

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS IN FORMING STUDENT CHARACTER OF THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract: Students in the digital era have great potential. With the right guidance, they can become a generation that is intelligent, creative and has character. However, we also need to be aware of the negative impacts of excessive use of technology. Rapid development digital This time has brought significant changes in the thinking patterns, behavior, and social interactions of the younger generation. In this context, Islamic religious education teachers have a significant role in instilling strong moral and ethical values. Through a review of the literature covering the latest research, this article explains how the role of Islamic religious education teachers can contribute to the formation of good character so that students can adapt to technological developments. The research results show that Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic role in forming students' character who is religious, intelligent and has a noble character. This research provides important implications for PAI curriculum development, teacher training, and efforts to create a learning environment that is conducive to student character formation in the digital era.

Keywords: Role, islamic religious education teachers, student character, digital era.

Introduction

Character education is a combination of two words, namely education and character, according to Ki Hajar Dewantara, character education is an effort to improve the mind, body and character so that they are in harmony with the environment and natural surroundings. Preparing a golden generation in 2045 that is always devout, nationalistic, tough and independent is the ideal of the Indonesian nation, but in realizing this ideal, efforts are needed, because if you look at the social problems that occur among students, such as brawls between students in Indonesia. Another problem that occurs in the world of education in Indonesia is the decline in moral values, morals and character that is currently occurring in the educational environment in Indonesia, for example cheating, disobeying teachers, being rude when meeting teachers, entering class without saying anything. What. greetings, speaking in a high tone when meeting older people, and many other problems that occur. By looking at the problems that occur, it can be seen that in Indonesia itself there has been a decline in character values in students, and it is necessary to instill character values by teachers and parents.

The digital era has brought major changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Rapidly developing information and communication technology (ICT) has a significant impact on the way young people learn, interact and behave. In this context, Islamic religious education plays an important role in shaping the character and morality of students so that they adhere to noble values amidst the rapid currents of change.

Islamic religious education does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also on forming attitudes and behavior that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. Values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance and discipline are important foundations in forming the character of students. In the digital era, the challenges faced are increasingly complex, such as misuse of

technology, unhealthy information and instant culture which can damage the morale of the younger generation. Therefore, the integration of Islamic religious education with technology is a necessity to maintain and shape the strong and adaptive character of students. This research uses a literature review method to explore the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era. This review includes the latest research in the last five years that is relevant to this topic. The main focus of this review is (1) Islamic Religious Education, reviewing various approaches and methods of Islamic religious education used in learning; (2) Student Character, analyzing the character values instilled through Islamic religious education; and (3) Digital Era, identifying the challenges and opportunities faced in integrating digital technology in Islamic religious education.

This research aims to identify the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era, analyze the challenges and opportunities faced in the integration of Islamic religious education with digital technology, and present practical recommendations for educators and educational institutions in optimizing Islamic religious education for character formation. learners. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide benefits (1) for educators, providing insight and strategies in integrating Islamic religious education with digital technology for the formation of students' character; (2) For educational institutions, it becomes a reference in designing Islamic religious education curricula and programs that are adaptive to technological developments; (3) For other researchers, providing a comprehensive literature base for further research related to Islamic religious education and character formation in the digital era. Thus, it is hoped that this research can make a real contribution to efforts to improve the quality of Islamic religious education and shape the character of superior students in the digital era.

Literature Review

The theoretical basis taken or presented in this research comes from various research and literature that supports the important role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era. Some research results taken from several journals are as follows:

First, research conducted by (Hamzah, 2018) shows that Islamic religious education has a significant influence in improving students' moral attitudes and ethical behavior. Second, other research by (Aisyah, 2020) found that the integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education can increase students' participation and understanding of religious values. Furthermore, the literature also shows that Islamic religious education helps students develop critical thinking skills in responding to the information they receive through digital media. With a good understanding of religious teachings, students can be more critical and selective in consuming information, thereby avoiding negative influences.

Third, Islamic religious education also has an important role in forming the character of students who are able to face the challenges of the digital era. According to research conducted by (Yusuf, 2021), students who receive good Islamic religious education tend to have better self-control in using technology, and are better able to avoid behavior that is detrimental to themselves and others.

Fourth, (Rahmawati & Syafrudin, 2023) in their research stated that In the digital era which is marked by the rapid development of technology and widespread use of the internet, the role of teachers, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, is becoming increasingly crucial in forming student character. The digital era not only offers various opportunities, but also presents challenges such as students' exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and a decline in moral and ethical values. In this situation, Islamic Religious

Education teachers have a big responsibility to provide students with a moral foundation, ethical principles, and a strong sense of responsibility.

Fifth, research by (Fauzi, 2023) also found that the influence of the external environment, especially from digital media, can hinder students' character, so the role of teachers is needed in it, especially Islamic teachers.

Overall, the literature shows that Islamic religious education has a very important and relevant role in shaping the character of students in the digital era. With proper integration between religious education and technology, learning goals can be achieved effectively, and students can become individuals with strong character, good ethics, and ready to face the challenges of the times.

Method

This research uses a library research approach which aims to examine various literature relevant to the topic of the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to collect, analyze and synthesize information from various previously published sources. The data sources used in this research consist of secondary literature which includes scientific journals, reference books, theses and dissertations, conference articles, and official documents. Data collection in this research was carried out through the following stages: (1) Source Identification: Searching for and identifying literature relevant to the research topic through academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Springer, and ProQuest. (2) Literature Selection: Selecting literature based on inclusion criteria, namely literature published in the last five years, relevant to the research topic, and recognized for its quality. (3) Data Collection: Collect data from selected literature, including information regarding methods, results and research findings related to the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, Source Triangulation was carried out using various data sources to reduce bias and increase the accuracy of the findings.

Result and Discussion

1. The Importance of Character Education in the Digital Era

The character of education has become one of the main focuses in the digital era because of the many impacts of technology on students' lives, both positive and negative (Lickona, 1991). On the one hand, technology provides broad access to information, allowing students to learn independently and develop intellectually (Ribble, 2011). However, on the other hand, technology also brings challenges such as cyberbullying, the spread of false information, and the negative impact of social media on students' mental health (Hollandsworth, R., Donovan, J., & Welch, M. 2017).

Character education based on Islamic values helps students overcome these challenges by providing a strong ethical framework for facing the digital world (Rahman et al., 2018). Values such as honesty, responsibility and empathy are important foundations for forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has high morals (Zakaria, 2010).

2. The Importance of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a learning process that aims to instill Islamic religious, moral and ethical values in students. This education includes teaching about aqidah (beliefs), worship (religious practices), akhlak (morals), and muamalah (social interaction). PAI's main goal is to form individuals who are faithful, devout, have noble character, and are

able to apply Islamic teachings in everyday life. In the context of formal education, PAI is taught at various levels of education from basic education to higher education.

The digital era is characterized by rapid advances in information and communication technology, which are changing the way people live, work and learn. This change has a significant impact on all aspects of life, including education. In this era, students face various new challenges that affect their character development. Therefore, the urgency of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students is becoming increasingly important. Here are several reasons why Islamic religious education is very important in the digital era:

- a. **Instilling Moral and Ethical Values:** Islamic religious education plays an important role in instilling moral and ethical values in students. The digital era often introduces content that is inconsistent with moral values, such as pornography, violence and hoaxes. Through Islamic Religious Education, students are equipped with the values of honesty, responsibility, tolerance, discipline and cooperation which become a guide in dealing with various digital content.
- b. **Strengthening Religious Identity:** The digital era with all its convenience can cause an identity crisis among the younger generation. Islamic religious education helps students recognize and strengthen their religious identity. With a good understanding of religion, students can face negative influences from outside more firmly and wisely.
- c. **Use Technology Wisely:** Islamic religious education also teaches the ethics of using technology. Students are taught to use technology as a tool for good, such as seeking knowledge, preaching, and building relationships. They are also taught about the dangers of misuse of technology, such as gadget addiction, cyberbullying, and the spread of false information.
- d. **Holistic Character Education:** Islamic Religious Education provides holistic character education, which includes cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. This education does not only focus on religious knowledge, but also on forming attitudes and behavior that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. Thus, students are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have strong and noble character.
- e. **Formation of Attitudes of Tolerance and Diversity:** In the digital era, interactions with various cultures and religions have become more intense. Islamic Religious Education teaches students about the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity. Students are taught to live in harmony with other people who have different backgrounds, without sacrificing their religious values.
- f. **Improving the Quality of Human Resources:** Effective Islamic religious education can improve the quality of human resources who have high integrity and professionalism. In the era of global competition, human resources with strong character and good ethics are urgently needed. Islamic Religious Education contributes to forming a young generation that is ready to compete globally while still upholding religious values.

3. The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Character Formation in the Digital Era

Islamic religious education plays a central role in forming the character of students, especially in the digital era which offers various new challenges. Islamic religious education focuses on instilling strong moral and ethical values, such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, discipline and cooperation. These values are not just theory, but are expected to be internalized and applied in students' daily lives.

- a. **Honesty or as-sidq** is a fundamental value taught in Islamic religious education. Through this learning, students are encouraged to always say the truth and act according to the truth, even in difficult situations. Responsibility or trustworthiness is another

important value that is emphasized, where students are taught to be responsible for all actions and decisions they take. Tolerance or *tasamuh* is a very relevant value in this era of globalization, where interaction with people from various cultural and religious backgrounds is increasing. Islamic religious education teaches students to appreciate and respect differences, and to live side by side in harmony.

- b. Discipline or *iltizam* and cooperation or *ta'awun* are also key values taught in Islamic religious education. Discipline teaches students to obey rules and carry out tasks well, while cooperation encourages them to work together with others to achieve common goals. The learning methods used in Islamic religious education, such as lectures, group discussions, case studies, and active learning, are designed to ensure that these values are not only learned in theory, but also put into practice in students' daily lives.

4. The Role of IRE (Islamic Religious Education) Teachers in Shaping Student Character

a. Exemplary Figures of Islamic Values

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are the main role models in instilling Islamic values in students (Suyadi, 2019). In a digital context, teachers not only teach theory, but also demonstrate Islamic behavior that students can emulate, such as using technology for useful purposes and avoiding reprehensible actions.

b. Integration of Islamic Teachings with Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is an important need in this era, and Islamic Religious Education teachers can apply Islamic teachings by teaching about using technology wisely (Ribble, 2011). For example, teachers can teach students to filter what is circulating on the internet and avoid spreading hoaxes, in accordance with Islamic values regarding honesty of information and justice. In accordance with the command in the Koran which means: And do not mix right with wrong, and do not you hide the truth, while you know (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah: 42).

c. Encourage Critical Thinking and Ethical Decision Making

The digital era requires students to have critical thinking skills. Islamic Religious Education teachers can help students analyze information based on Islamic principles, so that they can distinguish between right and wrong (Hidayatullah, 2018). In Islam, ethical decision making is highly emphasized, as mentioned in the Al-Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl: 125, regarding the importance of using wisdom in preaching and acting.

d. Promoting Positive Digital Behavior

Islamic Religious Education teachers also play a role in encouraging students to show positive digital behavior. For example, students are taught to use social media as a means of sharing kindness and spreading Islamic knowledge, not to spread hatred or slander (Rahman et al., 2018). This is in line with Islamic teachings which encourage people to convey kindness to fellow humans (Hadith History of Bukhori)

e. Building a Sense of Spirituality in the Digital Era

In a digital era full of distractions, Islamic Religious Education teachers can help students maintain their spirituality by strengthening their relationship with Allah through worship, prayer and *dhikr* (Suyadi, 2019). Technology can also be used to support spirituality, such as using prayer reminder applications or reading the Koran digitally (Nasir & Abdulrahman, 2020).

Apart from that, according to (Hasan & Karim, 2022) IRE (Islamic Religious Education) teachers are tasked with instilling Islamic teachings, such as honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility and compassion, into students' daily lives. By emphasizing values derived from

the Qur'an and Hadith, they help students internalize the principles of akhlakul karimah (kindness). To effectively shape student character in the digital era, Islamic Religious Education teachers can apply the following strategies:

- a. Holistic Education
- b. Interactive Learning Methods
- c. Parental Involvement
- d. Extracurricular Activities

5. Challenges Faced by IRE Teachers

Even though they have an important role, Islamic Religious Education teachers also face various challenges, such as limited technological capabilities which make it difficult for them to connect with digital generation students (Sutrisno, 2021). In addition, the influence of popular culture and social media often conflicts with the Islamic values taught in class (Hidayatullah, MF 2018).

6. Effective Character-Building Strategies in the Digital Era

Strategies for forming character in the Digital Era that can be carried out by Islamic Religious Education Teachers are as follows:

- a. Using Technology as a Teaching Tool
The use of technology such as Islamic educational videos and interactive applications can make learning more interesting for students (Rahman et al., 2018)
- b. Incorporates Real Life Examples
Case studies about digital challenges can help students understand how to apply Islamic teachings in everyday life (Lickona, 1999)
- c. Encourage Open Discussion
Open discussions about digital issues such as cyberbullying and the impact of social media can be an opportunity for teachers to provide Islamic guidance
- d. Collaborate with Parents
Collaboration between teachers and parents in providing educational character ensures that the values taught at school are also applied at home (Zakaria, 2010).
- e. Organizing Extracurricular Activities
Extracurricular activities such as digital Islamic campaign programs can help students instill Islamic values in a real way (Nasir, M., & Abdulrahman, H. 2020).

Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers, the conclusion that can be drawn in this research is that Islamic Religious Education Teachers have a strategic role in shaping student character in the digital era. By being role models, integrating digital literacy with Islamic teachings, and encouraging ethical decision making, they help students become responsible individuals with noble character. The challenges faced can be overcome with innovative strategies and support from all.

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