

## Curriculum Restructuring and Reorientation of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program in the Digital Era

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### ABSTRACT

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Technological disruption in the Society 5.0 era has triggered a shift in religious authority to virtual spaces and created a significant gap within the conventional curriculum of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program, which remains rigid and lacks technology integration. Employing a qualitative literature review approach with content analysis, this study elaborates on macro-policy reconstruction strategies for the PAI curriculum based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and blended learning. This reconstruction integrates pure Islamic sciences (ulûm al-dîn) with data literacy, technology, and contemporary science without diminishing fundamental religious subjects. This transformative-digital curriculum reorients the philosophical direction of graduates, enabling them to adaptively serve as Islamic education content creators, cyber counselors, and pioneers of religious moderation in the digital sphere. The synergy between updating formal technological aspects and internalizing Islamic spiritual values (core values) serves as the primary key to producing PAI graduates who are competent, competitive, and highly principled in the global era.



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## Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the higher education level plays a strategic role in shaping the character, morality, and moderate religious understanding of the nation's next generation. In the midst of changing times, the PAI Study Program is not only required to produce graduates who master theoretical

theology and pedagogy, but also practitioners who are capable of contextualizing Islamic values within a dynamic social life (Hasni, Ahmad 2025). Therefore, the PAI LPTK (Teacher Training Institute) curriculum should ideally be adaptive, visionary, and constantly relevant to the demands of the times, ensuring it does not create a gap between the academic world and the reality of the community's needs.

However, the arrival of the digital era characterized by technological disruption, artificial intelligence, and an information overload has fundamentally transformed the educational landscape. An epistemological challenge arises as traditional religious authority begins to shift into virtual spaces, where Generation Z and Alpha prefer seeking religious answers through digital platforms rather than referring to classical texts (Karyasa et al. n.d.). This phenomenon demands that PAI lecturers and students not be technologically illiterate, but instead be capable of converting these digital challenges into opportunities for innovative dawah and learning.

In addition to structural restructuring, the PAI Study Program also requires a reorientation of its curriculum's philosophical direction. This reorientation guides PAI graduates to not only become "classroom teachers" in a narrow sense, but also to serve as creators of friendly Islamic educational content, cyber-based religious counselors, and developers of inclusive digital learning media (Purna, Prof, and Saleh n.d.). Through this reorientation, the vision of the PAI study program will expand from merely fulfilling school administrative requirements to meeting the religious literacy needs of the global digital society.

The implementation of this restructuring and reorientation aligns with current government policies regarding higher education curriculum flexibility and digital transformation in the education sector. Reconstructing the PAI curriculum based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) integrated with 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration is the primary key for this study program to remain competitive and appealing to the younger generation (Silfiani et al. 2025). PAI must be able to prove that Islamic prophetic values can go hand in hand with the acceleration of cutting-edge technology.

The development of information and communication technology in the Society 5.0 era has disrupted various aspects of life, and the Islamic higher education sector is no exception. As one of the pillars producing strategic educators, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program carries a dual responsibility: to preserve sacred normative religious values while simultaneously formulating teaching methodologies that are contextual and adaptive to the advancements of the times (Hawa, Anni Malihatul 2025). The main challenge faced today is the emergence of a gap between rigid conventional doctrines and the characteristics of the digitally-literate (digital native) Generation Z and Alpha.

Islamic religious education must not get trapped in the romanticism of medieval methodologies that rely solely on textual memorization without critical interpretation. As put forward in recent literature studies, curriculum revitalization is absolutely necessary so that the process of transmission of knowledge and transformation of values can run simultaneously and effectively through the

mediation of digital platforms (Abdurrohman 2022). Therefore, an in-depth study regarding theoretical and practical restructuring within the PAI Study Program environment has become an urgent need to guarantee the relevance of graduates both in the job market and the wider society.

The digital era and the development of Society 5.0 have disrupted the landscape of Islamic higher education, demanding the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program to be adaptive and visionary in order to answer the challenges of the times. Currently, there is a shift of traditional religious authority into virtual spaces where the digital native generation (Gen Z and Alpha) tends to seek religious information through digital platforms. This phenomenon highlights a significant gap in the conventional PAI curriculum, which is considered rigid, overly teacher-centered, and lacking integration with modern technology, potentially producing graduates who are digitally illiterate.

Responding to these conditions, a comprehensive macro-level restructuring and reorientation of the curriculum has become an urgent sociological and academic necessity. Restructuring is carried out by overhauling the curriculum structure and learning outcomes based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE), as well as integrating pure Islamic sciences (*ulûm al-dîn*) with data, technological, and contemporary science literacy through modern learning methods such as blended learning. Meanwhile, reorientation is aimed at expanding the role of PAI graduates so that they do not merely become administrative classroom teachers, but are also capable of becoming inclusive Islamic educational content creators, cyber counselors, and pioneers of religious moderation in the digital sphere.

While the transformation of the digital technology-based "vessel" and methodology is absolutely necessary, the essence of the curriculum must never deny the roots of Islamic spiritual identity. The development of this transformative-digital curriculum must go hand in hand with the internalization of noble Islamic values (*core values*), digital ethics based on *akhlakul karimah* (noble character), and spiritual role-modeling (*uswah hasanah*). Consequently, the synergy between formal technological mastery and spiritual role-modeling will successfully produce PAI education graduates who are competent, innovative, competitive, and highly principled in the global era.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review (*library research*) method. Data were collected through searches of academic documents, reputable journals, curriculum textbooks, and higher education regulations related to the Islamic Religious Education cluster. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, verified through the triangulation of literature sources, to formulate a theoretical yet applicable framework for the reorientation of the PAI curriculum.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Technology Integration in Islamic Education

Digitalization must not be viewed merely as a threat to the originality of Islamic education, but must instead be conceptualized as an instrument for acceleration. Modern learning media based on the web, interactive applications, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Learning Management Systems (LMS) provide opportunities for PAI lecturers to present material visually, interactively, and deeply (Khairani et al. 2025). Conventional methods such as lectures and *sorogan* can be enriched through flipped classrooms or blended learning.

Nevertheless, the digitalization of PAI teaching brings significant ethical consequences. The presence of virtual spaces often reduces the aspect of role-modeling (*uswah hasanah*) that is usually gained from direct, physical interaction between teacher and student. Therefore, the digital competence of PAI educators must go beyond technical skills (*digital skills*); they are required to possess digital literacy grounded in *akhlakul karimah* (noble character) (Azra 2019). Technology is positioned as a medium, while the soul of education remains sourced from Islamic spiritual values.

The learning process of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia is undergoing a transition from conventional, human-centered methods toward the utilization of ICT as the center of the learning process to face the Society 5.0 era. Based on UNESCO's phases, the utilization of technology in Indonesia has currently only entered the second stage (application), which indicates that the integration of the internet and computer-based applications—such as text, audio, instructional videos, and interactive media—has not spread optimally due to resource limitations and the minimum digital competence of educators (J. P. Islam 2022). In fact, from an Islamic perspective, there is no doctrine that restricts the use of technology, and the integration of digital devices is scientifically proven to improve the quality of visualizing religious material, boost enthusiasm, and significantly increase student learning outcomes compared to lecture methods. Therefore, this discussion emphasizes that Islamic Studies teachers and lecturers are required to be more flexible, creative, and innovative in collaborating modern technology with Islamic values so that teaching no longer relies solely on textbooks and blackboards.

The advancement of digital technology has transformed the way humans communicate and build knowledge, so that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which has long been considered traditional, must be adapted with a digital approach to suit today's generation. The content of this article outlines technology integration strategies through the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive learning videos, educational mobile applications, short films, animation, and social media to present material that is contextual and relevant to students' concrete experiences. The use of these digital media makes it easier for students to access e-books, Islamic podcasts, and religious discussion forums anytime and anywhere, which simultaneously increases their learning independence and intrinsic motivation (Relevan 2025).

The integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era is proven to bring a significant positive impact in improving the quality, interactivity, and learning motivation of students. The utilization of various digital media—such as mobile applications, instructional videos, and e-learning platforms—is capable of transforming the delivery of PAI material to be more dynamic, personal,

and adaptive to the learning pace of each student (Khairani et al. 2025). Nevertheless, this implementation is faced with real challenges, including infrastructure limitations and access disparities between regions, low digital literacy among teachers and students, curriculum alignment barriers, as well as digital security and ethical issues.

The integration of information technology into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia is a strategic step toward creating a learning process that is more interactive, dynamic, and easily accessible for students. Viewed from the perspective of M. Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory, the adoption of technology in PAI is understood as the spread of new ideas through specific communication channels within a social system, encompassing five essential stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Although this digitalization offers great potential to boost student engagement through the exploration of reliable digital sources, its fieldwork implementation still faces several complex challenges, such as infrastructure limitations, resistance to changing traditional methods, and the demand to ensure that digital content remains aligned with Islamic values, morals, and ethics (Nareswari 2025). Therefore, the teacher's role is highly crucial in guiding the responsible use of digital tools, which must be balanced with well-prepared pedagogical planning and cross-sector collaboration among educational institutions, the government, and the community to achieve a holistic PAI curriculum transformation.

The integration of technology in Islamic education management is proven to provide a significant contribution to the escalation of teacher performance in the digital era through the implementation of e-learning and blended learning methods, as well as the utilization of various educational applications that optimize classroom management and administrative efficiency. The acceleration of educators' professional quality is also effectively accommodated through digital-based training programs, such as webinars, online certifications, and digital portfolio compilation. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this transformation is still faced with several crucial barriers, including the problems of the digital divide, the urgency of protecting religious values, and data security issues (Islamiyya 2025). To overcome these obstacles and ensure system continuity, a structured and systematic implementation phase is required, initiated from infrastructure needs analysis and the formation of a competent educational technology team to the execution of regular monitoring and evaluation.

## 2. Reconstruction of the PAI Study Program Curriculum Structure

To face global dynamics, the PAI Study Program needs to reconstruct its curriculum roadmap by incorporating future competencies without sacrificing core religious competencies. The future curriculum integrates data literacy, technological literacy, and human literacy (humanities) into Islamic courses (Wahyuni, Wandu, and Amriza 2026). As an example, the PAI Learning Media course is oriented toward creating educational digital dawah content, religious podcasts, and developing Android-based digital teaching materials.

The current curriculum structure of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in madrasahs is considered not fully relevant to answering contemporary educational challenges, such as the currents of globalization, digitalization, value crises, and the demands of 21st-century competencies. Literature reviews indicate that the division of PAI content into separate subjects—namely Al-Qur'an Hadith, Akidah Akhlak (Theology and Ethics), Fiqh (Jurisprudence), SKI (Islamic Cultural History), and Arabic—still tends to be fragmented and normative-textual, causing students to comprehend Islamic teachings partially and detached from their social realities. Furthermore, the implementation of new regulations, such as the P5RA activities (Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students and Rahmatan lil Alamin) in KMA (Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs) Number 450 of 2024, is still frequently positioned as a supplementary program rather than an structurally unified space for value integration (Manan et al. 2025). Therefore, a reconstruction of the PAI curriculum structure is absolutely necessary through an interdisciplinary integrative approach among subjects, contextualization of materials with modern challenges, and strengthening the role of teachers as creative curriculum developers. Through this reconstruction, madrasahs can reinforce their role as adaptive institutions to produce a Muslim generation that is not only digitally adept and critical, but also possesses a solid foundation of religious character and noble morals in the modern era.

The development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum using a social reconstruction approach is focused on integrating actual, real-world problems occurring within society into the learning materials. Through this approach, the educational process and students' learning experiences are realized through group activities that prioritize synergistic cooperation among students, teachers, and various other learning resources by utilizing science and technology to build a better society. Furthermore, the implementation of this curriculum is systematically designed through a learning paradigm that encompasses four main stages: the situation and theme analysis stage, the program design and proposal creation (Term of Reference) stage, the implementation of learning activity scenarios stage, and finally, the evaluation and feedback stage for future program improvement (P. A. Islam et al. n.d.).

The reconstruction of an adaptive Islamic education curriculum emerges as a tangible solution to tear down the dichotomous wall between religious sciences and secular sciences, which has long made learning feel rigid and left behind in the digital era. This concept no longer views science and technology as secular threats, but rather integrates them holistically with the value of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) as a unified direction of life. In practice, this reform transforms the conventional learning style—which is dominantly rote memorization—into a more vibrant experience

through 21st-century approaches (such as critical thinking and collaboration) and the ethical utilization of digital technology (Tsaniyah, Hidayah, and Saputri 2025). Although there are still major challenges in the field, such as technological illiteracy and resistance from educators who fear losing the "sacredness" of religious guidance, this adaptive curriculum is proven capable of breaking through those boundaries to give rise to a modern Qur'anic generation that is not only intellectually brilliant, but also spiritually mature and ready to answer the challenges of the times.

The table below illustrates the comparison of the conventional curriculum orientation with the proposed transformative-digital PAI curriculum model:

<b>Analysis Aspect</b>	<b>Conventional PAI Curriculum</b>	<b>Transformative-Digital PAI Curriculum</b>
Methodology	Dominantly teacher-centered with lecture methods.	Student-centered, based on blended learning & project-based learning.
Course Content	Focused on the mastery of normative texts and static theoretical understanding.	Integration of normative texts with digital social realities and contemporary science.
Evaluation	Relies on conventional written examinations and textual memorization.	Authentic assessment based on products, portfolios, and critical analysis.

**Fig. 1.** Curriculum orientation versus the transformative-digital PAI curriculum model

Based on the comparison above, it is evident that the curriculum restructuring does not intend to eliminate fundamental religious materials such as *Aqidah* (creed), *Akhlak* (morals), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), or *Ulumul Qur'an* (Quranic studies). Instead, this reform updates the 'vessel' and perspective of delivering these materials to make them more compatible with the modern reality of students' lives (Madjid n.d.). Consequently, graduates of the PAI Study Program will not be technologically illiterate; rather, they will be capable of becoming pioneers of religious moderation in cyberspace.

The development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum and learning in the modern era must be directed toward the integration of revealed values with modern pedagogical approaches in a systematic and sustainable manner. PAI should no longer be understood merely as a medium for the transfer of religious knowledge (*transfer of knowledge*), but rather as a process of character building, strengthening

faith, internalizing spiritual values, and fostering the social responsibility of students in order to produce an *insan kamil* (holistic human) generation. To overcome various real challenges such as low innovation in teaching methods, limited educator competence, less integrative curriculum, and symptoms of moral degradation, this article offers a conceptual research development model that integrates Research and Development (R&D) approaches such as the ADDIE model, Design-Based Research (DBR), constructivist models, humanistic approaches, kurikulum merdeka (independent curriculum), and Action Research synthesized with the principles of Islamic education and religious psychology (Samita et al. 2026).

The phenomenon of the humanism crisis and dehumanization in modern education is triggered by the dominance of the instrumental rationality paradigm and an overly pragmatic-utilitarian orientation. Although modernization has successfully improved technological efficiency and learning effectiveness, this market-oriented system tends to treat students as objects or instruments for labor production to meet global industrial demands. Consequently, a fundamental imbalance occurs where curriculum priorities are absorbed by cognitive academic achievements measured through test scores, while the dimensions of moral values, ethics, social empathy, and spiritual maturity become marginalized. In Indonesia itself, this crisis is visibly apparent through symptoms of moral degradation among the youth, rampant violence in school environments, and a lack of dialogic relations between teachers and students (Maret and Putri 2026).

## Conclusion

The transformation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program in the digital era is an academic and sociological necessity. Through a curriculum reorientation that integrates digital literacy with core Islamic values, the PAI Study Program can produce education graduates who are adaptive, innovative, and possessing high integrity. The implementation of blended learning, the reconstruction of outcome-based education (OBE) courses, and the strengthening of digital ethics are the main pillars of this restructuring. The synergy between mastery of formal technology and the spiritual role modeling of lecturers is key to successfully achieving holistic Islamic education goals.

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