

Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Religious Education Teacher Professionalism in the Utilization of Technology

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Abstract. *Teacher professionalism in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) concerns various competencies, namely pedagogical, personal, social and professional skills that an educator must have. A PAI teacher is not only tasked with delivering material, but also plays an important role in instilling Islamic values in the learning process. In the digital era, the challenges faced by PAI teachers are increasingly complex, including moral crises, demands for digital literacy, curriculum changes, and the need to improve the quality of human resources. However, technological advances also provide great opportunities for PAI teachers to improve their professionalism. By utilizing interactive learning, more flexible access to materials, and developing digital skills, they can create more engaging and effective learning experiences for students. Therefore, the professional development of PAI teachers through technology-based training and development needs to continue to be supported so that they are ready to face the challenges of globalization and meet educational needs in the modern era.*

Keyword: *Teacher professionalism, Opportunities, and Challenges.*

INTRODUCTION

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is a key factor in improving the quality of religious learning in the modern era. Professional teachers not only have a deep understanding of the teaching materials, but are also able to adapt learning methods according to the times. Along with the rapid advancement of technology, the use of technology in education has become a must, including in PAI learning. Technology offers various conveniences, such as wider access to materials, more interactive teaching methods, and more effective learning evaluations. However, on the other hand, not all PAI teachers have adequate readiness and skills in integrating technology into the learning process. Amid the demands of globalization and digitalization, the challenges of PAI teacher professionalism in utilizing technology are increasingly complex. Some obstacles that often arise include limited technological infrastructure in schools, lack of adequate training, and resistance to changes in teaching methods. In addition, there is concern that the use of technology can shift Islamic values if not used wisely. Therefore, an appropriate strategy is needed to improve the professionalism of PAI teachers in utilizing technology, so that they can use it as a tool that supports learning based on Islamic values.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of technology integration in education, including in the context of Islamic education. In the journal entitled "Technology Integration in Islamic Education: Policy Framework and Adoption Challenges" emphasizes that technology integration in Islamic education has great potential to improve the quality of learning, expand accessibility, and create more interactive and skill-based learning models (Sholeh 2023).

However, its implementation is not without challenges, including differences in technology accessibility between regions, infrastructure limitations, and the need to maintain Islamic values in the content presented through technology.

From the study, it can be concluded that the use of technology in Islamic education requires a mature strategy, including improving technological infrastructure, teacher training, developing relevant digital content, and a technology-based curriculum approach. Therefore, this study was conducted because there is still a gap between the development of technology and the readiness of Islamic Religious Education teachers in using it. Although technology has become an integral part of the education system, there are still many teachers who do not have adequate digital skills. In addition, the challenges in implementing technology in Islamic Religious Education learning are still often ignored in academic studies. By understanding the factors that influence teacher professionalism in utilizing technology, it is hoped that the right strategy can be found to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning in the digital era. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the concept of PAI teacher professionalism in the context of technology utilization, identify the challenges faced by teachers in integrating technology into PAI learning, and explore opportunities that can be utilized to improve their professional competence. In addition, this study also aims to provide strategic recommendations that can help PAI teachers face the digital era with more readiness and adaptation.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method using a data analysis approach. This method was chosen because it aims to explain the challenges and opportunities for the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers in the use of technology. The qualitative descriptive method is suitable because this study does not test hypotheses, but focuses on understanding existing data and information. With this method, the study will explain the data narratively and descriptively, so that readers can understand the phenomena being studied.

The research technique applied in this research was carried out through several simple steps, namely by collecting secondary data, selecting relevant data, analyzing data through analysis stages such as data reduction, then presenting data and drawing conclusions, finally ensuring the accuracy of the findings. Thus, the research is expected to provide a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities for PAI teacher professionalism in utilizing technology. All processes are carried out systematically and simply so that they are easy to understand and follow.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The word "professional" comes from the term "profession", which refers to a job that requires special expertise or skills in its implementation (Dianiati 2023). Jasin Muhammad defines a profession as a job that demands dedication, the use of scientific procedures and techniques, and is oriented towards quality service. Meanwhile, according to Rusman, a profession is a job that is done by someone based on skills, expertise, and procedures and strategies that are based on intellectual abilities (Khanifatul Azizah dan Fuadi 2021).

Thus, a profession can be understood as a job that cannot be done carelessly, but must be based on special expertise and skills. A profession also involves the application of scientific procedures, strategies, and techniques to ensure that the work is carried out systematically and according to standards. In addition, a profession demands high dedication from its practitioners and is oriented towards the quality of service provided. In other words, someone who carries out a

profession must have competence obtained through education, training or experience, so that their work can be carried out properly and responsibly.

The law on teachers and lecturers defines teachers as professional staff whose duties include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing and evaluating students at all levels of formal education, including basic education and early childhood education (Akhyar dkk. 2024). Teacher professionalism is a framework that outlines the quality, standards, and ethical guidelines that must be met by a teacher in carrying out their duties. Professionalism creates conditions that allow teachers to freely develop effective learning processes, with high standards, and with a sense of responsibility. In addition, teachers are also expected to independently continuously improve their quality in carrying out their role as educators. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), teacher professionalism not only includes mastery of teaching materials and teaching methods, but also skills in internalizing Islamic values in the learning process. In his research (Khanifatul Azizah dan Fuadi 2021) explains a number of skills that must be possessed by professional teachers, all of which are based on the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Namely:

- 1) Being fair is the main principle for a teacher who also acts as a second parent for students at school. Teachers do not discriminate against students in the learning process, both in giving attention and in assessment. Not only that, teachers must also be able to show their spiritual maturity when speaking, treating all students equally regardless of their social background and giving them the opportunity for students to express their opinions.
- 2) Caring for students, teachers need to balance giving assignments to students, avoiding excessive and continuous assignments. Teachers also need to show affection, attention, and concern for the academic and character development of students by providing ongoing guidance, understanding the needs and potential of each student. Caring teachers not only teach, but also build warm relationships and motivate students to achieve their best potential, and provide solutions to difficulties faced by students in learning.
- 3) Academic, in Education, teachers play an important role as pillars for the country, so their existence is very crucial. The professional attitude of teachers greatly determines the quality of student growth and development. Having broad insight and intellectual abilities that continue to develop in their fields by continuing to learn and follow the development of science, both through formal education, training, seminars, and academic literature. The professional attitude of teachers is positively correlated with student growth and development, lack of teacher professionalism will have the opposite effect.
- 4) Democratic, learning can be considered democratic if there is good communication between students and teachers. Teachers encourage students to actively participate in learning by providing opportunities to express opinions, ask questions, and get involved. The teacher acts as a facilitator, namely encouraging students to think critically, ask questions, and dare to express their ideas or views (Arfandi dan Samsudin 2021). In this way, students feel appreciated and more motivated to explore and understand the learning material.

In the increasingly developing digital era, technology plays an important role in various aspects of life, including in the world of education. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as part of the education curriculum has also undergone a transformation thanks to technological advances. Technology not only speeds up the delivery of material, but also makes the learning process more interesting, flexible, and in accordance with student needs.

The use of technology in Islamic Religious Education learning opens up opportunities for students to understand religious concepts more deeply through various interactive media. With the use of educational software, online platforms, and other digital resources, students can be more active in learning and developing skills that are relevant to the modern world. Therefore, it is

important to understand how technology plays a role in increasing the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education learning and its impact on the development of character and students' understanding of religion.

1) Interactive and Interesting Material Delivery

One of the main roles of technology in Islamic Religious Education learning is its ability to present material in a more interactive and interesting way. Through media such as animated videos, infographics, simulations, and digital-based educational applications, students can understand religious concepts more easily and enjoyably. For example, in studying the stories of the prophets, the use of animated videos can provide a more vivid picture than just reading text. Likewise, interactive simulations on the procedures for prayer or pilgrimage help students understand worship practices more deeply. With this approach, students are not only passive listeners, but also actively participate in the learning process (Gultom dkk. 2025).

2) Accessibility and Flexibility of Learning

Technology allows students to access Islamic Religious Education materials anytime and anywhere through online learning platforms or educational applications. With a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Moodle, or other platforms, teachers can upload materials, assignments, and quizzes that can be accessed by students according to their own time and learning pace. For students who live in remote areas or have limited access to conventional learning resources, technology provides a solution by providing various digital references that can be downloaded or accessed online. This provides flexibility for students to learn according to their respective conditions and needs (Hajri t.t.).

3) Development of Digital Skills and Information Literacy

In the digital era, technological skills are a must. By integrating technology into Islamic Religious Education learning, students not only understand religious teachings, but also develop digital skills that are useful for their future lives. For example, students can be trained to create presentations using software such as PowerPoint or Canva in explaining religious concepts. They can also use interactive quiz applications such as Kahoot or Quizizz to test their understanding of Islamic Religious Education material. Thus, Islamic Religious Education learning is not only oriented towards theory, but also provides practical skills that are relevant to the development of the times (Robiah dkk. t.t.).

4) Collaboration and Communication in Learning

Technology also enables broader collaboration in Islamic Religious Education learning. With online discussion forums, study groups on social media, or communication platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, students can discuss Islamic Religious Education materials, exchange ideas, and work on group projects virtually. For example, in discussing contemporary Islamic issues, students can discuss through WhatsApp groups or online forums monitored by teachers. This kind of collaboration not only improves their understanding of the material, but also trains critical thinking skills and strengthens Islamic brotherhood among them (Sugianto dkk. 2023).

5) More Effective Assessment and Feedback

Technology allows teachers to conduct assessments more effectively and efficiently. By using online assessment tools, such as Google Forms, Socrative, or LMS platforms, teachers can provide quizzes, assignments, and exams that can be automatically graded. In addition, technology also allows for direct feedback. Teachers can provide comments and suggestions on student assignments through online platforms, so that students can immediately know which parts need to be improved. In this way, the learning process becomes more adaptive and responsive to student needs (Prihartana dkk. 2022).

In addition, self-confidence is an important aspect in the learning process. Based on research (Zulaikha dan Huriyah 2025) Self-confidence is very necessary so that students are able to actively participate in learning such as asking questions or expressing opinions without shame or hesitation. Teachers have a big role in creating a learning atmosphere that supports the development of self-confidence through interactive strategies such as group discussions and peer teaching. Supporting factors such as teacher professionalism and modern learning media are important elements in the success of this strategy. However, there are obstacles such as lack of access to technology in some areas and the influence of the family environment.

In today's digital era, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are expected not only to improve their teaching knowledge and skills, but also to utilize technology as a tool in the learning process. The use of information technology has become an inseparable part of the world of education, so PAI teachers need to utilize digital platforms properly. Thus, they can deliver teaching materials in an interesting and interactive way. Unfortunately, there are still many PAI teachers who tend to use conventional methods that are less appropriate to the needs of this digital era. Therefore, improving the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers is very important, including training in the use of technology, designing digital-based learning, and developing effective interactions with students in cyberspace.

Relevant curriculum development is also very important, especially in integrating religious values with technology. This aims to enable students to apply religious teachings in their increasingly modern lives. In this context, collaboration between Islamic Religious Education teachers, educational institutions, and the government becomes very crucial. Through training programs, seminars, and workshops, we can improve teachers' skills and knowledge about educational technology. With the right support, Islamic Religious Education teachers can be better prepared to face existing challenges and provide better education for students.

According to Abdul Malik Fadjar, there are three major challenges currently being faced by the world of education. First, the challenge of maintaining the achievements that have been achieved and protecting them from the impact of the crisis. Second, the existence of a global atmosphere in the field of education that makes competition—whether on a regional, national, or international scale—a necessity. Third, the need to make changes and adjustments to the national education system that supports a more democratic education process, by paying attention to the diversity of regional needs and conditions and increasing community participation.

Globalization has changed the way of life of humans in various aspects, both as individuals, members of society, and as citizens of the nation. No individual can avoid the ever-growing flow of globalization. In this context, the tasks and roles of Islamic Religious Education teachers are increasingly difficult along with the rapid development of science and technology. The challenges for Islamic Religious Education teachers are becoming increasingly complex in facing the dynamics of ongoing globalization, considering that these developments have implications for the shift in existing values. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to be able to maintain and develop Islamic values amidst this rapid flow of globalization. The following are some of the challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers in facing the phenomenon of globalization:

- 1) Moral Crisis

Islamic Religious Education teachers are faced with the challenge of instilling strong moral and ethical values amidst the moral crisis that is hitting society. In this situation, teachers must be able to integrate religious teachings with the existing social context, so that students can understand the importance of these values in everyday life. A more contextual and

relevant approach is needed to attract students' attention and increase their awareness of existing moral issues (Lainah dan Supratman 2022).

2) Digital Literacy

With the rapid development of technology, Islamic Religious Education teachers need to have adequate digital skills. This includes the ability to use educational software, social media, and online learning platforms. Through training and workshops, teachers can learn effective ways to integrate technology into their teaching. This will not only increase student engagement, but also help them to be better prepared to face the challenges of an increasingly digital world (Murdaningtias, Fahmi, dan Hidayat 2025).

3) Curriculum Changes

The religious education curriculum needs to be updated to be relevant to the needs of the times. Integration of religious values with information technology in the curriculum will help students understand how religious teachings can be applied in a modern context. Islamic Religious Education teachers must be involved in developing a curriculum that is responsive to social and technological changes (Anshori 2024).

4) Quality Human Resources

The conditions described above require thorough preparation, especially in terms of the quality of human resources. Reliable and superior human resources are needed who are ready to compete with other nations in the world. The world of education plays an important and strategic role in creating human resources that meet these criteria. Therefore, visionary, competent, and highly dedicated teachers are needed, so that they are able to equip students with the competencies needed in life in a society that continues to change (Najib t.t.).

Although this study reveals several challenges, it also opens up great opportunities for Islamic Religious Education teachers. Especially in the use of technology for education that can provide opportunities for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to improve their professionalism. In facing rapid technological developments, Islamic Religious Education teachers have the opportunity to optimize technology to improve the quality of learning and teaching. These opportunities not only encourage teachers to be more innovative, but also strengthen their role in shaping relevant and meaningful learning for students.

One of the main opportunities that can be utilized by Islamic Religious Education teachers is the use of technology to develop learning models that are more interactive, dynamic, and relevant to the student's context (Musbaing 2024). Teachers can utilize animated videos, interactive simulations, and digital quizzes such as Kahoot! Or Quizizz to deliver religious material. The use of these media makes learning more lively and easier for students to understand. Technology integration is very important for Islamic Religious Education teachers to improve their knowledge, skills, and teaching methodologies. This allows for increased communication, collaboration, and access to various sources. In addition, teachers can also create digital content such as Islamic study podcasts or learning videos, which demonstrate the teacher's ability to innovate and adapt to technological developments. The use of technology for project-based learning can also improve students' collaboration and problem-solving skills, as well as create a more meaningful learning experience.

In addition, teacher training and professional development through technology also includes opportunities for the professionalism of PAI teachers. PAI teacher training and professional development through technology, known as e-PD or e-professional development, is a great opportunity to improve their competence. E-PD utilizes digital technology to provide training,

development, and resources to teachers (Firdaus, Asrori, dan Anggraini t.t.). Technology has significantly changed the way people access learning resources, allowing them to engage in professional development independently and flexibly. Online learning platforms facilitate this process by offering a variety of formats such as modules, webinars, and video tutorials, which enhance teachers' knowledge and skills. This flexibility allows educators to tailor their learning experience to their individual needs and schedules. Teachers can learn independently according to their needs and interests, and can arrange the time and place of learning according to their availability. Webinars and virtual conferences serve as a modern approach to professional development for educators in Islamic education, allowing them to participate in a variety of online activities led by experts. These platforms facilitate access to new trends, best practices, and research findings, enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills in the field.

The use of technology in teacher training and professional development provides ease of access, flexibility, and opportunities for continuous development. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions need to support teachers in adopting and using this technology. This form of support can include providing access to resources, technology training, and the assistance needed so that teachers can use it optimally.

CONCLUSION

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers plays a very crucial role in creating quality education. This education does not only prioritize mastery of material, but also focuses on the formation of student character in line with Islamic values. Therefore, PAI teachers need to have various competencies, such as justice, concern for students, broad academic insight, and a democratic attitude in the teaching and learning process. In today's digital era, PAI teachers are faced with various major challenges, such as moral crises, the need for digital skills, and curriculum changes. However, behind these challenges, there are opportunities to improve professionalism through the use of technology. By integrating technology into the learning process, teachers can create a learning environment that is more interactive, flexible, and in accordance with the demands of the times. Therefore, developing teacher competencies through technology-based training is a very important step in improving the quality of PAI education.

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