of a digital divide between students who have access to technology and those who do not. In addition, not all teachers have adequate digital competence to manage e-learning-based learning effectively. Therefore, PAI learning strategies in the digital era must be accompanied by teacher training and provision of adequate infrastructure.

## **3. Combination of Pedagogical and Digital Strategies**

The success of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era cannot only depend on the sophistication of the technology used, but is largely determined by how the technology is effectively combined with the right pedagogical strategy. In this context, the pedagogical approach is not only the basis for designing learning activities, but also a framework to ensure that the religious values taught remain meaningful, contextual, and can be internalized by students.

Integration between pedagogical strategies and digital media can create holistic learning, where cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in Islamic Religious Education can be developed in a balanced manner. One approach that is widely highlighted in the literature is the contextual learning strategy (Contextual Teaching and Learning/CTL), which emphasizes the relationship between subject matter and the reality of students' lives. In practice, teachers can utilize digital media such as videos, podcasts, and online news to raise current issues related to Islamic teachings, for example regarding ethics in using social media, tolerance between religious communities, or social responsibility in Islam.(Widodo et al., 2023).

In addition, constructivist strategies are also very relevant to be applied in digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning. This strategy provides space for students to actively build their own understanding through meaningful learning experiences. Teachers can design online-based exploratory tasks, such as asking students to search for and review religious content on social media, create personal reflections based on values, or discuss contemporary moral issues online. With this approach, students are not only recipients of information, but also active subjects in the learning process.

One of the most potential strategies in the digital era is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), where students are challenged to produce real work related to Islamic Religious Education material. For example, students can create short Islamic preaching videos, infographics about the pillars of faith, or digital campaigns about Islamic manners on social media. Activities like this not only increase creativity and 21st century skills (collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking), but also strengthen the understanding and practice of Islamic values in everyday life.(Ayunda et al., 2024).

However, the success of the combination of pedagogical and digital strategies is greatly influenced by the competence of teachers in managing adaptive and transformative learning. Islamic Religious Education teachers are required not only to master religious material, but also to understand the principles of modern pedagogy and

the use of educational technology. In this context, the development of teacher professionalism through learning technology training, digital mentoring, and communities of practice is an urgent need.(Safitri et al., 2025).

The literature also emphasizes the importance of adjusting strategies to the characteristics of students, both in terms of age, level of religious understanding, and socio-cultural background. This is where the urgency of learning differentiation in digital platforms lies, where teachers prepare materials, activities, and evaluations that are appropriate to the needs and abilities of each student. That way, Islamic Religious Education learning does not become a cognitive burden, but becomes an inclusive and effective value transformation process.

The combination of appropriate pedagogical strategies and digital media not only strengthens students' conceptual understanding of Islamic Religious Education material, but can also shape religious character, attitudes, and habits in everyday life. This is in line with the main goal of Islamic education, which is to form people who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. Therefore, in designing learning strategies in the digital era, teachers must position technology as a servant of pedagogy, not the other way around. The technology used must always be directed to strengthen values, not just facilitate the process(Najah, 2024).

Thus, an effective PAI learning strategy in the digital era is a strategy that is able to combine the power of humanistic and value-based pedagogy, with interactive, flexible, and contextual digital media. This approach will produce learning that is not only informative, but also transformative and applicable in real life.

#### **4. Implications for Character Education and Student Spirituality**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) not only aims to equip students with religious knowledge, but also has a central role in shaping character and strengthening the spirituality of students. In the digital era, the transformation of learning strategies through the use of social media and e-learning has significant implications for the formation process, both in positive aspects and the challenges that accompany it.(Nurhaliza, 2024)

Positively, digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies can be an effective means to instill character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, and tolerance. Social media, for example, can be used to build a community of values, where students are invited to remind each other of goodness through digital da'wah content, moral campaigns, and online activities that lead to the habituation of

Islamic behavior. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok can be used to convey character messages through creative and inspiring content, such as short videos about the virtues of morality or inspiring stories from Islamic history.(Rizal & Makmur, 2025).

Meanwhile, e-learning allows for reflective and personal learning. Through assignments such as religious journal writing, daily spiritual reflections, and value-based quizzes, students are invited to reflect on Islamic teachings and relate them to personal experiences. These activities help students build self-awareness as the foundation of character education. In this case, teachers can act as facilitators who provide constructive feedback and guide the process of character formation gradually and continuously.

Integration of digital-based learning also has the potential to strengthen students' spirituality, namely the awareness and transcendental relationship between individuals and God. For example, learning about worship can be delivered through video simulations and applications that support religious practices (such as prayer or tilawah applications), which allow students to learn independently and repeatedly. In addition, digital content containing interpretations of verses, hadiths, and exemplary stories can be a source of spiritual inspiration that is easily accessible anytime and anywhere, strengthening students' attachment to Islamic values in everyday life.

However, digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning also presents challenges that need to be anticipated. One of them is the potential for a decrease in the depth of spirituality due to minimal direct interaction, especially in the emotional and ritual aspects of religion. Activities such as congregational prayer, tadarus together, and moral development that are usually carried out face-to-face have an important role in forming a spiritual atmosphere and religious ethos that are difficult to replace by digital media. Therefore, online learning needs to be combined with offline learning (blended learning) so that the spiritual dimension is maintained comprehensively(Prayetno, 2025).

In addition, an Islamic digital ethics approach is needed, so that students are not only able to utilize technology, but also use it responsibly according to Islamic moral principles. Digital literacy based on religious values needs to be instilled so that students do not get caught up in the use of technology that is consumptive, hedonistic, or even damaging to morality, but make it a means of preaching and self-development.



Another implication is the changing role of teachers as character builders. In the digital era, teachers are no longer the only source of knowledge, but must transform into value educators who are able to guide students to navigate information critically and ethically. Teachers need to be sensitive to the spiritual dynamics of students in the digital space, and be able to design learning that is not only interesting, but also meaningful and fosters spiritual awareness.

Thus, the Islamic Religious Education learning strategy that utilizes social media and e-learning has great potential in supporting character education and students' spirituality, as long as it is managed with a wise, planned, and value-based approach. Technology must be positioned as a tool to strengthen the substance of Islamic education, not as a substitute for spiritual interaction and moral development which are the core of religious education itself.

## **CONCLUSION**

Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in the digital era must be designed by combining the power of technology and the right pedagogical approach. Social media functions as an interactive educational tool, while e-learning allows flexible and structured learning management. The combination of the two is able to support the achievement of Islamic Religious Education learning objectives which are not only cognitive, but also affective and psychomotor. The implication is that digital-based learning can strengthen students' character and spirituality if it is designed consciously in terms of values, creatively, and contextually. However, challenges such as digital literacy, limited access, and the potential for misuse of technology must be anticipated through the role of teachers as active and reflective value educators. Thus, Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in the digital era not only answer the needs of the times, but also maintain the spirit of profound and transformative Islamic education.

## **REFERENCES**

Anshori, I., & Nadiyya, FAA (2023). The role of digital space as a transformation of student social action movements through social media platforms. *Journal of Sociological Analysis*, 12(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.20961/jas.v12i2.68981>

- Ayunda, V., Jannah, AM, & Gusmaneli, G. (2024). Effective Learning Methods in Elementary Education. *Wathan: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.71153/wathan.v1i3.139>
- Baroroh, AZ, Kusumastuti, DA, & Kamal, R. (2024). Utilization of Technology in Learning. *Perspective: Journal of Education and Language Sciences*, 2(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.59059/perspektif.v2i4.1952>
- Hanafi, Y., Ikhsan, MA, Saefi, M., Diyana, TN, & Arifianto, ML (2021). Islamic Religious Education during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Responses. *Delta Pijar Khatulistiwa*. <https://repository.um.ac.id/1209/>
- Hanik, EU, & Ramadhani, AD (2021). Implementation of Flipped Classroom Learning Strategy as an Implementation of Blended Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic at MI NU Miftahul Falah Undaan Tengah. *eL Bidayah: Journal of Islamic Elementary Education*, 3(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.33367/jiee.v3i2.1794>
- Najah, HL (2024). Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies in Forming the Character of Students in the Society 5.0 Era. *Proceedings of Annual Islamic Conference for Learning and Management*, 1, 223–235.
- Nurhaliza, S. (2024). Islamic Religious Education and Social Skills Improvement in Playing an Important Role in Forming Students' Moral and Social Character. *Integrated Education Journal*, 1(1), Article 1.
- Prayetno, I. (2025). Challenges and Solutions in Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Digital Era. *Journal of Islamic and Socio-Religious Studies*, 2(3), Article 3.
- Purba, RD, Zahra, SA, Hutagalung, RR, & Nasution, AF (2024). Strategy for Developing Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era. *Tarbiyah Bil Qalam: Journal of Religious Education and Science*, 8(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.58822/tbq.v8i1.199>
- Rizal, A., & Makmur, M. (2025). Islamic-Based Character Education. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education*, 5(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v5i2.2520>

- Safitri, L., Najah, TS, & Hidayati, N. (2025). Application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) Model in Islamic Religious Education Subject. TARLIM: JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 8(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v8i1.2966>
- Widodo, W., Wahyudin, A., Masrukhi, M., & Widiyanto, W. (2023). Radical Challenges Impact on the Failure of Technology Integration in Educational Innovation. Proceedings of the National Postgraduate Seminar, 6(1), Article 1.