

## The Role of Technology In Shaping The Creativity of Islamic Education Teachers In The Era of Merdeka Curriculum In Elementary Schools

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### Abstract

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This study uses a qualitative approach by conducting descriptive analysis that has integrated technology in their learning. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis method. The results of the study show that technology can play an important role in shaping the creativity of PAI teachers. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, technology gives PAI teachers access to various digital resources, such as interactive learning materials, videos, and game-based learning applications. The use of this technology provides an opportunity for teachers to present learning materials in a more interesting and innovative way, so as to increase their creativity in designing effective learning strategies. This research shows that technology has a significant role in shaping the creativity of PAI teachers in the Independent Curriculum era in MI/SD. With the right use of technology, PAI teachers can develop innovative and interesting learning strategies for students, increasing their participation and understanding in Islamic education learning. However, challenges related to access to and skills in technology need to be addressed to ensure effective use of technology in the context of PAI learning.

**Keywords:** Technology, Creativity, Independent Curriculum

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### INTRODUCTION

The government's official stance on the availability of the new curriculum is the Merdeka Belajar curriculum during the 5.0 period. After COVID-19, Minister of Culture and Education Nadiem Anwar Makarim launched the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in response to the global education crisis. Although instructors have limited flexibility in this curriculum, they have more accountability for their roles as educators, and the program's emphasis on student growth means that students are better prepared to learn independently and share what they have learned (Syafrin et al., 2023; Zunaidi et al., 2021).

In an increasingly demanding profession, no one plays a more crucial role than Islamic religious education teachers in shaping students' personalities according to Islamic principles (Tari et al., 2022). When it comes to Islamic religious education, the Quran is the highest authority. Thus, when they learn, students can acquire sound knowledge. Students' readiness to learn amidst advances in science and technology is significantly influenced by Islamic religious education teachers, who play a vital role in preparing the nation's future generations.

Technology enables teachers to create a learning environment that motivates students to actively and creatively participate in the learning process. One important role of technology in enhancing teacher creativity is providing access to abundant and diverse resources. The internet, as a form of technology, has transformed how we access information. Teachers can easily search for lesson materials, references, interactive learning resources, and various other supporting materials through the internet. This allows them to design and deliver more engaging, relevant, and up-to-date learning materials. The ability to enhance one's own skills and enthusiasm for creativity in the digital world in learning is an indirect demand imposed on educators with the availability of this technology. Technology in education can also serve as a bridge connecting various parts of the learning process.

In light of this, the author is interested in further examining the role of technology in shaping the creativity of Islamic religious education teachers in the era of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in elementary schools. Some previous relevant studies include those conducted by (Afista et al., 2020), focusing on the analysis of Islamic religious education teachers in preparing the Merdeka curriculum. The second study, conducted by (Fauziah et al., 2023), focuses on the role of Islamic religious education teachers in implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum to enhance students' understanding in junior high schools. Previous research has only focused on the role of Islamic religious education teachers, while the novelty of our research is more focused on the role of technology in shaping the creativity of Islamic religious education teachers in the era of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in elementary schools.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The qualitative research method, including descriptive analytic techniques and literature review, is employed in article writing. Studying and documenting all relevant material from books, journals, and other sources constitute the strategy for data collection. To gain a better understanding of the intriguing phenomena, qualitative researchers collect, analyze, and interpret narrative and visual evidence in great detail. Similar to conventional research, this approach formulates hypotheses related to the phenomena under investigation, operationalizes ideas, and implements actions.

Furthermore, this approach integrates efforts to review literature related to the research. 1) Determining and collecting relevant teaching materials related to the impact of technology in the era of self-directed learning on the development of instructor intelligence. 2) Identifying sources or references related to the subject of discussion. 3) Evaluating facts or information sources. 4) Simultaneously, the acquired data serves as the foundation for engaging in debates (Savitri, 2020).

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

People nowadays are accustomed to using technology. This includes the education era, which has the potential to be a pioneer in the development of new technologies. It makes sense that educational institutions can leverage technological advancements to implement instructional programs more effectively.

Originating from the Greek term *technologia*, meaning "systematic treatment" or "methodical treatment," technology is a relatively new concept. The root word of technology, *techne*, denotes knowledge of science or art and proficiency in scientific methods. In ancient times, the ancient Greeks recognized technology as an art and body of knowledge (Switri, 2022). Technology is defined as a scientific approach to achieving goals in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI). It can also be seen as a way to provide the necessary needs for people to live comfortably and sustainably (Indonesian Dictionary, 2008).

The field of educational technology encompasses various tools and methods used to study and address issues related to all aspects of human learning (Nasruddin Hasibuan, 2015). Non Syafriaferdi (2020) adds that educational technology integrates concepts, machinery, ideas, and management methods besides human factors. Educational technology, from an alternative perspective, is best understood as a methodical procedure that can help solve problems arising during learning activities (Tahir, 2016). Some views lead to the conclusion that educational technology is a framework to facilitate learning with the goal of achieving desired outcomes.

The Merdeka Curriculum initiative places significant emphasis on fostering intelligence and patriotism. It is anticipated that this idea will serve as a remedy for educational obstacles in the era of globalization, which has become more diverse and complex. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages students to engage in active learning, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate their independence.

From the perspective of Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning), educational technology facilitates the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. It is anticipated that Nadiem Anwar Makarim's new Merdeka Belajar strategies will have a direct positive impact on proficiency in mathematics and reading, currently ranking sixth from the bottom (79th out of 79 countries). Given this, Nadiem Anwar Makarim developed an innovative evaluation system that includes fundamental skills such as literacy (assessing not only mathematical lessons but also students' practical applications of numerical concepts and reading comprehension), calculation (evaluating not only mathematical instruction but also students' ability to interpret and understand written material), and character surveys (not tests, but tracking the extent to which assessments are applied to the ethical, religious, and Pancasila values practiced by students).

In Islamic Education (PAI) learning, various problems may be encountered, such as 1) Lack of time to teach religious materials due to increasing and dense workloads. 2) Difficulty in choosing the right teaching method so that students can more easily understand religious lessons without becoming bored or burdened with additional tasks. 3) Lack of up-to-date and relevant resources or teaching materials for use in religious education (Aan & Izzah, 2021).

The solution to the above problems is if 1) Lack of time to teach religious materials due to increasing and dense workloads. In this case, both schools and teachers can create effective scheduling and minimize PAI learning to avoid teaching it at the last hour, which sometimes makes students bored and sleepy. Additionally, some teachers use lecture methods, making religious education

incomprehensible to students. To teach materials not only during Islamic education but also allocate them to other subjects so that religious materials can be conveyed more and students can understand them.

Solution to problem 2) Difficulty in choosing the right teaching method so that students can more easily understand religious lessons without becoming bored or burdened with additional tasks. In this case, teachers are required to be creative in teaching to use active and experience-based learning approaches, such as group discussions, problem-based projects, or practices. These methods can encourage active student participation and help them better understand religious concepts.

Solution to problem 3) Lack of up-to-date and relevant resources or teaching materials for use in religious education. In this case, given the rapid development of technology, and the role of technology demands teachers to enhance creativity in Islamic religious education, it is essential in the current Merdeka Belajar curriculum era. Teachers can easily find teaching materials, references, interactive learning resources, creative media, and various other supporting materials through the internet. This allows them to design and deliver more interesting, relevant, and up-to-date learning materials. Utilizing educational technology, based on multimedia, videos, or online learning platforms, makes learning more engaging and interactive for students, providing flexibility in accessing religious materials. Therefore, Islamic Religious teachers can enhance their creativity in this Merdeka curriculum era with the current role of technology. To create creative and innovative learning, an Islamic religious teacher is required to have creativity in teaching. Teaching creativity refers to the use of teaching techniques that can make the class enjoyable and interesting (Samira, Baghaei & Mohammad Javad Riasati, 2013), and the use of creative learning design (Mohammad & Muhammad, 2015). Characteristics of a creative teacher include the ability to help solve student problems, analyze, provide ideas from various knowledge (Huang & Lee, 2015), use creative strategies in teaching in class (Chan & Yuen, 2014). Because a teacher's creativity in conducting learning activities for children can make learning more interesting, children's attention becomes more focused, and teachers can maximize the use of gadgets for children, to be well utilized by both children and parents.

A teacher who has shown creativity in learning, according to Asmani (2011:93), can be identified by several indicators: (a) designing and implementing learning processes and outcomes; (b) creating learning aids; (c) effectively utilizing the environment; (d) managing classes and learning resources; and (e) implementing interesting and diverse activities. As leaders who have a significant impact on student learning outcomes, teachers must be creative and original in their thinking to fulfill their responsibilities correctly and operate as leaders who can influence students and ensure that they achieve satisfying learning outcomes. An educator must inspire self-discipline and refrain from rigid thinking processes, promoting intellectual acceptance and tolerance for different perspectives. Educators who tend to be intellectual and creative will approach situations and challenges with a flexible mindset, not rigid or limited by certain perspectives or themselves.

To meet the demands of education 4.0, which combines autonomous learning concepts, instructors must enhance their skills and capacities for innovation. Especially in the domain of digital education. This is due to the issues faced concerning the millennial generation, who are accustomed to students using digital technology. Additionally, children often lose interest in traditional learning methods (Dewi, 2019). The ongoing internal evolution of educational technology requires appropriate administrative revisions. Educational technology and autonomous learning programs are thus closely related. Implicitly encouraging, supporting, and demanding that 21st-century educators enhance their talents and professionalism, the two work together. This involves emphasizing innovation in administration and the rapid development of educational technology.

## CONCLUSION

The role of technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can help actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers can utilize various interactive tools, such as online polling, discussion forums, and educational social media, to encourage student participation, build critical thinking skills, and enhance the creativity of teachers. In the era of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, technology can serve as a means to measure student progress and achievements more effectively. PAI teachers can leverage online assessment tools, such as quizzes and digital rubrics, to gauge students' understanding and abilities in various aspects of PAI. Thus, PAI teachers can create engaging learning experiences, increase student participation, and expand the scope of learning beyond the classroom.

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