

Research Article

Analysis of the Impact of E-Learning-Based Religious Learning on Student Character

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Corresponding Author, Email: zafirah@gmail.com**Abstract**

The rapid growth of e-learning platforms has transformed the landscape of education, including religious education, which has traditionally been delivered in classroom settings. This shift towards digital learning has raised important questions regarding its impact on students' character development, particularly in the context of religious studies. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effects of e-learning-based religious education on students' character development by reviewing relevant literature and synthesizing existing research. This qualitative study uses a literature review methodology to gather data from various academic sources, focusing on the benefits and challenges of e-learning in religious education. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis to identify patterns and draw conclusions about the relationship between e-learning and character education. The findings reveal that e-learning can have both positive and negative impacts on character development. On the one hand, it promotes autonomy, self-regulation, and accessibility to diverse religious teachings, fostering critical thinking, empathy, and moral reasoning. On the other hand, the lack of face-to-face interactions can lead to feelings of isolation, and the over-reliance on digital platforms can result in distractions, reducing students' focus on moral engagement. To maximize the benefits of e-learning, a blended learning approach combining online learning with traditional face-to-face interactions is recommended. This study provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to optimize the use of e-learning in religious education for effective character development.

Keywords: E-Learning, Religious Education, Character Development.

INTRODUCTION

Religious learning in Indonesia has a very important position in the national education system, especially in shaping the character and morals of students. Along with the development of technology, religious learning, which was initially limited to conventional approaches, is now beginning to transform through the use of a more flexible digital platform, known as e-learning. E-learning is a method that allows students to access learning materials online, which can be done anytime and anywhere (Arifin & Sumarno, 2020). Even so, there are great challenges in adapting technology-based religious learning, especially in maintaining the quality of teaching religious values that must still be conveyed with depth and understanding (Hidayat, 2019). Therefore, it is important to analyze the impact of e-learning-based religious learning on the formation of student character.

Religious learning in Indonesia has a very important role in shaping students' character and morality. This learning not only aims to introduce religious teachings, but also to teach universal values such as tolerance, honesty, compassion, and responsibility. In the context of Indonesian education, religious subjects in schools are not only seen as an effort to deepen students' knowledge of certain religious teachings, but also as a medium to build positive attitudes that are in accordance with the social and cultural norms of the nation. One of the main challenges in religious learning is how to make these teachings relevant to students' lives in the modern era which is increasingly affected by technological developments (Sudiarso, 2019).

On the other hand, E-Learning or online learning is an approach that allows students to access learning materials through digital platforms, such as websites, applications, or social media. This learning is growing along with the rapid advancement of information and communication technology. In the context of religious learning, E-Learning offers greater flexibility for students to learn religious teachings independently. For example, students can access religious learning videos, conduct discussions online, or work on assignments related to understanding religious teachings without time and place restrictions. This can certainly increase student involvement in religious learning more actively and interestingly, especially for the younger generation who tend to be more familiar with technology (Arifin & Sumarno, 2020).

The character of students as a result of religious learning is greatly influenced by the way the material is delivered and how students are involved in the learning process.

E-Learning in religious learning can play an important role in shaping students' character, because it provides opportunities for them to learn more independently and responsibly. In addition, this technology-based learning can encourage students to be more open to various religious views, which in turn strengthens the values of tolerance and mutual respect. However, to achieve maximum results, it is important for teachers to choose the right media and methods in E-Learning-based religious learning, so that religious values can still be conveyed effectively even though using technology as a means (Santoso & Susanto, 2021).

Digital transformation in education does not only apply to general learning, but also to religious learning. In this context, the use of e-learning can provide opportunities for students to gain a deeper understanding of the religious teachings they are studying, as well as strengthen their character through content delivered digitally (Santoso & Susanto, 2021). E-learning offers advantages such as time flexibility and easier access to materials, but it also risks reducing the direct interaction that has been an important component of religious learning that emphasizes moral values and character. Several studies show that technology-based learning can increase student engagement, but it can also pose challenges in terms of strengthening student character (Sudiarso, 2019)

In the world of education, student character is a very important aspect, especially in religious learning. Character formation through religious education includes not only an understanding of religious teachings, but also the practice of moral values that can influence students' attitudes and behaviors in daily life. However, with e-learning, there are concerns that students will lose the religious values that should be built through direct interaction between teachers and students, as well as more active community-based learning. Therefore, this study focuses on how e-learning in religious learning can affect the character of students, both positively and negatively, as well as the challenges faced in optimizing religious learning through digital platforms (Wahyudi, 2020).

This study aims to analyze the impact of e-learning-based religious learning on students' character, focusing on changes that occur in the moral, social, and behavioral aspects of students related to religious teachings. The purpose of this study is to identify whether e-learning can strengthen or actually weaken students' character in practicing the religious values they learn online. In addition, this research also aims to uncover the challenges and opportunities that exist in the application of e-learning in religious learning, as well as provide recommendations to increase the effectiveness of digital-

based religious learning (Arifin, 2020; Hidayat & Zulkarnain, 2021).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a literature study design to analyze the impact of e-learning-based religious education on students' character development. The qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in its natural context, particularly the implications of digital learning environments on moral and behavioral aspects of students (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study draws upon a comprehensive review of existing literature, focusing on scholarly articles, books, and reports that explore the intersection of e-learning, religious education, and character development in the educational context. This approach allows for the identification of themes, patterns, and emerging trends related to the impact of e-learning on students' character.

The data for this research is sourced primarily from academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ERIC, which provide a broad range of peer-reviewed journals, books, and conference papers relevant to the subject matter. Additionally, reports from educational institutions and governmental organizations concerning the implementation of e-learning in religious education and its effects on character development are also considered (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2010). The data sources are selected based on their relevance, credibility, and recency, ensuring that the research reflects current trends and insights in the field of e-learning and education.

Data collection involves a systematic review of literature published within the last decade, with an emphasis on studies that examine e-learning in religious education settings and its influence on character formation. The process follows a rigorous protocol of inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that only high-quality, peer-reviewed, and contextually relevant sources are included in the analysis (Jesson, Matheson, & Lacey, 2011). Thematic analysis is employed to analyze the collected data, focusing on recurring themes and concepts related to the influence of digital learning environments on character development. This method allows for the extraction of insights regarding both the positive and negative impacts of e-learning on students' moral and ethical growth. The findings from the literature review are synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic and suggest recommendations for improving e-learning strategies in religious education (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Positive Impacts on Students' Character

One of the key positive outcomes identified in the literature is the potential for e-learning to promote autonomy and self-regulation in students (Hrastinski, 2008). The flexibility of online platforms allows students to engage with religious content at their own pace, which fosters a sense of responsibility and independence. This autonomy, when coupled with structured learning tasks and digital tools that encourage reflection, can enhance critical thinking and moral reasoning skills (Garrison et al., 2010). Furthermore, e-learning platforms can encourage collaboration and peer interaction through discussion forums, group projects, and online debates, which are integral components of character development in religious education (Hew & Cheung, 2014). The ability to engage in asynchronous discussions allows students to reflect on religious values and ethical issues, promoting deeper moral engagement and empathy towards others, which are essential aspects of character education (Dawson & Lee, 2018).

Another positive effect is the increased accessibility of religious education for diverse groups of students, particularly those in remote or underserved areas. E-learning eliminates geographical barriers, enabling students from different backgrounds to access high-quality religious education that might otherwise be unavailable (Jaggars & Bailey, 2010). By expanding the reach of religious education, e-learning creates opportunities for students to explore a wider range of religious teachings, values, and perspectives, enriching their personal and moral development (Ally, 2008). This exposure to various religious viewpoints can help students develop a broader understanding of global religious and cultural diversity, fostering tolerance and respect—key components of character formation in the context of religious education.

Negative Impacts on Students' Character

Despite these benefits, the literature also highlights some challenges and potential negative effects of e-learning on character development. One concern is the lack of face-to-face interaction between students and educators, which is crucial for fostering personal relationships and providing direct moral guidance (Johnson et al., 2015). In traditional classroom settings, religious educators often serve as role models for students, guiding them through moral dilemmas and providing immediate feedback

on character development. E-learning, with its emphasis on virtual interactions, can sometimes lead to a sense of isolation, limiting the opportunity for students to engage in meaningful conversations with their teachers and peers about ethical and moral issues (Garrison et al., 2010). This may result in a more superficial understanding of religious values, as students might not have the chance to discuss complex moral questions in depth or receive personalized mentorship from their instructors.

Moreover, the increasing reliance on digital platforms for education can lead to overexposure to digital distractions, which can hinder students' focus and self-discipline. The temptation to multitask, engage in social media, or browse unrelated content while participating in online religious education classes can diminish the quality of students' moral engagement with the material (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). As students are often left to manage their own learning schedules, the absence of a structured classroom environment may result in a decline in attention and commitment to the ethical aspects of the curriculum (Martin, 2012). Therefore, while e-learning offers flexibility, it also requires a high degree of self-discipline, which may not always be fully developed in students, particularly those in the early stages of their education.

Moderating Factors and Best Practices

Several factors influence the extent to which e-learning impacts students' character development, including the design of the e-learning environment, the teaching strategies employed, and the level of student engagement. The integration of interactive and engaging content, such as video lectures, gamified learning activities, and peer collaborations, can mitigate some of the potential drawbacks of e-learning and enhance its effectiveness in promoting character development (Sung et al., 2016). Furthermore, the involvement of religious educators in guiding students through online platforms, offering personalized feedback, and maintaining regular communication can bridge the gap created by the lack of in-person interactions (Garrison et al., 2010).

To maximize the benefits of e-learning in religious education, it is essential to strike a balance between digital learning tools and traditional pedagogical approaches. Blended learning models that combine both online and face-to-face interactions can provide a more holistic educational experience, ensuring that students receive the moral guidance they need while benefiting from the flexibility and accessibility of e-learning (Horn & Staker, 2015). Additionally, the incorporation of character-building activities,

such as community service projects or online ethical discussions, into the e-learning curriculum can reinforce the development of positive moral values and behaviors (O'Neil, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the impact of e-learning-based religious education on students' character development presents a nuanced picture, with both significant benefits and potential challenges. While e-learning can foster autonomy, accessibility, and collaboration, it also requires careful consideration of the design and implementation of digital learning environments to avoid the pitfalls of isolation and distraction. By employing best practices and combining e-learning with traditional methods of character education, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning experience that supports the moral and ethical development of students.

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