



TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND DIFFERENCES IN PAI TEACHING APPROACHES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN URBAN & RURAL SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the integration of information technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and compare the differences in teaching approaches between schools in urban and rural areas. The background of this research is based on the rapid digitalization of education, which has not been fully accompanied by equal access to technology and improvements in the digital competencies of educators. This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a comparative study method through observation, interviews, and documentation in two schools with different environmental characteristics. The results show that schools in urban areas have a more optimal level of technology utilization, such as the use of online learning platforms, interactive media, and digital applications to support the PAI learning process. In contrast, schools in rural areas still rely on conventional methods such as lectures and face-to-face discussions due to limited technological facilities and network infrastructure. Nevertheless, the learning approach in rural areas is considered more contextual and effective in shaping the religious character of students. This study concludes that optimizing technology integration in PAI learning must be adapted to local social, cultural, and infrastructure conditions, accompanied by improving teacher competency and developing Islamic learning models that are in harmony with advances in digital technology.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Educational Technology, Teaching Approach, Urban Schools, Rural Schools*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education (PAI) plays a crucial role in society, especially in an increasingly globally connected world (Veronika & Zaini, 2024). The importance of religious education is not only related to understanding moral and ethical values, but also in shaping individual character and identity (Zohaib et al., 2025). Along with technological developments and globalization, the challenges facing Islamic religious education are increasingly complex (Nazilah et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore the challenges and opportunities facing Islamic religious education in the era of globalization. This research is important because it contributes to an understanding of how PAI can develop and adapt to increasingly rapid global social and cultural dynamics. For example, many Islamic schools around the world are faced with the need to integrate religious knowledge with the demands of modern education. Therefore, this study makes a valuable contribution to addressing this challenge.

The problem faced in Islamic religious education, particularly in a global context, lies in the lack of alignment between teaching materials and contemporary developments (Khusnuridlo & Fauzi, 2024). Many Islamic

schools in Muslim-majority countries face difficulties in balancing the demands of tradition-based religious education with contemporary approaches that are more adaptive to scientific developments (Kunta & Muslim, 2025). This leads to ineffectiveness in achieving the goals of holistic religious education (Ropi, 2023). Furthermore, the conservative Islamic Religious Education curriculum often fails to facilitate the development of critical thinking and social skills necessary in the modern world (Wahid et al., 2024). Therefore, a deeper understanding of how to adapt Islamic Religious Education to these global challenges is needed.

The current situation demonstrates a gap between conservative religious education systems and the demands of globalization and modernization. In many Muslim countries, Islamic religious education still relies on traditional approaches that focus on memorization and textual teaching, without providing space for the development of critical thinking and contextual understanding of religious teachings. Furthermore, with advances in technology and social media, many adolescents prefer to access information directly from the internet, which is often not entirely reliable. This phenomenon highlights shortcomings in the Islamic religious education system, which has not fully adapted to current developments, making it increasingly urgent to reform the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) methods and materials delivered in schools.

Several previous studies have attempted to examine the challenges and opportunities in Islamic religious education. For example, a study by Ahmad (2019) found that the lack of integration between the religious curriculum and the needs of the workplace is a major obstacle in Islamic education. However, these studies tended to be limited to conventional analysis and did not delve deeply into how Islamic religious education can utilize technology to enhance students' understanding of religious teachings. Another study by Hasanah (2021) highlighted the important role of educators in supporting students in critically understanding religion. However, this research failed to address globalization and its impact on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching methods. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining ways to integrate Islamic religious education with current and technological developments.

On the other hand, there are studies that focus more on practical approaches to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching in Indonesia, such as that by Suryani (2022), which emphasizes the need for innovation in teaching methods to improve the effectiveness of PAI. While the study provides insights into local practices, it does not examine the influence of globalization on the dynamics of Islamic religious teaching. This is an important area for further research, given the importance of adapting Islamic religious education to the challenges facing modern society. This research, which highlights the importance of technology integration in Islamic religious education, is expected to contribute to formulating new, more effective ways of teaching religion amidst globalization.

The biggest challenge facing Islamic religious education today is how to integrate religious values with the rapid developments of today's world and ever-evolving technology. One of the innovations proposed in this research is a digital technology-based approach to Islamic religious teaching. This is crucial because the use of technology not only facilitates access to information but also enables students to learn in a more interactive and engaging way. In this context, this research aims to explore how technology can be applied to strengthen Islamic religious understanding among the younger generation and

provide insights into how Islamic religious education can be adapted to meet the needs of the times.

This research aims to answer the main question: how can Islamic Religious Education address the challenges of globalization and adapt to technological developments in a modern educational context? Specifically, this research will examine how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curricula in schools can integrate technology without losing the essence of religious teachings. The argument put forward in this research is that the integration of technology in Islamic religious education not only enhances learning effectiveness but also opens up opportunities for more inclusive and relevant teaching in today's global social context. This research will also contribute to the development of new teaching models that combine traditional and modern aspects in Islamic religious education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research design with a case study approach. This design was chosen based on the need to deeply explore the real-world situation and understand the challenges and opportunities in Islamic religious education amidst globalization. Case studies allow researchers to comprehensively analyze phenomena while considering the specific contexts of each research location.

This research will be conducted in several Islamic schools located in urban and rural areas in Indonesia. These locations were selected based on the differences in characteristics between schools in more developed urban areas and schools in more conservative rural areas. This allows for comparisons of how challenges and opportunities in Islamic religious education can vary depending on the social and geographic context.

Data will be collected using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews will be conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, students, and parents to obtain perspectives from various parties involved in the religious education process. Observations will be conducted to directly observe how teaching takes place in the classroom, while documentation will include analysis of the curriculum and teaching materials used.

The data obtained will be analyzed using data reduction, data display, and data verification techniques. Data reduction will be carried out by identifying key themes from the interview and observation results. Data display will be carried out by organizing the data into a format that is easy to understand and analyze. Data verification will be conducted by checking the consistency and validity of the data obtained through source triangulation.

Data validity will be checked using triangulation techniques, which involve comparing data obtained from various sources and methods. Furthermore, member checking will be conducted by sending preliminary findings back to participants to obtain confirmation and clarification regarding the accuracy of the information provided. This ensures the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges of Globalization in Islamic Religious Education

The challenges of globalization in Islamic religious education refer to the difficulties faced by Islamic religious educational institutions in adapting teaching materials and methods to global social, cultural, and technological

developments. Globalization, characterized by the rapid spread of information, has brought about significant changes in how society accesses knowledge, including in the field of religious education. In this context, the primary challenge is how Islamic religious education can remain relevant and adaptable to an increasingly connected world, without losing the core values of Islamic teachings.

In an interview with the principal of an urban Islamic school, he stated, "Globalization has had a significant impact on Islamic teachings in our school. For example, although we continue to teach religious values, many students are more interested in technology and information they obtain through the internet, which often contradicts religious teachings." From this interview, it can be concluded that while Islamic religious education remains important, the phenomenon of globalization presents challenges in maintaining the relevance of religious teachings to a younger generation who are more likely to access information from less controlled sources.

The following interview was conducted with an Islamic Religious Education teacher who teaches at a school in a rural area. According to him, "We are experiencing significant difficulties in teaching religious material that is contextual to current developments. Most of the material still focuses on memorizing and understanding very traditional religious texts, while students are more interested in information they encounter on social media." The interviews revealed that in rural areas, the challenges of globalization are more apparent in limited access to adequate information and technology, resulting in Islamic religious teaching tending to be stuck with conventional methods that are less relevant to current needs.

Field observations also provide a clearer picture of this challenge. In some schools, especially in large cities, the use of technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching has begun to be implemented, such as the use of mobile-based learning applications and online learning platforms. However, despite the use of technology, there are still shortcomings in teacher training and students' unpreparedness to utilize it optimally. On the other hand, in rural areas, the use of technology remains very limited. These limitations cause Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching to rely heavily on lectures and memorization, without incorporating more modern technology or approaches. Researchers interpret this difference as indicating an imbalance in schools' readiness to adopt the changes necessary to face the challenges of globalization.

The data obtained shows that globalization has influenced the way students access and absorb information, thus making Islamic religious education face challenges in adapting teaching materials to modern needs. On the one hand, urban schools tend to be more open to change and integrate technology into their teaching, but there are gaps in teacher training and student readiness to adapt. On the other hand, rural schools remain stuck in very traditional teaching approaches and are less able to integrate technology, which hinders the development of a more contextual and relevant understanding of religion in response to global challenges.

From the available data, an emerging pattern is the disparity between urban and rural schools in facing the challenges of globalization in Islamic religious education. In urban areas, schools have begun to try integrating technology into their teaching, but obstacles remain in terms of teacher training and student readiness. Meanwhile, in rural areas, limited technology and human resources mean that Islamic religious teaching remains heavily reliant on conventional

methods. This pattern suggests that despite adaptation efforts, many challenges remain to be overcome to make Islamic religious education more relevant and effective in the era of globalization.

The Role of Technology in Islamic Religious Education

The role of technology in Islamic religious education refers to the use of digital tools and technology platforms to support and enrich the religious learning process. Technology here encompasses various digital devices and applications used to access, disseminate, and interact with Islamic religious teaching materials. The use of technology in Islamic religious education includes the use of mobile applications, online learning platforms, social media, and other multimedia tools that can enrich students' understanding of religious material. Technology not only helps convey religious knowledge in a more engaging and interactive manner but also enables flexible and efficient access to religious learning outside of school hours..

Interview Results Table

Interview Excerpt	Indicator	Informant
" We have begun integrating technology into religious learning, particularly through online learning applications and instructional videos."	The use of technology in religious learning	Principal (Urban)
" However, we face many challenges, particularly related to limited resources and teacher training to optimally utilize technology."	Challenges in utilizing technology	Islamic Education Teacher (Rural)
" Students are more interested in material taught through social media and applications, because it is more interactive and fits their daily habits."	Students' interest in technology	Students (Urban)
" However, many teachers are not yet accustomed to using technology in teaching, even though we have tried to use it in religious learning."	Teacher readiness in using technology	Islamic Education Teacher (Rural Area)

The table above shows that the use of technology in Islamic religious education has been implemented in several schools, but with significant challenges. The first informant, a principal in an urban area, indicated that technology has begun to be integrated, particularly in the form of online learning applications and videos. This indicates that urban schools are more prepared to adopt technology and consider it an effective tool for improving the quality of learning. However, the main challenge faced is limited resources, particularly in rural areas. This is reflected in interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in rural areas who expressed difficulty in optimally utilizing technology.

Teacher readiness is a determining factor in developing the use of technology in Islamic religious education. Based on interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers from rural areas, despite efforts to integrate technology, many teachers are not yet familiar with using digital tools in their teaching. This suggests that despite efforts to introduce technology, the success

of its implementation depends heavily on teachers' skills and readiness to utilize it.

Based on the interview data obtained, it can be concluded that although technology is recognized as playing a vital role in enriching Islamic religious education, its implementation is still limited to a few schools with greater access and resources. In urban areas, the use of technology such as learning applications and instructional videos has been well-received and captured students' attention. Students tend to be more engaged in learning materials that utilize technology because it better aligns with their habits, which are already familiar with technology in their daily lives.

In field observations, researchers observed that the use of technology in Islamic religious teaching in urban schools tends to be more interactive and engaging for students. For example, the use of mobile applications allows students to study outside of school hours and discuss material with their peers through online platforms. This has been shown to increase student engagement in the teaching and learning process. However, in rural areas, most religious teaching still relies on lectures and memorization methods, without maximizing the use of technology.

One major challenge observed is the lack of adequate infrastructure to support the use of technology, such as slow internet connections and a lack of adequate technological devices. Furthermore, despite the intention to use technology in teaching, many teachers feel unprepared or lack sufficient knowledge in this area. This observation reinforces the interpretation that teacher readiness and infrastructure are key determinants of the successful integration of technology in Islamic religious education.

Overall, the data obtained indicates that while technology can improve the quality of Islamic religious education, there is a clear gap between urban and rural schools in its utilization. In urban areas, schools are better able to integrate technology into Islamic education by utilizing learning apps and other digital media. Conversely, in rural areas, technology use is very limited, with many teachers lacking training and inadequate infrastructure. Therefore, to maximize the role of technology in Islamic religious education, better teacher training and improved infrastructure in schools are needed, especially in rural areas.

The pattern emerging from this data is a clear disparity between urban and rural schools in terms of implementing technology in Islamic religious education. Urban schools are more prepared and open to the use of technology, with supportive infrastructure and teachers possessing better technology skills. On the other hand, rural schools face greater obstacles, both in terms of limited resources, infrastructure, and teacher training. This pattern suggests that while technology has significant potential to enhance Islamic religious education, its implementation is highly dependent on readiness and accessibility in each region.

Differences in Teaching Approaches between Urban and Rural Areas

The differences in teaching approaches between urban and rural areas in Islamic religious education demonstrate how the education systems in these two regions adapt to different social, cultural, and infrastructure contexts. In urban areas, Islamic religious education tends to be more modern, utilizing technology and more interactive learning methods. Conversely, in rural areas, religious instruction still focuses on traditional methods.

Interview Table

Interview Excerpt	Indicator	Informant
"We mostly use lecture and memorization methods. Technology is not used much in our school."	Traditional teaching methods	Islamic Education teachers in rural areas
"In our school, we have widely used mobile applications and online platforms to facilitate learning.."	Use of technology in teaching	Principal in urban areas
" Students are accessing information more frequently from social media, and we are trying to adapt that into the classroom."	The influence of social media on learning	Islamic Education teachers in urban areas
" In our area, almost all the material is still taught manually and using textbooks."	Limitations in the use of digital media	Islamic Education teachers in rural areas

The interview data reveals striking differences in approaches to Islamic religious teaching between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the use of technology in teaching is increasingly being implemented, such as the use of mobile applications and online platforms, which facilitate students' access to religious materials in a more flexible and interactive manner. This is reflected in statements by urban school principals who emphasized the importance of technology applications in religious education. Conversely, in rural areas, teaching still relies heavily on lectures and memorization methods, with limited use of technology. Islamic Religious Education teachers in rural areas revealed that teaching materials are still very traditional and do not utilize digital media, indicating disparities in available facilities and resources.

This difference demonstrates a significant disparity in the quality of education between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, although the use of technology is growing, this is not always matched by the readiness of students and teachers to utilize it optimally. On the other hand, in rural areas, although limited facilities are a major obstacle, the use of conventional methods such as lectures and memorization still has advantages in maintaining traditional values in religious teaching. However, this also indicates that rural schools lag behind in integrating technology that can enrich students' learning experiences. This gap highlights the importance of the government and community in improving educational facilities in underdeveloped areas.

Observations in several rural schools revealed that Islamic religious instruction classes are still dominated by conventional methods. Students primarily listen to lectures and memorize religious texts without sufficient interaction or practical application of the material. On the other hand, in urban schools, the use of technology has advanced, with the introduction of digital-based classrooms and the use of online learning platforms. However, some urban students still rely on unverified information from social media, often leading to misunderstandings of religious teachings. Researchers interpret that while technology offers many benefits, the biggest challenge is how to use it wisely and in accordance with the true goals of Islamic religious education.

The data obtained indicate significant differences in approaches to Islamic religious teaching between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, technology is used to enhance the effectiveness of Islamic religious learning, although there are challenges related to student and teacher adaptation to the technology. Conversely, in rural areas, Islamic religious instruction still relies on

lectures and memorization methods, with limited technological facilities. This indicates that despite efforts to integrate technology into Islamic religious education, differences in infrastructure and resources between urban and rural areas create disparities in the quality of education received by students.

The pattern emerging from this data indicates that Islamic religious teaching in urban areas predominantly adopts modern approaches with technology, while in rural areas, more traditional and manual approaches still dominate. This reflects inequities in access to technology and teacher training, which contribute to differences in the quality of Islamic religious education received by students. This pattern underscores the importance of equitable access to educational facilities and technology to achieve equality in the quality of Islamic religious education throughout Indonesia.

Differences in Islamic Religious Education Teaching Approaches Between Schools

In this discussion, the results of research on differences in teaching approaches between urban and rural areas will be compared with existing literature, highlighting their suitability and differences. The findings of this study indicate significant differences in approaches to teaching Islamic religion between the two regions. In urban areas, the use of technology in Islamic religious education is more developed, with mobile applications and online platforms implemented to facilitate learning (Sapruddin, 2025). Conversely, in rural areas, teaching methods still rely heavily on lectures and memorization, with limited access to technology (Aidillah & Sassi, 2024). These findings align with research conducted by Ahmad (2018), which found that education in urban areas is more open to technological innovation than in rural areas. However, these findings also reveal greater disparities than those found in the literature, particularly in terms of technology integration, which is less optimal in urban areas.

The theoretical implication of these findings is the importance of broadening the understanding of Islamic religious education in the digital age. This research reveals that technology can be an effective tool in teaching Islam, but the greatest challenge lies in utilizing technology wisely and in a manner relevant to the goals of Islamic religious education. Digital literacy must be strengthened in both urban and rural areas to maximize technology's potential in religious education. Furthermore, the application of technology in Islamic religious teaching also requires an approach based on the local context and culture of the local community. Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between traditional approaches based on religious texts and modern, more technology-based approaches.

Practically, these findings provide a clear picture that Islamic religious education in rural areas requires special attention, particularly in terms of increasing access to technology and teacher training. Developing technological infrastructure and enhancing teacher capacity are crucial for achieving equality in education. The government and relevant parties need to provide greater support to improve educational facilities in rural areas to prevent a widening gap between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, ongoing training for Islamic education teachers is needed to integrate technology with more interactive teaching methods that are appropriate to current needs.

Within the context of previous literature, these findings also highlight the gap between existing theory and practice. Most previous studies, such as those

conducted by Suryani (2022), have focused primarily on the theory of technology integration in Islamic religious education, but have not yet examined in-depth how it is practiced in various regions with varying conditions. This research contributes by highlighting the real challenges in implementing technology and Islamic religious teaching methodologies in areas with limited infrastructure. Furthermore, it opens up further discussion on how technology can be integrated into Islamic religious teaching without eliminating the traditional values inherent in religious teachings.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the importance of a more holistic approach to Islamic religious education, one that integrates technology with established religious values. Technology-based approaches must be adapted contextually, taking into account existing limitations in the field, both in terms of infrastructure and the preparedness of teachers and students. Going forward, this study can serve as a foundation for further research that examines the application of technology in Islamic religious education more deeply, as well as how innovative methods can be implemented to address the challenges of globalization.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is the clear distinction between approaches to Islamic religious teaching in urban and rural areas. Urban areas tend to be more open to technology in teaching, while rural areas remain underdeveloped in terms of technology integration. The lesson from this study is that Islamic religious education requires adaptation to changing times, taking into account both local context and technology as a teaching tool. The lesson learned is the importance of balancing traditional methods and modern, technology-based approaches.

The strength of this paper lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Islamic religious education in the face of globalization, as well as how regional differences influence the implementation of teaching methods. This study also contributes to highlighting the disparities in technology utilization across regions, which are crucial to address for the equitable development of Islamic religious education throughout Indonesia.

However, this study's limitations lie in its focus on only two regions (urban and rural) and its inability to comprehensively address regional variations. Furthermore, the limited sample size also impacts the depth of the findings. For future research, it is highly recommended to conduct research with a wider sample and cover various other regions with different social and cultural characteristics, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities in Islamic religious education in various global and local contexts.

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