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The Use of Artificial Intelligence Innovation in Islamic Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

The pervasive integration of artificial intelligence (AI) necessitates continuous human innovation and adaptation to ensure the societal relevance of AI. Within education, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), leveraging AI is crucial for modernizing learning approaches. This study critically examines the application of AI innovations in IRE, specifically when they diverge from the core principles of literacy. Employing a systematic literature review, we meticulously gathered articles from Scopus and Google Scholar using Publish or Perish, subsequently screening and analyzing them according to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. This process yielded 28 relevant articles for review. The findings suggest that the sustained and consistent use of AI in IRE learning environments may potentially undermine human critical thinking skills. Consequently, fostering habits of reading and engaging in robust discussions emerges as a vital solution to preserve and enhance individual cognitive abilities. This research contributes comprehensive insights into the utilization of AI innovations in IRE pedagogy over the past five years, offering a timely critique and guiding future educational practices.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:
artificial intelligence; innovation; Islamic religious education

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has compelled all humans on earth to adapt in order to avoid a decline in existence. In the digital era, it is now essential for humans to understand and leverage various conveniences that can be accessed anywhere and at any time, one of which is artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is here to help with all human affairs, easing the workload at hand. This simultaneous change occurred to eliminate human labor and replace it with artificial intelligence, as it was more efficient and effective in its use. In the world of work, these conditions have become increasingly prevalent, resulting in a growing number of unemployed individuals. In the context of education, such conditions are beginning to emerge, not only among teachers but also among students. Dependence on artificial intelligence has consequences (Alifa et al., 2025). It must be paid for dearly by humans, as it weakens the ability to think critically (Hanifah et al., 2025). Based on research at the secondary school level, it was found that as many as 87.40% of students use AI to help complete assignments (Nasution et al., 2025), especially in Mathematics and Indonesian subjects (Ikhsan et al., 2025), where AI provides benefits in the form of quick access to materials, interactive explanations, and solutions to complex problems (Yani, 2024). This is a challenge and proof of dependency (Maula et al., 2023) that reduces students' critical thinking skills (Ratnasari et al., 2024). Although it only applies to a portion of students in Indonesia, it can serve as a reflection for education at all levels.

This research is important for demonstrating the extent of the discussion, use, and effectiveness of artificial intelligence in Islamic religious education. The discussion and use of previous research were found to be numerous, and almost all share similarities in seeing artificial intelligence as a potential solution to the challenges of the times. A study states that artificial intelligence in Islamic religious education learning can create an effective (Jusman et al., 2025) and creative learning

environment (Nurhayati et al., 2024). In addition, the positive impact of artificial intelligence can also be used as a learning tool for effective interactive (Muriati, 2024) and online assessment tools, such as what was done at SMA NU 05 Brangsong in assessing Islamic religious education subjects derived from daily tests, end-of-semester exams, and so on (Azis et al., 2022). E-learning itself has three functions as a learning medium, namely, functioning as an adjunct, functioning as a complement, and functioning as a substitute (Hoerudin et al., 2023). As done by the lecturer of Islamic Religious Education at Nurul Jadid University, Paiton, Probolinggo, uses e-learning to make it easier for teachers to deliver material, so that students are more proactive in doing their assignments (Bali et al., 2022). Such activities were also adapted by MA Almaarif Singosari, who used madrasah e-learning media in fiqh subjects during the COVID-19 period (Lubis et al., 2023).

The benefits of artificial intelligence are numerous, but its use must be employed wisely by both teachers and students. In searching for information through chatbots, for example, it is like dealing with a virtual assistant when needed, always present, and provides answers. The use of artificial intelligence can increase student learning outcomes from 70% to 82%, which shows the advantages of this technology. Additionally, interest in learning increased by up to 67% among informatics engineering students, as reported in a survey (Muchminiin et al., 2024). The use of artificial intelligence has indeed been proven to have a positive influence on improving students' learning skills (Wahyudi, 2024). As many as 80% of the positive influence was felt by students in increasing their learning independence for science and religion learning (Syamridar & Samsinar, 2024). The existence of AI is very beneficial to learning, such as Islamic religious education (Muchlis, 2025), as evidenced by the t-test paired samples, which showed an increase of 14.45% from the pre-test score, which was initially 68.67, after receiving intervention treatment from AI (Susilowati & Sulasmi, 2024).

The increase in all learning abilities, independence, and interest of students is contrary to the fact that the reading interest of the Indonesian people is still low. Additionally, students from upper-middle-class families tend to have a higher interest in reading. However, this cannot be generalized (Mardiah, 2023) because a study has found that the use of AI does not significantly impact reading habits (Aulia et al., 2024). The results of the study stated that the family environment had an influence of 25.5% on students' reading interest, apart from other factors that followed; it should not be underestimated because there is a need for mutually supportive collaboration from the home (Sayekti et al., 2023) and school environment, for example, have a high interest in reading, so the place that students visit the most is the library, not the school canteen. Based on research using simple linear regression, it shows that 58.3% of libraries are often visited because students' interest in reading is still there, but it does not mean that the rest do not have an interest in reading, because this study is limited to library visits (Ningsih et al., 2024). In addition, the interest in reading has a positive correlation with students' understanding of the content they read (Kurniati et al., 2023). If the opposite happens, the decrease in reading interest has a positive correlation with the decrease in students' understanding of the reading content (Musta'liyah et al., 2023). Ideally, the increase in student learning, facilitated by artificial intelligence, aligns with the interest in reading, as artificial intelligence provides the information needed quickly and critically for thinking (Julianti et al., 2025). However, it still needs to be validated through books as a reading source, so that there is no excessive dependence (Siallagan et al., 2024).

Reading enables a human being to exercise critical thinking in studying various things and to be imaginative in describing extraordinary ideas. Humans must possess critical thinking skill enable humans to think far enough to the point of validity and correctness to produce an innovation, where innovation, is the result of a critical and creative way of thinking; therefore, it is very closely related to these two things in giving rise to innovative ideas. The purpose of this research is to critique the use of artificial intelligence innovations in Islamic religious education, which is not accompanied by

reading books as a primary source of knowledge. In the era of Society 5.0, the term 'book' is not only in print form as a reading source but can also be used in PDF form. Various articles, procedural journals, and final project results are also easily accessible and studyable, requiring minimal motivation and interest in reading continuously. Based on the articles reviewed by the researcher, there is a tendency for modern humans who prioritize material needs without being oriented towards servitude to Allah to weaken their mental faculties and remembrance of Allah. While many studies have highlighted the advantages of AI in IRE, this research aims explicitly to critically examine AI innovations in Islamic religious education learning that are not accompanied by the cultivation of critical literacy and reading habits.

METHOD

This research is currently conducting a systematic literature review to gather data. This approach systematically identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes existing research, providing a comprehensive overview of a specific topic. The primary data were collected from the Scopus and Google Scholar databases through the Publish or Perish 8 application. Before searching, research questions were prepared to guide the inquiry, focusing on how to innovate with AI in the study of Islamic religious education, its implementation, challenges, and effectiveness. Inclusive and exclusive criteria were also prepared to facilitate data search, as follows in the table below. The process of identifying, screening, and assessing the eligibility of articles is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Article Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year of publication	Articles published from 2020 to 2025.	Articles are released outside of the specified time frame.
Publication categories	Articles and Conference Proceedings exclusively from journals.	Examinations, editorial works, and non-empirical studies.
Ease of access	Full article or freely accessible.	Preview articles or articles that require payment.
Subyek	Articles discussing Innovation with AI for Islamic religious education learning	Articles without research subjects or not published according to the database inclusion criteria

In the Scopus database, searches using the keywords "artificial intelligence" and "Islamic religious education learning" yielded five articles. In the Google Scholar database, a search using the keywords "innovation" and "artificial intelligence" in Islamic Religious Education Learning found 200 articles. So the total number of articles collected is 205. The selection process is carried out by identifying data exported from the Publish or Perish application in CSV format, using automation tools to remove duplicate and ineligible articles. Furthermore, the screening stage, which initially included 205 articles, was subsequently reduced to 174 articles that were not related to AI in Islamic religious education. There are 31 articles left that the article association will read, and three paid articles have been found, resulting in 28 articles. The researcher added four more articles from searches outside the database that matched the inclusion criteria, allowing the research question to be answered. The next stage of screening involves eliminating articles that do not discuss innovation, resulting in the exclusion of 4 articles that do not meet the inclusion criteria. The total number of final articles that

have passed the screening stage is 28. The following is an overview of the identification and screening process based on the article data.

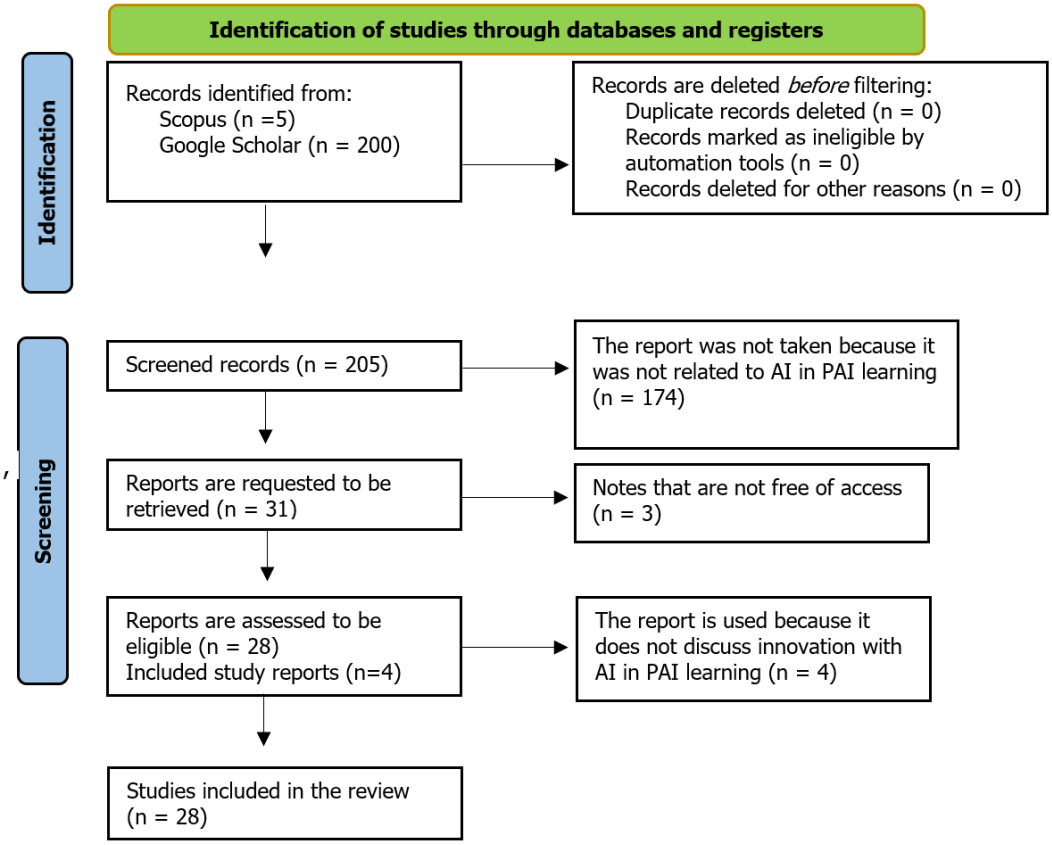

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flowchart

Based on the total final screening of 28 articles, an analysis will be carried out using the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The analysis of PRISMA 2020 requires providing a detailed report structured according to the PRISMA framework, which consists of 27 items (PRISMA statement, 2020). However, to summarize it more concisely, the researcher focuses more on the research subject, author, methodology, theoretical concepts, and findings of each article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings on the use of Artificial Intelligence innovations in Islamic religious education learning in this study indicate that there are significant dynamics in its use, with a strong push for a more interactive, personalized, and adaptive learning transformation, driven by the development of digital technology (Tanjung & Suteki, 2024). This innovation answers the need for learning that is not only content-based but also adapts to the characteristics of students in the digital era. Nevertheless, some articles suggest that AI integration is not yet ideal. In addition, significant challenges arise in terms of teacher readiness, institutional resistance, and gaps in access to digital devices and platforms. Some Islamic educational institutions lack a long-term orientation towards the use of AI, both in policy and curriculum development (Sutan Mamad & Isfaryeti, 2023). This highlights the importance of training and mentoring in building teachers' digital competencies and the sustainability of AI integration across the board.

From a pedagogical perspective, AI offers opportunities to develop innovative approaches in Islamic religious education, including project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and edutainment

models (Huda et al., 2022). However, affective and spiritual aspects are still not fully accommodated when using artificial intelligence as a learning medium (Nirwana et al., 2025). The tendency to leave the learning process to AI risks diminishing the value of appreciation, which is at the core of Islamic education, placing more emphasis on acts of charity. The use of artificial intelligence in religious learning should not only be technical-instrumental, but also reflective and ethical (Fathur Rohiem & Aulya Salsabila, 2024). The emphasis on digital literacy and spiritual literacy must be balanced. In this case, the role of teachers remains irreplaceable as a guardian of values, facilitators of the critical thinking process, and guides of students' morals and faith. Some important findings include:

The cognitive and motivational enhancement of artificial intelligence (AI) in the educational world has shown a positive impact on improving students' cognitive and learning motivation. Studies show that AI can significantly increase student engagement and cognitive achievement, with improvements of up to 82% (Elihami et al., 2024). In addition, the use of e-learning has a positive effect on IQ (68.7%), EQ (42.5%), and SQ (72.5%) (Bali et al., 2022). However, there are still limitations in affective and psychomotor aspects that require direct assistance from teachers. AI provides a new learning atmosphere because it can adjust to the personalization needs of its users through interactive conversations conducted with it. AI can adjust responses based on individual needs, including the use of simple language when students ask basic questions. In such cases, the AI response will provide simple explanations and adjust the instructions accordingly. This approach provides students with the flexibility to explore learning materials independently. The existence of AI has an impact on learning independence and student motivation, as it can be utilized as a virtual tutor at any time (Astuti et al., 2024). This response shows that AI is not only a tool, but also a responsive and flexible learning partner.

The discourse on the role of technology in education has been a topic of discussion among experts for a long time. According to Heinich, the use of educational technology must be based on the learning needs and learning styles of students. AI, as a form of educational technology evolution, enables the realization of individual and interactive learning based on constructivist learning principles. This means that AI can support the active formation of knowledge by students through meaningful dialogue and exploration, not just one-way information delivery. In addition, from Vygotsky's perspective, learning is more effective when there is "scaffolding" or temporary support from adults or technology within the Proximal Development Zone (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). In this context, AI can serve as a digital scaffolding tool that helps students grasp concepts they have not yet been able to master independently. However, the role of teachers remains crucial as a director, companion, and feedback provider of affective and contextual dimensions that technology, including AI, has not yet fully achieved.

Therefore, media innovation and learning methods, such as the application of AI in Islamic religious education, can create a more effective and creative learning environment in this context. AI not only serves as an auxiliary medium but also as a facilitator that can respond to students' needs in a more personal and flexible manner (Nurhayati et al., 2024). The presence of AI in religious subject classrooms can shape more active learning interactions, where students are not only passively receiving material, but also encouraged to participate actively through interactive digital systems. The use of Artificial Intelligence innovations, such as E-Modules, blended learning, edutainment, and project-based learning, can increase students' interest in learning and improve their writing skills. Even learning innovations, such as E-modules, have good opportunities for improvement by adjusting to the needs of the learning climate (Azizah & Widyastono, 2023). Learning media innovations utilize AI, such as WhatsApp, Zoom Meetings, Khan Academy, BSD Education, and Google Classroom (Novianto & Hidayat, 2023). AI-based media employs a learning method called E-Learning, which has three functions: additional, complementary, and substitute (Hoerudin et al., 2023). Additional

functions as a complement to existing conventional learning methods provide variety in the delivery of material. Complementary functions complement the face-to-face learning process by providing additional materials, quizzes, discussion forums, and other online activities. A replacement function to replace face-to-face learning entirely, especially in emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, while still allowing the teaching and learning process to run remotely. All of this is an effort by humans to adapt to the increasingly complex and dynamic changes of the times.

It is no longer a discourse on various media innovations and AI-based learning methods, but there is an Islamic organization called Muhammadiyah that has already addressed the issue of AI development by creating EduMu. This student media platform facilitates flexible, comfortable, and needs-based learning in the current era. Then, making EdutabMU a digital learning service without requiring internet access is a very inclusive innovation, as it enables areas with limited internet access to use it freely. The use of AI innovations is also evident in the form of AI-based online assessments at SMA NU 05 Brangsong, which have proven effective in assessing student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education subjects while minimizing cheating practices (Azis et al., 2022). This system enables teachers to automatically and quickly generate varied questions, which are then graded by the system, thereby speeding up the process of student feedback and reflection. Another study found that the application of AI in two classes of Islamic religious education students provided a more personalized and interactive learning experience, particularly in understanding religious concepts (Tanjung & Suteki, 2024).

Not only do students receive a more enjoyable learning experience, but their teachers also benefit from it. A study stated that teachers at MAN 4 Medan City Preparation began to utilize AI-based e-learning platforms to upload PAI subject (Lubis et al., 2023). This initiative not only makes it easier for students to access materials but also provides flexibility in time and place of learning. Teachers are also encouraged to design learning content that is more contextual and digital-friendly. The use of AI innovation also enables the presentation of material adaptively, according to the level of understanding of each student, allowing the process of internalizing Islamic values to occur more deeply. In the AI-based independent learning method, Chatbots can be used to enhance the writing skills of students in Islamic religious education (Sulaeman et al., 2024). This chatbot can provide instant corrections and feedback, helping students refine their ability to compose religious texts more effectively. This approach shows that AI can support religious literacy competencies, provided it is pedagogically directed. The use of AI innovations in Islamic religious education learning is increasingly broad and varied, ranging from assessment and material development to adaptive learning interactions.

Moreover, ethics and implementation challenges of artificial intelligence in Islamic religious education learning cannot be separated from ethical and cultural challenges. Several articles highlight the risks of relying on AI, which can weaken critical reasoning and motivation for independent learning (Hanifah et al., 2025). This is part of the consequences of overusing AI, making oneself accustomed to easy and detailed access to information. The intelligence that should be obtained through the learning process and the seriousness of achieving maximum results have shifted to achieving maximum results, but the effort is minimal. The results are the same, but the different processes hinder the development of critical thinking in students and teachers, as they become reliant on AI users who cross the line. In the context of Islamic education, the formation of character and manners through the learning process cannot be completely substituted by technology. As explained in a study, there has been a paradigm shift in architectural aspects in the Islamic world that cannot be replaced by AI, namely touching on fundamental aspects such as the architectural meaning of knowledge and spirituality, which cannot be replaced by the mechanistic logic of AI (Sukkar et al., 2024). Other research suggests that it is not possible to equate humans with AI robots unless a human

being of exceptional intelligence can control them (Ghaly, 2024). This statement emphasizes that, in essence, AI remains an artificial tool, which must be governed by a human being with a divine orientation. Therefore, making AI a dominant instrument without a balance of transcendental values will distance students from the spirit of religiosity and ethical awareness.

According to Neil Postman, technology is not neutral; it brings its ideology that can replace the value structure in a society if it is not critically examined and wisely addressed. He warned that when technology, including AI, is adopted without cultural wisdom, people can lose local wisdom and spiritual values that have been the cornerstone of education. In the context of Islamic religious education, this is particularly important because Islamic education encompasses not only the transfer of information but also the shaping of students' morals and spirituality as a whole (Postman, 1993). Meanwhile, from the perspective of Islamic ethics, the use of technology must be subject to the principles of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, namely, safeguarding religion, soul, intellect, descent, and property. Actual knowledge is not only obtained from information, but from the process of searching with sincerity and sincerity, to produce wisdom and closeness to Allah (al-Ghazālī, 2004). Therefore, the use of AI in Islamic religious education should be viewed as a means that strengthens the learning process, rather than replacing it. This approach will maintain a balance between technological advances and Islamic values in shaping a generation that is intellectually intelligent and spiritually mature.

The role of the teacher is constructive in the learning process, but the role of teachers as spiritual and moral guides remains crucial and cannot be replaced by technology. No matter how sophisticated, AI also has limitations in providing information because, in the coding system, there are indeed limitations and prohibitions by AI creators. Moreover, the aspect of an exemplary figure that embodies moral and spiritual values can only be seen through a person, in this context, the teacher. Until the present time, the role of a teacher will not be replaced by AI, because human beings are alive and live their lives; of course, their presence has meaning in the hearts of other human beings (Saihu, 2021). In contrast to AI, which is a manifestation of digital technology, it resembles a way of thinking, learning, and acting that is similar to that of humans. Teachers are not only conveyors of material, but also value planters and meaning makers in the educational process, something that digital devices do not possess.

On the other hand, learning approaches such as flipped classrooms, while providing flexibility in the delivery of materials, also raise concerns regarding the reduction of direct interaction between teachers and students. This interaction has been a vehicle for instilling exemplary values (Meliani et al., 2022). Technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and AI, along with cloud computing, have great potential for presenting Islamic religious education content interestingly and interactively (Luqmi et al., 2024). However, its use must remain within the parameters of Islamic pedagogy, which emphasizes spiritual values. Even the use of simple media such as index cards or poster designs still has the power to build students' understanding if managed with a creative and meaningful approach (Ramli, 2022). The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model is also considered a strategic innovation in the context of Islamic religious education, which requires active student involvement and direct character formation (Wiliyanti et al., 2023).

In line with this, Paulo Freire emphasized the importance of education as a dialogical process that fosters a human relationship between teachers and students. In Freire's view, liberating education cannot be achieved through a mechanistic approach alone, because education is a process of humanization, not just the transfer of information (Freire, 2005). This demonstrates that in Islamic education, the role of teachers as active participants in guiding, setting examples, and engaging in dialogue with students is essential and cannot be replaced by machines that operate based on algorithms. In Islam, the concept of exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) is the main principle guiding

the educational process. Ibn Miskawayh emphasized that ideal education not only forms intellect, but also manners and morals through the repetition of good actions and correct habituation (Miskawayh, 1978). Thus, technology such as AI can only be a complement, not a replacement, in the great mission of Islamic education to form knowledgeable and noble human beings. The integration of AI in Islamic religious education learning must be carried out wisely, with teachers serving as central figures in shaping the values, morals, and spirituality of students.

Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a significant opportunity for improving the quality and effectiveness of learning, major challenges remain in terms of access and equity, particularly in the context of Islamic educational institutions. Several studies indicate that a gap remains in the readiness of Islamic educational institutions to integrate AI, primarily due to limited infrastructure and teachers' digital competence (Eraku et al., 2021). This condition is exacerbated by the low digital literacy of some teachers; a teacher still needs to improve their digital literacy to effectively integrate technology, including AI, into learning, especially in Islamic religious education. This willingness to learn is also hindered by limited internet access and the scarcity of computers as a resource for learning. Mastery of technology, including AI, is a crucial key to the transformation of learning that is more adaptive and relevant to the times. Limited access to the internet and hardware, such as computers, is also a major barrier to creating digital equality among teachers and students.

On the other hand, AI has the potential to encourage student independence in learning. As a virtual tutor available at all times, AI can foster learning motivation and facilitate personalized learning as per individual needs (Astuti et al., 2024). Unfortunately, this potential cannot be felt equally by all students, especially in disadvantaged areas. This creates a digital divide that can exacerbate educational inequality between urban and rural schools. However, the increasing trend of scientific publications examining the relationship between AI and religion shows a growing awareness in academia of the importance of integrating spiritual values in technological innovation (Andriansyah, 2022). In this context, it is essential to develop Islamic religious education teaching materials that are compatible with AI technology, such as text and audio formats that are easily readable and processable by AI systems (Sari et al., 2024).

To address these challenges of access and equity, a critical and transformative approach in education is needed. Education should not only be liberating but also transformative, encouraging social justice and equality as its ultimate goal (Giroux, 2011). In this regard, the integration of AI in education must be positioned not just as a technological tool, but as part of the liberation process to provide equitable access to quality education to all groups. AI-based education must be accompanied by affirmative policies for marginalized groups and systematic training for teachers to prevent them from being left behind in the wave of digitalization. Furthermore, from an Islamic perspective, justice and equality are fundamental values in the education system, as education is not only aimed at transferring knowledge but also at forming a complete human being *(insān kāmil)* who can function fairly in society (Al-Attas, 1991). Therefore, the challenge of access to AI in Islamic religious education must be answered with policies that ensure equitable distribution of learning facilities and teacher capacity building, so that technology becomes a means to strengthen, not widen, the educational gap. This implementation still requires ethical and pedagogical support to ensure that it is not only technically instrumental but also contributes to the achievement of holistic religious education goals.

The researcher sees the potential for the use of AI in Islamic religious education that is sustainable and consistent, which may weaken critical thinking in humans. All humans possess an intellect that distinguishes them from animals, an extraordinary gift from Allah, which must be used to the best and fullest extent. Maximum effort in continuous thinking will foster critical and creative thinking in generating ideas. Critical ideas combined with creative ideas will result in an innovation.

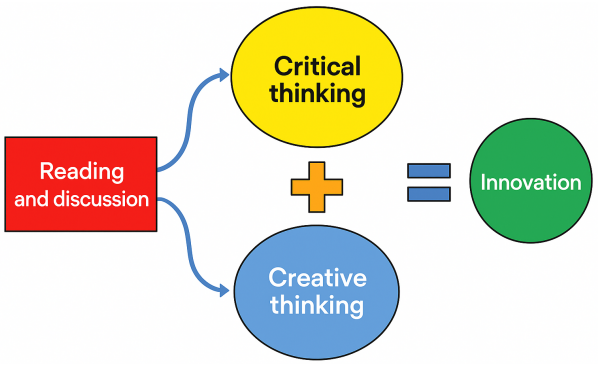

Figure 2. Innovation Mind Map

The existence of AI as an innovation is a manifestation of the critical and creative nature of computer experts, who are developing rapidly in the digital era. This rapid development must strive to maintain its critical and creative power through reading and discussion. Reading is an activity that requires a person to think from simple to complex, depending on the reading being read. There is a difference between reading physical books and reading digital books in PDF format, which lies in the strain on the eyes from staring at a computer screen. Radiation produced by computers can sometimes cause sore eyes for anyone. Unlike reading books, physical form has its impression and meaning because books have a form that the sense of touch can feel, the smell of books that the sense of smell can detect, and writing that can be captured by the sense of sight, making reading books a love that intoxicates every reader. Reading is not only the act of receiving information, but also a process of active dialogue with the author to build deep understanding and knowledge (Adler & Van Doren, 1972).

In the context of Islamic religious education, a teacher and student cannot continuously rely on AI to understand religious teachings. Technology does offer ease and speed, but that does not mean all learning needs can be solved just by typing questions and receiving answers. Religious teachings require deep understanding, reflection, and example, which digital devices cannot replace. There are still so many Islamic books, tafsir, yellow books, and works of scholars that can be used as a source of reference to explore Islamic values as a whole, such as the Tafsir of *Al-Azhar* by Buya Hamka (Hamka, 1999), *Sirah Nabawi* (Al-Mubarakfuri, 1997), and *Ihya Ulumuddin Iman Al-Ghazali* (Al-Qasimi, 2010). They are still relevant to be studied in depth by their readers. There are still so many books that can be read and used as a source of reference in learning to stay well-maintained, and maintaining their critical power is a wiser choice. It does not mean not allowing, but somewhat limiting the use of AI so as not to overdo it. Making reading a habit is the wisest way to maintain the sharpness of one's reason and the richness of one's ideas. It does not mean that using AI is prohibited; in that science in Islam is not just the accumulation of data, but involves the process of internalizing values and forming manners (al-Attas, 1978). Therefore, its use needs to be guided by educators and parents so that it does not become a habit that weakens critical thinking. Because everything excessive, even though it seems easy at first, will gradually lead to dependency and weaken one's character.

In addition to reading, it is a way to nurture creative power in generating unique ideas that set people apart from others. It is essential to maintain both because it demonstrates the development of more intelligent individuals, problem solvers, and responsible citizens (Redhana, 2024). The discussion is also an important part of the learning process. Through discussion, humans not only convey their opinions but also learn to listen and understand the perspectives of others. Discussions train healthy communication skills, build courage in expressing ideas, and open up space for the formation of broader understanding. In discussions, one can discover new perspectives that were previously unthinkable. This is the power of human-to-human interaction that AI cannot replace,

because AI only answers, never feels, and experiences. Human discussions encompass the emotional, spiritual, and empathetic aspects, all of which are integral to the overall process of religious education.

As a transformative reflective form of this discussion, the researcher urges teachers and students to re-recognize themselves with all their abilities, making them more aware and willing to learn. Continuous learning requires sacrifice and resilience, leading to an incredible expansion of critical and creative thinking. In this process, humans are elevated because they utilize their intellect to comprehend science, rather than merely copying information from cold and neutral technology. In addition, being wise in using AI is also a form of human prudence, keeping the mind sharp and enabling one to see things more clearly. Education should be able to develop students' potential holistically, covering intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects, so that they can face the challenges of the times wisely and creatively (Qomar, 2005).

In the context of Islamic religious education, as a heavenly religion, Allah has sent down His glorious and miraculous book, namely the Qur'an. This book is not only a source of knowledge but also a guide to life that helps people avoid errors. The existence of AI that can answer various questions quickly and accurately should not replace the Qur'an as the primary reference point for understanding Islamic values. On the contrary, AI must be directed to support the understanding of the Qur'an, not to distance the ummah from recitation and *tadabbur*, which should be the spirit of religious education itself. The integration of AI in Islamic education must be done wisely, so as not to reduce the spiritual depth and understanding of the essential Islamic values (Hakim, 2023).

Teachers, as the spearhead of education, play a crucial role in maintaining this balance. He is not only a teacher, but also a guide, role model, and guardian of values. AI cannot replace the sincerity of teachers in imparting knowledge, cannot bring the warmth of a loving educator to the face, and cannot instill noble moral values with real-life examples like teachers do in their daily lives. A teacher has the responsibility to instill character values in students through example and direct interaction, which is the foundation for the formation of students' personalities (Agustin & Maryani, 2021). So, as great as AI is, it is just a tool that must be guided by the heart and values. Likewise, students should not be distracted by the ease of information offered by AI. Students must be trained to love the process of reading books, discussing, writing, and struggling to understand the material, all while persevering patiently. Because from that process comes the blessing of knowledge, not just quick results obtained without struggle.

AI is indeed an extraordinary creation of humans who use their intellect, but precisely because of that, humans must not forget that technology is only a result, not an end. The ultimate goal in learning, especially in religious education, is to draw closer to Allah and make knowledge a beacon of truth. Therefore, it is essential to exercise caution when receiving information from AI, as it requires validation, confirmation, and, most importantly, *dzikir*. With this awareness, teachers and students will be more effective in using technology as a learning partner, rather than a substitute for instruction. AI will remain on the right track if it is controlled by humans who have faith, piety, noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and good citizens.

The results of this study indicate that the potential application of AI in sustainable and consistent Islamic Religious Education can potentially weaken critical thinking in humans. These findings present a novel critical perspective compared to most of the literature that tends to focus on the efficiency and positive potential of AI in improving writing skills (Sulaeman et al., 2024) and improving IQ, EQ, and SQ (Bali et al., 2021). In contrast to this dominant view, our analysis indicates a contradictory impact that arises when AI innovation is not balanced with an emphasis on literacy and reading habits. The habit of reading and discussing can be a solution in building one's critical reasoning. Discussing allows humans to add new perspectives, and social relations are indirectly also

positively affected. These two combinations are crucial for the foundation of human survival in all-digital and uncertain conditions like today.

CONCLUSION

The integration of artificial intelligence in Islamic religious education offers significant opportunities to address the challenges of the times. The innovations enabled by technology have facilitated the learning process, creating a more flexible and personalized learning environment. However, behind this convenience lies a space that has not been filled, namely, the importance of ethical values, the power of critical literacy, and spiritual depth, which should be the guiding spirit of religious education. AI is not an enemy in the educational process, but rather a tool guided by Islamic and humanitarian values. The use of AI must be accompanied by strengthening teachers as true educators, validating every piece of information received, and fostering a literacy culture. By doing so, the application of AI in Islamic education will not only produce technologically proficient students but also individuals with stronger critical thinking, spiritual depth, and a clear purpose in life. Islamic education not only forms intelligent human beings, but also human beings who are civilized and aware of their purpose in life as servants of Allah. This study provides a comprehensive overview of the potential, opportunities, and challenges of using AI in Islamic religious education, while highlighting the imbalance between technological advances in the form of AI and reading interest and critical thinking skills.

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