



New Approaches in Islamic Religious Education: Integrating Technology and Student Learning Independence

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Abstract: One of the transformations in the field of education includes the rapid development of digital technology. Traditional teaching methods centered on lecturers are considered less effective in meeting the needs of modern students. Technology offers various tools and platforms that can enrich the learning process and support student learning independence. However, the implementation of technology in Islamic religious education still faces various challenges. This research aims to explore new approaches in Islamic religious education through the integration of technology and support for student learning independence. The research methodology used is library research, where data is collected from various written sources such as books, scientific journals, conference papers, theses, and credible online sources. The results of the study show that the integration of technology in Islamic religious education can increase accessibility by providing various learning resources, offering interactive learning, and providing instant feedback. Some identified new approaches include the use of mobile applications, e-learning platforms, social media, and educational games. To improve the quality of Islamic religious education through technology, it is recommended that educational institutions provide training for lecturers, develop a digital curriculum, enhance technological infrastructure, encourage student collaboration, and conduct regular evaluations. Thus, it can be concluded that the integration of technology in Islamic religious education has great potential to support student learning independence. By implementing the identified new approaches, Islamic religious education can become more relevant and effective in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education in higher education has undergone numerous changes over time (Ariza, 2023). There are several opinions regarding traditional teaching methods, which often focus on the instructor as the main source of knowledge, being deemed less effective in facing the challenges of the digital era (Amelia, 2023) (Ida Faridatul Hasanah, 2022). Currently, students are more familiar with technology and have easy access to a vast amount of information through the internet and mobile devices. Therefore, new approaches to Islamic Religious Education that leverage technology have become crucial to meet the needs and expectations of modern students.

The use of technology can also support student learning independence, which is the ability to manage the learning process independently without fully relying on the instructor (Armono, 2023). Learning independence is essential for developing students' critical and analytical skills, as

well as preparing them for lifelong education (Dewi Ayu Wisnu Wardani, 2023). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, learning independence also means the ability of students to understand and internalize religious values independently.

Although the potential of technology to support education is vast, its implementation in Islamic Religious Education still faces various challenges. Many educational institutions have not yet fully optimized the use of technology in the learning process (Basar, 2021). Additionally, there are concerns about how technology can be used effectively without diminishing the spiritual and ethical values in Islamic Religious Education (Rahman, 2023). Therefore, the integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education has not yet fully optimized the support for student learning independence. Hence, it is important to develop new approaches that integrate technology with learning strategies that support student learning independence (Usman, 2018). These approaches should be designed in such a way that technology enriches the learning process rather than merely serving as an auxiliary tool. This way, students can gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of Islam while simultaneously developing independent and sustainable learning skills.

Research on the integration of technology in learning has been conducted, including the use of internet-based information and communication technology, which has proven to be an important learning resource that needs to be integrated (Yaumi, 2011) fostering student creativity through the integration of technology (al, 2022), and the use of e-learning methods that demonstrate student learning independence (Hermawan, 2021). However, previous research has not yet examined the integration of technology and student learning independence specifically in the context of Islamic Religious Education.

Therefore, this study aims to explore various new approaches in Islamic Religious Education that integrate technology and support student learning independence. By understanding how these approaches can be effectively implemented, it is hoped that this will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era.

METHOD

The approach used in this research is qualitative, employing the library research method. Library research is a method aimed at gathering data and information from various literature directly related to the research topic. This method involves the collection and analysis of data from various relevant written sources, such as books, scientific journals, conference papers, theses, dissertations, research reports (Sugiyono, 2018) and credible online sources that discuss Islamic religious education, technology integration in education, and theories of learning independence. Library research also allows the researcher to review previous studies to gain a comprehensive and in-depth. In this process, the researcher critically selects sources to ensure the quality and relevance of the data. Content analysis techniques are used to identify themes, concepts, and patterns that emerge from the collected data. Through this approach, the research integrates various theoretical and empirical perspectives from the literature to enrich the analysis and produce more robust and in-depth conclusions. This library research also provides an essential theoretical foundation as a basis for further field research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Technology in Islamic Religious Education

Technology can be defined as the application of scientific knowledge and skills for practical purposes in human life. It involves the use of tools, machines, materials, and processes to solve problems or achieve specific goals (Suryadi, 2023). Technology encompasses various aspects, including information and communication technology, biotechnology, manufacturing technology, and more (Saputra, 2023). Essentially, technology aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of human life by simplifying various activities and addressing the challenges faced in everyday life (Nikmah, 2023).

The utilization of technology in Islamic education refers to the use of various digital tools and platforms to support the educational and learning processes within the context of Islam (Ade Maulia Alfi, 2023). This includes various aspects, from the accessibility of learning materials to more interactive and dynamic teaching methods. This represents a significant shift in how students access, understand, and evaluate learning materials (Ariani, 2023). One significant form of technology is mobile applications (Hasanah, 2022). Applications like Muslim Pro (Yahya, 2023) Quran.com, dan Bayyinah TV provide easy and quick access to various Islamic learning resources, from the Quran and Hadith to lessons on fiqh and Islamic history (Tugino Tugino, 2023). These applications not only offer text but also interactive features such as tafsir, audio, and video, which can help students understand religious concepts more deeply and holistically (Lukman, 2022).

In addition to mobile applications, e-learning platforms also play a crucial role in Islamic religious education (Barokah, 2023). Platforms such as Coursera and Khan Academy offer online courses that cover various aspects of Islamic education (Dhea Adinda Syafitri, 2024) ranging from Quranic studies to the history of Islamic civilization. With e-learning, students can learn from a diverse and structured array of sources and take courses from experts in the field without being limited by geographical location (Usman, 2018). E-learning also allows students to learn at their own pace, revisit material they have not yet understood, and test their knowledge through online quizzes and tests (Indrajit, 2021).

Social media and online discussion forums also become important tools in Islamic religious education (Fabian Eka Prasetyo, 2024). Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are used by scholars and intellectuals to disseminate knowledge and hold discussions on religious topics (et, 2023). Discussion forums such as Reddit and Stack Exchange allow students to ask questions, engage in discussions, and receive answers from a broader community (I Gusti Ngurah Triyana 2018). These interactions not only expand students' understanding but also encourage them to think critically and analytically about complex religious topics.

Technology also enables the development of educational games and simulations that can teach Islamic concepts interactively and enjoyably (Masrochatul Lailiyah and A Wathon 2019). Educational games can be designed to teach Islamic history, moral values, and ethics through engaging gameplay (Mardiah Astuti 2023). For instance, games that simulate daily life during the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW can help students understand the historical and cultural context of Islamic teachings. Thus, technology not only makes learning more engaging and relevant for the digital generation but also supports the development of critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills (Pratama 2023).

Student Learning Independence

Student learning independence refers to the ability of students to organize, manage, and direct their own learning processes without overly relying on external assistance (Yusrizal 2023). This includes the capability to set learning goals, choose appropriate learning strategies, monitor progress, and evaluate learning outcomes (Dianne Amor Kusuma 2020). Learning independence is deemed crucial for students as it equips them with the skills necessary to succeed in an ever-evolving academic and professional environment. Additionally, independent learning fosters lifelong learning, which is essential in a dynamic and challenging world (Usanto 2022).

Students with high learning independence tend to actively seek out information and learning resources. They do not solely depend on materials provided by lecturers but actively look for books, articles, videos, and other online sources to deepen their understanding of a topic (Yusrizal2023), his capability is particularly important in Islamic religious education, where a deep and contextual understanding of sacred texts and religious teachings is vital (Lukman 2022). Thus, independent students are better able to explore and integrate meanings from various sources into their understanding.

To develop independent learning, students need to possess critical and analytical thinking skills (Santoso 2020). These skills help them evaluate sources objectively, identify biases, and

construct logical and structured arguments (Zainal Abidin 2019). In Islamic religious education, critical thinking is considered essential for understanding religious texts in the correct historical and cultural context and avoiding narrow or extreme interpretations (Mohammad Hanafi 2023). Therefore, learning independence supported by critical thinking abilities enables students to participate more actively in academic and religious discussions and contribute valuable insights based on a critical and profound understanding (Endang Andrian 2024).

Given the importance of student learning independence, several factors play a role in its implementation, one of which is technology. Technology can play a crucial role in supporting student learning independence. With technology, students can learn anytime and anywhere, according to their own schedule and pace. Technology also allows students to receive instant feedback through online quizzes and automated tests, helping them measure their understanding and quickly address deficiencies (Hariyadi, 2023). Additionally, technology facilitates online collaboration and discussions, which can enrich the learning process and enhance independence (Prasetyo, 2024).

Integration of Technology and Learning Independence in Islamic Religious Education

The integration of technology in Islamic religious education can serve as an effective catalyst in enhancing student learning independence (Ekowati, 2024). By leveraging various digital tools and platforms, students can access information and learning materials more widely and flexibly. Technologies such as mobile applications, e-learning platforms, and social media enable students to learn at their own pace and convenience, according to their individual needs. This aligns with the notion that technology provides them with the freedom to manage their study time and choose the most effective methods for them, which is a key aspect of learning independence (Hariyadi, 2023).

Effective integration of technology in Islamic religious education and learning independence can be achieved through holistic and integrated approaches. This includes developing technology-responsive curricula, providing training for lecturers to integrate technology in teaching, and ensuring adequate support for students to access and utilize technology (Iskandar, 2023). As expressed by (Akbar, 2023) and (Handayani, 2023) with proper support, technology can be a powerful tool in enhancing the quality of Islamic religious education and supporting student learning independence, enabling them to become more independent, critical learners ready to face future challenges.

The integration of technology in Islamic religious education can be seen as a strategic step to modernize education and make it more relevant to the needs of the current digital generation. Technologies such as mobile applications, e-learning platforms, and social media have opened up wider and more flexible access for students to various learning resources (Prasetyo, 2024). This not only facilitates more interactive and dynamic learning but also allows students to learn independently and at their own pace. The ability to manage one's own learning time and methods is crucial in developing learning independence, which is an essential skill in facing academic and professional challenges in the future..

However, there are challenges in developing learning independence, including many students still accustomed to lecturer-centered learning methods and less familiar with self-directed learning. Another challenge is digital divide, where not all students have adequate access to digital devices and the internet (Hariyadi, 2023). Additionally, low digital literacy also impacts students' ability to effectively use technology in their learning (Haickal Attallah Naufal, 2021). Therefore, educational institutions should provide appropriate support to address these challenges in learning independence.

These challenges can be overcome by adopting holistic and integrated approaches in educational institutions (Wartono, 2023). This involves not only providing adequate technology and infrastructure but also developing training programs to enhance students' critical thinking skills and digital literacy. The curriculum should also be designed to support learning independence by giving students room to explore, innovate, and collaborate (Iskandar, 2023). As

noted by (Akbar, 2023) with proper support, student learning independence can be enhanced, making them better prepared to face academic and professional challenges in the future, and becoming individuals capable of lifelong learning.

CONCLUSION

The integration of technology in Islamic religious education holds great potential for enhancing student learning independence by providing wider and more flexible access to various learning resources, as well as creating a more interactive and dynamic learning environment. However, the success of this integration depends heavily on digital literacy readiness and equitable access to technology. Educational institutions need to address these challenges by providing digital literacy training and adequate technological facilities, as well as developing curricula that are responsive to technology. With a holistic approach and proper support, technology can become a powerful tool for improving the quality of Islamic religious education and preparing students to face future challenges with independence and adequate skills.

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