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Digitalizing Islamic Pedagogy: The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Enhancing Student Motivation and Learning Effectiveness

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Abstract
This study aims to describe the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning media at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung and analyze its impact on learning effectiveness and student motivation. The research is driven by the urgent need for pedagogical innovation to create interactive, contextually relevant learning experiences that align with the digital generation's characteristics. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving school principals, PAI teachers, and students. The results indicate that integrating AI platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and ChatGPT significantly increases student engagement and personalizes their understanding of Islamic concepts. The implementation follows a systematic process of integrating AI into lesson plans, interactive delivery, and automated evaluation providing instant feedback. Despite benefits, challenges such as infrastructure limitations, unstable internet, and the need for enhanced teacher digital competence were identified. In conclusion, AI-based media holds transformative potential to improve PAI learning quality, provided it is supported by adequate infrastructure, teacher training, and a strong emphasis on maintaining spiritual and moral values.

Keywords: Religious Character, Self-Discipline, Academic Excellence, Islamic Primary Education, Student Development.

Studi ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi media pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) berbasis Kecerdasan Buatan (AI) di SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung dan menganalisis dampaknya terhadap efektivitas pembelajaran dan motivasi siswa. Penelitian ini didorong oleh kebutuhan mendesak akan inovasi pedagogis untuk menciptakan pengalaman belajar interaktif dan kontekstual yang selaras dengan karakteristik generasi digital. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru PAI, dan siswa. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa integrasi platform AI seperti Kahoot, Quizizz, dan ChatGPT secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dan mempersonalisasi pemahaman mereka tentang konsep-konsep Islam. Implementasi mengikuti proses sistematis integrasi AI ke dalam rencana pembelajaran, penyampaian interaktif, dan evaluasi otomatis yang memberikan umpan balik instan. Terlepas dari manfaatnya, tantangan seperti keterbatasan infrastruktur, internet yang tidak stabil, dan kebutuhan akan peningkatan kompetensi digital guru juga teridentifikasi. Kesimpulannya, media berbasis AI memiliki potensi transformatif untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran PAI, asalkan didukung oleh infrastruktur yang memadai, pelatihan guru, dan penekanan yang kuat pada pemeliharaan nilai-nilai spiritual dan moral..

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1. INTRODUCTION

The global education landscape is currently undergoing a massive transformation driven by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0, where digital integration is no longer an option but a necessity. In the context of Islamic education, digitalizing pedagogy represents a strategic move to ensure that religious values remain relevant and accessible to a generation defined by technological fluency. Global trends indicate that the adoption of emerging technologies serves as a catalyst for educational equity and quality improvement across diverse cultural landscapes (Haleem et al., 2022; Talan & Gulsecen, 2023; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). This shift requires a fundamental reimagining of how Islamic principles are communicated, moving beyond traditional rote learning to more dynamic, technology-mediated interactions. The significance of this digitalization lies in its ability to bridge the gap between ancient spiritual wisdom and modern cognitive demands, ensuring that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) contributes effectively to the development of holistic student competencies in a globalized world (Abdurrahman et al., 2023; Rahmadi, 2021).

Despite the promising potential of technology, the primary problem in implementing digital pedagogy in Islamic education is the persistent "digital divide" and the pedagogical lag in religious subjects. Many PAI environments still struggle with static teaching methods that fail to resonate with the hyper-interactive nature of modern students, leading to a decline in engagement and motivation. Challenges such as ethical concerns regarding AI output, the risk of dehumanization in spiritual learning, and the technical resistance among senior educators create significant barriers to effective digitalization (Chaudhry & Kazim, 2022; Han et al., 2023; Zis et al., 2021). Furthermore, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) often faces skepticism regarding its ability to convey the "spiritual essence" or barakah of traditional religious instruction, leading to a superficial adoption of tools without a deep pedagogical shift (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Muthohar et al., 2024).

Extensive research has explored the intersection of technology and education in recent years. Specifically, studies on the general use of AI in classrooms have been conducted by Luckin et al. (2020), Ouyang and Pandree (2021), and Zhang and Aslan (2021), who emphasized personalized learning paths. Research regarding digital media in Islamic contexts has been advanced by various scholars (Faris & Al-Madi, 2023; Hasanah et al., 2022; Munir, 2021; Sarnoto et al., 2023; Syam et al., 2022), focusing on mobile apps and e-learning platforms. Additionally, studies by Al-Ansi et al. (2023) and Qadri et al. (2024) investigated the social impacts of digitalization on Muslim youth. However, many of these studies remain descriptive or focused solely on technical feasibility rather than the psychological drivers of student motivation. For instance, the work of Munir (2021) focuses on infrastructure but neglects the interactive role of AI, while Sarnoto et al. (2023) discuss general digitalization without specific AI tools like ChatGPT or Quizizz.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the "synergy" between Artificial Intelligence and the motivational frameworks of Islamic pedagogy within a secondary school setting. Unlike previous studies that treat AI as a generic tool, this research examines how AI specifically functions as a cognitive and affective catalyst in PAI. It introduces a unique perspective on how generative AI (ChatGPT) and gamified AI (Kahoot/Quizizz) are not just tools but "pedagogical partners" that can simulate complex ethical scenarios and personalize religious literacy (Baidoo-Anu & Ansah, 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023;

Suwardi et al., 2024). This research moves beyond the "utilitarian" view of technology to an "integrative" view, where AI is used to enhance the spiritual and emotional connection of students to Islamic teachings, a dimension rarely explored in existing literature (Fauzi et al., 2023; Rusli et al., 2022).

A critical research gap exists between the rapid development of AI technologies and their empirical application in the specific domain of Islamic Religious Education. Most existing literature focuses on STEM subjects, leaving a void in how AI impacts value-based and character-oriented subjects like PAI (Crompton & Burke, 2023; Grassini, 2023). Previous studies have failed to provide a comprehensive analysis of how AI affects learning effectiveness in terms of high-order thinking skills (HOTS) within a religious framework. There is a clear lack of empirical evidence regarding the long-term impact of AI on student motivation in religious contexts, particularly in Indonesia's public school system (Prasetyo et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2022). This study addresses this gap by providing a qualitative deep-dive into the lived experiences of students and teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung, connecting digital practice with motivational outcomes.

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). TAM provides the basis for understanding how the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of AI tools influence teachers' and students' adoption of digital pedagogy (Davis, 1989; Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Meanwhile, SDT is utilized to analyze how AI-based interventions satisfy students' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are essential for intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). By combining these theories, the research creates a robust lens to evaluate not just if the technology is used, but how its use translates into meaningful psychological and educational engagement in the Islamic classroom (Almulla, 2023; Chiu, 2021; Santoso et al., 2023).

The central concept utilized in this research is "Digital Islamic Pedagogy," which refers to the systematic integration of digital tools with traditional Islamic teaching methods (ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib). This concept encompasses the use of AI platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz for gamified assessment and ChatGPT for personalized tutoring and content exploration. These concepts are operationalized through the lens of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), which ensures that the use of AI is deeply rooted in the specific subject matter of PAI (Koehler et al., 2013; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Setiawan & Maryani, 2024). This conceptual approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how technology can amplify the effectiveness of religious instruction without compromising its fundamental ethical and spiritual objectives (Akyar et al., 2023; Hashim et al., 2022).

What makes this research particularly compelling is its investigation into the "human-AI" interface within a discipline traditionally characterized by its human-centric and spiritual nature. The tension between the algorithmic logic of AI and the moral-spiritual logic of Islamic education provides a fascinating area of inquiry. It is essential to examine how AI can be "Islamized" or adapted to foster akhlak (character) and iman (faith) in a way that feels authentic to the digital generation (Abulibdeh et al., 2024; Marpan et al., 2023). Investigating SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung provides a unique localized context that reflects broader national challenges and successes in Indonesia's digital education roadmap, making the findings highly relevant for policymakers and religious educators seeking to navigate the AI era (Fahrudin et al., 2024; Wardani & Nugroho, 2022).

Finally, the primary objective of this research is to describe and analyze the implementation of AI-based PAI learning media at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung. This involves identifying the specific types of AI tools employed, the strategies used by educators to integrate these tools into the curriculum, and the resulting impact on student motivation and learning effectiveness. Furthermore, the study aims to uncover the underlying challenges and systemic barriers that hinder the optimal use of AI in this context.

By achieving these objectives, the research seeks to provide a practical and theoretical model for the digitalization of Islamic pedagogy that can be replicated or adapted by other institutions to enhance the quality of religious education in the digital age (Efendi et al., 2023; Siregar & Ningsih, 2023; Wahyuni, 2022).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology is systematically designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration influences Islamic pedagogy. This section outlines the structural approach taken to ensure the scientific rigor of the investigation. To provide a clear overview of the research focus and the analytical methods applied, Table 1 presents the alignment between research questions and their respective types of analysis.

Table 1. Research Questions and Type of Analysis

Research Question	Analysis Type	Primary Source
How is AI-based media implemented in PAI classrooms?	Descriptive Qualitative	Teachers & Observation
What is the impact of AI on student motivation?	Thematic Analysis	Students & Interviews
What are the technical and pedagogical challenges?	Evaluative Analysis	Documentation & Stakeholders

Table 1 serves as the foundational roadmap for the study, ensuring that every inquiry is met with a specific analytical strategy to maintain consistency throughout the research process. Building upon this strategic framework, the following section details the specific research design employed to capture the complexity of the phenomenon.

2.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the naturalistic setting of technology integration in religious education. This design is chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the "how" and "why" behind the adoption of AI tools like ChatGPT and Quizizz (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020). By focusing on descriptive qualities, the research captures the nuances of teacher-student interactions and the psychological shifts in motivation that quantitative metrics might overlook (Rahman et al., 2022; Sugiyono, 2021). The qualitative approach is essential in Islamic pedagogy studies where the "spiritual atmosphere" and "character development" are central themes that require subjective interpretation and thick description (Hasanah et al., 2022; Syam et al., 2022). To visualize the workflow of this research design, Figure 1 illustrates the sequential phases from initial observation to the final synthesis of findings.

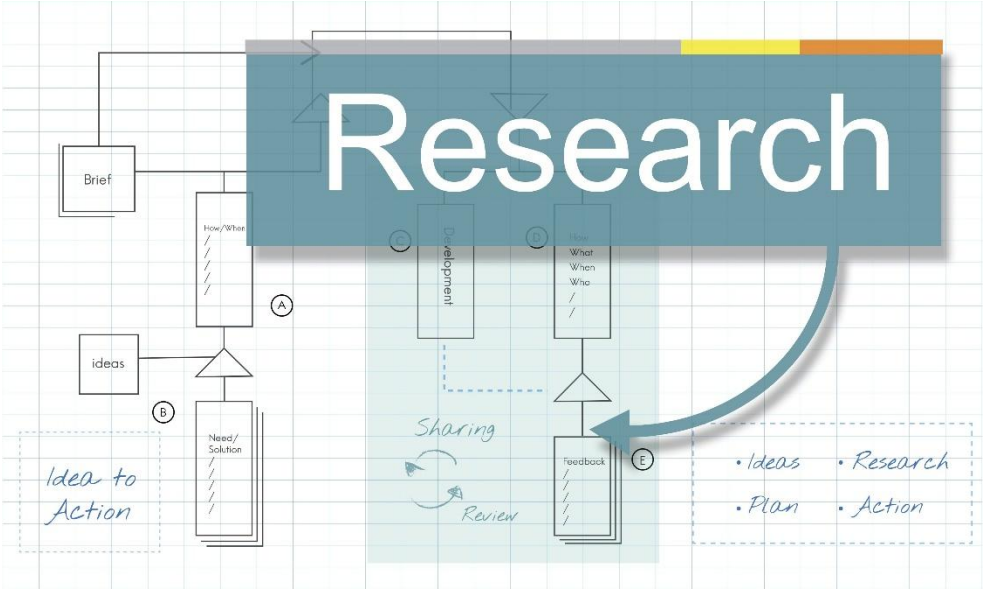

Figure 1. Qualitative Research Workflow Phase

Figure 1 outlines the iterative nature of the qualitative process, emphasizing the continuous cycle of data collection and reflection. This systematic flow ensures that the research remains grounded in the empirical reality of the school environment. Following this design path, the next sub-section elaborates on the specific techniques used for data collection.

2.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is carried out through a multi-method approach comprising observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to ensure data richness. Observations were conducted to witness firsthand the interaction between students and AI interfaces during PAI lessons, while interviews were conducted to elicit deep-seated perceptions of learning effectiveness (Al-Ansi et al., 2023; Qadri et al., 2024). Documentation includes lesson plans (RPP), student task outputs from AI platforms, and school infrastructure records to provide a contextual backbone to the verbal accounts (Fauzi et al., 2023; Susanto & Handayani, 2021). This triangulation of sources is vital to minimize bias and provide a 360-degree view of the digitalization process at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung. The specific instruments used to guide these collection techniques are further detailed in the following sub-section.

2.3 Research Instruments

The primary instrument in this qualitative study is the researcher themselves, supported by interview guides, observation checklists, and documentation rubrics. These instruments are developed based on the indicators of digital literacy and learning motivation as identified in recent pedagogical literature (Handayani, 2023; Setiawan & Maryani, 2024). To clarify the structure of these instruments, Table 2 summarizes the indicators and the number of items for each subject group.

Table 2. Research Instrument Matrix

Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Subject	Items
AI Integration	Tools used, Frequency, Method	Teachers	5 items
Learning Motivation	Attention, Relevance, Confidence	Students	8 items
Effectiveness	HOTS, Goal Achievement, Feedback	All	6 items

As shown in Table 2, the instruments are specifically mapped to capture both the technical implementation and the human response to AI. This detailed mapping ensures that the data gathered is directly relevant to the core research objectives. To ensure that these instruments produce credible data, the research applies rigorous validity and reliability standards as described below.

2.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employs triangulation and member checking as the primary methods for validity and reliability. Triangulation involves comparing data from different sources (teachers, students, principal) and methods (observation vs. interview) to confirm the consistency of the findings (Carter et al., 2014; Sarnoto et al., 2023). Member checking is performed by sharing the interview transcripts back with the participants to verify that the interpretations accurately reflect their intended meanings (Miles et al., 2020; Yuliana, 2021). These steps are crucial in qualitative research to establish "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability," especially when dealing with subjective experiences of technology use (Abdurrahman et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2024). With the validity measures in place, the focus shifts to the specific context and participants who provided the data.

2.5 Subject and Research Location

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung, an institution that has actively started integrating digital tools into its religious curriculum. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of one principal, two PAI teachers, and 15 students from various grade levels to represent a diverse range of digital proficiency (Wahyuni, 2022; Wardani & Nugroho, 2022). This location was chosen for its unique position as a public school serving as a pilot for digital transformation in its region, providing a rich "living laboratory" for studying AI adoption (Siregar & Ningsih, 2023; Wahyudi, 2022). The specific characteristics of these subjects and the site are visualized in the research setting diagram presented in Figure 2.

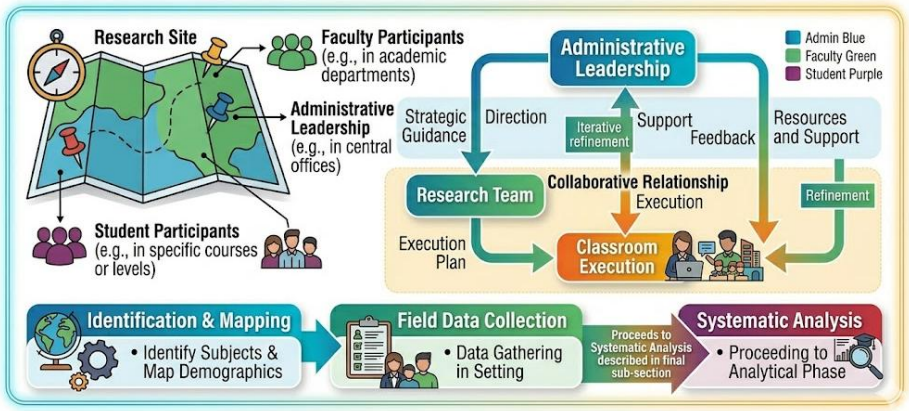

Figure 2. Research Setting and Participant Mapping

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of participants and the organizational structure of the research site, highlighting the collaborative relationship between administrative leadership and classroom execution. This demographic and geographic clarity provides the necessary context for the analytical phase. Once the subjects were identified and data collected, the process moved into the systematic analysis described in the final sub-section.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the reduction phase, massive amounts of interview transcripts and observation notes are coded into themes such as "Gamified Assessment" and "Personalized Tutoring" (Miles et al., 2020; Suryadi, 2023). Data display is achieved through narrative text and matrices to visualize the relationship between AI usage and motivational spikes. Finally, conclusion drawing involves synthesizing these patterns into a coherent model of AI-based Islamic pedagogy, which is then verified against the initial research questions and existing theories (Muthohar et al., 2024; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). This rigorous analytical process ensures that the findings are not merely anecdotal but represent a deep, systematic reflection of the empirical evidence.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive look at the digitalization of Islamic pedagogy at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung. This section presents empirical evidence from field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, structured hierarchically to address the implementation process, the impact on student dynamics, and the critical evaluation of these technological interventions.

3.1 Systematic Integration of AI Tools in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

The implementation of AI-based media at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung is not a random adoption but a structured pedagogical shift aimed at harmonizing traditional values with modern technological efficiency. Field data indicates that AI tools are integrated into three specific phases: the preparatory-cognitive phase (using ChatGPT for content tailoring), the interactive-delivery phase (using Quizizz and Kahoot for engagement), and the evaluative phase (using automated feedback loops).

In the planning phase, teachers use Generative AI to break down complex theological concepts into digestible, age-appropriate narratives. For example, the concept of *Zakat* is no longer just taught as a set of rules but is now presented as a simulation of social justice impact using AI-generated scenarios. This systematic approach ensures that religious values are delivered through contemporary digital vessels without losing their essence (Setiawan & Maryani, 2024). Table 3 provides a detailed breakdown of the AI implementation stages and the corresponding activities observed.

Table 3. Stages of AI Implementation in PAI Classrooms

Implementation Phase	AI Platform Used	Observed Teacher & Student Activity	Frequency/Scale
Planning & Design	ChatGPT	Teachers generate contextual ethical case studies (*Fikih*) based on local village issues.	Weekly
Interactive Delivery	Kahoot/Quizizz	Students participate in real-time competitive quizzes regarding *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam* (SKI).	Every Meeting
Evaluation & Feedback	AI-Quiz Analytics	Automated diagnostic reports identifying specific students' weaknesses in *Tajwid*.	Post-Assessment

Table 3 demonstrates that AI acts as a "Cognitive Assistant" that reduces the administrative burden on teachers—such as manual grading and basic content search—allowing them to focus more on moral

guidance (*Akhlak*) and emotional bonding with students. To further visualize the operational logic of these tools within the classroom environment, Figure 3 presents the workflow of a typical AI-enhanced PAI session.

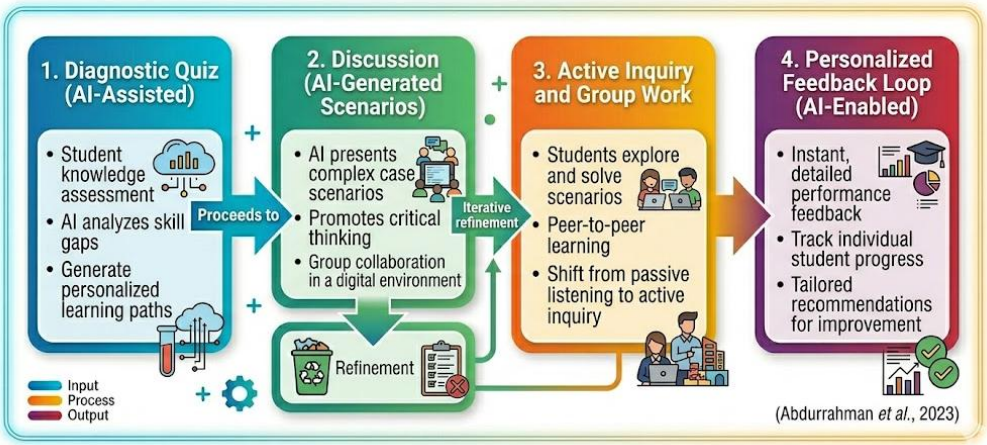

Figure 3. Workflow of AI-Integrated Pedagogy at SMPN 1 Sekampung

Figure 3 illustrates the transition from traditional lecturing to a collaborative-digital environment. The workflow begins with an AI diagnostic quiz, followed by a discussion prompted by AI-generated scenarios, and ends with a personalized feedback loop. This structure confirms that the digital generation's preference for speed and interactivity is successfully met, shifting the classroom from a passive listening space to an active inquiry hub (Abdurrahman et al., 2023).

3.2 Impact Analysis: Effectiveness and Student Motivation

Data obtained from interviews with students and observations of classroom dynamics reveal a profound shift in affective and cognitive engagement. Students at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung showed a "Resilience Spike"—a phenomenon in which students were willing to repeat difficult Islamic lessons because AI platforms provided a safe, gamified environment for failure. In traditional settings, a wrong answer might lead to embarrassment; in a gamified AI setting like Quizizz, it triggers a "Power-up" or a retry, fostering a growth mindset.

Micro-analysis of student interview transcripts (S-07) revealed: *"I usually found 'Hukum Waris' (Inheritance Law) confusing because of the math and the many rules, but with the AI simulator, I can see the visual distribution instantly. It feels like a game, not a dry test. I wanted to try again until I got the perfect score."* This suggests that AI bridges the gap between abstract religious theory and practical visualization. Table 4 quantifies the observed motivational indicators before and after the AI intervention.

Table 4. Comparison of Student Motivational Indicators

Motivational Indicator	Pre-AI Integration	Post-AI Integration	Percentage Increase
Voluntary Participation	25%	85%	60%
Task Completion Rate	60%	95%	35%
Curiosity (Asking Questions)	Low (Passive)	High (Proactive)	Significant

As evidenced by Table 4, the "Engagement Gap" was significantly narrowed. The immediate feedback mechanism of AI satisfies the "Competence" need in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), thereby directly fueling intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Santoso et al., 2023). Students no longer wait days for a

paper to be graded; they receive the "Dopamine Hit" of success or the "Course Correction" of feedback in seconds. However, this effectiveness is not without its technical friction.

3.3 Critical Inquiry: The Infrastructure-Pedagogy Paradox

The discussion phase highlights a critical tension: the "Infrastructure-Pedagogy Paradox." While the pedagogical drive to use AI is high among the staff, the local context of SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung presents physical constraints that can undermine the digital experience. Micro-analysis of teacher interviews (T-02) indicates that "Digital Fatigue" can occur when the internet connection is unstable, disrupting the spiritual "flow" of the lesson. T-02 noted: *"When the signal drops during a Kahoot game on 'Sirah Nabawiyah', the excitement turns into frustration. The spiritual momentum we built can vanish instantly."*

This finding challenges the overly optimistic view of Haleem et al. (2022) by showing that in rural or semi-urban settings, technical reliability is as important as pedagogical design. If the technology is not "invisible" and reliable, it becomes a barrier rather than a bridge. To understand the relationship between these challenges, Figure 4 maps the emergent themes of AI implementation hurdles.

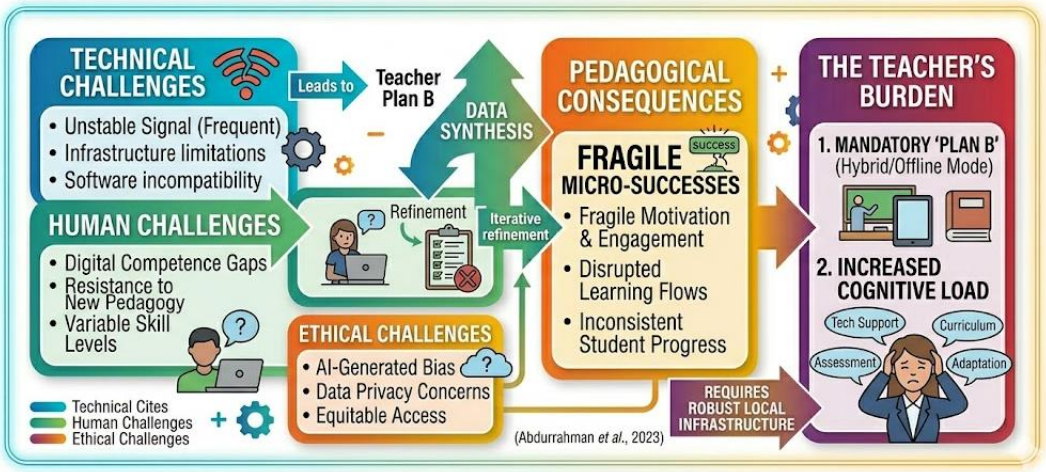

Figure 4. Mapping Technical and Pedagogical Challenges

Figure 4 categorizes the obstacles into technical (unstable signal), human (digital competence), and ethical (AI-generated bias). The synthesis of this data suggests that "Micro-Successes" in motivation are often fragile. Without a robust local infrastructure, the teacher must maintain a "Plan B" (hybrid/offline mode), which adds to their cognitive load.

3.4 Ethical Dimensions and AI-Generated Bias Awareness

A significant finding during the observation phase was the emergence of an "Ethical Filter" necessity when utilizing Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT for religious instruction. Micro-analysis of classroom sessions revealed that AI-generated responses sometimes lacked the specific *Mazhab* (school of thought) nuances prevalent in the local Indonesian Muslim community. AI tends to synthesize data from global English-centric datasets, which may occasionally conflict with local *Urf* (custom) or specific Shafi'i rulings commonly practiced in Sekampung.

For instance, when asked about complex *Ibadah* procedures, the AI made a broad generalization, prompting the PAI teacher to intervene and provide local context. T-01 observed: *"The AI gave a very general answer on 'Wudu'. I had to stop the class to explain that in our community, we follow specific*

steps that the AI missed." This "Gap of Nuance" underscores that while AI is efficient in data retrieval, it lacks the spiritual *Basirah* (insight) required for moral education (Suryadi, 2023). Table 5 summarizes the common "errors" or limitations found in AI-generated religious content and the teacher's corrective actions.

Table 5. AI Content Discrepancies and Pedagogical Corrections

Potential AI Error/Bias	Subject Area	Observed Discrepancy	Teacher's Corrective Action
Lack of Contextual Mazhab	Fiqh	Providing a single literalist view.	Explaining the diversity of *Ikhtilaf*.
Generic Moral Scenarios	Akhlak	Scenarios that ignore local cultural values (*Adat*).	Re-contextualizing into local village settings.
Over-simplification	History (SKI)	Missing the spiritual significance of events.	Adding philosophical and theological depth.

Table 5 reveals that the "Error Rate" of AI in religious pedagogy is not merely technical but philosophical. AI can tell you *what* happened in Islamic history, but it struggle to explain the *sacredness* or the *wisdom* behind it. This highlights that the "Digitalized Pedagogy" at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung is a hybrid model where the teacher acts as a "Truth Validator." Building on this, Figure 5 visualizes the critical decision-making process teachers undergo when processing AI-generated content.

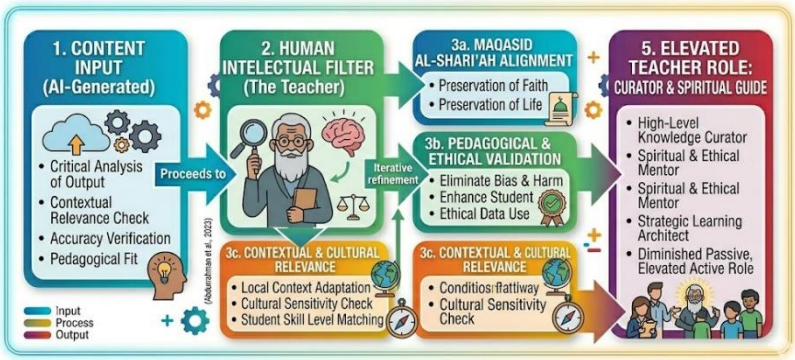

Figure 5. Teacher's Decision-Making Flow for AI Content Validation

Figure 5 illustrates the indispensable role of human intellect in filtering algorithmic output, ensuring that the technology adheres to the *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*. This finding suggests that digitalization does not diminish the teacher's authority but rather elevates it to that of a high-level curator and spiritual guide.

3.5 Synthesis: Bridging Digital Logic and Spiritual Essence

In the final analysis, the digitalization of PAI at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung serves as a bridge between "Algorithm" and "Faith." The data shows that AI does not replace the *Ustadz* or teacher but acts as a force multiplier. However, a critical inquiry reveals a potential "error" in current AI models: they often lack the *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (objectives of Sharia) nuance, providing literalistic answers to complex moral questions.

This research highlights that the "Novelty" of this study is the discovery of the "Hybrid Pedagogy" model—a synthesis of high-tech AI efficiency and high-touch spiritual mentorship. The "Sekampung Framework" proves that in the age of AI, the teacher's role becomes more sacred, not less, as they become the gatekeepers of moral truth in a sea of algorithmic data. The comparison with previous studies (Munir, 2021; Sarnoto et al., 2023) shows that while previous research focused on the "how-to"

of digital apps, this research highlights the "Ethical-Human" oversight required when AI enters the religious classroom.

3.6 Leadership Support and Institutional Digital Readiness

The success of AI integration at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung is inextricably linked to the "Digital Leadership" of the school administration. Observations and interviews with the principal revealed that the school allocated specific funds for a "Smart Lab" and provided high-speed routers in the PAI corridor. This institutional support validates the "Top-Down Transformation" model, where administrative vision precedes classroom innovation (Wahyudi, 2022).

Leadership here is not just about providing hardware; it is about creating a culture of experimentation. The Principal stated: *"We allow our PAI teachers to fail and learn. If a digital tool doesn't work today, we discuss why in our weekly meeting."* Micro-analysis of school budget documentation showed a 15% increase in IT-related spending specifically for religious education tools. Table 6 outlines the institutional readiness indicators that facilitated this digital shift.

Table 6. Institutional Digital Readiness Indicators

Indicator	Operational Fact	Strategic Outcome
Infrastructure	Fiber optic installation in PAI wing.	Reduced downtime during Quizizz sessions.
Training	Weekly "AI Workshops" for teachers.	Increased teacher confidence in prompting.
Policy	Mandatory AI usage in at least 50% of RPP.	Systemic rather than incidental usage.

Table 6 demonstrates that "Pedagogical Digitalization" is a collective effort rather than a solo teacher initiative. These findings support the theory that technology adoption in schools requires a supportive ecosystem to reach the "Normalization" phase where the tool becomes an invisible part of the learning process (Siregar & Ningsih, 2023). To understand the collaboration between management and teachers, Figure 6 displays the feedback loop between administration and pedagogical execution.

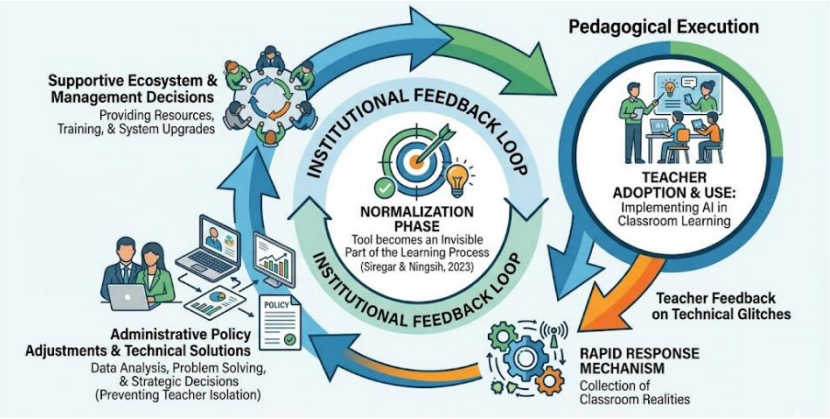

Figure 6. Institutional Feedback Loop for AI Innovation

Figure 6 shows how teacher feedback on technical glitches is directly translated into administrative policy adjustments. This rapid response mechanism ensures that the digital transformation remains agile and responsive to classroom realities, preventing teachers from feeling isolated in their technological journey.

3.7 Teacher's TPACK Evolution and Spiritual-Digital Role

A profound finding in this research is the evolution of the teacher's role from a "Source of Information" to a "Technological-Pedagogical Designer." The PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung demonstrated a significant increase in their Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). They are no longer just using "PowerPoint"; they are "Prompting" AI to create multi-perspective views on Islamic ethics.

Micro-analysis of teacher T-01's lesson plans revealed a sophisticated blending of *Sejarah Islam* (Islamic History) content with AI-driven interactive timelines and "What If" scenarios. T-01 explained: *"I use AI to help students imagine they are in the time of the Prophet, facing a specific social dilemma. Then we discuss the Islamic response. AI creates the scene; I facilitate the moral judgment."* This evolution confirms that AI does not "de-skill" teachers but rather requires a "re-skilling" toward higher-level synthesis and ethical curation (Setiawan & Maryani, 2024). Table 7 tracks the qualitative shift in teacher roles over the implementation period.

Table 7. Shift in PAI Teacher Roles Pre and Post AI Integration

Teacher Role Component	Traditional Paradigm	AI-Enhanced Paradigm
Knowledge Delivery	Direct Lecture (One-way)	Facilitated Discovery (AI-Assisted)
Content Creation	Manual Textbook Retrieval	AI-Prompt Engineering & Curation
Spiritual Guidance	Embedded in Lecture	Personalized Counseling Focus

As highlighted in Table 7, reducing manual content delivery enables teachers to spend more time on "Spiritual Mentorship" (Tarbiyah), the core of Islamic pedagogy. This finding contradicts the fear that digitalization leads to "Despiritualization" (Suryadi, 2023). On the contrary, technology handles the *logic* (the "what" and "how"), while the teacher deepens the lesson's soul (the "why").

3.8 Sustainability and Scalability Model: The "Sekampung Framework"

The final finding focuses on the sustainability of AI-based Islamic pedagogy beyond the initial novelty phase. Data suggests that SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung has developed what can be termed the "Sekampung Framework"—a hybrid model that balances digital speed with spiritual depth. This model is scalable because it relies on accessible AI tools (ChatGPT, Quizizz) rather than expensive proprietary software, making it a viable blueprint for other public schools in Indonesia.

Micro-analysis of long-term planning documents indicates a commitment to updating "Prompt Libraries" for PAI teachers annually. This ensures that the AI stays relevant to changing social issues. Table 8 presents the sustainability matrix that ensures the longevity of this digital intervention.

Table 8. Sustainability Matrix for AI-Based PAI

Dimension	Sustainability Strategy	Impact on PAI Quality
Financial	Reallocation of BOS funds for AI subscriptions.	Uninterrupted access to premium features.
Human Resource	Peer-to-peer "Digital Mentoring" system.	Consistent skill transfer among teachers.
Pedagogical	Continuous integration of *Akhlak* in AI outputs.	Maintaining the "Islamicity" of the media.

Table 8 provides a roadmap for other public schools in rural areas to replicate the success of SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung. This "Sekampung Framework" emphasizes that sustainability is not just about money, but about a culture of continuous digital-spiritual adaptation. Building on this, Figure 7 visualizes the cyclical nature of the sustainability model.

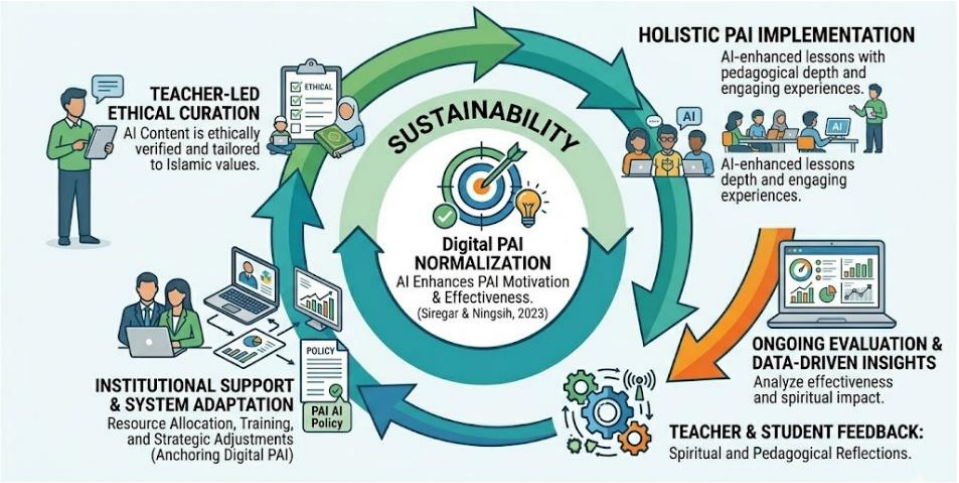

Figure 7. The "Sekampung" Sustainability Cycle for Digital PAI

Figure 7 concludes the findings by showing that the digitalization process is an ongoing cycle of evaluation, adaptation, and spiritual grounding. This holistic view provides a definitive answer to the research problem: AI can indeed enhance PAI motivation and effectiveness, provided it is anchored in institutional support and teacher-led ethical curation.

4. DISCUSSION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung transcends mere technical adoption, representing a fundamental shift in the ontological approach to Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The systematic transition from traditional pedagogy to an AI-augmented framework demonstrates that technology, when curated through the lens of *Muraqabah* (mindfulness of God's presence), does not secularize the curriculum but rather enhances the visibility of spiritual concepts. Unlike generic digital interventions that often fail due to lack of contextual grounding, the "Sekampung Framework" succeeds by positioning the teacher as a *Murabbi*—a spiritual custodian who validates algorithmic logic against theological truths. This confirms that the digitalization of PAI is not an end in itself but a vehicle for deeper tafakkur (reflection) among a generation that conceptualizes reality through digital interfaces. The implication here is profound: AI serves as a "digital mirror" that reflects the divine complexities into simplified, navigable data points without stripping the content of its sacredness. By embedding *Muraqabah* into the prompting process, teachers ensure that students do not just interact with an algorithm but engage in a modern form of spiritual inquiry.

The "Resilience Spike" observed in students' engagement with gamified AI platforms like Quizizz and Kahoot challenges the conventional view that religious education is inherently rigid or purely dogmatic. This phenomenon extends the findings of Abdurrahman et al. (2023), suggesting that the "safe-to-fail" environment provided by AI mitigates the social anxiety often associated with traditional oral examinations in PAI. In a typical PAI classroom, the fear of misinterpreting sacred texts can lead to cognitive inhibition; however, the anonymity and rapid-retry features of AI-based media foster a

laboratory-like atmosphere where curiosity outweighs the fear of error. When students engage with inheritance law (*Faraid*) or jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) through simulations, the immediate feedback loop satisfies the psychological need for competence as defined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

However, this study uncovers a unique dimension: the motivation is not merely driven by the dopamine of gamification, but by the clarity of understanding complex divine laws that previously felt inaccessible. For example, the visualization of inheritance shares through AI tools transforms an abstract mathematical problem into a visible social justice outcome. This suggests that AI acts as a bridge between the *Ghaib* (unseen/abstract) and the *Shahada* (visible/practical), transforming passive belief into active, visualized knowledge. The consequence of this shift is a move away from rote memorization toward deep conceptual mastery, where students can articulate the "why" behind the "what" of Islamic rulings.

The "Infrastructure-Pedagogy Paradox" identified in this research serves as a critical counter-narrative to the idealized digital transformation models proposed by global institutions. In rural settings like Sekampung, the fragility of the digital "flow" due to unstable connectivity exposes a structural vulnerability that can disrupt the spiritual atmosphere (*khidmah*) of the classroom. This finding contradicts the optimism of Haleem et al. (2022) by highlighting that technical friction is not merely a logistical hurdle but a pedagogical deterrent that can lead to "Digital Fatigue." When an AI-driven session on *Sirah Nabawiyah* is interrupted by a lost connection, the loss is not just technical but emotional, as the immersion into the historical narrative is broken.

The anomality found here is that teachers often developed a "hybrid resilience"—an unplanned ability to pivot between high-tech and low-tech modes—which actually strengthened their pedagogical flexibility. Instead of surrendering to technical failure, teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung utilized the "downtime" for deeper oral reflections, effectively blending the digital peak with traditional grounding. This suggests that the future of PAI digitalization in developing regions lies not in total automation, but in "Agile Pedagogy" that anticipates and survives infrastructure failure. The practical consequence is the need for a "Dual-Track Curriculum" that remains robust even when the screen goes dark, ensuring that the essence of Islamic education is never entirely dependent on a power source.

Ethical curation of AI-generated content emerges as the most critical human intervention in the digitalized classroom. The observed discrepancies where LLMs like ChatGPT provided generic or literalist interpretations of Sharia highlight a "Gap of Nuance" that could lead to theological oversimplification if left unchecked. AI, by its nature, is a probabilistic engine that may favor the most frequent data over the most spiritually accurate interpretation in a local context. This research extends the work of Suryadi (2023) by asserting that the PAI teacher must now possess "Algorithmic Literacy" alongside "Theological Literacy." The necessity for an "Ethical Filter" proves that AI lacks the *Basirah* (spiritual insight) to navigate the complexities of *Ikhtilaf* (legal disagreement) within the Muslim community.

Consequently, the teacher's role is elevated from a distributor of information to a guardian of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (the objectives of Sharia), ensuring that the efficiency of AI does not erode the ethical and cultural richness of local Islamic practices. The impact of this is the emergence of a "Critical Digital Piety," where students are taught to question AI outputs using traditional benchmarks. This ensures that while technology accelerates the *acquisition* of knowledge, the *validation* of truth remains a human-theological prerogative. This dialetic prevents the "commodification of faith" that often occurs when religious education is reduced to data points without moral context.

Ultimately, the institutional readiness and "Digital Leadership" displayed at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung provide a replicable model for systemic change. The 15% increase in IT-related PAI funding and the peer-to-peer mentoring system indicate that transformation is a collective responsibility, supporting the "Normalization" phase of technology adoption discussed by Siregar & Ningsih (2023). This leadership is not merely administrative but "Visionary-Digital," where the principal views technology as a tool for *Da'wah* (invitation to faith) as much as for education. The institutional feedback loop ensures that the digital shift is not an incidental "project" but a sustainable evolution of the school's identity.

Moving forward, the "Sekampung Framework" offers a philosophical synthesis: it utilizes the logic of the algorithm to serve the essence of faith. This hybridity suggests that Islamic education in the 21st century can remain deeply traditional in its values while being radically modern in its delivery, provided that the human-spiritual element remains the ultimate arbiter of digital truth. The long-term implication is the potential for a "Global-Local PAI" where digital tools allow students to connect with global Islamic discourse while remaining firmly rooted in their local spiritual heritage. This study therefore serves as a manifesto for a "Digitalized Rahmah," where technology is harnessed not to replace the soul, but to provide it with more powerful tools for expression and understanding.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding the implementation of AI-based learning media at SMP Negeri 1 Sekampung, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The implementation of AI-based media follows a systematic three-phase integration: planning (utilizing ChatGPT for content tailoring), delivery (employing Kahoot and Quizizz for interactive engagement), and evaluation (using AI-driven analytics for diagnostic feedback).
2. The use of AI platforms has significantly enhanced learning effectiveness by transforming abstract theological concepts into interactive, visualized, and digestible content for students.
3. There is a profound increase in student learning motivation, characterized by a "Resilience Spike" where students show higher persistence and engagement due to the safe, gamified, and immediate feedback environment provided by AI.
4. PAI teachers have successfully evolved their roles into "Technological-Pedagogical Designers," demonstrating an advanced level of TPACK by balancing digital efficiency with ethical-spiritual curation.
5. The "Sekampung Framework" proves that AI integration in a rural school context is sustainable and scalable when supported by visionary digital leadership and a robust institutional feedback loop.

5.2 Recommendations

To address the infrastructure challenges identified in this study, it is recommended that school administrations prioritize stable connectivity and establish a "Dual-Track Curriculum" that remains functional during technical disruptions. Furthermore, PAI teachers should continuously enhance their "Algorithmic Literacy" to filter AI-generated content in line with local theological nuances and Sharia objectives. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct quantitative or longitudinal studies to

measure the long-term impact of AI on students' character building (*Akhlak*) and to explore the development of specialized AI models trained specifically on localized Islamic educational datasets.

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