

Integration of Technology and Innovation in Islamic Religious Education Learning Models in the Digital Era: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) faces significant challenges in adapting to the digital era, particularly following the post-COVID-19 shift from face-to-face to technology-mediated learning. Existing studies tend to examine digital platforms or models in isolation, without evaluating whether technology genuinely reinforces pedagogical quality or undermines Islamic character education values. This study aims to systematically synthesize and critically analyze the effectiveness of digital learning model innovations in PAI, focusing on three dimensions: (1) innovative pedagogical models; (2) educator competency (TPACK) and digital literacy; and (3) infrastructure equity and learning inclusivity. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA protocol was employed, reviewing 16 empirical articles from the Scopus database (2018–2026). Findings indicate that technology integration represents a fundamental pedagogical transformation, not mere digitization. Blended learning, flipped classrooms, and digital tools (LMS, AR, PDF Hyperlinks) have been proven to improve learning outcomes and student engagement. However, effectiveness is hampered by low TPACK mastery, urban-rural infrastructure disparities, and inadequate academic supervision. Technological innovation in PAI will only be meaningful when accompanied by holistic teacher capacity development, continuous managerial support, and inclusive infrastructure policies that bridge the digital divide.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is undergoing a fundamental transformation to adapt to the needs of the times, in which technology plays a vital role in driving that transformation (Siregar et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic massively altered learning models worldwide, transforming what was previously dominated by face-to-face instruction into network-based or online education (Yudiawan et al., 2021). This shift demands the integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge/TPACK) as a critical and mandatory competency for educators in order to create effective teaching (Dharin et al., 2025). The process of adapting digital instruments into teaching methods is no longer merely optional, but rather a professional responsibility to preserve the essence of religious education. Prior studies have progressively documented the transformation of PAI learning in response to digital demands, establishing a foundation of evidence that informs current practice. Research by Siregar et al., (2025) found that technology integration in PAI teaching practices in

Indonesia has significantly enhanced teachers' professional performance when supported by institutional guidance. Dharin et al., (2025) demonstrated through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) that the simultaneous mastery of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) is a statistically significant determinant of effective madrasah teaching. Atabik et al., (2025) confirmed through quasi-experimental evidence that the flipped classroom method substantially improves student comprehension by reserving classroom time exclusively for analytical elaboration. Posangi et al., (2025) further highlighted that without deliberate academic supervision and ICT mentoring, individual teacher quality in technology integration remains stagnant. Meanwhile, Mustafa et al., (2025) provided cross-national evidence from Abu Dhabi showing that Augmented Reality (AR) in Islamic education correlates positively with both intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. The development of a blended learning model with systematic steps (the B-PAS model) has been proven capable of teaching religious material contextually (Adhi et al., 2022). The flipped classroom innovation also facilitates student independence by shifting knowledge transfer to asynchronous spaces and maximizing classroom time for critical elaboration (Atabik et al., 2025). To bridge the infrastructure gap across various regions, the use of lightweight media such as PDF Hyperlinks has successfully facilitated significant student independent learning (Riwanda et al., 2024). Furthermore, the use of immersive technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) has begun to be explored and has been proven capable of stimulating students' intrinsic motivation in understanding Islamic teachings (Mustafa et al., 2025).

Despite these advances, a critical research gap persists that this study seeks to address. Prior studies tend to examine platforms or models in isolated, context-bound settings without cross-contextual synthesis or critical evaluation of whether technology genuinely reinforces pedagogical quality or inadvertently undermines the moral dimensions of Islamic character education. Educational digitalization is frequently reduced to merely moving textbook content to a screen, without considering psychological approaches, diverse intelligences, and the depth of higher-order thinking (HOTS). Moreover, the quality of PAI teachers' adaptation is consistently hindered by weak digital literacy and inadequate academic supervision (Fauzan et al., 2022; Posangi et al., 2025). These gaps collectively point to an urgent need for a systematic, cross-contextual synthesis that can evaluate what works, under what conditions, and for whom in digital PAI learning. This study aims to systematically, critically, and argumentatively synthesize and analyze the effectiveness of digital learning model innovations in PAI. This paper does not only map technology trends in use, but also examines in depth how cognitive approaches, educator competency readiness (TPACK), and infrastructure interact and determine the quality of learning outcomes. The results of this review are expected to provide a solid academic foundation for policymakers and educational institutions in designing PAI learning strategies in the Society 5.0 era in a more inclusive and sustainable manner. To achieve this aim, this study addresses three central research questions: (1) What innovative pedagogical models have been proven effective in digital PAI learning, and what are the conditions of their success? (2) How do educator competency factors, particularly TPACK mastery and digital literacy, determine the quality of PAI learning outcomes in the digital era? (3) To what extent does infrastructure equity, including access disparities and low-bandwidth solutions, shape the inclusivity and effectiveness of digital PAI learning?

2. METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design, adopting the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) standard reporting

guidelines. The SLR approach and PRISMA protocol were chosen because they provide a structured framework to minimize bias and ensure that the process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing articles is conducted objectively and comprehensively (Moher et al., 2009). The data collection process was conducted through searching the globally reputable academic database Scopus, exported on April 20, 2026. The literature search was formulated specifically using the following search query to ensure accuracy of results: (TITLE-ABS-KEY("digital learning media" OR "e-learning" OR "mobile learning" OR "blended learning" OR "online learning" OR "ICT" OR "technology integration" OR "instructional technology" OR "educational technology")) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY("Islamic education" OR "Islamic religious education" OR "Pendidikan Agama Islam" OR "Islamic school" OR "madrasah" OR "Islamic studies" OR "Muslim students")) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY("learning outcome" OR "student engagement" OR "motivation" OR "achievement" OR "effectiveness")). Article selection stages were based on inclusion criteria, namely: (1) empirical research journal articles in English; (2) focused on the pedagogical learning process of PAI (syntax, media, digital models); and (3) measuring direct impact on students (effectiveness, motivation, resilience). Exclusion criteria were applied to literature focused on administrative management (such as EMIS applications), leadership studies without a classroom teaching context, or subjects outside pure PAI (e.g., science education/ethnoscience). Based on the PRISMA flow, the initial identification stage found 24 articles. In the screening stage, 5 articles were excluded for focusing on administrative management and pure science learning. Of the remaining 19 full-text articles assessed for eligibility, 3 articles were further excluded for only addressing macro-level supervisor performance without discussing learning instruments. Ultimately, 16 articles met the inclusion criteria and were fully extracted for synthesis in the results and discussion section, as presented in Figure 1.

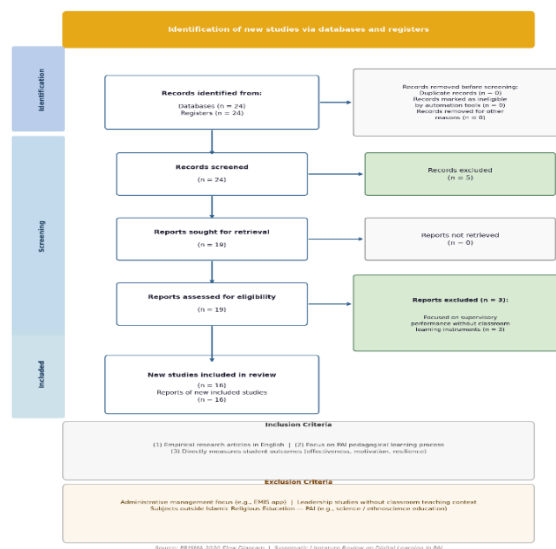


Figure 1. Article Selection Process (PRISMA Protocol)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The systematic literature search (Systematic Literature Review) yielded 16 empirical articles meeting the inclusion criteria. Based on the extraction of author affiliation data presented in Figure 2, Indonesia dominates absolutely as the country

with the most publications related to digital learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), accounting for 13 articles (81.25%). These studies are generally led by academics from State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN). Other countries contributing to this literature include Malaysia (2 articles), as well as Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait (each contributing 1 collaborative article).

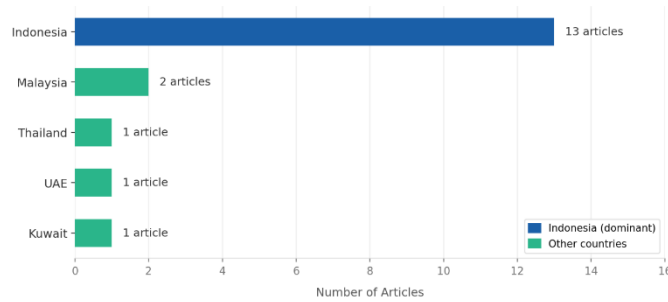


Figure 2. Distribution of Countries of Publication

Cumulatively, the 16 analyzed articles have garnered a total of 136 citations in the Scopus database. The distribution of article counts and citation acquisition per year shows a trend heavily influenced by the momentum of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic transition. Figure 3 presents the citation details for the 16 main articles extracted. This citation data is based on the Scopus database export retrieved on April 20, 2026. The figure is sorted from the article with the highest number of citations to those most recently published or with no citations yet. Articles with 0 citations are generally those recently published (in 2025) or with early access status, meaning their citations in the Scopus database are still in the incubation phase and will continue to grow.

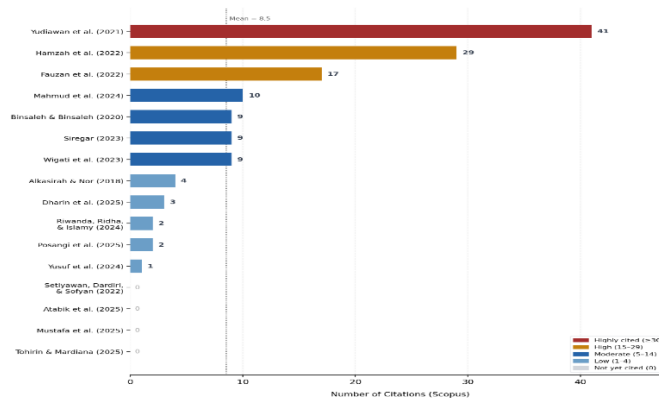


Figure 3. Per-article Citation Distribution

This data indicates that discourse on technology in PAI has transitioned from merely being an "emergency pandemic response" in 2020–2021 to becoming a "long-term optimization and innovation imperative," as evidenced by the surge in publications in 2024 and 2025.

Study Characteristics Data Extraction

To map the research focus, methodology, and key findings from each piece of literature, a comprehensive data extraction summary from the 16 synthesized articles is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Digital PAI Learning Article Extraction

No.	Author & Year	Article Title / Research Focus	Method / Design	Key Findings
1	Setiyawan, Dardiri, & Sofyan (2022)	Developing a blended learning model in islamic religious education to improve learning outcomes	R&D	The B-PAS model (ASSURE & Plomp) simplifies PAI blended learning syntax to be more contextual.
2	Hamzah et al. (2022)	Effectiveness of Blended Learning Model Based on Problem-Based Learning in Islamic Studies Course	R&D (ADDIE)	Integration of Web-Centric Course (WCC) in a problem-based LMS was proven to improve problem-solving skills.
3	Atabik et al. (2025)	Optimizing educational management through the flipped classroom method: An innovation in Islamic education learning in the digital era	Quasi-Experiment	Flipped classroom significantly improved comprehension as the classroom was exclusively used for discussion elaboration.
4	Binsaleh & Binsaleh (2020)	4P-2E Model: Teaching and Learning Process Through ICT Integration for Private Islamic Schools in Thailand	Conceptual / Applied	The 4P-2E framework consistently accommodates ICT-integrated project-based learning in Islamic schools.
5	Mustafa et al. (2025)	The Correlation between the Use of Augmented Reality in Islamic Education and Academic Achievement.	Quantitative (Survey)	The use of Augmented Reality (AR) positively correlates with intrinsic motivation and academic achievement of PAI students.
6	Riwanda, Ridha, & Islamy (2024)	Empowering Asynchronous Arabic Language Learning Through PDF Hyperlink Media	R&D	PDF Hyperlink is highly efficient in low-signal areas (low-bandwidth), proven effective in facilitating independent learning.
7	Siregar (2023)	Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use of Online Learning for Islamic Religious Education Teacher	Multiple Linear Regression	The independent LMS platform (SPACE) has perceived usefulness and ease of use that directly impacts the effectiveness of PAI Teacher Professional Education (PPG).
8	Alkasirah & Nor (2018)	Potential usage of mobile learning via short messaging system (SMS) for enhancing islamic knowledge of adult learners	Quasi-Experiment	Asynchronous SMS-based learning effectively transfers basic religious knowledge (waqf) for adult learners.
9	Yusuf et al. (2024)	Distance Learning in a Cyber Islamic University: Best Experience from	Mixed Methods	An Islamic Cyber University demonstrated that the quality of distance learning can be

		Indonesia		managed through integrated virtual interaction.
10	Wigati et al. (2023)	Perception of Religious Lecturers of Higher Order Thinking Skills and Students' Academic Performance in Online Learning	Descriptive Quantitative	An anomaly exists: PAI lecturers are aware of the importance of HOTS, yet online evaluations remain dominated by rote memorization (LOTS).
11	Mahmud et al. (2024)	Integrating Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences in Islamic Education: A Systematic Review of Indonesian Practices	SLR	Multiple Intelligences are relevant to the principle of fitrah; their implementation encourages PAI teachers to innovate differentially.
12	Tohirin & Mardiana (2025)	The Role of Counselors and University Students' Adversity Quotient in Enhancing Islamic Education (PAI) Online Learning: Insights from the COVID-19 Experience	Exploratory Qualitative	Mental resilience (Adversity Quotient), particularly perseverance and sincerity, are key determinants of PAI students' success.
13	Dharin et al. (2025)	Analysis of TPACK-Based Learning for Teachers of Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Banyumas Regency, Indonesia	Quantitative (SEM)	Mastery of TPACK (Technology, Pedagogy, Content) simultaneously and significantly determines the teaching success of madrasah teachers.
14	Fauzan et al. (2022)	Lecturer's digital literacy ability in the pandemic	Descriptive Qualitative	Lecturers' digital literacy is the primary foundation for content preparation, smooth execution, and the validity of online assessment.
15	Yudiawan et al. (2021)	Successful online learning factors in covid-19 era: Study of islamic higher education in west papua, indonesia	Multivariate Regression	Factors for successful online learning in Eastern Indonesia are more dominated by educator characteristics and competencies than by infrastructure.
16	Posangi et al. (2025)	Enhancing Islamic Education Quality through Educational Supervision and ICT	Descriptive Qualitative	Teacher quality in integrating ICT is difficult to develop without direct intervention through academic supervision.

Source: Author's Compilation

DISCUSSION

The synthesis of 16 selected articles reveals that the shift in PAI learning in the digital era goes beyond mere tool modernization (digitization), instead demanding reconceptualization at the pedagogical, cognitive, and managerial levels. This discussion is critically structured around four thematic pillars, concluding with a projection of future research directions.

Critique of Syntactic Innovation: A Paradigm Shift or an Abdication of Responsibility?

Literature consistently demonstrates the effectiveness of blended learning and flipped classrooms as the best innovative models for post-pandemic PAI (Ni'mah et al., 2023; Dharin et al., 2025). Rather than persisting with one-way lecture methods, the flipped classroom model is capable of restructuring time management; students study faith or fiqh material at home asynchronously, then use the virtual classroom exclusively for critical debate (Atabik et al., 2025). Similarly, the integration of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) into LMS compels students to connect religious texts to real-world problem-solving (Hamzah et al., 2022). Sukiman et al., (2022) in a large-scale study involving undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral PAI students, found that the hybrid learning model can maintain and even surpass the effectiveness of conventional face-to-face learning when designed with a 60% online and 40% offline proportion. This finding is significant as it refutes the longstanding assumption that religious learning must always be face-to-face to be effective. Nevertheless, this implementation risks becoming an "abdication of instructional responsibility" if teachers are unable to shift their role from knowledge transmitters to analytical facilitators. This mixed-syntax innovation will only succeed if accompanied by structured guidelines such as the 4P-2E framework (Plan, Project, Presentation, Performance, Enrichment, Evaluation), which maintains student engagement at every phase (Binsaleh & Binsaleh, 2020).

Media Pragmatism: Between Visual Immersion and Infrastructure Disparities.

The presence of an Islamic cyber university with a complete LMS ecosystem demonstrates that distance PAI can be managed comprehensively (Siregar, 2023; Yusuf et al., 2024). In addition, advanced technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) are reported to improve the academic achievement and motivation of madrasah students due to its striking visual power (Mustafa et al., 2025). However, geographic realities in the field present a contradictory narrative. A critical review reveals that in areas with limited infrastructure, low-bandwidth approaches are far more effective. Asynchronous media such as PDF Hyperlinks have proven essential in overcoming blank spot issues in Arabic language learning studies (Riwanda et al., 2024), while SMS-based mobile learning has been able to facilitate adult learners in waqf literacy (Alkasirah & Nor, 2018). This fact reinforces the argument that technology integration in PAI is not measured by the sophistication of its devices, but rather by how inclusively those instruments respond to access limitations in underdeveloped regions.

Preserving Fitrah and Character through HOTS and Multiple Intelligences.

One of the greatest concerns in digital PAI learning is the erosion of moral values (character). However, this concern can be mitigated if teachers design differentiated learning. The implementation of Multiple Intelligences theory shares a common ground with the Islamic principle of fitrah, where diverse intelligences (visual, spatial, kinesthetic) are accommodated through diverse media interventions (Mahmud et al., 2024). Nevertheless, cognitive depth (Higher Order Thinking Skills/HOTS) often remains underdeveloped. Wigati et al., (2023) revealed an anomaly in which PAI lecturers are aware of the urgency of HOTS, yet exam questions on online

platforms remain trapped in basic rote memorization (LOTS). This lack of depth frequently triggers learning fatigue. In this context, student success is highly dependent on Adversity Quotient (AQ), such as perseverance and sincerity to persevere through the cognitive demands of distance learning (Tohirin & Mardiana, 2025).

The Axis of Success: TPACK Competency and the Role of Academic Supervision.

All of the above discourse converges on one absolute conclusion: the effectiveness of digital learning is greatly determined by the educators themselves (Yudiawan et al., 2021). Low digital literacy among lecturers will directly undermine the assessment ecosystem (Fauzan et al., 2022). Therefore, technological mastery cannot proceed naturally; it requires systematic academic supervision (Posangi et al., 2025). Educational supervisors or institutional management are responsible for ensuring that every PAI teacher steps out of their comfort zone and receives continuous mentoring in ICT utilization. Based on the synthesis of weaknesses and gaps found in the reviewed literature, the direction of future research in digital PAI learning needs to be focused on several essential areas. First, the majority of current studies only measure short-term cognitive effectiveness, making it highly necessary to conduct longitudinal research that evaluates how blended learning or digital media influences the ongoing internalization of students' morals, ethics, and religious character. Second, given the dominant constraints of internet infrastructure in remote areas, Research and Development (R&D) must be directed more toward creating e-learning ecosystems or asynchronous media capable of operating with minimal data consumption (low-bandwidth). Third, given that most literature only captures teacher readiness levels, future studies need to design and test the effectiveness of continuing professional training programs that specifically train PAI teachers to formulate theological and fiqh content within a standardized TPACK framework. Overall, this discourse affirms that digital transformation in Islamic education is not merely a race to adopt the latest instruments, but a strategic effort to restore the essence of pedagogy that humanizes, empowers, and reaches all learners without exception.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic literature review of 16 empirical articles, this study answers the three research questions as follows. First, in response to the question of which pedagogical models are effective in digital PAI learning, the review confirms that blended learning (particularly the B-PAS model with a 60% online and 40% offline structure), flipped classrooms, and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) integrated into LMS platforms are the most evidenced models. Their success is conditioned upon structured syntactic guidelines and active facilitation by the teacher as an analytical guide rather than a content transmitter. Second, in response to the question of how educator competency determines learning quality, TPACK mastery emerges as the single most decisive factor. SEM analysis confirms that the synergy of TK, PK, and CK simultaneously and significantly determines teaching effectiveness, while low digital literacy directly undermines the quality of content delivery and assessment validity. Third, in response to the question of infrastructure equity, the review demonstrates that effectiveness is not determined by technological sophistication but by contextual fit: low-bandwidth solutions such as PDF Hyperlinks and SMS-based learning are demonstrably more impactful in underserved regions than high-end platforms. This finding reinforces the principle of pragmatic inclusivity, wherein low-cost and data-efficient asynchronous innovations (such as interactive PDF media and short messages) are often more practical in bridging infrastructure gaps than high-end virtual reality platforms.

Furthermore, the application of critical analytical higher-order approaches and multiple intelligences theory demonstrates that digitization does not inherently erode the essence of Islamic character education, but rather facilitates the diverse potential and unique fitrah of each student. Nevertheless, all of this technological transformation will not produce a holistic impact without educators possessing adequate mastery of the framework for integrating technology, pedagogy, and content. The ongoing limitations of educator digital literacy in the field demand firm intervention in the form of academic supervision and systemic institutional management support. Therefore, the revitalization of continuous teacher training programs and the formulation of adaptive institutional policies become absolute prerequisites for realizing high-quality, equitable, and resilient PAI learning in the future.

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