QUO VADIS ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL NATIVE GENERATION ERA

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Abstract

The Digital Native Generation, encompassing Generation Z and Millennials, has grown up in an environment characterized by instant access to digital technology and information, presenting a new paradigm in the world of education, including Islamic Religious Education (IRE). This study aims to analyze the opportunities that can be utilized and the challenges faced by IRE learning in responding to the distinctive characteristics of the digital native generation. The research method employed is a literature study with a qualitative approach through critical analysis of various relevant academic references and literature. The research results indicate that personalized learning, flexibility in learning time and space, and broad access to online learning resources are the main opportunities in developing IRE learning. However, significant challenges also arise, primarily related to the rampant spread of religious misinformation (hoaxes), low digital literacy, and the potential decline in the socio-emotional interaction quality of students. Therefore, IRE learning needs to transform from an indoctrinative approach towards an integrative IRE learning model that combines Islamic principles, technology, and exemplary behavior. This transformation is expected to create effective, contextual, and transformative IRE learning, fostering students who possess a moderate understanding of Islam, good digital literacy, and sustainable digital piety.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education; Digital Native Generation; Digital Divide.*

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments in the modern era have brought about significant changes in various aspects of human life, including in the field of education. These developments have given rise to the term digital native—individuals born after the 1980s who have never known a world without the internet.[1] This generation has a learning style that is fast, visual, interactive, and tends to be multitasking. Education is one of the sectors most affected by technological advancement, as technology has changed the way teachers teach, students learn, and the education management system itself. While teaching and learning activities were once conducted only face-to-face in classrooms using conventional media like blackboards and textbooks, nowadays learning can occur anywhere and anytime with the help of technological devices such as computers, smartphones, and the internet.

One of the greatest benefits of technological development is the ease of accessing information.[2] With the internet, students and teachers can easily search for various learning references from all over the world. Knowledge that was previously difficult to obtain is now available with just a few clicks. Learning resources are no longer limited to textbooks but can also include e-books, instructional videos, scientific journals, and online courses. This helps students learn independently and broaden their horizons beyond the material taught in school.

Technology has enabled distance learning systems through various digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Moodle. This system has been very helpful, especially when face-to-face learning is not possible, for instance during the COVID-19 pandemic.[3] Through e-learning, students can still interact with teachers, take exams, and complete assignments online. Furthermore, online learning provides flexibility in time and place, making education accessible to anyone, even people in remote areas.

The use of technology-based media such as animated videos, simulations, augmented reality (AR), and educational games makes the learning process more engaging and interactive. This increases student interest and motivation because the material is presented visually and is easier to understand.[4] For example, science lessons can be learned through virtual laboratory simulations, or history lessons can be visualized through interactive videos. Thus, technology helps students grasp abstract concepts more easily.

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[1] Putri Pujianti Nuri Badariah and Syarbaini Saleh, "Criticism of Digital Native Students in Responding to Local Digital Democracy: Kritikalitas Mahasiswa Digital Native Dalam Menyikapi Demokrasi Digital Lokal," *Indonesian Journal of Innovation Studies* 26, no. 3 (2025): 1–12.

[2] Muhammad Candra Syahputra, "Jihad Santri Millennial Melawan Radikalisme Di Era Digital: Studi Gerakan Arus Informasi Santri Nusantara Di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Islam Nusantara* 4, no. 1 (2020): 69–80, https://doi.org/10.33852/jurnalin.v4i1.187.

[3] Jeff Clyde G. Corpuz, "Adapting to the Culture of 'New Normal': An Emerging Response to Covid-19," *Journal of Public Health* 43, no. 2 (2021): 344–45.

[4] Muhammad Adam, *Pengembangan Pembelajaran PAI Di Era Digital* (Bandung: Amerta Media, 2020).

Despite offering many benefits, technological development also brings a number of challenges that must be anticipated to prevent negative impacts in the world of education. Therefore, understanding the influence of technological development in education is important so that we can optimize its use and anticipate any potential negative effects. Over-reliance on technology in learning can make students excessively dependent on digital devices. They tend to seek quick answers on the internet without making an effort to think critically or analyze deeply. Consequently, independent thinking skills and creativity may decline.

Unlimited internet access also carries the risk of concentration disruption. Students are easily tempted to open social media, watch entertainment videos, or play games while studying. If not monitored, this can decrease learning productivity and academic results. Moreover, open access to information allows students to access adult sites with pornographic content, misinformation or hoaxes spread on social media, negative external cultural exchanges, and the lurking threat of radical ideologies. These certainly will influence behavior and can lead to moral degradation that damages the nation's generation. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education plays an active role in preventing moral degradation caused by technological development. However, Islamic Religious Education faces very complex challenges in confronting technological advancement and the digitalization wave. The shift in community culture from traditional to digital,[5] certainly requires adjustments. In the context of education, including Islamic Religious Education (IRE), this change raises a fundamental question: Quo Vadis (where to) is Islamic Religious Education headed in the Digital Native Era?

Islamic religious education, which has the mission of shaping students' religious and moral character, now competes with the boundless flow of information in cyberspace. Religious content, both correct and misleading, is available 24/7. Therefore, an in-depth review is needed on how IRE can adapt to remain relevant, effective, and capable of equipping students with digital-religious competencies. This article attempts to analyze the opportunities and challenges of Islamic Religious Education learning in the Digital Native Era and offers an integrated IRE learning model for the digital native era between Islam, technology, and exemplary behavior as an ideal IRE learning model.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative data obtained through the library research method.[6] The library research method is a study that uses library sources (books, journals, documents) to collect, process, and analyze information related to the discussion theme. The stages include searching and collecting literature, reading and taking notes, organizing reading materials, data analysis such as content analysis, to compiling the final report. This method is a qualitative research that focuses on

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[5] Dyah Farissa and Budi Haryanto, "Tantangan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Era Digital," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 03 (2025): 200–225.

[6] Lexy J. Moelong, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2002), 76.

describing text, images, or documents. It is called qualitative because the data sources to be explored are verbal statements expressed in written form. In qualitative research, a topic and theme are first determined to search for references from reputable sources. The next stage involves classifying and categorizing the literature.[7]

This research is descriptive analytical research, meaning research that describes a specific object and explains matters related to it or systematically depicts the facts or characteristics of something to be investigated. The research is conducted systematically and structured, with stages including formulating research questions, compiling a review protocol, searching literature in scientific databases using specific keywords, determining inclusion and exclusion criteria, selecting and assessing article quality, followed by extracting, analyzing, and synthesizing data from relevant studies, to transparently reporting results in order to produce valid and scientifically accountable conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The digital era has changed almost every aspect of life, and the education sector is no exception. This transformation, accelerated by technological advances and unexpected drivers like a global pandemic, has opened extraordinary opportunities for democratizing and personalizing learning, while simultaneously giving rise to serious challenges that require strategic and collaborative solutions. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning also faces similar dynamics in the digital native era, thus demanding it to follow the spirit of the times as a manifestation of education's adaptive and dynamic nature.

In this context, an integrated IRE learning model is needed that combines Islamic values, the utilization of digital technology, and the exemplary behavior of educators into a unified pedagogical framework.[8] The integration of Islamic values ensures that learning remains grounded in faith, worship, and morality, while technology functions as a means to enrich students' learning methods, media, and experiences. The educator's exemplary behavior becomes a key element that bridges the normative and practical aspects, so that Islamic values are not only understood cognitively but also internalized through real examples.

This integrated IRE learning model can be implemented through active and collaborative learning approaches that utilize digital platforms, such as project-based learning, online discussions, and the use of interactive media. IRE material is linked to contemporary issues, including digital ethics, information literacy, and social media responsibility, enabling students to contextualize Islamic teachings meaningfully. Through the teacher's exemplary behavior in attitude and interaction in the digital

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[7] Husnu Abadi, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2020), 68.

[8] Ardha Zahro Nareswari and Hafidz, "Integrasi Teknologi Informasi Dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Indonesia; Pendekatan Teori Difusi Inovasi M.Rogers," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2025): 129–37, https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v3i1.437.

space, IRE learning not only transfers knowledge but also shapes digital piety and Islamic character relevant to the demands of the times.

Opportunities for IRE Learning in the Digital Native Era

Opportunities for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning in the digital native era are increasingly open along with the rapid development of science and technology. Advances in digital technology allow IRE material to be delivered in a more engaging, interactive, and easily accessible manner for students. Learning media such as videos, podcasts, educational applications, and online learning platforms can help students understand Islamic teachings contextually and relevantly to daily life.[9] Furthermore, the modern era offers great opportunities for IRE learning to instill moderate, tolerant, and rahmatan lil 'alamin (mercy to all creation) Islamic values. Through critical discussions, collaborative learning, and the utilization of various digital sources, students can be invited to understand Islamic teachings comprehensively and not merely textually. This encourages the formation of a balanced religious attitude between faith, morality, and critical thinking skills in facing the challenges of the times.

Another opportunity lies in the increasingly strategic role of IRE educators as facilitators and role models in guiding students amidst the flow of globalization. IRE teachers can integrate Islamic values with contemporary issues such as digital ethics, social tolerance, and environmental care. With innovative and contextual approaches, IRE learning in the modern era has a great opportunity to shape a generation of Muslims with noble character, broad knowledge, and the ability to contribute positively to society. The digital era offers a golden opportunity for the world of Education, including Islamic Religious Education, to transform its methods and reach. The methods that can be used in the digital native era are more varied compared to the era before digital technology, and the wide reach of learning resources can facilitate teachers and students in the IRE learning process. The opportunities in IRE learning in the digital native era are as follows:

Data-Based Personalized Learning

Data-based personalized learning is an educational approach that tailors the learning experience (content, methods, and pace) to the unique needs, strengths, skills, interests, and goals of each student, using insights gained from educational data analysis. The character of the digital native generation, familiar with internet media, tends to have a high interest in learning using digital media.[10] This will certainly provide a learning experience suited to the characteristics of the digital native generation. Utilizing e-learning platforms makes learning Islamic Religious Education material

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[9] Muhammad Ridha and M. Andre Irawan, "Kapitalisme Digital Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam: Telaah Kritis Terhadap Transformasi Nilai Dan Media Pembelajaran Dalam Era Disrupsi Digital," *Tasqif: Journal of Islamic Pedagogy* 2, no. 2 (2025): 37–48, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51590/tsqf.v2i2.36.

[10] Miftachul Huda et al., "Islamic Religious Education Learning Media in the Technology Era : A Systematic Literature Review," *At-Tadzkir: Islamic Education Journa* 3, no. 2 (2024): 83–103, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkir.v3i2.62.

more enjoyable. Learning Islamic Religious Education using digital media will provide a more enjoyable learning experience, not boring, thus able to increase student motivation and provide freedom for independent learning according to student interests.[11]

E-learning platforms allow IRE teachers to track student progress, identify difficult material, and present content (videos, articles, quizzes) according to individual student interests and learning pace. This is far more effective than classical lecture methods that are one-way. E-learning platforms greatly facilitate students to learn anywhere and anytime without spatial and time limitations. E-learning platforms enable a more enjoyable learning process. Islamic Religious Education materials in the learning process still tend to be delivered using lecture methods disliked by Gen Z; e-learning platforms can be a solution. IRE learning materials can be packaged in more attractive forms of audio, visual, audiovisual, and reading, so the delivered material is easier to understand. IRE learning using e-learning media can also be more effective, as research conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Yogyakarta[12] shows that the application of e-learning media in IRE learning was declared effective on student learning achievement, proven by questionnaire results distributed to students indicating that e-learning is very beneficial as a supporting media in IRE learning. Because with e-learning media, students can study IRE material more intensively and independently. Besides being easy to use, e-learning also provides a discussion forum and content that greatly influences students in absorbing values about IRE material, whether in the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor aspects.

Accessibility of Rich and Contextual Learning Resources

In the digital native era, many IRE learning resources can be accessed via the internet through various means, such as online learning platforms, educational videos on YouTube and TikTok, downloads of e-books or digital libraries, journals, online discussion forums, and learning applications.[13] The internet provides access to a variety of multimedia materials, literature, and global resources that can enrich students' insights. Access to learning resources is no longer limited to physical classrooms or libraries but extends to the global internet network. This transformation offers unprecedented flexibility, personalization, and interactivity.

The internet also provides ease of access to social media. Social media, which was previously a platform for interaction, has now also been widely used as a learning

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[11] Dina Novela, Ari Suriani, and Sahun Nisa, "Implementasi Pembelajaran Inovatif Melalui Media Digital Di Sekolah Dasar," *Journal of Practice Learning and Educational Development* 4, no. 2 (2024): 100–105, https://doi.org/10.58737/jpled.v4i2.283.

[12] Aldila Siddiq Hastomo, "Efektivitas Media Pembelajaran E-Learning Terhadap Prestasi Belajar Pendidikan Agama Islam Siswa Di SMA Negeri 1 Yogyakarta" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2014), ttp://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/11217.

[13] Lulu Anwariyah and Nur Ali Yasin, "Transformasi Pembelajaran Di Era Digital : Pemanfaatan Internet Sebagai Sumber Belajar Yang Inovatif," *Jurnal Kajian Dan Inovasi Ilmu* 1, no. 1 (2025): 18–26, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.64123/jkii.v1.i1.4.

medium. Take TikTok, the most popular social media among young people; TikTok can be used as a learning medium that allows students to access anytime and anywhere. TikTok has advantages; besides being a popular social media, with TikTok, IRE learning materials can be packaged more attractively in the form of videos with adjustable durations. Previous research also mentions that the TikTok application is very possible for developing IRE teaching materials at SMA Negeri 1 Malang.[14] However, teachers in utilizing TikTok as a learning medium must certainly be skilled in video editing using additional applications like Benime, Text Voice Free, Picsart, Kine Master, Video to MP3 Converter, CapCut, and others.

Besides social media, in the context of Islamic Religious Education, the internet provides access to thousands of digital books, tafsir (Quranic exegesis), lecture videos from various scholars, and virtual tours to Islamic historical sites. IRE can utilize this to make material more contextual and authentic (for example, learning about Hajj through VR simulation). The internet has now become an inseparable part of human life; the internet network has become a necessity for everyone, including students. In the learning process, students can utilize the internet network to search for IRE learning materials on various internet platforms, whether on social media to find videos and images, digital libraries to find books and scientific articles in PDF form, to accessing supporting applications for IRE learning such as Digital Qur'an, hadith applications like Maktabah Syamilah, and many more. However, it is an important note for teachers that students in utilizing the internet to search for IRE learning materials need supervision and an understanding of digital literacy, so students can choose credible materials or literature from trustworthy sources.

Utilization of Gamification and Interactive Media

Gamification is utilized in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning to increase student interest, motivation, and learning outcomes through game elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges. Digital Natives enjoy challenges and rewards. IRE can apply gamification[15] (for example, interactive quizzes, leaderboards for memorization, or digital escape rooms with fiqh themes) to increase student motivation and engagement with religious material. The utilization of gamification and interactive media makes learning more interesting, interactive, and fun, and encourages students to be more active and responsible for their learning. The ways to apply gamification and interactive media in IRE learning are:

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[14] Wiwi Dwi Daniyarti et al., "Pengembangan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Melalui Pemanfaatan Aplikasi Tik-Tok Untuk Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Di SMP Negeri 1 Malang," *Tarbawiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan* 08, no. 02 (2024): 85–105, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32332/tarbawiyah.v8i2.9769.

[15] Georgios Lampropoulos and Kinshuk, "Virtual Reality and Gamification in Education : A Systematic Review," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 72, no. 3 (2024): 1691–1785, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-024-10351-3.

a. Using game elements: teachers can integrate elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges for materials like Quran memorization, understanding hadith, or fiqh discussions.

b. Using interactive platforms based on gamification like Quizizz, Kahoot, or Educaplay to create engaging digital quizzes.

c. Ensuring alignment with Islamic values; elements like competition should be designed to encourage cooperation, not negative rivalry, and be in accordance with Islamic values.

d. Adjusting to resources; gamification can be applied using simple tools without always requiring special applications; the most important thing is a clear concept and achieved objectives.

Gamification in learning is actually not new; the learning process using game methods was done before the digital era. However, gamification in learning in the current digital era certainly involves utilizing game platforms specifically designed for learning such as Quizizz, Kahoot, Educaplay, and others. The use of gamification and interactive media is to make learning more active and encourage student participation in the learning process.[16] Thus, effective IRE learning is created.

Collaboration and Global Learning Communities

Collaboration in learning (often called Collaborative Learning) is an educational approach in which a group of students work together to complete a task, explore a topic, or solve a problem.[17] This approach is very important because it not only focuses on academic results but also develops essential social and emotional skills for the real world. Collaborative learning in the digital era is a learning approach that emphasizes cooperation among learners by utilizing digital technology to achieve common learning goals. Collaborative learning in the digital era combines the principles of group work (collaboration) with technological support such as the internet, online learning platforms, and communication applications. Learners not only learn from the teacher but also actively learn from each other.[18] Collaborative IRE learning is very important for enhancing cooperation and communication among students, considering that cooperation and communication skills are highly needed soft skills in the 21st century. Because the modern world demands individuals capable of interacting, collaborating, and conveying ideas effectively in various contexts.

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[16] Fawaidatun R. N et al., "Pembelajaran Inovatif Berbasis Aplikasi Quizizz Pada Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Dan Hasil Belajar Anak," *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 6, no. 2 (2023): 311–320, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v6i2.562.

[17] Lucas Paulsen, Susanne Dau, and Jacob Davidsen, "Designing for Collaborative Learning in Immersive Virtual Reality : A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Electrical Systems and Information Technology* 28, no. 63 (2024): 1–17, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10055-024-00975-4.

[18] Juan Gabriel Mongkau and Richard Daniel Herdi Pangkey, "Kurikulum Merdeka: Memperkuat Keterampilan Abad 21 Untuk Generasi Emas," *Journal on Education* 06, no. 04 (2024): 22018–30, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i4.6323.

Technology facilitates cross-school, even cross-country IRE discussions through online forums or webinars. Webinars can become discussion forums on Islamic Religious Education materials and contemporary issues relevant to Muslim youth. Students can expand their knowledge about religion outside the formal learning context. Access to global communities allows students to learn IRE in a more inclusive and open manner with the modern world. Teachers can invite students to participate in Islamic religious discussion forums or IRE webinars to provide a learning experience with the global community, making IRE learning more interesting, certainly with guidance and supervision from the IRE teacher.

Challenges of IRE Learning in the Digital Native Era

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning in the digital native era faces various complex challenges along with the rapid development of science and technology. The flow of globalization and digitalization brings major changes in mindset, lifestyle, and how students obtain information. Religious values must compete with various digital content that is not always in line with Islamic teachings, so students' attention and interest in IRE material often decline. This condition demands that IRE learning be presented more contextually, attractively, and relevantly to daily life.

The next challenge lies in learning methods and strategies that are still conventional. Amidst the character of students familiar with technology, IRE learning that only emphasizes one-way lectures is less capable of developing a deep understanding and practice of Islamic values. Teachers are required not only to master the material but also to be able to utilize digital media, collaborative learning, and student-centered approaches so that the values of faith, morality, and worship can be well understood and internalized.

Furthermore, challenges in IRE learning in the digital native era are also related to the formation of student character and morals. The influence of popular culture, social media, and global social interactions can impact attitudes and behaviors that are less in accordance with Islamic teachings. Therefore, IRE learning is not enough to focus only on cognitive aspects but must emphasize exemplary behavior, habituation, and the integration of Islamic values in all educational activities. Synergy between teachers, schools, families, and society becomes the key to addressing these challenges so that Islamic religious education remains relevant and meaningful in the modern era. The digital native era presents many opportunities for Islamic Religious Education learning. However, behind these opportunities, there are serious challenges that IRE must overcome, as follows:

Misinformation and Religious Radicalism (Hoaxes)

Free access to the internet means students are exposed to shallow, extreme, or radical religious interpretations. The main task of IRE teachers now is to teach critical

thinking skills to filter information,[19] not merely deliver material. Misinformation in the digital era is one of the biggest challenges faced by modern society because it touches various aspects of life, from politics, health, to social order, and religion. Moreover, misinformation or hoaxes, content laden with religious radicalism, is often circulated by irresponsible parties for specific interests. Certainly, misinformation or hoaxes and content laden with religious radicalism can trigger tension and create disharmonious life.[20] Digitalization provides a perfect platform for the rapid and massive spread of misinformation and religious radicalism:

a. Social Media and Messaging Apps: Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and especially WhatsApp/Telegram groups, allow false information to go viral in seconds.

b. Filter Bubbles and Echo Chambers: Digital algorithms tend to present content that aligns with the user's views and beliefs (confirmation bias). This traps users in "bubbles" that continuously reinforce the misinformation they believe, making them increasingly closed to conflicting facts.

c. Manipulative Technology: The use of sophisticated technology like Deepfake (manipulating video, images, and sound using AI) makes misinformation appear very authentic and difficult to distinguish from genuine content.

d. Sensational Headlines (Clickbait): Misinformation often uses highly provocative, emotional, or bombastic headlines to attract clicks and encourage people to share it immediately without critically reading the content.

Examples of misinformation and religious radicalism in cyberspace include narrow and erroneous interpretations of holy verses (for example, simplifying the meaning of jihad to acts of violence or terrorism) spread through digital content. Content containing provocation, incitement, and sowing discord against other groups (both interfaith and within one religion) is spread massively to create enmity and intolerance.

Radical groups package their content with attractive visuals, touching narratives, and seemingly logical arguments, utilizing social media (such as YouTube, Telegram/WhatsApp groups, to hidden websites) to provoke feelings of anger, injustice, or heroism in potential recruits.

Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in preventing misinformation (hoaxes) and religious radicalism in the digital space, by teaching a moderate and tolerant understanding of Islam, promoting values of peace, and equipping students

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[19] Muhammad Umar Ibnu Malik and Muhammad Labib, "Fact-Checking Dan Literasi Informasi Berbasis Moderasi Beragama: Strategi Deradikalisasi Di Perguruan Tinggi," *Jurnal Penelitian Agama* 26, no. 1 (2025): 115–36.

[20] Nafi Muthohirin, "Radikalisme Islam Dan Pergerakannya Di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Afkaruna* 11, no. 2 (2015): 240–59, https://doi.org/10.18196/AIIJIS.2015.0050; Olih Solihin, Yuni Mogot, and Fajar Adi, "The Dynamic of Hoax News in The Digital Era: Implication for Media Credibility and Public Perception," in *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Business, Economics, Social Sciences, and Humanities - Humanities and Social Sciences Track (ICOBEST-HSS 2025*, 2025, 235–45.

with critical thinking and skills to filter false information. With a dialogical approach in IRE learning, IRE teachers can build strong character and prevent exposure to extremist ideology. Furthermore, it is necessary to strengthen students' religious understanding; with strong religious understanding, students are not easily swayed by misleading issues spread through hoaxes and religious radicalism on the internet.

Decline in Social Interaction and Character Education

Learning that is overly dependent on screens can reduce face-to-face interaction and the emotional/character education that should be gained from teacher role-modeling and in-depth discussions.[21] The aspects of adab (etiquette) and akhlak (morality) are vulnerable to erosion. The decline in face-to-face social interaction is one of the negative impacts often associated with increased digitalization and excessive use of technology, especially social media.[22] Many people, especially teenagers and young adults, tend to prefer communicating through social media, instant messaging apps, or other online platforms rather than interacting directly.

Excessive use of technology can lead to social isolation and feelings of loneliness, especially if online interactions replace important real-world interactions essential for emotional well-being. The habit of constantly checking phones while with others (the phenomenon of phubbing) can reduce the quality of time and disrupt personal relationships. Digital communication often lacks important non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice that can only be obtained in face-to-face interaction. This can make interactions more superficial or easily misunderstood.[23]

Digital technology, especially social media algorithms, can create filter bubbles where individuals are only exposed to people and information with similar views. This undermines healthy social dialogue and can worsen social polarization. Constant exposure to the "perfect lives" of others on social media can lead to feelings of inferiority, dissatisfaction, anxiety, and even depression. Excessive dependence on digital devices and social media can lead to other mental health problems. The decline in social interaction occurs when technology is used excessively or as the primary substitute for face-to-face interaction. Balanced and wise use is the solution to harnessing the benefits of digitalization without sacrificing healthy and quality social relationships in the real world.

Direct communication from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education is the delivery of messages or Islamic values conducted face-to-face (direct interaction). Direct communication in Islam aims to build harmonious relationships, mutual support, and

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[21] Ghani Ahmad Haidar and Hikmah Maulani, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Membina Karakter Siswa Di Era Digital," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2025): 234–41.

[22] Ulpaini Roudhotur Rohimai et al., "Value-Based Inquiry Learning Approach in Shaping The Morality of The Digital Native Generation," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2025): 341–52.

[23] Muhammad Candra Syahputra and Dewi Puspo Rini, "Internalisasi Paham Kesalehan Digital Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Di Era Cyberculture," *OASIS: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Islam* 5, no. 1 (2021): 33–41, https://doi.org/10.24235/oasis.v5i2.7859.

realize justice, peace, and goodness in this world and the hereafter. Direct communication can also build positive emotional relationships, minimize misunderstandings, build trust/credibility, and allow the expression of polite manners and noble character (*akhlakul karimah*). [24] The importance of face-to-face communication for strengthening social relationships; direct face-to-face communication enables interaction at a deeper psychological level, fostering feelings of closeness, comfort, and, importantly, strengthening social bonds and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*).

Teacher Digital Divide

The digital divide among teachers refers to the gap in access and ability to utilize digital technology for learning. This is caused by several factors, such as infrastructure limitations (internet and devices), economic capability, and low digital literacy. [25] Consequently, teachers experiencing the digital divide face difficulties in designing and implementing effective and interactive technology or internet-based learning. Many teachers are not adequately trained in using technology for teaching, making digital learning less effective.

Teachers lacking digital skills will fall behind in facing 21st-century Education. Not all IRE teachers (especially Digital Immigrants) have the same proficiency in utilizing technology. Lack of adequate training and infrastructure hinders optimal technology integration. Solutions to overcome the digital divide among teachers require a collaborative and multi-sectoral approach focused on improving access, skills training, and continuous support. The government needs to expand the reach of cheap and stable internet networks, especially in 3T areas (disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost) by strengthening cooperation (multi-sector) between the central government, local governments, and private parties (technology providers) to ensure digitalization efforts run well, provide training and improvement of digital skills for teachers. By implementing these solutions comprehensively, the digital divide among teachers can be minimized, so that the overall quality of Education can be improved and equalized across all regions of Indonesia.

Divided Attention (Attention Span)

The digital native generation (Gen Z and Millennials) tends to consume information that is short and concise, following trends in the online world and the influence of social media distractions.[26] Video content, reels, on various social media platforms can present content with short durations but with dense and accurate information. Islamic Religious Education material for the Digital Native Generation

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[24] Muhammad Marcel Irshandi, "Overcoming Challenges in P5 Implementation : Teachers' Strategies for Digital Native Students," *Jurnal Paedagogy: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan* 12, no. 3 (2025): 876–84.

[25] Cendy Lestari et al., "Kesenjangan Digital Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Pendidikan," *RISOMA : Jurnal Riset Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan* 3, no. 4 (2025): 1–16, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62383/risoma.v3i4.783.

needs to be delivered briefly, relevantly, and by utilizing technology to maintain student interest. Topics delivered must be connected to the challenges and contemporary issues they face. The tendency of Digital Natives, accustomed to short content (like TikTok or Reels), causes their attention span to become short. IRE must present material in concise, attractive, and relevant formats without sacrificing substantive depth.

Integrated IRE Learning Model in the Digital Native Era: Between Islam, Technology, and Exemplary Behavior

An integrated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning model in the digital native era has become an unavoidable necessity. The digital native generation grows and develops in an environment saturated with technology, instant information, and social media. This condition demands that IRE learning not only focus on transferring religious knowledge but also be able to integrate Islamic values with the digital life realities faced by students daily. The digital era presents challenges as well as opportunities for IRE learning. On one hand, the torrential flow of information can influence students' religious understanding and attitudes. On the other hand, technology opens space for more creative, interactive, and contextual learning innovations. The integrated IRE learning model emerges as an effort to bridge Islamic teachings with technological development so that Islamic values remain relevant and grounded.

Integrated IRE learning emphasizes the integration between aspects of faith, worship, morality, and muamalah (social interactions) with knowledge and technology. IRE material is not taught separately from real life but is linked to social, cultural, and digital phenomena. Thus, students are able to understand that Islam is a comprehensive teaching capable of answering the problems of the times. The utilization of digital technology in integrated IRE learning becomes one of the main characteristics in the digital native era. Media such as instructional videos, digital Quran applications, e-learning platforms, and educational social media can be used to enrich the learning experience. Technology is not positioned as a goal but as a means to instill Islamic values more effectively and attractively.

Besides mastery of technology, the exemplary behavior of IRE teachers holds a central role in the integrated learning model. Amidst digital sophistication, students still need educator figures who can become real examples in attitude, speech, and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. This exemplary behavior becomes a balance between digital intelligence and the formation of Islamic character. The integrated IRE learning model also encourages active and collaborative learning. Students are invited to discuss, think critically, and solve religious problems that arise in digital life, such as social media ethics, hoaxes, and consumptive culture. This process helps students internalize Islamic values reflectively, not just through memorization.

The integration of Islam and technology in IRE learning also strengthens the development of 21st-century skills. Through project activities, digital presentations, and online discussions, students are trained to communicate, cooperate, and think critically based on Islamic values. Thus, IRE learning contributes to shaping a generation of

Muslims who are religious as well as competent. The role of family and environment also becomes an important part of the success of the integrated IRE learning model. Values instilled in school need to be supported by exemplary behavior at home and in society. Synergy between school, family, and the digital environment will strengthen the continuous formation of student character.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the integrated IRE learning model in the digital native era is not free from various challenges. Limitations in teachers' digital competencies, differences in technology access, and low digital literacy among students can become obstacles. Therefore, increasing educator capacity and sustainable educational policy support are needed. Thus, the integrated IRE learning model in the digital native era is a strategic approach that connects Islam, technology, and exemplary behavior in unity. Through innovative, contextual, and value-oriented learning, IRE has a great opportunity to give birth to a generation of Muslims who are faithful, have noble character, are digitally literate, and are ready to face the challenges of the times.

CONCLUSION

The digital native generation, which grows and interacts naturally with digital technology, brings new dynamics to various aspects of life, including in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning. This condition presents both opportunities and challenges for IRE learning to remain relevant, profound, and effective amidst rapid social and technological changes. Therefore, IRE learning in the digital native era can no longer rely on conventional approaches but requires a new paradigm that is adaptive and integrative.

Theoretically, IRE learning in the digital native era needs to be based on the principle of integration that combines Islamic values, the utilization of technology, and the exemplary behavior of educators. This approach aligns with constructivist theory and contextual learning that positions learners as active subjects in building religious understanding through meaningful learning experiences. Islamic values are not only understood normatively but are contextualized with the realities of digital life so that learners are able to interpret Islamic teachings relevantly and applicably. Furthermore, theoretically, the concepts of digital literacy and character education become important foundations in integrative IRE learning. Learning is directed towards forming students' ethical awareness in using technology, so they are able to filter information, be critical of digital content, and make Islamic teachings a guideline for interacting in the digital space. Thus, IRE functions not only as a transfer of religious knowledge but also as a shaper of morals and religious attitudes in the digital era.

In practical implementation, this integration can be realized through the utilization of digital media and platforms as means for IRE learning. Teachers can use interactive videos, digital Quran applications, online discussions, and projects based on contemporary issues such as social media ethics, hoaxes, and digital tolerance. These activities allow learners to connect IRE material with real experiences they face in daily

digital life. Another practical implementation lies in the role of IRE teachers as digital role models. Teachers are not only required to master technology but also to demonstrate wise, polite, and responsible attitudes in the use of digital media. This exemplary behavior becomes a key factor in internalizing Islamic values, because learners learn not only from the material presented but also from the real behavior of their educators.

The ultimate goal of integrative IRE learning in the digital native era is not merely to produce learners with Islamic knowledge but to shape students who possess digital wisdom or digital piety. Digital piety is reflected in the ability to use technology as a means to strengthen faith, spread rahmatan lil 'alamin (mercy to all creation) values, and contribute positively to building a civilization with noble character. With a strong theoretical approach and contextual practical implementation, IRE learning has a great opportunity to answer challenges and utilize opportunities in the digital native era.

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