Progressive Islamic Education in the Digital Age: Application of Game Application Media as an innovation in Islamic Education learning

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Abstract: The era of globalization and rapid technological advancements has transformed the education sector by offering new opportunities and challenges. Technology-based learning requires educators to continuously enhance their digital competencies to ensure effectiveness in the learning process. This study employs a literature review method to examine the application of game-based media as an innovation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Data were collected from reputable academic sources such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and other scientific databases. The findings indicate that the integration of educational games in PAI learning significantly improves students' learning motivation, strengthens their understanding of religious concepts, and fosters critical thinking skills through interactive and engaging activities. Moreover, game-based learning contributes positively to character development by reinforcing moral and spiritual values within the learning process. Therefore, digital educational games serve as a promising learning innovation that supports the improvement of Islamic Education quality in the digital era.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Game-based learning, Learning innovation, Motivation, Critical thinking

Abstrak: Era globalisasi dan kemajuan teknologi yang pesat telah mentransformasi sektor pendidikan dengan menawarkan peluang dan tantangan baru. Pembelajaran berbasis teknologi menuntut para pendidik untuk terus meningkatkan kompetensi digital mereka guna memastikan efektivitas proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka untuk mengkaji penerapan media berbasis permainan sebagai inovasi dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Data dikumpulkan dari sumber akademik terkemuka seperti Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, dan basis data ilmiah lainnya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi permainan edukatif dalam pembelajaran PAI secara signifikan meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa, memperkuat pemahaman mereka tentang konsep-konsep agama, dan menumbuhkan keterampilan berpikir kritis melalui kegiatan yang interaktif dan menarik. Lebih lanjut, pembelajaran berbasis permainan berkontribusi positif terhadap pengembangan karakter dengan memperkuat nilai-nilai moral dan spiritual dalam proses pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, permainan edukatif digital menjadi inovasi pembelajaran yang menjanjikan dan mendukung peningkatan kualitas Pendidikan Islam di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Pembelajaran berbasis permainan, Inovasi pembelajaran, Motivasi, Berpikir kritis

Introduction

Education seeks to develop the intellectual, moral, and skill potential of each person so that they can become competent individuals who contribute to society. Education can be conducted in formal (schools, universities), non-formal (courses, training), and informal (family, social environment) settings. Islamic education aims to create intelligent and devoted human beings by emphasizing not only the delivery of information, but also the development of morality and spirituality. In this context, Islamic education also seeks to adapt to changing times to improve its quality and relevance in the 21st century (Zainuddin & Martedi, 2023). The ethical and spiritual values taught through Islamic education are essential aspects that distinguish it from other educational systems (Nugraha et al., 2020). Therefore, the integration of technology in Islamic education is crucial to ensure that teaching and learning methods remain relevant and effective in the face of global dynamics (Muzaini et al., n.d.).

The era of globalization and rapid technological advancement has brought significant transformation to the education sector, creating both new opportunities and challenges. The development of information and communication technology has changed the way information is accessed, processed, and distributed in education (Huraerah et al., 2024). The digital world offers efficiency in solving various problems and meeting human needs; thus, digital-based systems allow individuals to operate more independently. Islamic education in the digital era is designed to equip Muslims with practical applied knowledge that can be utilized in everyday life (Alfinnas et al., n.d.).

Educators are required to be able to innovate learning designs by utilizing existing technology. Learning innovations aim to create learning processes that encourage students to learn effectively and achieve expected learning outcomes. One method commonly used today is hybrid learning, which combines face-to-face and online learning to improve teachers' competence in multimedia-based instruction and provide greater learning opportunities for students (Nopilda & Kristiawan, 2018; Sadriani et al., n.d.).

Wardiman Djojonegoro (2000) in Akbar & Noviani (2019) explains four essential competencies that teachers must have in the digital era: mastery of science and technology, professional work ethics, the ability to produce innovative works, and technology-oriented character that supports the vision and mission of education (Sadriani et al., n.d.).

Technology-based learning also presents various internal and external challenges. Internal challenges in Islamic Education include orientation, management, and output quality, while the core challenge remains the improvement of educational quality (Alfinnas et al., n.d.; Idris & Mokodenseho, n.d.). Educators must continuously enhance their digital literacy to guide students in using technology responsibly and meaningfully.

Learning media plays an essential role in ensuring the success of the teaching and learning process. It is a tool to convey material and stimulate student participation (Idrus, 2019). Attractive and appropriate media can improve student understanding, learning outcomes, and interest. Game-based media is widely recognized for its potential to increase student engagement and motivation. Games are fun, challenging, and often collaborative, making them popular and effective as learning tools (Abdillah et al., 2019; Solviana, 2020; Sitorus et al., n.d.).

This study aims to explore the application of games as an innovation in PAI learning. This research is expected to contribute to the development of innovative game-based learning media in the

digital era and serve as a reference for educators in designing more effective and interesting learning methods. Thus, PAI learning is expected to run better and support the formation of a generation with strong noble character.

In addition, a literature review approach was selected because innovations in digital-based Islamic Education are continually evolving, making it necessary to map and synthesize existing findings. This method enables systematic identification of relevant studies to evaluate the effectiveness of game-based learning applications in PAI. The data were analyzed through thematic categorization focused on learning motivation, understanding of Islamic concepts, critical thinking skills, and internalization of moral values. These criteria were used to determine the extent to which educational games contribute to improving the quality of Islamic Education.

Methodology

Modern Islamic education incorporates interactive teaching methods and information technology to facilitate more effective learning. In the era of globalization, Islamic education is faced with numerous challenges, including how to integrate Islamic values with universal values such as human rights, pluralism, and democracy. Teachers must be able to educate and guide students with compassion, as emphasized by Al-Ghazali, who described educators as leaders and role models responsible for nurturing students with sincerity and care (Turmuzi, n.d.-b).

Building educational game-based Islamic Education learning is an approach rooted in problem-based learning by integrating game applications. Through this approach, students are actively involved in solving problems and exploring solutions using game tools specifically designed for educational purposes. While digital transformation presents obstacles such as access inequality and content regulation, the benefits in participation, interactivity, and learning personalization make this approach necessary and highly relevant (Sindi Septia Hasnida et al., 2023).

High-quality learning media are essential to improving teaching and learning outcomes. Game-based applications in PAI subjects are developed to enhance students' creativity and facilitate interactive learning that supports the development of critical thinking skills, deeper concept understanding, and higher motivation (Daulay et al., 2023). Overall, educational games have shown a very positive impact in PAI learning, making students more active, collaborative, and able to apply Islamic knowledge in real life.

Result and Discussion

A. Interactive Educational Game "Calculation of Inheritance"

This application strengthens students' logical reasoning and problem-solving abilities by requiring them to calculate inheritance portions according to Islamic jurisprudence. Students can apply the rules of faraidh in simulated contexts, resulting in stronger retention of fiqh knowledge. Its collaborative play design also enhances social interaction and character values such as fairness, justice, and responsibility, which are core principles in inheritance distribution (Ali et al., 2024).

 B. "Gimkit" Games

Gimkit successfully cultivates active student engagement by using gamification features such as live scoring, bonuses, and friendly competition. These mechanics allow students to repeatedly practice PAI material, improving mastery and long-term memory. Real-time feedback helps students correct misunderstandings quickly. Ethical competition fosters sportsmanship,

respect, and confidence in Islamic learning, making assessments feel enjoyable rather than stressful (Septyana et al., n.d.).

C. Educational Games for Memorizing Daily Prayers

This game supports spiritual and affective development by integrating multimedia elements (voice, visuals, repetition), which improve both memorization and pronunciation of daily prayers. As students frequently engage with the content, consistent digital repetition encourages the habit of worship and strengthens religious character. The game reduces boredom often associated with rote memorization and guides learners to practice prayers correctly and meaningfully (Rizka Hamadi et al., 2017).

D. Wordwall Games

Wordwall offers diverse interactive templates that help reinforce PAI learning through matching activities, puzzles, and quizzes. These activities cater to differences in learning styles and make evaluation more engaging and less intimidating. Collaboration within gameplay also builds communication skills and positive student relationships, contributing to the internalization of Islamic moral values during learning (Zalillah & Alfurqan, 2022).

E. Teams Games Tournament (TGT)

The TGT learning model creates a social and cooperative learning environment that strengthens affective and moral development. Students practice team responsibility, tolerance, and mutual respect when competing in a supportive academic atmosphere. Through TGT, learners develop brotherhood, empathy, and humility, values that align with Islamic character education, while simultaneously improving understanding of PAI content (Firmansyah et al., 2019; Dewi et al., 2024).

F. Types of Games

1. Interactive Educational Game *'Calculation of Inheritance'*

The development of an interactive inheritance game using Scratch is designed to help students understand the rules of faraidh in Islam through real-case simulations. By determining the share of each heir, students practice applying Islamic law, enhancing both conceptual knowledge and procedural skills. This strengthens their ability to connect theory with real-life implementation, making fiqh learning more meaningful.

In addition, the game mechanics encourage students to evaluate fairness and justice in inheritance distribution, two core moral values emphasized in Islamic teachings. Such learning activities not only support logical reasoning and problem-solving but also shape ethical understanding. However, varied levels of students' initial knowledge and limited access to technology may affect game implementation effectiveness (Ali et al., 2024).

2. 'Gimkit' Games

Gimkit supports PAI learning by transforming lessons into gamified quizzes where students respond to questions related to aqidah, akhlak, and fiqh topics. Real-time scoring, rewards, and friendly competition significantly increase student engagement and concentration during Islamic learning activities.

The game also encourages repetition of key Islamic concepts an essential aspect in religious education for memorization and mastery. Students who previously felt anxious in

evaluations become more confident because assessments feel like play. Through healthy competition, learners are trained to practice sportsmanship, humility, and respect all of which align with Islamic moral character. Teachers, however, must ensure the platform is used beyond entertainment and truly strengthens Islamic learning outcomes (Septyana et al., n.d.).

3. Educational Games for Memorizing Daily Prayers

Games for memorizing prayers integrate audio-visual cues that guide pronunciation and meaning of daily supplications, making worship practices easier to internalize. This supports students' spiritual formation, not merely academic achievement.

As children repeatedly interact with prayer materials in enjoyable ways, the memorized content becomes habitual, encouraging students to practice doa in daily life. Furthermore, using leisure time for beneficial activities reduces negative exposure to digital content. Despite its benefits, less appealing visuals may still reduce motivation, indicating the need for continuous design improvement (Rizka Hamadi et al., 2017).

4. Wordwall Games

Wordwall provides multiple activity templates, puzzles, matching tasks, word searches, which improve comprehension of Islamic topics such as iman to angels and pillars of Islam. Students show increased willingness to participate in review and formative assessments because the tasks feel like a game, not a test.

Collaborative tasks foster communication skills, tolerance, and supportiveness, strengthening the affective dimension of Islamic character. Wordwall therefore benefits not only cognitive learning but also moral growth in PAI subjects. However, limited access to premium features can restrict broader classroom implementation (Zalillah & Alfurqan, 2022).

5. Games Tournament

TGT encourages teamwork in understanding Islamic lessons. Students engage in discussions about religious concepts before competing as a team, which supports deeper comprehension of Islamic values.

Through learning activities involving responsibility distribution and mutual respect, students practice ukhuwah (brotherhood), tolerance, and empathy, core Islamic values that are difficult to teach through traditional lectures.

Competition in TGT is oriented toward self-improvement and collective success, encouraging learners to demonstrate good manners while striving for better PAI learning outcomes (Firmansyah et al., 2019; Jamliah, 2021; Dewi et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education must continue to evolve to remain relevant in the era of rapid technological advancement. The integration of digital media, especially educational games, provides new learning experiences that are more interactive, engaging, and student-centered. Game-based learning in PAI does not only improve students' understanding of the material, but also supports the development of critical thinking skills, learning motivation, and Islamic character values such as responsibility, justice, cooperation, and spiritual awareness.

Although challenges still exist, such as technological limitations and unequal access to digital tools, the benefits gained show that educational game innovation is a strategic step toward strengthening the quality of Islamic education. With continuous improvement in media development, teacher competency, and digital literacy, technology-based Islamic education has the potential to produce a generation that is intellectually capable while still upholding moral and spiritual identity in a globalized world.

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