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Innovation in Islamic Education Learning in the Digital Era to Address Multicultural Challenges

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze innovation in Islamic education learning in the digital era in addressing multicultural challenges. This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method based on the framework proposed by Barbara Kitchenham, consisting of planning, conducting, and reporting stages. Data were collected from relevant scientific publications indexed in Google Scholar, Scopus, and ScienceDirect, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns across studies. The findings indicate that innovation in Islamic education learning is primarily reflected in three aspects: the integration of digital technology, the application of innovative pedagogical models, and the adoption of student-centered learning approaches. At the same time, multicultural challenges include diverse student backgrounds, limited understanding of tolerance, and exposure to uncontrolled digital information. The study further reveals that the integration of digital innovation with multicultural values—through interactive learning media, project-based learning, and the strengthening of digital literacy—plays a significant role in fostering inclusive and tolerant attitudes among students. These findings highlight the importance of developing integrative curricula, enhancing teachers' competencies, and promoting collaborative learning environments to support effective Islamic education in the digital era.

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Introduction

Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, morality, and spirituality in the midst of rapid societal transformation (Mansur et al., 2023). In the digital era, characterized by the advancement of information and communication technologies, learning processes are no longer confined to conventional classroom settings but have expanded into flexible and interactive virtual environments. This transformation necessitates innovation in Islamic education to ensure its relevance to the needs of the digital generation. Furthermore, changes in students' mindsets and learning styles, which are increasingly adaptive to technology, present additional challenges for educators (Anggara & Darlis, 2019). At the same time, contemporary global society is confronted with increasingly complex multicultural realities, marked by diversity in ethnicity, religion, culture, and language (Pohan et al., 2024). This condition requires the development of tolerance, inclusivity, and adaptive social skills. Therefore, Islamic education must not only adopt technological innovation but also integrate multicultural values into the learning process.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the use of digital technology in education can enhance the effectiveness and quality of learning (Fadilah et al., 2025). Digital platforms such as e-learning systems, social media, and educational applications enable more engaging, interactive, and accessible learning experiences. In addition, technology-based learning promotes collaborative and participatory learning environments (Syarnubi et al., 2023). Other studies emphasize the importance of implementing innovative learning models, such as student-centered learning, to increase student engagement (Hidayaturrahman, 2022). Meanwhile, research on multicultural education highlights the necessity of integrating values such as tolerance, religious moderation, and inclusivity into Islamic education (Kustanto et al., 2025). However, several challenges remain, including students' limited digital literacy and the widespread dissemination of information that may not align with Islamic values (Nasution, 2023; AS et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of research on digital learning innovation and multicultural education, these areas are often examined separately, resulting in limited understanding of their integration within Islamic education contexts. Most existing studies tend to focus either on technological aspects or pedagogical approaches without comprehensively addressing multicultural challenges faced by students. Moreover, there is a lack of studies employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to systematically map patterns of innovation in Islamic education in the digital era from a multicultural perspective. Therefore, a more integrative and comprehensive analysis is needed to bridge this gap.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze innovation in Islamic education learning in the digital era in addressing multicultural challenges using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The research questions are: (1) what forms of innovation are implemented in Islamic education in the digital era, and (2) how do these innovations address multicultural challenges in the learning process. The novelty of this study lies in its systematic and comprehensive integration of digital learning innovation with multicultural values within the context of Islamic education. This study is expected to contribute conceptually to the development of innovative, inclusive, and contextually relevant Islamic education in the digital age.

Method

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to systematically examine innovation in Islamic education learning in the digital era in addressing multicultural challenges (Pringgar & Rizaldy, 2020). The research design follows the stages proposed by Barbara Kitchenham, namely planning, conducting, and reporting. The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from relevant scientific journal articles, conference proceedings, and academic books. Data were collected from databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ScienceDirect, focusing on publications from the last 5–10 years. The inclusion criteria include studies that discuss digital-based innovation in Islamic education and multicultural education, while the exclusion criteria cover irrelevant articles, studies with unclear methodologies, and duplicated publications.

The data collection procedure was conducted through several stages, namely identification, selection, and data extraction. In the identification stage, the researcher used keywords such as “innovation in Islamic education learning,” “digital Islamic education,” and “multicultural education” to locate relevant literature. The selection stage involved reviewing titles, abstracts, and full texts to ensure alignment with the research focus. Subsequently, data extraction was carried out by collecting essential information, including authors, publication year, research objectives, methods, and key findings. This process aimed to systematically organize the data to facilitate the analysis stage.

The data analysis technique employed in this study is thematic analysis, which involves identifying, categorizing, and interpreting patterns across the reviewed literature. The extracted data were grouped into several main themes, such as forms of learning innovation, the use of digital technology, and multicultural approaches in Islamic education. To ensure validity and reliability, the quality of the sources was evaluated, and data triangulation was conducted by comparing findings across different studies. The results of the analysis are presented in a descriptive-analytical manner to provide a comprehensive overview of innovation in Islamic education learning in the digital era in addressing multicultural challenges.

Result

Digital Innovation in Islamic Education Learning

The results of the literature review indicate that digital innovation in Islamic education learning is predominantly reflected in the integration of technology as a primary learning medium. Various studies consistently highlight the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), educational applications, video-based learning, and social media platforms in facilitating the teaching and learning process. These digital tools enable flexible access to learning materials, allowing students to engage with content beyond spatial and temporal limitations.

The findings also reveal that digital technology contributes to increased student engagement through interactive and visually enriched learning content. Several studies report that the use of multimedia elements, such as animations, infographics, and instructional videos, enhances students’ understanding of abstract concepts in Islamic

education. In addition, digital platforms support asynchronous and synchronous learning interactions, promoting more dynamic communication between teachers and students.

Furthermore, the results indicate a shift toward the adoption of innovative pedagogical models supported by digital technology. Approaches such as blended learning, problem-based learning, and project-based learning are frequently implemented in Islamic education contexts. These models emphasize active student participation and collaborative learning processes.

Multicultural Challenges in Islamic Education

The review findings identify several key multicultural challenges in Islamic education learning. One of the primary challenges is the diversity of students' backgrounds, including differences in culture, social status, religious understanding, and language. These differences influence students' perspectives and interactions within the learning environment.

Another significant challenge identified across the studies is the limited level of students' understanding of tolerance and inclusivity. Some studies report that students tend to exhibit rigid interpretations of religious teachings, which may affect their attitudes toward diversity. This condition highlights the complexity of integrating multicultural values within Islamic education.

In addition, the rapid development of digital technology presents challenges related to the dissemination of information. The findings indicate that students are frequently exposed to unverified and uncontrolled digital content, which may not align with moderate and inclusive Islamic values. This exposure potentially influences students' perspectives and learning behaviors.

The results also show that teachers' competencies remain a critical issue. Several studies reveal that not all educators possess adequate skills in implementing multicultural-based and technology-integrated learning strategies. This limitation affects the effectiveness of learning in addressing multicultural challenges.

Integration of Digital Innovation and Multicultural Values

The findings demonstrate that the integration of digital innovation with multicultural values has been implemented through various approaches in Islamic education. One of the most frequently identified strategies is the use of digital media to introduce multicultural perspectives. Educational videos, digital storytelling, and online learning content are used to present examples of diversity and social interaction.

In addition, project-based learning is identified as an effective approach to integrating multicultural values. Through collaborative activities, students are encouraged to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, which supports the development of mutual understanding and cooperation.

The results also indicate the importance of strengthening digital literacy alongside religious literacy. Several studies emphasize that students need the ability to critically evaluate digital information, particularly in relation to religious content. This competency is considered essential in navigating the digital environment.

Moreover, digital-based collaborative learning environments are found to facilitate interaction among students with diverse backgrounds. These interactions support the

development of communication skills and awareness of diversity within the learning process.

Strengthening Strategies in Islamic Education Learning

The literature review identifies several strategies for strengthening Islamic education learning in the digital and multicultural context. First, the development of an integrative curriculum that incorporates multicultural values is widely emphasized. This includes embedding principles such as tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for diversity within the learning content.

Second, improving teachers' competencies is highlighted as a key factor. The findings show that effective implementation of digital and multicultural learning requires teachers to possess pedagogical, professional, and technological skills.

Third, the creation of collaborative learning environments involving multiple stakeholders, such as schools, families, and communities, is identified as an important strategy. Digital technology supports this collaboration through online communication and group-based activities.

Finally, strengthening digital literacy is consistently emphasized across the reviewed studies. The ability to access, evaluate, and utilize digital information critically is considered essential for both students and educators in the digital era.

Discussion

The Role of Digital Innovation in Enhancing Islamic Education Learning

The findings indicate that digital innovation plays a significant role in transforming Islamic education learning, particularly in increasing accessibility and student engagement. The integration of digital technology enables learning to move beyond traditional classroom boundaries, allowing students to access materials more flexibly. This supports the view that digital learning environments are more adaptive to the characteristics of contemporary learners, who are highly familiar with technology.

Moreover, the use of interactive media, such as videos, animations, and digital platforms, contributes to improving students' comprehension of abstract religious concepts. This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through interactive and meaningful learning experiences. In this context, digital tools function not only as instructional media but also as facilitators of deeper cognitive engagement.

The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning models further reinforces the effectiveness of digital innovation. Approaches such as project-based and problem-based learning encourage active participation, critical thinking, and collaboration. These findings confirm that innovation in Islamic education is not limited to technological adoption but also involves pedagogical transformation.

Multicultural Challenges in the Context of Islamic Education

The results highlight that multicultural diversity presents both opportunities and challenges in Islamic education. Differences in students' cultural, social, and religious backgrounds influence how learning is perceived and interpreted. Without appropriate strategies, such diversity may lead to misunderstandings or exclusive attitudes.

From a theoretical perspective, multicultural education emphasizes the importance of inclusivity, equality, and respect for diversity. In the context of Islamic education, these values are strongly grounded in Islamic teachings. This is reflected in the Qur'anic verse (Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13):

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

This verse emphasizes the concept of *lita'arafu* (mutual understanding), which serves as a foundational principle for fostering tolerance and harmonious interaction in multicultural educational settings. It indicates that diversity is not a barrier but a means to promote understanding and social cohesion.

However, the findings also reveal that students' limited understanding of tolerance remains a significant issue. This condition may be influenced by rigid interpretations of religious teachings and limited exposure to diverse perspectives. In addition, the rapid spread of digital information introduces new challenges, as students may encounter content that promotes intolerance or misinterpretation of religious values.

The Importance of Integrating Digital Innovation and Multicultural Values

The integration of digital innovation and multicultural values emerges as a strategic solution to address the identified challenges. Digital technology provides opportunities to introduce diverse perspectives through multimedia content, enabling students to observe and understand real-life examples of cultural and social diversity.

Project-based learning and collaborative activities play a crucial role in this integration process. Through these approaches, students engage in interactive learning experiences that foster cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect. This supports the idea that social interaction is essential in developing multicultural awareness and interpersonal skills.

In addition, strengthening digital literacy is a key factor in ensuring that students can navigate the digital environment critically. The ability to evaluate information is particularly important in the context of religious learning, where misinterpretation can lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, digital literacy should be integrated with religious literacy to create a balanced and contextual understanding of Islamic teachings.

Furthermore, the role of educators is central in facilitating this integration. Teachers are required to not only master digital tools but also possess intercultural competence to manage diverse learning environments effectively. This highlights the need for continuous professional development to support innovative and inclusive teaching practices.

Implications for Islamic Education in the Digital Era

The findings of this study have several important implications for the development of Islamic education. First, curriculum design should incorporate both digital innovation and multicultural values in an integrated manner. This approach ensures that learning is not only technologically relevant but also socially responsive.

Second, educational institutions need to prioritize the development of teachers' competencies, particularly in digital pedagogy and multicultural education. Without adequate teacher capacity, the implementation of innovation will remain limited.

Third, the creation of collaborative learning environments involving schools, families, and communities is essential in reinforcing the values taught in the classroom. Digital technology can support this collaboration through various online platforms and communication tools.

Finally, the emphasis on digital and multicultural literacy reflects the need to prepare students for the complexities of modern society. Islamic education, therefore, must evolve to produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also inclusive, tolerant, and adaptive.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that innovation in Islamic education learning in the digital era is not merely a technological adaptation but a comprehensive transformation that integrates digital tools, pedagogical approaches, and multicultural values. The findings highlight that the effective combination of digital technology, student-centered learning models, and multicultural-oriented content contributes significantly to enhancing student engagement, learning effectiveness, and the development of inclusive and tolerant attitudes.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that multicultural challenges in the digital era cannot be addressed solely through conventional approaches. Instead, they require integrative strategies that combine digital innovation with the internalization of values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and religious moderation. In this regard, Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping learners who are not only digitally competent but also socially and culturally adaptive.

However, this study is limited by its reliance on a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on secondary data, which may not fully capture the complexity of real educational practices. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ empirical methods, such as field-based studies or experimental designs, to validate and extend these findings. Further studies are also encouraged to develop practical and applicable models of digital and multicultural-based Islamic education.

In addition, this study implies the need for continuous improvement in teachers' digital and pedagogical competencies, as well as the development of integrative curricula and collaborative learning environments. These efforts are essential to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the demands of the digital and multicultural era..

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