



## **EXPLORATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (PAI) TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS' MORALS IN THE DIGITAL ERA**

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### **Abstract:**

The digital era has significantly impacted various aspects of life, including education and the moral formation of students. Information and communication technologies, especially the internet and social media, are potential sources of religious learning but also present complex ethical challenges. This study explores the perception of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers towards students' morality in the digital era. The study results show that PAI teachers are aware of the positive impact of technology, such as easy access to religious content that enriches the understanding of spiritual values. However, they also highlight negative consequences, including exposure to content not aligned with religious values, changes in social interaction patterns, and dependence on technology that can reduce students' discipline and critical thinking skills. PAI teachers view the importance of technology integration in creative religious learning and the need for supervision in selecting and utilizing digital content. This research emphasizes the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community in guiding students to use technology wisely by instilling relevant moral values. These findings provide insights for the development of innovative, adaptive, and value-based learning strategies to support the formation of the younger generation's character amid the challenges of the digital era.

**Keywords:** *Religious Education, Student Morality, Teacher Perspective.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The digital era has brought major changes in various aspects of life, including education and moral formation of students (Salisah et al., 2024). The rapid development of information and communication technology makes it easier to access information, but on the other hand, it also presents complex moral challenges (Fauzi & Suaidi, 2024). In the midst of this dynamic, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a strategic role in guiding students to be able to navigate the influence of the digital era without losing the foothold of noble moral values.

The influence of digitalization on students' morale cannot be ignored. The internet and social media, for example, are often open spaces for the dissemination of information that is not always positive (Ahmad et al., 2024). In addition, instant culture, individualism, and exposure to content that is not in accordance with religious values are often the main challenges in shaping the character of the younger generation. This situation requires special attention, especially from PAI teachers, who have the

responsibility to instill religious values as a moral foundation.

PAI teachers are at the forefront of forming a generation that is not only technologically literate, but also has strong moral intelligence. However, the complexity of the digital world is often an obstacle for them to perform their roles optimally (Arifuddin & Yusuf, 2024). Teachers' perception of students' morality in the digital era is very important to understand, because it will affect their approach in guiding students (Meti, 2023).

This research focuses on exploring the perception of PAI teachers towards student morale in the digital era. By exploring the views of teachers, this research is expected to provide an in-depth overview of the challenges and opportunities faced, as well as a foothold to formulate learning strategies that are relevant to the needs of the times. This not only aims to form a moral generation, but also a generation that is able to use technology wisely and responsibly.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory method. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the perception of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers towards the morals of students in the digital era. This research is descriptive, focusing on qualitative data mining through direct interaction with the research subject. To understand teachers' perception of students' morality in the digital era, the method that can be used is a comprehensive approach by integrating various data collection techniques (Rohani, 2024).

Qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews allow researchers to explore teachers' personal views in more detail, especially related to their experiences in facing students' moral changes in the midst of technological developments. In addition, secondary data analysis can also provide useful insights. Data from previous research, educational reports, or related studies can be used to identify trends and patterns relevant to the research topic. Case studies on some schools with unique characteristics, such as faith-based schools, public schools, or technology-intensive schools, can provide depth of analysis in specific contexts (Violeta & Achadi, 2024).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research involves PAI teachers who have integrated technology in their learning methods. Based on the interviews, several main findings were found related to teachers' perceptions of students' morality in the digital era (Mahmud et al., 2021).

For the most part, PAI teachers revealed that they see the potential of technology, especially the internet and social media, as a means that can enrich students' understanding of religion. They mention that platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have become useful sources of learning references. Some PAI teachers said that they used da'wah videos and online lectures to illustrate Islamic religious teachings in a more interesting way. While there are recognized benefits, most PAI teachers also note the negative impact of using technology, especially social media (Najiburrahman et al., 2024).

Some teachers stated that students are often exposed to content that is not in accordance with religious values, such as violence, pornography, and other negative behaviors. This is especially the case when students access social media outside of school hours.

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that technology, especially social media, has a positive and negative impact on students' morale. PAI teachers are aware of the need for appropriate supervision and selection of content so that technology can be used wisely to enrich religious knowledge and strengthen students' morals. Teachers also play an important role in guiding students to use technology in a positive way (Amir et al., 2022).

. PAI teachers have a very important role in directing students to use technology wisely, by providing digital ethical knowledge and integrating religious values in learning. The

use of technology in religious education also needs to be accompanied by increased creativity and innovation from teachers in delivering moral material that is relevant to students' daily lives (Mardianti, n.d.).

The digital era has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of Education (Purba & Saragih, 2023). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a unique perspective on how technological developments, especially social media and the internet, affect the moral behavior of students. Based on the results of interviews with several teachers of PAI subjects, the influence of the digital era on students' moral behavior can be categorized in several main aspects.

#### 1. Access to Positive and Negative Content

PAI teachers observed that the digital era provides unlimited access for students to various kinds of information, both positive and negative. Most PAI teachers are of the opinion that the internet and social media can be useful sources of religious learning if used wisely. Resources such as da'wah videos, religious lectures, and articles on moral values can be easily accessed by students. This provides an opportunity for them to deepen their understanding of religion and strengthen their morality.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a central role in shaping the character and morals of students, especially in the context of rapid technological developments. Their perception of positive content is greatly influenced by moral responsibility to ensure that students get the correct understanding of religion while being able to adapt to the challenges of the times. PAI teachers generally view positive content as anything that can strengthen religious values, morals, and Islamic character. For example, creative da'wah content on social media, educational videos about Islamic values, or articles that motivate good behavior are often considered useful because they can be an additional reference for learning.

However, on the other hand, PAI teachers also see that social media and the internet can be fertile ground for negative content that can damage students' morale. Violent content, pornography, behavior that is not in accordance with religious values, and hedonistic behavior are often found on popular platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Students who are exposed to this content can be affected in the way they think and act, which has the potential to change their behavior patterns, and can even create a gap between religious values taught in school and the behavior they show online. They view these contents as threats that can damage students' morals and morals. Teachers often feel the need to conduct additional education to help students understand how to filter information and fortify themselves from bad influences.

However, the perception of this content is not always black and white. Some PAI teachers realize that digital media has great potential if used wisely. Therefore, they seek to integrate technology in their learning methods, such as using social media platforms to convey Islamic messages or holding online discussions to discuss actual issues from a religious perspective. They also encourage students to be more critical in accessing and utilizing technology in order to be able to choose content that is in accordance with Islamic values.

This perception, however, is also influenced by the level of digital literacy of PAI teachers themselves. Teachers who are more tech-savvy tend to be more optimistic and innovative in utilizing positive content, while those who are less tech-savvy may focus more on their negative potential. Therefore, it is important to improve the competence of PAI teachers in utilizing information and communication technology (ICT) so that they can be more effective in guiding students.

Overall, the perception of PAI teachers towards positive and negative content shows an awareness of the potential and challenges of the digital world. With the support of good training and understanding, PAI teachers can be reliable guides in directing students towards the use of technology in accordance with Islamic teachings.

#### 2. Changes in Social Interaction Patterns

Changes in students' social interaction patterns reflect their sensitivity to the social dynamics that continue to develop in the educational environment. In the modern context, students' social interaction patterns have undergone significant changes influenced by technological developments, social media, and lifestyles. PAI teachers often observe that students' use of social media has become the primary means of communication, replacing face-to-face or face-to-face interactions. This has an impact on shorter and often less in-depth communication patterns, which can affect students' ability to build more meaningful relationships.

PAI teachers observed that although the digital world offers ease of communication, social interactions conducted through social media often do not fully reflect the moral values taught in schools. For example, many students engage in unethical conversations, such as online bullying (*cyberbullying*), or the behavior of spreading hoaxes and slander that is contrary to religious teachings (Gulo et al., 2024).

This kind of behavior can be a serious threat to the formation of students' character, as they tend to feel that the norms and ethics that apply in the real world do not always apply in the virtual world (Anandari, 2024).

However, not all teachers view this change negatively. Some see it as an opportunity to integrate technology into religious learning. By understanding the dynamics of student social interaction, PAI teachers can utilize digital media to convey religious messages in a way that is relevant and attractive to the younger generation. They can direct students to use social media as a means of spreading kindness, sharing knowledge, and preaching.

Overall, PAI teachers' perception of changes in students' social interaction patterns depends on their ability to manage the impact of these changes. Adaptive and creative teachers tend to see this change as a challenge as well as an opportunity to guide students to become individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have noble character in each pattern of interaction.

### 3. Dependence on Technology and Its Influence on Discipline

The digital era has also brought major changes in the way students access information and learn. Many students rely more on technology to find answers to various questions, which often leads to laziness in critical thinking. In a moral context, overreliance on technology can reduce students' ability to think independently and form their own moral values (KHAMDIYAH, n.d.).

Many PAI teachers reveal that students are often more focused on their gadgets than listening to the subject matter, and this has an impact on their level of discipline and attention in moral learning. Dependence on digital devices, such as smartphones or tablets, makes it easier for students to be distracted by digital entertainment that is not related to the lesson.

PAI teachers see that the influence of the digital era on student discipline and attention is a challenge that must be overcome with a more innovative approach to learning.

### 4. Character Education in the Digital Context

Although there are negative impacts that need to be watched out, PAI teachers also argue that the digital era provides an opportunity to integrate character education more broadly. Some teachers have started using technology to teach moral and religious values in a more engaging and interactive way. They use videos, articles, and apps that can help students understand religious teachings in a more contextual and relevant way to their daily lives in the digital world.

PAI teachers realize that while social media is often seen as a challenge, it can also be used as a tool to teach morality. With the right approach, religious education in the digital world can direct students to develop better moral behavior.

### 5. The Role of Parents and Teachers in Accompanying Students

PAI teachers also underlined the importance of the role of parents in accompanying students using technology. Many teachers feel that even though they have

tried to teach moral values in the classroom, outside influences, especially from the family, still play a very important role. Parents who provide briefings on the wise use of technology will be very helpful in shaping students' morals.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the digital era has a complex influence on students' moral behavior. Technology, especially social media, can have a positive impact on expanding students' horizons and understanding of religion, but it can also have a negative influence if not managed wisely (Syahraini et al., 2024). PAI teachers play an important role in guiding students to be able to use technology positively, by emphasizing the importance of digital ethics, discipline in learning, and parental supervision. Moral learning in the digital era requires a more innovative and collaborative approach between schools, parents, and the community.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Conclusion** This title reflects the importance of understanding how teachers view the moral condition of students in the midst of technological developments. The digital era brings new challenges to character building, such as global cultural influence, unlimited access to information, and the impact of social media on moral values. This exploration aims to explore teachers' views on these dynamics, as well as understand their role in guiding students to be wise in using technology.

This research highlights the importance of the role of teachers as character formation agents who are able to bridge traditional moral education with a modern technology-based approach. In addition, this exploration can be the basis for innovation of teaching methods that are more relevant to the needs of the digital-native generation, such as the integration of technology in moral education and the development of strategies that support the formation of positive characters. The results of this exploration also have the potential to be valuable inputs for the formulation of education policies that are more adaptive to moral challenges in the digital era (Hariyono et al., 2024). In conclusion, this research is expected to answer the problem of students' morality comprehensively, relevantly, and contextually.

This research also emphasizes the need for collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school environment in shaping students' morals in the digital era (Zalukhu et al., 2024). Teachers cannot work alone; The influence of family and community is an important element that also determines the success of character formation. The digital era presents challenges that require a holistic value-based education approach, involving an understanding of technology as well as instilling ethics in its use (Azwar et al., 2023).

Exploring teachers' perceptions of students' morals can also provide insight into the gap between moral values taught in schools and values that may be eroded by the influence of the digital world. By exploring these perceptions, research can identify teachers' need for adequate training and resources to support them in carrying out their role as moral educators in the midst of changing times.

In the end, this exploration not only aims to understand the problem, but also offers solution recommendations for the world of education. This research can be a foothold for the formation of moral learning strategies that are innovative, relevant, and able to equip students with critical thinking skills, empathy, and responsibility in facing the complexities of the digital world. Thus, this research contributes to the development of an education system that is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also the formation of a solid and moral character.

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