

Optimizing Innovation-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Modern Era

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping the religious and social character of students, particularly amidst the dynamics of the modern era marked by technological developments and changing learning patterns. However, PAI learning in educational institutions still faces various challenges, such as limited learning innovation and suboptimal institutional strategies. This study aims to analyze educational institutions' strategies in optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning in the modern era, identify supporting factors, and formulate an integrative strategic approach. The method used is a qualitative approach with a library research type, with data sources in the form of scientific journals, books, and relevant documents from the last five years analyzed using content analysis techniques. The results show that optimization of PAI learning can be achieved through the integration of systematic institutional managerial strategies, technology-based learning innovations and student-centered learning, as well as strengthening teacher competencies and a supportive school culture. In conclusion, the success of PAI learning in the modern era is largely determined by the synergy between institutional policies, pedagogical innovation, and the sustainable use of technology.

Keywords

Educational Institution Strategies, Educational Technology, Islamic Religious Education, Learning Innovation, Modern Era.



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a strategic position within the national education system as a means of developing both the religious and social character of students. In the modern era, marked by the development of digital technology, globalization, and changing patterns of social interaction, educational institutions are required to transform their management of PAI learning to remain relevant to the needs of the times. PAI is no longer sufficient to be taught conventionally; it must be able to address complex challenges such as the flow of digital information, changing social values, and the dynamics of student diversity. Therefore, educational institutions' strategies are key factors in optimizing PAI learning to foster a generation that is religious, adaptive, and has character.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in many educational institutions still faces various obstacles, such as monotonous teaching methods, limited use of technology, and a lack of integration between religious values and the context of modern life. Furthermore, the development of digital technology has had a significant impact on the learning methods of students, who are now more accustomed to interactive and technology-based media. Another challenge is the proliferation of religious content on social media, which is not always valid and has the potential to lead to misconceptions. This situation demands that educational institutions have the right strategy for managing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning to keep up with current developments and continue to optimally shape students' character.

Educational institutions encompass three main aspects in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning: institutional management, learning innovation, and strengthening character values. From an Islamic educational perspective, educational institutions must be able to effectively integrate curriculum, human resources, and technology. Furthermore, constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning, while character education theory asserts that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning must foster the internalization of moral values in real life. Therefore, optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning depends not only on teachers but also on a comprehensive institutional strategy.

Research by Mesran et al., (2024) shows that the integration of technology such as e-learning and digital media can increase student engagement in Islamic Religious Education learning. Other research by Hanafie Das et al., (2020) found that Islamic Education learning strategies in the contemporary era have shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered through problem-based and inquiry-based approaches. Meanwhile, (Hasnawati, 2022) emphasizes the importance of learning strategies based on student characteristics to improve learning effectiveness. However, these three studies focused more on aspects of classroom learning and did not deeply examine the strategic role of educational institutions as a whole. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of educational institutions' strategies, not only at the learning level but also at the institutional management level. Judijanto et al., (2024) shows that the strategies of Islamic educational institutions in the digital era include strengthening character, integrating technology, and improving teacher competency. In addition, research (Abad et al., 2022) emphasizes the importance of developing character education-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning integrated with technology. However, these two studies focus more on the character and technology aspects, without examining in depth how these strategies are integrated into the overall institutional system. This research gap indicates the need for studies that systematically connect institutional strategies with learning implementation. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach between institutional management, learning innovation, and strengthening PAI values. Wiratama, (2025) revealed that a strategy for developing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials based on religious moderation is needed to address the

challenges of uncontrolled digital content (Hidayah, 2021). This study demonstrates that the management of educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, must be able to integrate tradition and technology to remain relevant in the digital era. Furthermore, various recent studies emphasize that educational transformation requires the simultaneous integration of technology, adaptive curricula, and strengthening of character values. However, these studies are still partial and have not yet produced a comprehensive strategic model. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its effort to formulate a comprehensive and applicable strategy for educational institutions to optimize Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning.

Based on the analysis of previous research, it can be concluded that most studies still focus on specific aspects, such as learning methods, technology integration, or character building, separately. Few studies have examined educational institutions' strategies holistically, encompassing the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning within a single, integrated framework. Therefore, this study presents a key innovation in developing a strategic concept for educational institutions that integrates managerial, pedagogical, and religious aspects to optimize Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era.

Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to analyze the strategies of educational institutions in optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning in the modern era, identify factors influencing the effectiveness of these strategies, and formulate an integrative strategic model that combines institutional management, learning innovation, and strengthening religious values. Furthermore, this study aims to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Islamic religious education that is relevant to current demands and capable of improving the quality of learning in educational institutions.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a literature review type that aims to analyze in depth the strategies of educational institutions in optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on conceptual exploration, theoretical analysis, and synthesis of previous research results relevant to the themes of educational institution management, PAI learning innovation, and technology integration in education. The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data, where primary data is obtained from articles in accredited national scientific journals and reputable international journals, while secondary data comes from reference books, scientific proceedings, and relevant educational policy documents. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies by searching various academic databases. The data analysis technique uses content analysis with the stages of data reduction, thematic classification, interpretation, and inductive conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, this study uses source triangulation by

comparing various research results with a similar focus, as well as conducting a critical evaluation of the credibility and relevance of the sources. In addition, a comparative analysis approach is used to identify similarities, differences, and research gaps which are then used as a basis for formulating research novelties in the form of an integrative educational institution strategy model in optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning in the modern era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Innovation of Educational Institutions in Optimizing Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Modern Era

Educational institutions' innovation in optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning begins with strengthening managerial aspects, encompassing systematic planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. Educational institutions with well-developed strategic planning tend to be able to integrate religious vision with the demands of modern development. In this context, PAI learning planning is not solely oriented toward the formal curriculum but also toward the development of superior programs that support the development of students' religious and social character. This demonstrates that the success of PAI learning is largely determined by the quality of the educational institution's overall management.

Effective educational institutions are able to manage human resources, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, professionally through clear division of tasks, competency development, and strengthening collaboration between educators. Research shows that institutions that actively develop teacher competencies through training, workshops, and learning communities have better learning quality. Thus, good organization directly contributes to improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in schools. Educational institutions are seen in their ability to integrate religious values with modern learning approaches. Educational institutions that adapt to technological developments are able to utilize digital media, e-learning platforms, and interactive learning resources in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This not only increases student interest in learning but also expands access to relevant and contextual religious information. The implementation of this strategy demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can be presented in a more engaging manner without losing the substance of Islamic values. Evaluation is conducted not only on student learning outcomes but also on the learning process, teacher performance, and the effectiveness of the program. Research shows that educational institutions that implement continuous evaluation are able to identify weaknesses and make systematic improvements. Thus, evaluation serves as a control tool that ensures that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is running according to predetermined objectives.

Strengthening the culture of religious and adaptive educational institutions. A school culture that supports religious values, such as regular religious activities, the practice of worship, and a conducive environment, has been proven to strengthen the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values in students. On the other hand, a culture that is adaptive to change is also necessary for educational institutions to be able to respond to the dynamics of the modern era. The combination of religious and innovative cultures is key to optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning. Overall, the research results show that educational institutions play a very significant role in optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning. The integration of thorough planning, effective organization, innovative implementation, and ongoing evaluation are key factors for success. Therefore, educational institutions need to develop comprehensive and adaptive managerial strategies so that Islamic Religious Education learning can run optimally and be relevant to the demands of the modern era.

Innovation in Islamic Religious Education Learning to Improve Quality and Relevance in the Modern Era

Learning innovation is a crucial strategy implemented by educational institutions to optimize Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era. This innovation encompasses the development of methods, media, and learning approaches that are more contextual and relevant to students' needs. Innovative PAI learning focuses not only on delivering material but also on developing critical, reflective, and applied thinking skills. This demonstrates that learning innovation is key to improving the quality of PAI learning. One widely implemented form of innovation is the use of digital technology in PAI learning. Research shows that the use of digital media such as instructional videos, interactive applications, and e-learning platforms can increase student engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, technology also allows for flexible learning, both online and offline. Thus, integrating technology into PAI learning is an effective strategy in facing the challenges of the modern era.

In addition to the use of technology, a student-centered learning approach is also an important part of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning innovation. Methods such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and group discussions provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process. Research shows that this approach can improve students' conceptual understanding and social skills. Thus, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is not only theoretical but also applicable and relevant to real life. Experiential learning is also an innovative strategy in PAI. Students are invited to directly participate in activities related to religious values, such as social activities, religious practices, and community projects. Through these experiences, students can understand Islamic Religious Education values more deeply and contextually. Research shows that this approach is effective in increasing the internalization of religious values.

The role of teachers in learning innovation is also crucial. Creative and adaptive teachers are able to develop a variety of engaging learning strategies that are tailored to student characteristics. Research shows that teachers with strong pedagogical and digital competencies tend to be able to create an active and enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, improving teacher competency is a crucial factor in supporting innovation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Overall, research findings indicate that innovation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a key factor in improving the quality and relevance of learning in the modern era. Technology integration, the use of active learning methods, and strengthening the role of teachers are key elements in this strategy. Therefore, educational institutions need to continue encouraging learning innovation so that PAI can make an optimal contribution to shaping students' character and competency amidst the dynamics of modern development.

Discussion

Innovation in educational institutions plays a crucial role in optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era. This finding aligns with theoretical studies. Utomo, (2023) which emphasizes that the success of a learning process is greatly influenced by systematic planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. From an Islamic educational perspective, the integration of religious vision and the demands of modern development is key to managing educational institutions. Najib & Maunah, (2022) also emphasized that institutions with values-based strategic planning and innovation tend to be more adaptive to change. However, previous research generally separates managerial and learning aspects, while this study's findings demonstrate that both must be integrated simultaneously.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have proven to be a crucial factor in improving the quality of learning. This aligns with the human capital theory in education, which emphasizes that the quality of educators is crucial to the success of the learning process (Salma & Rizky, 2024). Study Dudung, (2018) Research shows that teacher training and professional development have a positive impact on learning effectiveness. However, some research still focuses on improving individual teacher competencies without linking them to the overall institutional system. In this research, organization is understood not only as individual management, but as a collaborative system involving all elements of the educational institution.

Integrating technology into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is an effective strategy for increasing student engagement. This finding aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of active and meaningful learning experiences. Azzahra & Prasetyo, (2024) Research also shows that the use of digital media can improve student motivation and understanding. However, some studies still view technology as a mere tool, without linking it to broader institutional strategies. This research provides a new

perspective: technology utilization must be part of a planned and sustainable institutional strategy. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation can improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This aligns with educational evaluation theory, which emphasizes the importance of feedback in the learning process. Taali et al., (2024) Previous research also revealed that evaluations that focus solely on learning outcomes fail to provide a complete picture of learning effectiveness. In this study, the evaluation extends beyond outcomes to include processes, teacher performance, and the effectiveness of institutional programs, providing a more holistic approach.

The research results show that student-centered learning approaches such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning can improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This finding is consistent with constructivism and active learning theories, which emphasize the active role of students in constructing knowledge. Previous research also shows that this approach is effective in improving students' critical thinking and social skills. However, some research is still limited to implementing methods in the classroom without considering institutional support. This study complements these findings by demonstrating that learning innovation must be supported by comprehensive educational institution policies and strategies.

Finally, this discussion confirms that optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era cannot be separated from the synergy between managerial strategies and learning innovation. This aligns with educational systems theory, which states that educational success is determined by the integration of various components, including management, curriculum, human resources, and the learning environment. Previous research tends to examine these components separately, while this study offers an integrative approach that connects all these aspects within a single strategic framework. Thus, this research provides a new contribution to the development of a more comprehensive strategy for educational institutions to optimize Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results. First, the study used a library research approach, so the findings are conceptual in nature and not yet supported by direct empirical data from the field. This results in the study placing more emphasis on theoretical analysis and literature synthesis than on the practical realities of educational institutions. Second, the research data sources were limited to scientific publications within the last five years, so there may be relevant research beyond this range that has not been accommodated. Third, this study did not examine in depth the variation in strategy implementation across various types of educational institutions, such as public schools, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Therefore, further research using empirical approaches and mixed methods is needed to obtain a more comprehensive and contextual picture.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of an integrative approach in analyzing the strategies of educational institutions in optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning in the modern era. Unlike previous studies that tended to be partial—either highlighting only the management, learning, or technology aspects separately this study combines these three aspects into a complete conceptual framework, namely the integration of institutional managerial strategies, learning innovation, and strengthening religious values. Furthermore, this study also offers a new perspective that optimizing Islamic Religious Education learning depends not only on teacher competence, but also on the policies and culture of educational institutions systematically. Thus, this research provides a theoretical contribution to the development of a more comprehensive model of educational institution strategies that are relevant to the challenges of the modern era.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the strategy of educational institutions in optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the modern era is determined by the integration of systematic institutional management and adaptive learning innovation, including value-based strategic planning, organizing human resources, especially professional teachers, utilizing digital technology in the learning process, and continuous evaluation that includes aspects of process and results; in addition, the application of student-centered learning approaches such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning has been proven to be able to improve the quality of understanding and internalization of religious values; thus, it can be concluded that optimizing PAI learning does not only depend on classroom learning methods, but also on comprehensive and synergistic institutional strategies; therefore, it is recommended that educational institutions continue to develop policies that support learning innovation, improve teachers' pedagogical and digital competencies, strengthen academic and religious culture in the school environment, and integrate technology sustainably to ensure that PAI learning remains relevant, effective, and able to answer the challenges of modern developments.

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