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The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Awareness in the Digital Era at SMAN 1 Tenggarong

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in fostering students' religious awareness in the digital era at SMAN 1 Tenggarong. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that students' religious awareness is influenced by both internal and external factors, including self-motivation, family environment, peer influence, and digital media exposure. In the digital era, IRE teachers play important roles not only as educators, but also as mentors, motivators, role models, and filters of religious information

accessed by students through digital media. Effective strategies implemented by teachers include religious habituation, emotional and contextual approaches, and the selective use of technology. The study concludes that collaboration among teachers, families, and schools is essential in creating a religious environment that supports the development of students' religious awareness in the digital era.

Keywords: Religious Awareness, Digital Era, Islamic Education, Student Religiosity.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam membentuk kesadaran beragama siswa di era digital pada SMAN 1 Tenggarong. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesadaran beragama siswa dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal dan eksternal, seperti motivasi diri, lingkungan keluarga, teman sebaya, serta paparan media digital. Di era digital, guru PAI berperan tidak hanya sebagai pendidik, tetapi juga sebagai pembimbing, motivator, teladan, dan filter terhadap informasi keagamaan yang diakses siswa melalui media digital. Strategi yang diterapkan meliputi pembiasaan religius, pendekatan emosional dan kontekstual, serta pemanfaatan teknologi secara selektif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kolaborasi antara guru, keluarga, dan sekolah sangat penting dalam menciptakan lingkungan religius yang mendukung pembentukan kesadaran beragama siswa di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Kesadaran Beragama, Era Digital, Pendidikan Islam, Religiusitas Siswa.

A. Introduction

Religious awareness is an essential aspect of students' character development as it relates to the understanding, internalization, and implementation of religious values in everyday life. In the context of Islamic education, religious awareness is reflected not only through the performance of religious rituals but also through attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes that align with religious teachings. Therefore, religious education plays a strategic role in developing a generation that possesses not only academic competence but also strong moral and spiritual integrity. Huber and Huber argue that religiosity is a multidimensional construct encompassing religious beliefs, experiences, knowledge, practices, and the influence of religion on daily life.¹ Consequently, fostering religious awareness has become one of the primary objectives of religious education in schools.

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed the ways student access, understand, and practice religious knowledge. Various digital platforms, including social media, websites, educational applications, and online video channels, provide extensive access to religious information. On the one hand, these developments offer valuable opportunities for students to broaden their religious understanding. On the other hand, the rapid flow of information also presents challenges, including exposure to unverified information, superficial religious understanding, and interpretations that may not align with moderate Islamic principles. Golan highlights that digital spaces have become important arenas for the construction of religious identity and religious practices among young people.²

¹ Stefan Huber and Odilo W Huber, "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)," *Jurnal Religions* (2012): 710–724.

² Oren Golan, "Introduction : Digital Youth and Religion," *Jurnal Religions* (2023).

Furthermore, Larson found that digital technology significantly influences how Indonesian youth understand and practice religious values in their daily lives.³

In response to these challenges, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers play a crucial role in guiding students toward a proper understanding and implementation of religious teachings. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering instructional content but also serve as mentors, motivators, facilitators, and role models for their students. As digital technology continues to evolve, the responsibilities of teachers have become increasingly complex, requiring them to assist students in evaluating and filtering religious information obtained from various digital sources. Wohlfart and Wagner emphasize that teachers are key actors in the digitalization of education and play a vital role in helping students adapt to digital learning environments.⁴ Therefore, IRE teachers contribute not only to the development of religious understanding but also to the promotion of responsible digital religious literacy.

Previous studies have examined the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in fostering students' religious character in the digital era. Research has demonstrated that teacher exemplarity significantly contributes to the development of students' religious character and moral behavior.⁵ Other studies have highlighted the importance of strengthening digital literacy as an integral component of religious education in contemporary educational settings.⁶ Furthermore, the transformation of teachers' roles in addressing the challenges of the digital era has attracted increasing scholarly attention.⁷ Nevertheless, most existing studies primarily focus on teachers' roles as educators, mentors, and role models. Research that specifically explores how Islamic Religious Education teachers perform their multidimensional roles as educators, motivators, role models, and facilitators of digital religious literacy in fostering students' religious awareness remains limited.

Based on these considerations, this study employs Glock and Stark's theory of religiosity, which conceptualizes religiosity as a multidimensional construct consisting of belief, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential dimensions.⁸ This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding students' religious awareness as a phenomenon that encompasses not only religious practices but also religious understanding, experiences, and the implementation of religious values in daily life. Although previous studies have investigated the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in character formation and digital literacy development, limited attention has been given to exploring how teachers perform their multidimensional roles in fostering students' religious

³ Monica Petcu and Monica Roman, "YOUTH RELIGIOSITY : A BIBLIOMETRIC COVERAGE AND QUANTITATIVE ASSESMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL Dimensions," *Journal of Socian and Economic Statistics* 12, no. 1 (2023): 1–24.

⁴ Olivia Wohlfart and Ingo Wagner, "Teachers' Role in Digitalizing Education: An Umbrella Review," *Educational technology research and development*, no. 2022 (2024): 339–365, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-022-10166-0>.

⁵ Ahmad Abdul Rochim and Amal Khayati, "Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Character in the Digital Era: A Case Study of SDN 1 Kondangsari, Cirebon," *Journal Of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2023): 259–269.

⁶ Abuddin Nata et al., "Digital Extension of Digital Literacy Competence for Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Era of Digital Learning," *Jurnal Pendidikan agama islam* 21, no. 2 (2024).

⁷ "Transformasi Peran Guru PAI dalam Pembentukan Kesadaran Beragama Siswa di Era Digital," *Alwatzikhoebillah: Kajian Islam, Pendidikan, Ekonomi, Humaniora* (2025).

⁸ Rofiul Kahfi and Donny Khoirul Azis, "Transformasi Peran Guru PAI Dalam Pembentukan Kesadaran Beragama Siswa Di Era Digital," *Jurnal Alwatzikhoebillah* 12, no. 1 (2026): 318–330.

awareness amid the increasingly complex flow of digital information. Therefore, this study aims to explore the forms of students' religious awareness, analyze the roles and strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in fostering religious awareness in the digital era, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence this process at SMAN 1 Tenggara. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing an in-depth understanding of how Islamic Religious Education teachers perform multidimensional roles as educators, mentors, motivators, role models, and facilitators of digital religious literacy in fostering students' religious awareness within increasingly digitalized educational environments.

B. Literature Review

1. Religious Awareness

Religious awareness refers to an individual's internal condition that reflects the understanding, internalization, and implementation of religious values in everyday life. From the perspective of the psychology of religion, religious awareness is not merely associated with cognitive aspects such as religious knowledge but also encompasses affective and behavioral dimensions that are manifested through attitudes and actions. Consequently, religious awareness can be understood as a manifestation of an individual's religiosity that influences how people think, behave, and respond to various life situations. Religious awareness is considered an important indicator in students' character development because it contributes to moral growth, ethical conduct, and social responsibility.⁹

Within educational settings, religious awareness develops through a continuous process of value internalization facilitated by learning experiences, habituation, and social interactions. Religious education aims not only to increase students' religious knowledge but also to cultivate commitment to religious values that are reflected in everyday behavior. Huber and Huber argue that religiosity occupies a central position in human life because it influences various dimensions of individual existence, including moral orientation and social behavior.¹⁰ Therefore, fostering religious awareness in schools cannot be separated from educational processes that integrate religious knowledge, spiritual experiences, and religious practices.

The rapid advancement of digital technology has introduced new dynamics in the development of students' religious awareness. Young people today obtain religious information not only from teachers and educational institutions but also from various digital platforms. Petcu and Roman demonstrate that youth religiosity is influenced by social and technological transformations that shape how young people understand and express their religious beliefs.¹¹ Therefore, religious awareness in the digital era should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the interaction between individuals, educational environments, and digital media.

2. Glock and Stark's Theory of Religiosity

One of the most influential theories in the study of religiosity is Glock and Stark's Theory of Religiosity. This theory conceptualizes religiosity as a multidimensional construct that cannot be understood solely through religious

⁹ Glock, Charles Y., dan Rodney Stark. *Religion and Society in Tension*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965.

¹⁰ Huber and Huber, "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)."

¹¹ Petcu and Roman, "Youth Religiosity: A Bibliometric Coverage And Quantitative Assesemnt Of Internal And External Dimensions."

practices but must be examined through several interconnected dimensions. Glock and Stark identify five dimensions of religiosity: belief, ritualistic practice, religious experience, religious knowledge, and consequential behavior.¹² These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals internalize and implement religious teachings in their daily lives.

The belief dimension refers to an individual's acceptance of religious doctrines and teachings. In the context of Islamic education, this dimension is reflected in students' understanding and acceptance of fundamental Islamic principles and values. Meanwhile, the ritualistic dimension concerns participation in religious practices such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, supplication, and other acts of worship. These two dimensions are often considered primary indicators of an individual's attachment to religion.

In addition, Glock and Stark emphasize the importance of the experiential dimension, which relates to an individual's spiritual experiences and personal relationship with God. This dimension demonstrates that religiosity is not merely formal or ritualistic but also involves subjective spiritual experiences that provide meaning and direction in life. Furthermore, the intellectual dimension refers to the level of religious knowledge and understanding possessed by an individual. A deeper understanding of religious teachings increases the likelihood that religious values will guide decision-making and everyday behavior.¹³

The final dimension is the consequential dimension, which refers to the extent to which religious values influence an individual's social behavior. This dimension is considered the practical manifestation of religious internalization because it is reflected in honesty, responsibility, discipline, social concern, and other positive behaviors. Huber and Huber argue that strong religiosity is not only demonstrated through beliefs and religious practices but also through the influence of religion on daily life.¹⁴ Therefore, religious awareness can be understood as the integration of all dimensions of religiosity.

Based on these characteristics, Glock and Stark's Theory of Religiosity serves as the primary analytical framework of this study. The five dimensions of religiosity provide a conceptual foundation for understanding students' religious awareness and for analyzing how Islamic Religious Education teachers contribute to fostering such awareness in the digital era.

3. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Fostering Religious Awareness

Teachers occupy a strategic position in the educational process because they function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as mentors and role models for students. Within Islamic education, teachers are often regarded as *murabbi*, individuals who are responsible for students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. Therefore, the effectiveness of religious education is closely associated with the quality of teachers' roles in guiding students to understand and practice religious teachings.

Research conducted by Rochim and Khayati indicates that teacher exemplarity significantly contributes to the development of students' religious character.¹⁵ Through daily interactions, teachers become behavioral models whose

¹² Golan, "Introduction : Digital Youth and Religion."

¹³ Golan, "Introduction : Digital Youth and Religion."

¹⁴ Huber and Huber, "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)."

¹⁵ Wohlfart and Wagner, "Teachers' Role in Digitalizing Education: An Umbrella Review."

attitudes and actions can be observed and imitated by students. Viewed through Glock and Stark's framework, teachers contribute not only to the intellectual dimension by providing religious knowledge but also to the dimensions of belief, religious practice, spiritual experience, and behavioral consequences. In this sense, teachers act as facilitators who assist students in internalizing religious values comprehensively.

In the digital era, teachers' responsibilities have become increasingly complex. Teachers are expected not only to guide students in understanding religious teachings but also to assist them in navigating the vast amount of religious information available through digital media. Studies on the transformation of Islamic Religious Education teachers' roles indicate that educators must develop adaptive learning strategies that respond to technological developments while continuing to foster students' religious character and awareness.¹⁶ Consequently, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers extends beyond classroom instruction to include mentoring students within digital environments.

4. Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

The digital era has significantly transformed social interactions and learning processes among students. Digital technologies provide broader access to various sources of knowledge, including religious information. Golan argues that digital spaces have become new arenas where young people construct religious identities and acquire religious experiences.¹⁷ This phenomenon indicates that digital media increasingly influence how students understand and practice religious teachings.

Despite these opportunities, the accessibility of digital information also presents significant challenges. Not all religious content available online possesses adequate credibility and reliability. This condition may lead to misinformation, digital radicalization, and fragmented understandings of religion. Therefore, students' ability to evaluate and critically assess religious information has become an essential component of contemporary religious education.

Wohlfart and Wagner emphasize that teachers play a central role in helping students adapt to digital learning environments.¹⁸ Likewise, several studies conducted in Indonesia highlight that strengthening digital religious literacy has become an increasingly urgent necessity within Islamic Religious Education.¹⁹ Accordingly, religious education in the digital era should not only aim to enhance students' religiosity but also develop their ability to utilize digital technologies critically, responsibly, and in accordance with religious values.

5. Theoretical Synthesis

Based on the literature reviewed, students' religious awareness can be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing beliefs, religious practices, spiritual experiences, religious knowledge, and behavioral consequences, as conceptualized by Glock and Stark's Theory of Religiosity. The development of religious awareness does not occur automatically but is influenced by educational

¹⁶ Rochim and Khayati, "Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Character in the Digital Era: A Case Study of SDN I Kondangsari, Cirebon."

¹⁷ Nata et al., "Digital Extension of Digital Literacy Competence for Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Era of Digital Learning."

¹⁸ Kahfi and Azis, "Transformasi Peran Guru PAI Dalam Pembentukan Kesadaran Beragama Siswa Di Era Digital."

¹⁹ Moch Kalam Mollah, "Tantangan Pembelajaran Di Era Digital Dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius Siswa Di Sekolah Menengah Atas Muhammadiyah 2 Surabaya," *jurnal pemikiran dan pendidikan islam* 14, no. 1 (2024): 49–50.

processes in which Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role. In the digital era, these processes become increasingly complex because students continuously interact with diverse religious information available through digital platforms. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers serve as key actors in guiding, facilitating, and supporting students in developing comprehensive religious awareness while simultaneously cultivating responsible digital religious literacy.

C. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in fostering students' religious awareness in the digital era. The research was conducted over a period of three months, from late January to April 2025, at SMAN 1 Tenggara. The participants consisted of IRE teachers and students who were selected using purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The criteria included IRE teachers who actively taught and participated in students' religious development activities, as well as students who actively engaged in IRE learning and religious programmes within the school. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. An interview guide served as the primary instrument to explore information regarding teachers' roles, instructional strategies, the use of digital technology in learning, and efforts to enhance students' religious awareness. Observations were conducted to directly examine classroom learning processes and religious activities, while documentation was used to support the data through archives, photographs, and other relevant documents.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, beginning with the transcription of interview data followed by a coding process to identify key concepts, keywords, and significant information related to the research focus. Codes with similar meanings were grouped into categories and subsequently developed into major themes describing the role of IRE teachers in shaping students' religious awareness in the digital era. The analysis followed an interactive process involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, which was conducted continuously throughout the research. To ensure the credibility of the findings, source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking were employed to verify the consistency between the collected data and participants' perspectives and experiences. Through these procedures, the study is expected to produce valid, accurate, and comprehensive findings regarding the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in fostering students' religious awareness in the digital era.

D. Result

I. Students' Religious Awareness in the Digital Era

Based on the interviews conducted with the teacher and students, it was found that the level of religious awareness among students at SMAN 1 Tenggara varies considerably. These differences can be observed in terms of students' understanding, their practice of religious duties, and the religious attitudes they demonstrate in their daily lives.²⁰

²⁰ Mochamad Azis Kurniawan, A Y Soegeng Ysh, and Filia Prima Artharina, "Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Religius Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Di Sdn Jamean 01 Pati," *DWIJALOKA Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah* 2, no. 2 (2021): 197–204.

The Islamic Education (IRE) teacher stated that religious awareness cannot be measured solely through acts of worship, but also through students' behaviour and attitudes in social interactions.

"Religious awareness varies; it is not only measured through acts of worship, but also through one's attitudes".²¹ Furthermore, Mrs. Rina explained that within a single class, there are students who already demonstrate independent religious awareness, while others still require guidance and encouragement.

"Some students take the initiative without being instructed, while others still need motivation and guidance".²²

From the students' perspective, religious awareness is understood as the ability to consciously and sincerely carry out religious obligations and avoid prohibitions.²³ This indicates that some students already possess a relatively good understanding of the concept of religious awareness.

"Religious awareness is about being conscious of religious commands and prohibitions, and practising them sincerely without coercion".²⁴

However, in the digital era, students' religious awareness is also influenced by the use of technology. Students acknowledged that they frequently utilise the internet and social media to access religious information, such as through search engines, Qur'an applications, and various online platforms.

"I often use the internet to learn about religion, usually through Google or Qur'an applications".²⁵

On the other hand, digital media can also act as a distraction that affects the consistency of students' religious practices, particularly when they become overly engaged with social media activities.

"What makes me less consistent is usually gadgets and other activities".²⁶

Thus, it can be concluded that students' religious awareness in the digital era presents a dual dynamic on the one hand, it provides opportunities to access religious knowledge more easily, while on the other hand, it poses challenges in maintaining consistent religious practices.

2. The Role of IRE Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Awareness

Based on the interview findings, it was revealed that the Islamic Education (IRE) teacher plays a highly significant role in shaping students' religious awareness at SMAN 1 Tenggarong. This role extends beyond merely delivering instructional content, encompassing guidance, role modelling, and motivational support for students.²⁷

In the teaching process, Mrs. Rina emphasised that the internalisation of religious values cannot rely solely on the delivery of subject matter, but must also involve approaches that engage students on an emotional level. Such an approach enables students to more readily accept and internalise religious values.

²¹ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

²² Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

²³ Ahmad Fahmi Alfian, M Mujiburrahman, and S Sukari, "Upaya Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran Beribadah Siswa," *Al'Ulum Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* (2022): 227–240.

²⁴ Wawancara, Siswi Zahratul Jannah, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

²⁵ Wawancara, Siswa Muhammad Ali Akbar, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

²⁶ Wawancara, Siswi Haisha Putri, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

²⁷ Sri Devi, Siti Nurul Qomariah, and Yohana Syabilla, "Peran Guru Dalam Membimbing Siswa Mengamalkan Nilai Islam Mendidik Dengan Keteladanan," *Fatih: Journal of Contemporary Research* 2, no. 1 (2025): 362–374.

"I do not rely solely on teaching the material, but also use an approach that touches them from the heart".²⁸

In addition, Mrs. Rina applies a contextual approach by relating learning materials to students' daily lives, making religious teachings more relevant and easier to understand.

"I always relate the learning material to their real-life experiences so that it becomes easier for them to understand".²⁹

When guiding students who are less consistent in practising religious activities, Mrs. Rina first identifies the underlying causes, whether they stem from internal or external factors, such as family environment and peer relationships. Following this, guidance is provided through a personalised approach and the habituation of religious practices.

"I first identify the causes, then approach them personally and guide them through habitual practices".³⁰

Role modelling is also considered a crucial factor in shaping students' religious awareness.³¹ Mr. Sobirin explained that students are more likely to imitate behaviours they observe rather than simply follow verbal advice.

"Role modelling is extremely important; in fact, it is the main factor because students tend to imitate what they see".³²

In addition to being an educator and role model, the teacher also acts as a motivator. In this regard, Mr. Sobirin provides students with an understanding of the meaning and purpose of religious practices and relates them to everyday life through communicative approaches suited to students in the digital era.

"I use emotional approaches, friendly dialogue, and language that resonates with them".³³

From the students' perspective, the role of the PAI teacher is perceived as highly influential in their religious lives, particularly in guiding them towards a correct understanding of religious teachings.

"The PAI teacher is very influential because they guide us so that we do not misunderstand religion".³⁴

Thus, it can be concluded that the role of the PAI teacher in shaping students' religious awareness encompasses multiple dimensions, namely as an educator, guide, role model, and motivator, all of which are interconnected in fostering students' religious awareness in the digital era.

3. Strategies of IRE Teachers in Shaping Religious Awareness in the Digital Era

Based on the interview findings, it was revealed that the Islamic Education (IRE) teacher at SMAN 1 Tenggarong implements various strategies to shape students' religious awareness in accordance with the conditions of the digital era.

²⁸ Wawancara, Ibu Rina, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

²⁹ Wawancara, Ibu Rina, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

³⁰ Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

³¹ Musta'in Shodiq and Kuswanto Kuswanto, "Strategi Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa Melalui Pendidikan Berbasis Keteladanan Dan Pembiasaan," *Arsy* 8, no. 2 (2024): 134–146.

³² Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

³³ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

³⁴ Wawancara, Siswi Zahratul Jannah, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

These strategies are not limited to classroom instruction, but also involve the habituation of religious activities and the wise utilisation of digital technology.³⁵

In the teaching process, Mrs. Rina employs a contextual approach by relating religious materials to students' daily lives. This is intended to help students understand that religious teachings are closely connected to their real-life experiences.

"I always relate the learning material to their real-life experiences so that it becomes easier for them to understand".³⁶

In addition, the strategies applied include emotional and dialogical approaches, fostering closer communication between the teacher and students. This approach enables students to feel more comfortable and less pressured in engaging with religious learning.

"I use emotional approaches, friendly dialogue, and language that resonates with them".³⁷

The teacher also implements habituation strategies as a continuous effort to develop students' religious awareness.³⁸ Activities such as reciting prayers before and after lessons, Qur'anic recitation (tadarus), and congregational prayers are integrated into the school's daily routine.

"Routine activities such as prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and congregational prayers are scheduled at the school".³⁹

Furthermore, the school organises additional religious programmes, such as the commemoration of Islamic holy days (PHBI) and Islamic extracurricular activities (Rohis), which include various Islamic studies sessions. These programmes serve as supporting platforms in strengthening students' religious awareness.

"There are also PHBI activities and Rohis extracurricular programmes that include Islamic studies".⁴⁰

Within the context of the digital era, the teacher recognises that technology significantly influences students' understanding of religion. Therefore, students are encouraged to utilise digital media as a learning resource, while maintaining critical awareness and proper filtering of information.

"Social media has a significant influence, so it can be used for learning religion, but it must be filtered properly".⁴¹

The teacher also emphasises that the role of the teacher remains central as the primary source of guidance, while digital media serves as a supplementary resource.

"The teacher acts as a filter, while social media serves only as a supporting tool".⁴²

Thus, it can be concluded that the strategies implemented by the IRE teacher in shaping students' religious awareness in the digital era include contextual and

³⁵ Nurhabibi Nurhabibi et al., "Strategi Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Di Era Digital," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia: Teori, Penelitian, Dan Inovasi* 5, no. 2 (2025).

³⁶ Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

³⁷ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

³⁸ Muhammad Hafizh Rasyid Al Anshori et al., "Strategi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran Beribadah Salat Duha Pada Siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas: Strategies of Islamic Education Teachers in Enhancing Students' Awareness to Perform Duha Prayer at Senior High School," *Kharismatik: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 2 (2025): 100–111.

³⁹ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

⁴⁰ Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

⁴¹ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

⁴² Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong, 18-4-2026

emotional approaches, the habituation of religious practices, and the selective and responsible use of digital technology.

4. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Shaping Students' Religious Awareness in the Digital Era

Based on the interview findings, it was identified that various factors influence the effectiveness of IRE teachers in shaping students' religious awareness at SMAN 1 Tenggarong, including both supporting and inhibiting factors.

The primary supporting factor in the development of students' religious awareness is the teacher's role modelling. The IRE teacher serves as a figure who is directly observed by students, making the teacher's attitudes and behaviour highly influential in shaping students' religious character.

"Role modelling is very important in fact, it is the main factor".⁴³

In addition, a supportive school environment also plays a significant role in enhancing students' religious awareness.⁴⁴ The presence of various religious programmes, such as Qur'anic recitation (tadarus), congregational prayers, and other Islamic activities, contributes to the formation of students' religious habits.

Another important factor is peer influence. Students' social circles have a considerable impact on shaping their behaviour and habits, including in religious matters.

"Peers have a very strong influence".⁴⁵

From the students' perspective, internal factors such as personal intention and self-awareness also serve as key drivers in practising religious activities.

"What influences me the most comes from my own heart or intention".⁴⁶

However, several inhibiting factors were also identified. One of the main challenges is the diversity of students' backgrounds, including differences in family environment, social surroundings, and pre-existing habits.

"Students come with different backgrounds, and that becomes a challenge".⁴⁷

Furthermore, the lack of motivation among some students presents an additional obstacle in fostering religious awareness.

"Some students are still more focused on worldly matters".⁴⁸

In the context of the digital era, the influence of social media and excessive use of gadgets also act as significant distractions, diverting students' attention away from religious practices.

"What makes me less consistent is usually gadgets and other activities".⁴⁹

Limited instructional time at school also constrains the teacher's ability to provide comprehensive guidance.

"Limited time is also a challenge in guiding students".⁵⁰

Thus, it can be concluded that the formation of students' religious awareness is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, both internal and external, including the impact of the digital era, which presents both challenges and opportunities in the process.

⁴³ Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

⁴⁴ Yuliarni Pulungan, "Peningkatan Kesadaran Beragama Melalui Peran Guru dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah," *GUAU: Jurnal Pendidikan Profesi Guru Agama Islam* 3, no. 4 (2023): 109–121.

⁴⁵ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

⁴⁶ Wawancara, Siswa Muhammad Ali Akbar, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

⁴⁷ Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

⁴⁸ Wawancara, Pak Sobirin, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

⁴⁹ Wawancara, Siswi Haisha Putri, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

⁵⁰ Wawancara, Buk Rina, Tenggarong. 18-4-2026

E. Discussion

1. The Dynamics of Students' Religious Awareness in the Digital Era

The findings of the study indicate that the religious awareness of students at SMAN 1 Tenggara varies in terms of understanding, attitudes, and religious practices. This variation suggests that religious awareness is not formed instantly, but rather is the result of a process influenced by various internal and external factors. These findings reinforce the previous section, which demonstrated differences between students who already possess independent religious initiative and those who still require guidance and supervision. This is in line with the study conducted by Siti Patimah (2025), which states that adolescents' religious awareness is dynamic and influenced by both the social environment and learning experiences⁵¹.

In the context of the digital era, the dynamics of students' religious awareness have become increasingly complex. The presence of digital media provides broad access to religious information, thereby potentially enhancing students' understanding. However, on the other hand, this ease of access also exposes students to unfiltered content that may influence their religious attitudes and behaviour. This is consistent with the finding that the use of gadgets and social media can become a factor that disrupts consistency in worship practices. Research by Tatik Safiqo (2022) also demonstrates that the high intensity of internet use among adolescents affects behavioural patterns, including aspects of religiosity. These dynamics indicate that students' religious awareness in the digital era is not solely determined by the intensity of formal learning at school, but also by students' interactions with the digital environment they access daily. This is supported by the study conducted by Haidar (2025), which emphasises that low levels of digital religious literacy may result in misunderstandings of religious teachings among students⁵². These findings also suggest that the digital era has shifted the pattern of developing religious awareness from being previously teacher-centred to becoming more open and multidimensional. Students no longer learn solely from teachers, but also from a wide range of online sources. Therefore, the active role of teachers is required in directing and guiding students so that they are able to utilise technology wisely. This is consistent with the findings of Moh Kalam (2024), which highlight the importance of teachers' roles as guides in the use of digital media⁵³.

Thus, the dynamics of students' religious awareness in the digital era can be understood as a fluctuating and contextual process influenced by the interaction between individual factors, the social environment, and the digital environment. This serves as an important foundation for understanding how the role of PAI teachers must adapt in response to these changes.

2. Teacher Exemplarity as the Core of Value Internalization

The research findings indicate that teacher exemplarity is the most dominant factor in shaping students' religious awareness. These findings not only reinforce the results discussed in the previous section, but also demonstrate that the process of developing religious awareness is more effectively achieved through direct experience rather than merely through verbal instruction. The research findings

⁵¹ Siti Patimah, Dika Merlianda, and Nurul Zaman, "Krisis Spiritualitas Siswa Di Era Digital : Pembelajaran PAI Reflektif Sebagai Solusi Penguatan Kompetensi Iman Dan Akhlak," *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam* 3, no. November (2025).

⁵² Ghani Ahmad Haidar and Hikmah Maulani, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Membina Karakter Siswa Di Era Digital," *IHSAN Jurnal pendidikan islam* 3 (2025): 234–241.(2025)

⁵³ Mollah, "Tantangan Pembelajaran Di Era Digital Dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius Siswa Di Sekolah Menengah Atas Muhammadiyah 2 Surabaya."

indicate that teacher exemplarity is the most dominant factor in shaping students' religious awareness. These findings not only reinforce the results discussed in the previous section, but also demonstrate that the process of developing religious awareness is more effectively achieved through direct experience rather than merely through verbal instruction. Students tend to imitate the behaviors they observe in daily life; therefore, teachers' attitudes and actions become concrete representations of the religious values being taught. Conceptually, exemplarity can be understood as a mechanism of value internalization, in which students absorb religious values through processes of observation and imitation. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Unik Hanifaf (2024), which emphasizes that teachers' roles as role models have a significant influence on the formation of students' religious character, particularly among Generation Z students who are more responsive to concrete experiences than to normative instruction⁵⁴. Therefore, exemplarity is not merely a complement to the learning process, but rather the core element in fostering religious awareness.

In the context of the digital era, teacher exemplarity has become increasingly relevant as a counterbalance to the many figures appearing on social media. Today, students no longer view teachers as their sole source of reference, but are also exposed to various digital figures whose values may not align with religious teachings. Consequently, the presence of teachers as real-life figures who can be directly observed becomes highly important in helping students develop clear moral and religious standards. This is also supported by research conducted by Haidar (2025), which states that the absence of strong role models within educational environments may strengthen the negative influence of digital media on students' behavior⁵⁵.

Thus, teacher exemplarity functions not only as an educational method, but also as the primary mechanism in the internalization of religious values. This role becomes increasingly strategic in the digital era, where students require authentic figures who can serve as real references in filtering the various influences they encounter in digital environments.

3. The Adaptation of PAI Teachers' Roles in the Digital Era

The research findings indicate that the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers has undergone significant changes in response to the development of the digital era. Teachers no longer function solely as transmitters of knowledge (transfer of knowledge), but also as facilitators, mentors, and filters for the various forms of information received by students. This transformation demonstrates that the role of teachers has become increasingly complex and requires the ability to adapt to technological developments. In this context, the adaptation of teachers' roles can be seen through efforts to integrate learning approaches that are relevant to students' lives in the digital era, such as contextual learning methods and communication styles that are more aligned with the characteristics of Generation Z. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of learning is determined not only by the material being delivered, but also by the teacher's ability to adjust teaching methods according to students' needs and characteristics. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Salsabila (2025), which states that PAI teachers need to

⁵⁴ Unik Hanifah Salsabila, Andita Iftakuzzulfa, and Fathi Hana, "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Untuk Generasi Z: Peran Teknologi Dalam Ruang Kelas," *Kaunia: Integration and Interconnection of Islam and Science Journal* 19, no. 2 (2024): 55–61.

⁵⁵ Haidar and Maulani, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Membina Karakter Siswa Di Era Digital." *IHSAN Jurnal pendidikan islam* 3 (2025): 234–241.(2025)

develop innovative and adaptive approaches in order to remain relevant amid social changes caused by digitalization⁵⁶.

Furthermore, the teacher's role as a "filter" has become highly important in helping students evaluate and select religious information circulating on digital media. Based on interview results, students tend to access information from the internet more frequently than directly from teachers. This indicates a shift in learning sources from teacher-centered learning to more open and unlimited sources of information. Therefore, teachers need to take a strategic role in providing clarification, validation, and reinforcement regarding the information obtained by students. This finding is supported by the research of Rahmawati (2025), which emphasizes that teachers play an important role in guiding students to use digital media critically and responsibly⁵⁷.

The adaptation of teachers' roles is also reflected in efforts to direct students to utilize technology as a positive learning medium rather than merely a source of entertainment. This demonstrates that technology is not viewed as a threat, but rather as a tool that can support the development of religious awareness when used appropriately. However, without proper guidance from teachers, the use of technology may instead negatively affect students' behavior, as reflected in the findings regarding distractions caused by social media.

Thus, the adaptation of PAI teachers' roles in the digital era is not only technical in nature, but also pedagogical and moral. Teachers are not only required to master technology, but also to guide its use in ways that remain aligned with religious values. This indicates that the success of developing students' religious awareness in the digital era largely depends on teachers' ability to carry out adaptive and reflective roles in response to changing times.

4. The Interaction of Internal and External Factors in the Formation of Religious Awareness

The research findings indicate that the formation of students' religious awareness cannot be separated from the interaction between internal and external factors. Internal factors such as intention, self-awareness, and motivation serve as the primary foundation that encourages students to practice religious teachings consistently. However, these factors do not operate independently, as they are strongly influenced by the surrounding environment. The most dominant external factors identified in this research include family environment, peer groups, and the school environment. The family environment functions as the initial foundation in shaping students' religious habits and values, while the school environment reinforces these values through structured religious programs. On the other hand, peer influence also plays a significant role, as students tend to adjust their behavior according to their social groups. This finding demonstrates that students' religious awareness is formed through an ongoing social process.

In the context of the digital era, external factors have expanded significantly with the presence of social media and the internet as integral parts of students' environments. Digital media not only serve as sources of information, but also shape students' mindsets and behaviors. The research findings show that the use of gadgets can become an inhibiting factor when left uncontrolled, particularly because they may distract students from religious activities. However, on the other hand, digital media

⁵⁶ Salsabila, Iftakuzzulfa, and Hana, "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Untuk Generasi Z : Peran Teknologi Dalam Ruang Kelas."

⁵⁷ Rahmawati, Samsuddin, and Ade Wahidin, "Peran Guru Pai Dalam Membina Etika Digital Siswa Di Era Digital," *jurnal ilmu pendidikan dan penelitian* 01, no. 02 (2025): 108–118.

can also function as a supporting factor when utilized appropriately as a source of religious learning. The interaction between internal and external factors indicates that the formation of religious awareness is multidimensional in nature. This means that the success of religious development does not depend solely on one aspect, but rather results from the synergy of various interconnected factors. In this regard, PAI teachers have a strategic role as mediators between these internal and external factors by providing guidance, motivation, and proper direction to students. Thus, students' religious awareness in the digital era can be understood as the result of a complex interaction process between individual conditions and environmental influences, including the digital environment. Therefore, efforts to develop religious awareness need to be carried out comprehensively by involving various parties, not only teachers, but also families and students' social environments.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a strategic role in fostering students' religious awareness in the digital era, particularly at SMAN 1 Tenggarong. Students' religious awareness is influenced by internal and external factors, such as self-motivation, family, peers, school environment, and digital media. In this context, PAI teachers function not only as educators, but also as mentors, motivators, role models, and filters of religious information accessed by students through digital media. Teacher exemplarity and religious habituation were found to be important factors in strengthening students' religious awareness. Furthermore, the digital era requires PAI teachers to adapt their teaching approaches by utilizing technology wisely while maintaining Islamic values. Emotional and contextual approaches, as well as the selective use of digital media, are effective strategies in supporting the development of students' religious character. Therefore, collaboration among teachers, families, schools, and social environments is necessary to create a supportive religious educational environment in the digital era.

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