

## OPTIMIZING THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MADRASAH: TOWARDS A MODERN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Ahmad Kudori \*<sup>1</sup>**

Pascasarjana IAI Pangeran Diponegoro Nganjuk, Indonesia  
[khudhory68@gmail.com](mailto:khudhory68@gmail.com)

**Muslimin**

Universitas Ibrahimy Situbondo, Indonesia  
[muslimin1580@gmail.com](mailto:muslimin1580@gmail.com)

**Halimatus Sa'diyah**

STAI Cendekia Insani, Indonesia  
[thusy723@gmail.com](mailto:thusy723@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The use of technology in madrasas can bring many benefits, including improving access to education, improving the quality of learning, facilitating communication, and improving administrative efficiency. However, there are also challenges to overcome, such as the availability of adequate infrastructure and resources, the training and understanding of teachers, security and privacy concerns, and compliance with existing religious curricula. By addressing these challenges, the madrasah can optimize the use of technology in religious education. This can lead to improvements in the quality of education, student capacity, and learning experience in the Madrasah. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that the application of technology at the matrasah is consistent with the sacred principles of religious teaching, so that technology can be a tool that supports and enriches religious learning. Thus, overall, the optimization of technology can produce modern, relevant, and high-quality religion education for the students.

**Keyword:** Optimization, Technology, Madrasah, Education, Religion.

### Introduction

Religious education plays a vital role in shaping the character and spiritual understanding of students in the madrasah, whose roles include building values and morals, forming spiritual awareness, teaching tolerance and diversity, developing work ethics and ethos, cultivating caring and empathy so that students can not only accomplish academic achievements, but also become qualified individuals with integrity, good personality, and caring for the environment. While from the spiritual understanding of the student to have the beliefs, beliefs and spiritual values that shape the individual's life view (Arifin, S. 2018; Ainiyah, N. 2013; Sitopu et al., 2024).

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence author

Spirituality involves an individual's effort to explore and understand concepts related to human existence such as connection with God or cosmic energy, meaning of life, purpose of existence, and transcendental experience. (Guna et al., 2024). This can be done through spiritual activities such as meditation, Bible reading, self-reflection, or through real actions in everyday life. (Nurjaman, A. R. 2020).

Spiritual understanding can have a positive impact on individual well-being as it bridges the link between emotional development and human mental health. Spirituality is also associated with the development of positive moral and ethical values, such as gratitude and tolerance for other differences, harmonious relationships with fellow human beings, and reluctance to commit actions to the detriment of others. (Arif, M. 2012). However, the understanding of spirituality also risks being trapped in extreme practices or fundamentalist dogmatism. Therefore, a balanced spiritual understanding needs to be developed, by opening ourselves to the positive experiences of various religions and beliefs, as well as finding a balance between non-material beliefs and existence in the material world. (Zainudin, A. 2007). One of the most important warfare is the educational institute in the madrasah.

Education in the madrasah has profound values aimed at shaping the character and achievement of students. It is an important factor in determining the quality of education in the Madrasah. Strong student character development and good performance can help students become self-reliant, qualified, and ready to face future challenges (Berkey, J. P. 2007).

The Madrasah also aims to instill noble moral values in the pupils through the noble ethics education carried out by educators and educators. It involves all the components in the madrasah in supporting the implementation of noble moral education (Qasmi, M. K. 2002).

Internalizing the values of Islamic education is also an important part of education in madrasah. Madrasah carries out the internalization of Islamic education values through the cultivation and culture of madrasas, as an effort to shape the character of students in accordance with the teachings of Islam. (Blanchard, C. M. 2007).

With the implementation of character education, the madrasah plays a role in developing the character of the student to become a moral and ethically qualified human being. Character education management in the madrasah is an important concept to ensure that education in the Madrasah can shape the character of students effectively. However, the challenge faced by the madrasah in delivering quality religious education is how to present material relevant to the demands of the time and motivate students to be active in learning. This is because the traditional approaches used in religious education in the madrasah are still dominant.

Nowadays, information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed many aspects of life, including the world of education. Technology has brought about a major change in the way we obtain information, interact, and learn (Hairiyanto et al.,

2024). Therefore, it is important to consider the role of technology in enhancing religious learning in the madrasah (Siskandar, S. 2020).

The use of technology in the madrasah can provide a variety of benefits, including improving the quality of learning, expanding access to educational resources, and preparing students to enter an increasingly digitally connected world. (Megawati et al., 2023).

Technologies such as projectors, interactive displays, and iPads can be used as interactive and exciting learning tools, helping teachers to deliver lessons in an interesting and effective way. 2) Access to Educational Resources: Using technology and internet access, students in the madrasah can access broader educational resources, such as e-books, learning videos, educational websites, and online learning platforms. This can help improve the quality of learning and broaden students' insights. 3) Distance learning: Technology allows the matrasah to conduct distance learning, like using video conferencing and on-line learning platform. This can be beneficial in certain situations, such as when students cannot attend class for a certain reason. 4) Administration and Management: Technology can be used to improve the administration and management of the madrasah, such as by using school management software that helps in managing student data, attendance, school schedule, and academic reports. 5) Teacher Professional Development: Technology can help teachers in the madrasah in accessing educational resources and professional training programmes online. They can take online courses, webinars, or participate in an online teacher community to continuously improve their knowledge and skills (Abubakari, M. S. 2021; Sutrisno, S. 2023).

Thus, optimizing the role of technology in the madrasah towards modern religious education is a relevant and important research topic. In this context, the study aims to explore the potential of technology in improving the effectiveness of religious learning in madrasah and formulate strategies to implement it. (Tubagus et al., 2023; Aslan & Shiong, 2023).

In this study, it will analyze the challenges and obstacles in the use of technology in the madrasah as well as identifying the methods and tools of technology that can be applied to support the development of modern religious education. In addition, the benefits of the use of technology in improving the religious understanding of students and preparing them for the challenges of the digital world will be discussed.

Through this research, it is expected to contribute thought and practical contributions to the madrasah and related parties in understanding and optimizing the role of technology in religious education. Thus, religious education in the madrasah will be more relevant, interesting, and effective in meeting the needs and developments of learners in this digital age.

## **Research Method**

Study in this research, as a researcher using literary methods. Literary research method is a research approach that collects, analyzes, and presents information from a variety of literary sources relevant to a research topic. (Bungin, 2001). This approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive insight into the subject being studied by leveraging and analyzing data from books, scientific journals, articles, and other literary sources. (Arikunto, 2013).

Peneltii uses the Literature Research Method, with several steps, among which are: 1) Keyword search: This method involves searching for various keywords relevant to research topics in catalogues, indexes, and search engines. Using the right keyword, researchers can find literature relevant to the research topic being studied. 2) Bibliographic analysis: This method involves bibliographic analysis of literary sources that have been discovered. Researchers identify and analyze sources of literature used in other research relevant to their research topics. 3) Systematic review: This method involves a systematic and structured review of literary sources relevant to the subject of research. In a systemic review, the researcher uses defined criteria to select the sources of literature to be included in the research. (Reay, 2014; Graue, 2015; Sgier, 2012; Huberman, 1992).

Thus, the use of these methods in literary research allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of their research topics through the analysis and synthesis of information from diverse literary sources.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Concept of Religious Education**

A concept can generally be defined as a thought, idea, or abstraction of an object or phenomenon that allows us to understand and organize the information and experience that we have. A concept may be an abstract or general understanding created by man to simplify a complex world into a more comprehensible form (Van den Berg, M. 2000). A concept is a form of thinking that distinguishes one object from another on the basis of specific characteristics and defines a particular category or domain. The concept also facilitates communication and interpersonal interaction in a more effective and efficient way, because it makes it possible to use agreed general terms to describe a particular object. (Van den Berg, M. 2000).

Religious education, meanwhile, refers to a learning process aimed at improving the understanding and practice of certain religious teachings. (Muharrom et al., 2023). Religious education can include lessons about beliefs, ethics, morals, worship, and religious values applied in everyday life (Ahyat, N. 2017). For example, the definition of Islamic education is a learning process aimed at increasing the faith and faith in Allah SWT, as well as expanding the understanding and life of the teachings of Islam in the life of individuals and societies, carried out in a structured and systematic manner (Umar, M., & Ismail, F. 2020). Islamic Education also aims to improve the understanding

of and practice of the Islamic teachings in individuals and communities so as to strengthen faith and fear and become a person with an Islamic character (Kulsum, U., & Muhid, A. 2022). (Harianto, G. P. 2021).

Thus it can be concluded that the Concept of Religious Education is a conceptual framework that refers to the ideas and principles that form the basis or foundation of religious education. Religious education has the purpose of shaping the understanding, thinking, and values of religion in individuals as well as developing a strong relationship between man and God and fellow human beings.

In the context of Islam, the concept of religious education also includes an understanding of Islamic teachings, moral and ethical values, as well as their application in everyday life. There are various approaches and perspectives in the concept of Islamic education, such as the Imam Al-Ghazali perspective which focuses on the thinking and practice of spirituality, as well as the Hadith perspective that explores the Islamic concept of education based on the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad SAW. (Syafrin et al., 2023).

The approach to Islamic education also involves concepts such as Tawhid, Akhlak, Worship, and the history of Islamic development as a force for the spread of religious values. He is the only God worshiped, and there is no other God like Him. He is neither a son nor a child, and no one is equal to Him. (Firmansyah, M. I. 2019).

In Islam, the unity of God means that God is the Creator and Keeper of the universe, has power, wisdom, and full control over all things. There is no worship but God, and there is no associate with Him. (Yusuf, W. F. 2018).

In Islam, worship refers to all acts performed by a Muslim as a form of bondage and devotion to God. Worship covers all aspects of life, both physical and spiritual. Worship is one of the main duties of the Muslims. (Saihu, M. M., & Aziz, A. 2020).

There are several examples of worship in Islam: 1) Prayer: Praying five times a day and night as a form of direct communication with Allah SWT. 2) Fasting: Abstaining from eating, drinking, and certain things from dawn to sunset, during the month of Ramadan. 3) Zakat: Giving a portion of the wealth to the entitled in the form of social solidarity and the reduction of poverty. 4) Hajj: Travel to Mecca and perform a certain series of prayers in the month Dzulhijjah at least once in a lifetime for the able. 5) Dzikir: Remembering and mentioning the name of God, reading the holy verses, and praying in various situations. 6) Saddakh: Giving donations to the needy as a form of care and social good. (Dewanti et al., 2023).

In addition, worship also includes Islamic behavior in everyday life such as obeying moral and ethical teachings, doing good to one another, helping others, and avoiding forbidden deeds.

The Qur'an is a sacred book in Islam, known as the Quran or Quran, which is believed by the Muslims as a revelation from Allah to the last Prophet of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, through the angel Jibril. The Quran is written in Arabic and

consists of 114 suras or chapters, each of which is divided into verses. So that he may understand the Qur'an, and be taught and guided by scholars or experts who have understanding and knowledge of the interpretation and context. (Botma, A. 2020).

The knowledge of the Hadith is a record of the words, deeds, and agreements of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the events that occurred in his lifetime. Hadith serves as a second source of religion after the Quran and is used to understand, explain, and supplement the teachings of Islam contained in the Quran. There are various collections of hadith composed by the experts, such as Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and others. Understanding the hadith helps the Muslims to follow the teachings of Islam better (Sahlan, A. 2011).

Fiqh is a branch of Islamic science related to the law of Islam. Fiqh studies the principles of the Islamic law, the way of worship, muamalah (social and economic relations), and other related matters. The fiqh scholars seek to apply the teachings of Islam in daily life so that Muslims can practice religion correctly and in accordance with the terms of religion. Fiqh studies help Muslims understand the obligations, prohibitions, and methods of worship and daily behavior.

The history of Islam refers to the development and events that occurred in Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the present day. Understanding the history of Islam helps to understand how the teachings of Islam spread and evolved as well as the important events that occurred in Islamic history. History of Islam also includes the life of the Prophet's friends, the period of caliphate, and important events in Muslim history that influenced the teaching and practice of Muslims today. (Ifendi et al., 2022).

With a good understanding of the hadith, fiqh, and history of Islam, Muslims can deepen their knowledge of religion and enrich the practice of worship and obedience to the teachings of Islam.

Thus, religious education plays an important role in forming a noble person, having a profound understanding of religion, and practicing religious values in daily life. The concept of religion education also contributes to efforts to understand and respect religious differences and promote peace, tolerance, and interreligious cooperation.

### **Optimizing the Role of Technology in Religious Education**

Technology in education has gone through several important stages. In the early 1990s, universities began to be connected to computer networks that enabled the exchange of information using standard software that had been in operation for years. Then, in 1993, the introduction of the World Wide Web (WWW) had a major impact in expanding access to information and learning, including in Indonesia. (Powell, J., & Clarke, A. 2002).

In Indonesia, the development of education technology and learning technology has emerged since the mid-1970s. At the time, the establishment of the educational technology study program at the university was aimed at improving the quality of

human resources and supporting the improvement of educational quality. (Nurhayati et al., 2023; Nurdiana et al., 2023). In its development, the basic concept of educational technology has evolved from 1963 to 2018. In 1963, the formal definition of education technology stated that education technology is the design and use of messages that control the learning process. (Hakansson, H., & Waluszewski, A. 2003).

Nowadays, technology continues to evolve rapidly, and the use of technology in education is increasingly widespread. Educational technology (edutech) is a combination of computer hardware and software with educational theory and practice to facilitate learning. Educational technology also includes the use of applications, online platforms, video learning, and other tools to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of learning, including religious education. (Arico et al., 2001).

Religious education is an education that gives knowledge and shapes the attitudes, personalities, and skills of students in practicing their religious teachings. (Erwan et al., 2023; Sarmila et al., 2023). In Indonesia, religious education is crucial, especially in understanding and upholding religious values as well as building an Islamic personal character. Islamic education specifically involves various aspects, including curricula, educational institutions, and the role of Islam in the national education system. (Conroy et al., 2013).

As for the implementation of religious education in schools and its solutions include the provision of knowledge and the formation of attitudes towards religious teaching carried out through subjects on all paths, ranges, and types of education. The urgency of Islamic education is required to keep and not change the principles of Islam so that individuals can become skilled and moral in every development. (Husna, U., & Thohir, M. 2020).

The relationship between religious education and technology is very close and interdependent. Technology has a significant impact in enriching and enhancing religious learning (Haddar et al., 2023). Technology provides the necessary support to enrich the learning of religion. The use of technology in religious education can improve accessibility, interaction, and learning methods that are more attractive and effective for students. (Tambak, S. 2021).

Thus, the role of technology in religious education includes; 1) Access to Learning Resources: Technology allows students and teachers to have easier and faster access to learning resources such as religious texts, articles, learning videos, and relevant learning materials. Thus technology helps improve understanding of religious teachings. 2) Interactive Learning: Technology enables more interactive and exciting learning approaches. Through the use of educational software, for example, students can play educational games aimed at teaching religious values or solving problems related to religion. 3) Collaboration and Communication: Technology also supports collaboration and communication between students and teachers in the context of religious education. 4) Evaluation and Monitoring: With technology, teachers can easily evaluate

students' understanding of religious teachings. Through the use of app or evaluation software, the teacher can provide online tests or tasks related to religious topics and easily track and monitor students' progress. 5) Distance learning: Technology has enabled distance learning in religious education. For example, with video conferences or online classes, teachers can teach religious students remotely, without having to meet physically. (Sajjadi, S. M. 2008; Hamrah, S. Z. 2011).

Technology plays a significant role in religious education by providing access to learning resources, enhancing interactive learning, supporting collaboration and communication, facilitating evaluation and monitoring, and enabling distance learning (Tuhuteru et al., 2023).

Optimizing the role of technology in religious education can provide many benefits for students and teachers in expanding access, enhancing interactivity, and enriching the experience of religious learning. Therefore, it is important to involve teachers and educators in the development and training of technology so that they can use technology effectively in the learning of religion. In addition, there is a need to ensure the availability of adequate ICT infrastructure and the provision of digital resources that are in line with the curriculum of religion education. (Taufik, M. 2020).

### **Technological and educational developments in Madrasah**

Technological development refers to the evolution and advances in the field of technology that have occurred throughout history. Technology is a scientific method for achieving practical goals, applied science, or the way humans use to change the environment.

Over time, technology has undergone rapid development, from the use of fire to the era of artificial intelligence (AI). (Hakansson, H., & Waluszewski, A. 2003).

In Indonesia, the development of information technology has also affected various sectors, such as communications, education, manufacturing, and health. The positive and negative impact of such technology development is also felt in the context of the environment and the sustainability of these sectors. (Arico et al., 2001).

The development of information technology is now increasingly rapid and facilitates everyday life, especially in the field of communication. The creation of modern communication tools such as telephones has accelerated and changed the way humans interact with their surroundings.

In the history of information and communication technology development, there are many discoveries and revolutions that have affected the development of society and the way of life of humans from ancient times to the present, which also affects the educational institutions of one madrasah.

Madrasah is an Arabic term for schools, especially in Islamic sciences. Madrasah can be found in Arabic-speaking countries and beyond, as well as play an important role in education in Muslim communities. The curriculum of madrasah usually covers the

teachings of the Quran, the law of Shariah, and other religious subjects. These schools can offer basic education and higher education (Siskandar, S. 2020).

Madrasah has a rich history and is an important part of Muslim educational institutions. They provide education and training in Islamic studies, preparing students for leadership and religious scholarship. (Juniarni, C., & Ali, N. 2022).

Education in the madrasah is one of the most important in Indonesia and has undergone a significant transformation in the last few decades. In the 1980s, there was an acceleration in the education reform in the madrasah that led to the development and modernization of the education system. This development continues, and today madrasah has become an important part of the education system in Indonesia. (Zen et al., 2023).

The educational approach in the madrasah integrates the teaching of Islam with general education, so that students acquire comprehensive knowledge and skills. The madrasah curriculum usually includes religious lessons, such as the teachings of the Quran and Shariah law, as well as general subjects such as mathematics, Indonesian language, and science. To improve the quality of education in the madrasah, the Indonesian government has made various efforts. One of the things that was emphasized was the improvement of the qualifications and competence of teachers and educators in the madrasah. In addition, the government is also focusing on improving facilities and facilities as well as updating the curriculum of the madrasah in accordance with current learning needs. (Rohman et al., 2023).

Looking at the education in the madrasah, it is worth noting that the education of the matrasah has been the object of controversy and controversies. There are different views on the role and position of the madrasah in the national education system. However, with efforts to renew and improve quality, the madrasah in Indonesia continues to play a role as an educational institution that provides high-quality Islamic religious education to the young Muslim generation in the country. (Suhid et al., 2021).

Technological developments have also had an impact on madrasah in Indonesia. Madrasah has begun to use information and communication technology (ICT) as a means of expanding access to education, improving the quality of learning, and updating teaching methods. The use of technology in madrasas has brought many benefits, such as accelerating the teaching learning process, enabling access to more diverse learning resources, as well as facilitating communication between students, teachers, and parents. Thus, technology plays an important role in modernizing the madrasah and improving the quality of education in these Islamic educational institutions. (Haddade, H. 2022; Musbaing, M. 2021).

However, the challenges faced in the application of technology in the madrasah include the availability of adequate ICT infrastructure, training for teachers in implementing technology in learning, as well as the provision of digital resources that are appropriate to the curriculum of the matrasah. By continuously implementing and

integrating technology into the educational process, it is expected that the madrasah in Indonesia can continue to grow and improve the quality of education for the young Muslim generation in the country.

### **Advantages and Challenges in Using Technology in Madrasah**

Using technology in the madrasah can offer many advantages, but also face some challenges. Here are the advantages and challenges that may arise in the use of technology in the madrasah:

First, the advantages include; 1) Improving access to education: The use of technology in the madrasah can extend the access of education to students, especially those who live in remote areas or have physical constraints. With technology, students can access learning resources and conduct learning online from anywhere. 2) Improve learning quality: Technology can help improve learning quality in the madrasah. Teachers can use a variety of applications, software, and digital resources to teach materials in a more engaging, interactive, and concrete way. It can help students understand the concept better. 3) Facilitating communication: Technology also enables more effective communication between students, teachers, and parents. Through e-learning platforms, e-mail messages, or chat apps, students can communicate with teachers and classmates to ask questions, discuss, or share material. Parents can also be actively involved in monitoring and supporting their children's learning. 4) Improve administrative efficiency: With the presence of technology, administrative management in the madrasah can be improved. Processes such as absence recording, scheduling, data archiving, and learning results reporting can be done digitally. It can reduce the workload and time required for administrative tasks (Luneto, B. 2023; Hardjo et al., 2023).

Second, the challenges include; 1) Infrastructure and resources: One of the main challenges is the availability of adequate ICT infrastructure in the madrasah. Not all madrasas have smooth internet access, the necessary software, or adequate hardware. Efforts and investments are required to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and resources are adequately available. 2) Teacher training and understanding: Teachers need to get adequate training to understand and master the technology used in learning. Not all teachers have sufficient knowledge and skills in integrating technology into religious learning. 3) Security and privacy: In the use of technology, bear in mind that there are security and privacy risks that need to be taken into account. Madrasah needs to ensure the confidentiality of student data, protect personal information, and maintain the security of access to online platforms and information systems used. 4) Adaptation to the curriculum: The other challenge is to ensure that the use of technology in the madrasah is in line with the existing religious curricula. (Nurmayuli, N. 2022; Fitri, L. I., & Rohmah, H. 2023).

By realizing and overcoming these challenges, the madrasah can use technology more effectively in religious education. This is expected to improve the quality of education, students' ability, and learning experience in the Madrasah.

## Conclusion

The optimization of the role of technology in the madrasah towards modern religious education is as follows: 1) The use of technology in a madrasah can provide many advantages, such as improving access to education, improving the quality of learning, facilitating communication, and improving administrative efficiency. 2) However, there are some challenges that need to be addressed in the use of the technology in the Madrasah, like the availability of adequate infrastructure and resources, the training and understanding of teachers, security and privacy, as well as adaptation to existing religious curricula. 3) By recognizing and addressing these challenges, the madrasas can use technology more effectively in religious education. This is expected to enhance the education quality, student capacity, and learning experience in the matrasah. 4) Use of technology should be done with constant attention to the principles of sacred religion education, so that technology can be a means of supporting and enriching the learning of religion.

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