



Innovation Strategy for Islamic Religious Education Learning in The Era of Society 5.0: A Case Study at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the demands of the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the era of Society 5.0 which places people, technology, and religious values in mutually reinforcing relationships. The purpose of this study is to analyze PAI learning innovation strategies, map supporting and inhibiting factors, and formulate relevant implementation models at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran Malang. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, and then analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that PAI learning innovations are built through the integration of the pesantren ecosystem, the use of digital media, religious project-based assignments, strengthening teacher examples, and character-oriented reflective evaluations. The strategy increases learning engagement, religious discipline, and the relevance of PAI materials to students' vocational needs. The research concludes that PAI innovation in the Society 5.0 era is effective if technology is positioned as a pedagogical instrument controlled by Islamic vision, school culture, and adaptive learning leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

Social transformation in the Society 5.0 era places education no longer just a space for knowledge transfer, but an arena for human formation who is able to

utilize technology without losing its ethical and spiritual orientation. In the context of a religious Indonesian society, Islamic Religious Education is strategically positioned to ensure that the digitalization of schools does not lead to dehumanization, but to the strengthening of character, critical reasoning, and social responsibility. The important point of this research lies in the need to present a PAI (Islamic religious education) learning model that is relevant to the changing learning patterns of the digital generation. Evidence from various studies shows that pedagogic innovation and digital media integration can increase learning engagement when managed in a meaningful and targeted manner (Mansur et al., 2023; Septiani Selly Susanti et al., 2024).

A common problem faced by the education community today is the inequality between the acceleration of technology and the pedagogical readiness of teachers in managing learning that remains valuable. On the one hand, students live in the midst of a fast, visual, and interactive flow of information. On the other hand, many PAI learnings are still going on in one direction, centered on lectures, and has minimal connection with the context of daily life. This condition has the potential to give birth to saturation, weak internalization of values, and low ability of students to translate Islamic teachings into practical decisions in the real world. Therefore, research on PAI innovation strategies is important to be carried out so that schools are able to respond to social change responsibly, effectively, and sustainably (Haidir et al., 2021; Khayati et al., 2026).

Field phenomena show that Islamic-based schools that are also engaged in the realm of vocational education face more complex challenges. They must not only instill religious values, but also prepare graduates who are adaptive to the world of work, creative, and technologically literate. SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran Malang is an interesting context because this school is in the culture of Islamic boarding schools, has a vision of forming a generation with Islamic morals and achievements, and organizes learning with a practical competency

orientation. The combination of religious culture, vocational character, and the need for digitalization makes this school relevant as a case study to see how PAI innovation is built in a contextual and measurable manner.

Several previous studies have discussed PAI learning innovations through the use of digital media, social media, learning videos, and online platforms. Susanti show that PAI teachers are starting to use TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram as a more interactive learning medium. Khayati also emphasized that gamification, LMS, AR, VR, and artificial intelligence can expand learning motivation as well as internalize Islamic values. The findings confirm that digitalization provides great opportunities for PAI learning. However, most studies still place innovation at the level of tools or media, not yet in-depth reading how innovation strategies are built as pedagogical ecosystems that unite Islamic visions, school culture, and classroom practices (Khayati et al., 2026; Septiani Selly Susanti et al., 2024).

Other literature highlights the importance of learning innovation in the context of Islamic schools and madrasas. Rijal found that PAI learning innovations can increase student participation and understanding when combined with systematic teacher planning (Rijal et al., 2022). Laily explained that Islamic digital media in the 4.0 era can expand access to learning while demanding stronger digital literacy (Laily et al., 2022). Mhlongo and Nguyen added that a digital learning environment is only effective when supported by teacher readiness, classroom governance, and institutional policies (Mhlongo et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022). The weakness of previous research lies in the lack of a strong analysis of the relationship between innovation strategies, school leadership, religious habits, and students' vocational character in one complete case study (Laily et al., 2022; Rijal et al., 2022).

Based on this gap, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to map the innovation strategy of PAI learning as a socio-technopedagogic practice in

pesantren-based vocational schools. Innovation is not understood solely as the use of digital devices, but as a pedagogic engineering process that connects the curriculum, teacher examples, learning media, religious projects, school culture, and the needs of the Society 5.0 generation. With that perspective, this research contributes to the development of a PAI learning model that is not trapped in the dichotomy of tradition and modernity. Instead, the two are brought together to produce learning that is relevant, valuable, and adaptive to the challenges of the times (Budiarto et al., 2025; Mansur et al., 2023).

Departing from this background, this research focuses on three main issues, namely how the PAI learning innovation strategy is designed and implemented, what factors affect its success, and how these innovation patterns contribute to strengthening religious character and students' readiness to face the Society 5.0 era. The argument of this research is that PAI innovation will be effective if technology does not stand alone, but is linked to the school's religious culture, learning leadership, and authentic learning experience. Thus, this article seeks to offer a conceptual and practical formulation of PAI innovations that can be replicated adaptively in other Islamic schools with commensurate characteristics (Khayati et al., 2026; Septiani Selly Susanti et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The design was chosen because the research seeks to understand in depth the practice of PAI learning innovation as a complex, contextual, and inseparable phenomenon from the institutional culture in which the practice takes place. The focus of the case study is directed to the strategies, actors, processes, and meanings that are built in the implementation of learning. With this approach, researchers can examine the relationship between school policies, teacher practices, student responses, and the use of technology more fully. These methodological choices

are in line with the need for research that emphasizes data depth, interpretation of meaning, and construction of findings based on institutional contexts in an exploratory and analytical manner (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014).

The location of the research is SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran, Malang Regency, East Java. The selection of the location was carried out purposively with several considerations, namely that this school is Islam-based and Islamic boarding schools, has a vision of forming a generation with Islamic morals and achievements, organizes vocational education, and shows institutional adaptation to the development of learning technology. This context makes this school representative to examine PAI learning innovations in the Society 5.0 era, especially because the demands faced are not only academic, but also moral, cultural, and professional. With such a character, this school provides a rich analysis unit to examine the integration of Islamic values and the transformation of learning based on the needs of the times.

Research data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews are directed to school principals, PAI teachers, vice heads of curriculum, and students to gain a multi-perspective view. Observations were made on the learning process, classroom interaction, media use, religious activities, and school culture. Documentation includes teaching tools, activity schedules, program archives, and digital media used by teachers. Data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, member check, and observation diligence so that the findings have adequate credibility, consistency, and analytical traceability (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The first findings of this study define the PAI learning innovation strategy at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran as a series of planned efforts to link Islamic material, student character needs, pesantren culture, and learning technology in one relevant learning experience. Operationally, innovation is not only seen in the use of digital media, but also in the change in the role of teachers from information centers to experience designers, reflection directors, and value habituation reinforcers. In practice, innovation strategies include the preparation of contextual materials, the use of interactive videos and presentations, assignments of religious projects, collaborative learning, and evaluations that provide room for personal reflection. Thus, the innovation in question is pedagogical, cultural, and managerial at the same time.

The results of interviews with school principals show that PAI learning innovations are seen as an institutional need, not just an individual initiative of teachers. The informant emphasized that pesantren based schools must maintain the substance of values, but the way of delivery must adapt to the character of the current generation. According to him, vocational school students need religious learning that speaks the language of life, the world of work, and the digital challenges they face every day. The researcher interprets this statement as an indicator that the direction of innovation in schools does not rely on cosmetic modernization, but on efforts to maintain the relevance of PAI through learning leadership. This view also shows that there is structural support that gives legitimacy for teachers to develop more adaptive methods, media, and assessments.

Interviews with PAI teachers reinforced these findings. The informant explained that learning is no longer enough to be conveyed through long lectures because students are more likely to respond to visual stimuli, dialogue, case

studies, and concrete examples. Teachers admitted that they routinely use interactive presentations, video footage, short quizzes, and moral problem-based discussions that are close to adolescent experiences, such as social media etiquette, honesty in work practices, and communication manners. The researcher interprets this data as a shift from textual PAI learning to dialogical and contextual learning. The shift is important because it allows religious teachings to be read not just as memorization material, but as an orientation tool to judge actions in real-life and fast-changing ones.

The second finding shows that PAI learning innovations do not stand alone, but are supported by the school's religious culture that has been built through habituation of worship, discipline, and example. In this context, PAI classes become a node that connects religious theory with everyday school culture. Teachers not only explain the material but also continue to refer learning back to practices that have lived in the school environment, such as congregational prayers, prayer habits, dress etiquette, and social etiquette. The researcher views this pattern as a form of curricular and cultural integration. This means that learning innovation is effective not only because the media is interesting, but because the material learned is strengthened through a consistent structure of daily activities.

Interviews with the deputy head of curriculum show that schools provide space for teachers to adjust teaching tools to classroom needs while maintaining the core achievements of the curriculum. The informant explained that in PAI subjects, teachers are encouraged to compile case examples, worksheets, and project assignments that relate basic competencies to students' real situations. The researchers interpreted this data as the presence of healthy academic flexibility. The policy shows that innovation is not born spontaneously, but is made possible by curriculum governance that gives professional trust to teachers. Within the framework of Society 5.0, this kind of flexibility is important because it

allows learning to move responsive to evolving technological dynamics, vocational needs, and moral challenges.

The results of learning observations show that the use of digital media in PAI classes takes place selectively and pedagogically oriented. Teachers use short videos to open the lessons, display infographics of the material, and use projectors to clarify abstract concepts, such as the wisdom of worship, Islamic work ethics, and the relationship between faith and social responsibility. Students appear more active when learning is guided by visual stimuli and reflective questions. The researchers interpreted these findings as evidence that technology functions optimally when placed as a tool to provoke dialogue, rather than replacing the role of teachers. In other words, digital media is a lighter, while the deepening of meaning continues through interaction, clarification, and pedagogical direction from teachers.

Substantively, the data above confirms that the PAI learning innovation strategy in this school is centered on three elements, namely the relevance of the material, the management of learning experiences, and the continuity of religious culture. The relevance of the material can be seen from the effort to associate Islamic teachings with digital reality and the world of work. The management of learning experiences is seen in the use of media, discussions, and assignments that demand active participation. The continuity of religious culture can be seen from the strengthening of values through daily habituation. This restatement is important because it makes it easier for the reader to see that the innovations found are not a list of separate methods, but a system that connects classes, school policies, and student character in one complete educational orientation.

The pattern that emerges from the overall data can be referred to as a contextual-religious-based PAI innovation model. This model shows that learning becomes alive when religious teachings are translated into situations that students recognize and then reinforced by the corresponding school

environment. The first pattern that stands out is the association of the material with students' daily problems. The second pattern is the limited but effective use of technology. The third pattern is the sustainability of values through school culture. From this, it can be seen that the success of innovation does not depend on the number of digital devices, but on the expertise of schools and teachers to unite content, methods, and culture. This pattern also distinguishes substantive innovations from innovations that are only surface.

The findings of these three studies relate to experiential projects and assignments as an important strategy in PAI learning innovation. Teachers not only provide multiple-choice questions or descriptions, but also assign students to make study resumes, short reflection videos, group presentations on Islamic work ethics, and reports on social worship practices in school and home environments. For vocational school students, this form of assignment is considered more meaningful because it provides space to associate religious teachings with communication skills, cooperation, and responsibility. The researcher interprets these findings as a sign that PAI learning innovations have moved towards performance-based learning. This means that learning success is not only measured by knowledge, but also by the ability to display understanding in real actions and products.

Interviews with students show that they understand the material more easily when the teacher presents concrete examples and invites them to discuss. One of the informants stated that learning becomes more interesting when moral material is associated with behavior on social media, fieldwork practices, and daily associations. Another informant emphasized that the presentation task made him speak more boldly and remember the content of the material more. The researcher interprets this statement as evidence that learning innovations not only touch the cognitive dimension, but also confidence and ownership of meaning by students. The positive response of the students shows that the

vocational context and daily life of adolescents is an important entrance to ground the values of PAI.

Another interview with PAI teachers showed that the project assignments were deliberately designed to avoid learning that only pursued memorization. The informant said that when students were asked to observe the problems around them, then explain them from the perspective of Islamic teachings, the understanding became deeper. Researchers see this as a form of authentic assessment that assesses the ability to interpret, argue, and apply values. The teacher also emphasized that the project does not always use advanced technology, but must provide space for active engagement. These findings show that the essence of Society 5.0 in learning is not just digital, but the ability to place humans at the center of the learning process. Technology is supportive, but moral reflection and social responsibility remain the main orientation.

The fourth finding concerns the role of teacher role models as the heart of PAI learning innovation. Even though the media and methods have changed, students still place the figure of the teacher as a source of moral legitimacy for what is taught. In the context of pesantren-based schools, the example can be seen through the consistency of speech, discipline of time, politeness of interaction, and the involvement of teachers in religious activities of the school. The researcher views that PAI learning innovations cannot succeed if they only rely on instruments and materials, while the figure of educators is not authentically present. Therefore, exemplary must be read as a pedagogical component that is equally important as digital media. This is what distinguishes religious learning from ordinary informational learning, because the value of life is mainly transmitted through human encounters.

The results of observations show that PAI teachers often open learning with personal greetings, maintained humor, and association of students' experiences with the material of the day. When there are passive students, the teacher does

not immediately reprimand harshly, but invites them to be involved through simple questions. The researcher interprets this pattern as a form of humanistic pedagogical relations. In the framework of Society 5.0, humanist relations are very important because education that is too technical risks reducing the empathic touch. Observations also show that teachers' discipline in starting classes, media readiness, and neatness of teaching tools give an implicit message to students about the importance of professionalism. Thus, learning innovation turns out to work through a combination of attractive learning design and the quality of teacher presence in front of students.

Based on the overall data, it can be stated that PAI learning innovations at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran are built through the integration of digital media, learning projects, vocational contexts, religious culture, curriculum flexibility, and teacher examples. This combination results in learning that does not stop at material transfer, but encourages the internalization of values and reflective skills. This restatement confirms that the research findings are systemic. Successful innovation is not the use of one particular method, but the orchestration of various elements that support each other. From the perspective of researchers, the strength of this school lies in its ability to maintain the spirit of Islamic education while opening the space for methodological adaptation needed by the younger generation in the Society 5.0 era.

To clarify the data pattern, the following is presented with a mapping of the ideal influence of PAI's learning innovation strategy based on the interview excerpts of key informants. This table shows that each actor carries a different emphasis, but all lead to the same goal, which is to deliver relevant, meaningful, and characterful PAI learning. Through this table, it appears that innovation in schools is not the result of individual work alone, but the result of interaction between leadership, curriculum flexibility, teacher creativity, and student learning experience. Therefore, the interpretation of the table should not stop at the

description of the informant's position, but it is necessary to read the structural relationships between the indicators that make up the overall effectiveness of innovation.

Table 1. Mapping the Ideal Influence of PAI Learning Innovation Strategies

Informant Position	Interview Excerpts	Indicator
Principal	"PAI must remain strong on grades, but the way it is taught must be able to speak to the world of students today."	Policy direction of innovation and institutional legitimacy
Deputy Head of Curriculum	"Teachers are given space to adjust teaching tools so that religious materials are closer to the context of the classroom and department."	Curriculum flexibility and managerial support
Good Teacher	"Digital media is only an opening; The most important thing is discussion and reflection so that students understand the meaning."	Integration of technology with pedagogical deepening
Students	"If the material is related to social media, work practices, or everyday problems, it's easier for me to understand."	Relevance of the material and learning engagement

An in-depth interpretation of the table shows that the ideal influence of PAI learning innovations is formed through a relatively clear division of functions. The role of the principal is to provide a normative horizon that innovation must remain subject to the vision of values. The deputy head of curriculum provides an institutional space so that innovations can be carried out legally and in a structured manner. PAI teachers translate the policy into a concrete learning experience through media, discussions, and assessments. Meanwhile, students are the main indicator of innovation acceptance because it is their responses that show whether learning is really relevant. Thus, this table shows an integrative pattern that the ideal innovation always works through alignment between leadership, curriculum design, pedagogical practice, and learner experience.

The second pattern that appears is that all indicators in the table boil down to the principle of human-centered learning which is the soul of Society 5.0. Although technology is present in learning, its primary focus remains on the human experience: how students understand, feel, and live values. Therefore, the ideal influence of innovation strategies is not measured by the number of applications used, but by the ability of schools to connect technology with the character, context, and goals of Islamic education. This description shows that the most powerful innovation is born when each element works according to its function: the leader gives direction, the curriculum gives space, the teacher gives meaning, and the students give feedback through real involvement in the learning process.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the PAI learning innovation strategy at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran is in line with the view that digitization of learning will be effective if placed in a meaningful pedagogical design. Susanti et al. (2024) emphasized that various social media and digital media can be effective mediums in PAI learning, while Khayati show the potential of gamification, LMS, AR, VR, and AI to increase motivation and internalize values. The school's findings confirm that direction, but at the same time add that innovation is not synonymous with technological complexity. Different from studies that tend to highlight devices, this study shows that technology is only an entrance, while the main transformation actually occurs in the way teachers relate material to the world of students' lives (Khayati et al., 2026).

The relevance of these findings to literature is also seen in the importance of context and interaction. Rijal found that PAI learning innovations become effective when teachers are able to organize learning methods and atmospheres in a communicative manner (Rijal et al., 2022). Laily and Haidir emphasized that

digital media in Islamic education must be accompanied by value literacy so that it does not become just an information channel. The results of this study strengthen this argument, because in the schools studied, digital media is always followed by dialogue, reflection, and strengthening of religious culture. The difference is that this study shows in more detail that pesantren culture and school habituation function as moral anchors that make digital innovation remain in the corridor of character education, not just the efficiency of material delivery (Haidir et al., 2021; Laily et al., 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study support the human-centered learning approach that is widely discussed in the discourse of Society 5.0. Mansur explain that education in this era must integrate process standards, educators, and infrastructure while still placing humans at the center (Mansur et al., 2023). Mhlongo added that the adoption of educational technology is influenced by the readiness of the learning environment, user capacity, and institutional governance (Mhlongo et al., 2023). The findings at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid expand this perspective by showing that in PAI learning, the variables of teacher exemplary and religious culture need to be included as important theoretical elements. Thus, PAI innovation can be understood as a socio-techno pedagogic model that brings together technology, human relations, and value transmission in one learning framework.

The practical implications of this research are quite clear. First, Islamic schools do not need to wait for highly sophisticated digital infrastructure to start PAI learning innovations. What is more urgent is to build teachers' pedagogical courage in creating contextual materials, authentic assessments, and reflective dialogue. Second, managerial support from principals and curriculum areas is proving important because innovation requires policy space, training, and legitimacy. Third, for vocational schools, PAI materials should continue to be associated with professional ethics, work culture, digital communication, and

social responsibility so that religious teachings feel relevant to students' futures. This direction is in line with the findings of Budiarto and Nguyen regarding the importance of institutional support and adaptive digital classroom management (Budiarto et al., 2025; Nguyen et al., 2022).

However, this study also indicates that there are limitations that need to be critically observed. The innovation strategies found are highly dependent on the strength of the school culture and the personal commitment of teachers, so the possibility of replication in schools with weaker cultures requires significant adaptation. In addition, this study has not quantitatively measured the influence of innovation on long-term learning outcomes. Therefore, the main contribution of this article lies in the formulation of comprehension models, not statistical generalizations. However, this study shows that the future of PAI in the era of Society 5.0 does not lie in the conflict between tradition and technology, but in the ability to integrate the two ethically, reflectively, and contextually (Khayati et al., 2026; Mansur et al., 2023).



Figure. PAI Learning Innovation Strategi in Society 5.0

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the PAI learning innovation strategy at SMK Islam Darut Tauhid Pagelaran is built through the integration of vocational contexts, school religious culture, curriculum flexibility, selective use of digital media, experience-based assignments, and teacher examples. These innovations make PAI learning closer to the reality of students' lives, especially related to media ethics, work responsibility, social communication, and character building. Thus, religious learning does not stop at mastery of the material, but develops into a process of meaning that leads students to read contemporary situations from the perspective of Islamic values. The core of these findings shows that effective innovation is always systemic, not based on one specific method or device.

The theoretical implication of this research is the need to expand the reading of PAI learning innovations from media orientation to ecosystem orientation. Technology, in this context, is not sufficiently understood as an aid, but as part of the learning design that must still be controlled by pedagogical relations, school culture, and value orientation. Practically, Islamic schools can use the results of this research as a reference to develop innovations that are inexpensive but impactful, for example through the strengthening of reflective projects, case studies, integration of materials with students' daily problems, and professional development of teachers. Schools also need to ensure that there is internal policy support so that innovation can take place consistently and not depend on individual spontaneity.

The recommendations of this study are addressed to three parties. For school leaders, it is important to continue to build an institutional climate that provides space for pedagogical experimentation while maintaining the substance of Islamic values. For PAI teachers, the development of teaching tools that are contextual, dialogical, and based on authentic assessments need to be prioritized so that learning is more meaningful. For the next researcher, comparative studies

in other Islamic schools as well as follow-up research are needed to measure the influence of learning innovations on learning outcomes, religious behavior, and student job readiness in a more measurable manner. Thus, the development of PAI learning in the era of Society 5.0 can move from local good practices to a model that is increasingly conceptually and applicatively robust.

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