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# Relevance of Podcast-Based Cooperative Methods in Learning Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

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#### ABSTRACT

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Cooperative methods, digital era, Islamic religious education, use of podcasts

Objective: Digitalization has also influenced Islamic education in Indonesia, as students are increasingly connected to technology. The current study examines the potential of podcast-based cooperative methods of Islamic religious education learning in the digital era. Methodology: A qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach guided this study. A sample of 15 informants of grade XII pursuing multimedia majors at SMK (Vocational High School) Palembang participated in this study through in-depth interviews. The secondary data was collected from documentation and research articles. A thematic analysis was used to identify the benefits and challenges of implementing digital methods in religious education. Findings: Findings reveal that improve students' experience understanding of Islamic religious education material and encourage active participation and collaboration between them. In addition, this research also felt the need for training of educators in optimally utilizing

digital technology, and develop relevant and effective Islamic religious education learning strategies in the digital era. **Implications for research and practice.** Through the effective use of technology, religious education can become more interesting and appropriate for the younger generation. Implementing this method requires collaboration between teachers, students, and the school to create an innovative and inclusive learning environment.

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## Introduction

The digital era has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including Islamic religious education in Indonesia. Indirectly, Islamic religious education learning challenges remain relevant and attractive to students as the younger generation is increasingly connected to technology. Past studies reveal that changes in the field of digital technology are quick and have the potential to develop further over time, surpassing innovative learning techniques and traditional ones being left behind (Qureshi et al., 2021). It requires all educational human resources to be ready and to be able to adapt quickly to these changes. Teachers who are techno savvy can use technology as a medium to deliver lesson material that suits students' needs.

The use of digital technology in several schools in Indonesia has so far been dominated by superior schools at national and international standards or superior classes. Several technology-assisted learning methods are used to deliver subject matter to students so that they can adapt to current developments. One method that is adopted in the digital era is the podcast-based cooperative method. Conceptually, this collaborative method focuses on student cooperation to achieve common goals (Öztürk, 2023). Regarding Islamic religious education learning, this method allows students to discuss, exchange information and ideas, and learn from each other through one another's experiences. Through active interaction, students can deepen their understanding of religious values and their application in everyday life. The podcast-based cooperative method is also an appropriate alternative in the Islamic religious education learning process because it is relevant to current world developments, which tend to change quickly

The rationale for using podcasts in learning Islamic religious education is seen from the podcast aspect and student characteristics. Since all students can access podcasts easily via audiovisual means, podcasts for learning Islamic religious education aim to train independence, activeness, and engaging discussions in groups to increase students' understanding. The target for implementing the podcast-based cooperative method is SMK PP's students and teachers. Ar-Rahman Palembang, Indonesia, can adapt to technology and make learning more enjoyable. The feasibility of implementing it is supported by the availability of podcasts on YouTube channels and multimedia laboratories at the school. Podcast broadcasts can be accessed by teachers and students together.

The current research aims to describe the relevance of podcast-based methods in learning Islamic religious education in the digital era. Researchers involved PP Ar-Rahman Vocational School students as research subjects. To achieve the research objectives, the questions included how to apply the podcast-based cooperative method to vocational school students, its relevance to learning Islamic religious education in the digital era, and what problems are faced in its implementation. The rationale for this research is that cooperative methods can provide better results than individuals. As technology in learning in the digital era, podcasts are easy to access, not bound by time and place, have a broad reach, and students are familiar with podcasts. Using podcasts in learning aims to train independence, activeness, and group discussions to improve students' understanding. The feasibility of the research is supported by the availability of podcasts on YouTube channels and school facilities so that their relevance in the Islamic religious education learning process in the digital era can be studied.

## Literature Review

Digital technology in learning is a differentiator between superior and regular classes because it is used more often in superior classes (Clark-Wilson et al., 2020). As science advances in various corners of the world, every teacher needs to adopt digital technology (Rosyidah et al., 2021). The ability to absorb technology has brought differences in the distribution of human resources in the world of education in the era of globalization (Polónyi, 2022). In other words, the use of digital technology is influenced by developments in the flow of globalization (Skare & Riberio Soriano, 2021). The use of technology in learning is more interesting and fun for students and provides instructions that are inspiring and highly meaningful (Haleem et al., 2022). The advantage of using technology is that it can reach many individuals worldwide.

The podcast-based cooperative method in education learning has proved as an audio medium that can be accessed digitally, allowing students in groups to listen to learning material anytime and anywhere (Arkhangelskaya et al., 2021; Sandoval Zapata & Díaz Larenas, 2020). Regarding Islamic religious education learning, podcasts can be used to convey concise and open-ended material so that it can be delivered through engaging and informative podcast episodes. Using podcasts, students can discover and manage learning through their way of learning (González Enríquez et al., 2023). In practice, students can listen to discussions between teachers and resource persons and reflect on the content they hear. In general, the advantage of using podcasts in learning is that they can be accessed by all students without time limits, thus supporting independent learning. In addition, it also has advantages, namely: (a) increasing active student involvement in the learning process; (b) developing students' social skills through cooperation by communicating and collaborating; (c) making learning flexible where students can learn at their own pace (Hartono & Syarifuddin, 2024). Podcasts are a learning technology with a broad reach and are flexible in delivering material so listeners (students) can access the material without being bound by time and place (Kesuma et al., 2024).

Researchers have paid attention to podcast-based cooperative methods including examining the impact of medical and critical care podcasts in education by analyzing podcast websites that produce a relative effect on their audiences (Lin et al., 2023). It was found that podcasts can educate listeners depending on their listening level. Similar things received the attention of other researchers who discussed the impact of podcasts on listening skills in English language learning. It was found that students who listened to podcasts in groups had better performance in completing vocabulary tests than individuals, but this did not affect the increase in listening comprehension (Saeedakhtar et al., 2021).

Researchers have also examined podcast-based cooperative methods in the digital era of Islamic religious education learning. The material that can be obtained through podcasts is varied and not limited to texts such as lectures, Quran studies, *Fiqh*, the history of the prophet, inspirational stories, and others from experts. Podcasts are relevant to students because the character of digital-era students is very close to technology. For instance, Bećirović et al. (2022) stated the importance of combining cooperative methods with strengthening motivation in improving student learning outcomes. Through working together in groups, individual students are motivated to learn. They can compete to

increase their comprehension abilities to support better results as a form of contribution to the group, which ultimately improves their learning outcomes (Li et al., 2024; Rahmi et al., 2025).

In this digital era, technological developments are increasing very quickly, requiring technology in learning (Zulfizar & Dildora, 2023). The results of research on learning using computer applications are the best alternative for developing learning activities to meet the needs of the times and the characteristics of students, and they have been proven to be more efficient in terms of time (Saylan et al., 2023). Students can use podcasts to learn themselves and increase engagement and understanding of the lesson material. González Enriquez et al. (2023) state that a study of students at the Madrid Computer University in 2023 has illustrated how collaboration between two study programs can run smoothly and increase student understanding. Podcasts can be used in independent learning activities and improve students' critical thinking skills. In addition, podcasts improve students' abilities, excellence, and competitiveness. Science learning using the Common Knowledge Construction Model (CKCM) in collaboration with podcast media can be an option for educators to prepare a superior generation to face the challenges of the 21st century (Fatihatussa'adah et al., 2024). This research examines podcasts as a medium for learning with different study focuses. The podcasts study Islamic religious education material in the digital era.

Suhartini et al. (2021) reviewed empirical studies on podcast use in Islamic religious education learning. The resulting finding is that podcasts can be applied by integrating with project, problem-based, and cooperative methods (Suhartini et al., 2021). Regarding its relevance to the digital era, research on the reading habits of students in Pakistan shows that students prefer to get used to reading digital books compared to printed books. However, some students use social media in their free time to have fun. Most students have also used digital media (Mirza et al., 2021).

## Methodology

# Research Design

This research used qualitative research with a survey approach in order to gain an indepth understanding and experience and make a significant contribution to theory and practice related to the podcasts produced.

## Sampling

The informants for this research were 15 students in grade XII of multimedia courses. These students were divided into three equal groups of five each, facilitating more in-depth discussions. Each group created their podcast episode to apply the material they had learned. They were also directed to watch podcasts from relevant YouTube channels.

## Research Instrument and Procedure

Data was collected using in-depth interviews and documentation. The research began by selecting 15 students as informants and creating an instrument related to Islamic

religious education learning using a podcast-based cooperative method. Interviews were conducted with students who had previously watched podcasts related to the material they had studied. The data was then supported by learning results obtained through documentation by Islamic religious education subject teachers, especially *Fiqh*. The teacher provided feedback on students' understanding individually and in groups. The discussion included the principles of buying and selling in Islam, examples of online buying and selling cases, and reflections on the benefits of learning using podcasts.

## Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis of interview transcripts. This method produced precise and in-depth findings regarding students' experiences and understanding of participating in podcast-based *Figh* learning activities.

## **Results and Findings**

Application of Podcast-Based Cooperative Methods in the Digital Era

The implementation of learning using a podcast-based cooperative method in learning Islamic religious education (*Fiqh*) in this research was carried out in several steps. Right at the outset, teachers designed podcast content relevant and interesting to the Islamic religious education curriculum and for students. This learning design included determining essential competencies and objectives through interviews with *Fiqh* teachers at SMK PP. Ar-Rahman Palembang AM, the *Fiqh* material taught to students using podcasts, was a critical competency for understanding *Muamalah Fiqh* regarding buying and selling transactions, leasing, and contracts. This material was designed for three meetings. The first meeting was about sale and purchase transactions, the second was about rental transactions, and the third was about contracts. After the material was designed, podcast sources were determined to match the theme of these essential competencies. Furthermore, the next step was to determine the goal of the podcast presented.

In the next step, students were divided into small groups to discuss the podcast episodes they would watch/listen to. All 15 students were divided into three groups, with five members in each group. The media used in learning was podcast media, which had proven to increase students' conceptual understanding (Yulianti et al., 2020). Podcasts had been used as a strategy in independent learning activities and in group learning to train engagement between friends (O'Connor et al., 2020). Each group created their podcast episode as a form of application of the material they had learned. After the groups were classified, students had to watch podcasts via the YouTube channel as a substitute for students watching podcasts according to the specified theme. These activities made students learn independently to complete multimedia-based tasks (Errabo et al., 2024). Learning was carried out by directing students to listen to or watch podcasts in groups, and to note essential points from the podcast and then summarize and present their understanding.

After the discussion, the teacher provided feedback on the understanding and experience of individual students and the results of their group assignments. Students discussed with their group friends the principles of buying and selling in Islam, shared examples of online buying and selling cases, and provided infographics about halal online

buying and selling in the digital era. In this process, students were allowed to respond to the results of group presentations to share insights. The teacher invited students to reflect on the benefits of learning using podcasts.

Problems in Implementing Podcast-Based Cooperative Methods in the Digital Era.

While all students agreed to the need to implement learning using the podcast method in the digital era, they also shared several problems. First and foremost, the students agreed that the podcast method offered them minimal interaction. Podcasts are one-way, so they do not allow students to ask questions or discuss, which is essential in learning Figh. There is still much material that students have not mastered that requires further understanding, but in podcasts that are watched indirectly, there is no access for students to ask questions. It was acknowledged by 13 of the 15 informants interviewed in this research. A majority of students felt happy being able to watch while learning because the material was packaged lightly and could be repeated. However, there were problems such as limited presentation time and no space for questions and answers.

Another major problem faced in implementing podcast method was student Involvement. It was very challenging to encourage students to listen to and engage with podcast material actively, especially if they are more accustomed to traditional learning methods. About 90% of the informants were passive in learning because they concentrated on watching the podcast, and only 10% asked questions after the podcast took place. A passive attitude in podcast-based learning is felt by people who generally watch podcasts and is a challenge in implementation (Weinstock et al., 2020). It can also decrease if applied continuously (Shiang et al., 2021). On the other hand, podcasts can encourage student engagement in podcasts and be active (Johnston et al., 2021).

All informants agreed that evaluation of learning or assessing students' understanding after listening to a podcast could also be difficult because there is no direct way to measure how well they absorbed the information. Often, there is some material that they forgot to note down because it was conveyed too much by the resource person. However, they admitted that they got help with a copy of the recording so that it could be found by opening the rebroadcast. Last, but not the least, msot informants agreed that the curriculum adaptation was also a big challenge in podcast method. Integrating podcasts into the Islamic religious education curriculum requires adapting and developing materials by educational standards. In certain schools, not all support this podcast due to various reasons, such as lack of facilities and infrastructure and ignorance about podcasts. Podcasts can increase learning (Young et al., 2021).

Application of Podcast-Based Cooperative Methods in Islamic Religious Education Learning

Globalization has changed the national and international quality education system with most innovative consequences. One of these consequences is a type of digital learning that utilizes sophisticated technology and is standardized. It is a positive impact of technological educational advances, which also influences society's social characteristics and welfare. As humans who are constantly developing dynamically, teachers and students must be able to master science and technology through the help of artificial

intelligence. This technological advancement is only a tool that makes learning activities easier, not an end goal (Hall & Jones, 2021). Technology can be used in the learning process to develop reading skills because of the availability of easily accessible digital books (Mirza et al., 2021). Audio technology such as podcasts is applied in learning to improve students' understanding in listening independently and in groups (Suhartini et al., 2021). It can also assess students' mastery of material through podcasts (Hanson, 2023). However, podcast media can be adjusted to suit learning objectives (Kendrick et al., 2023).

Keeping up with developments is essential to avoid missing out on information and make it easier to complete tasks. From learning activities using cooperative methods based on podcast media, there was a high need for technology in learning, such as developing teaching materials, assessments of learning methods, and media modification so that students can learn easily and quickly. Figure 1 presents the use of multimedia practices applying digital technology to watch podcasts at SMK PP. Ar-Rahman Palembang.



**Figure 1:** Multimedia Practices for Using Digital Technology Based on Watching Podcasts at SMK PP. Ar-Rahman Palembang

Implementing learning using the podcast-based cooperative method in learning Islamic Religious Education, especially *Fiqh*, at SMK PP. Ar-Rahman, Palembang, Indonesia involves several strategic steps to increase students' understanding and experience of participating in podcast-based learning activities by collaborating with their groups. At the design stage, the teacher designs podcast content according to Islamic religious education criteria, which is interesting for students, focusing on the essential competencies of *Muamalah Fiqh*, including buying and selling transactions, renting, and contracts. This material is divided into three meetings, each discussing one specific topic. The next stage is to divide the discussion group into small groups to discuss the specified podcast episodes. Figure 2 presents a view of the computer room where students watched podcasts.



**Figure 2:** Computer Room as a Place to Watch Podcasts of SMK PP. Ar-Rahman Palembang

Problems in Implementing Podcast-Based Cooperative Methods in Islamic Religious Education Learning

However, in spite of several benefits, there have been many problems with the implementation of podcast-based cooperative methods in Islamic religious educational learning in Indonesia, especially in schools in remote areas. First, there is limited access to technology for students in remote areas who do not have stable internet access to access podcasts. Second, there are differences in educational backgrounds and religious understanding of students in podcasts, which all students may not easily understand. Third, not all podcasts have good content quality; there is a risk that the information submitted is inaccurate or not to Islamic teachings. Therefore, teachers as educators must understand developing culture and technology and sufficiently understand the subject matter to overcome these problems. The approach can be cross-cultural education, digital education systems, and communication because there is a relationship between culture, use of technology, and communication in digital education so far.

When applying the podcast-based cooperative method in Islamic religious education learning in the digital era, the problem is that not all students can access devices and the Internet. Therefore, schools or *madrasas* must provide access to alternative media such as CDs and DVDs. This solution can be implemented by improving good English language skills so that digital technology can be applied in Islamic Religious Education learning relevant to students' needs. In addition, teachers need to be trained to use technology and design effective content so that podcasts can improve speaking and listening skills (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023). Regular training can help improve teacher skills. This training is essential, especially regarding the increasingly sophisticated development of AI, which shows that the need for digital-based learning is critical. Additionally, digital learning presents material as more information for students (Liu, 2023). Training improves teachers' digital abilities and increases understanding and insight into technology, attitudes, and actions and their appropriate use in learning activities (Castillo, 2022), including combining learning methods and podcast-based media to increase participants' understanding of Islamic religious education.

## Conclusion

The site of this research was SMK PP. Ar-Rahman Palembang, Indonesia. The informants for this research comprised 15 students in grade XII of multimedia courses, divided into three equal groups. Each group created their podcast episode to apply the material they had learned. They were also directed to watch podcasts from relevant YouTube channels. After the discussion, the teacher provided feedback on students' understanding individually and in groups. The discussion included the principles of buying and selling in Islam, examples of online buying and selling cases, and reflections on the benefits of learning using podcasts. Through this method, the students not only understood Fiqh theory but also were able to apply it in factual contexts, especially in the current digital situation. This podcast-based learning shows the potential to increase student engagement and deepen their understanding of Fiqh material. The study made it evident that podcast-based cooperative methods have a great potential to improve Islamic religious education learning in the digital era.

The podcast-based cooperative method has facilitated material delivery to students by providing learning resources directly from experts so that they have more insight. This activity, which combines cooperative methods and modified audiovisual learning media in the form of podcasts, is considered more effective in conveying messages on dense material and requires high levels of understanding. The study recommends that through the effective use of technology, religious education can become more interesting and relevant for the younger generation. In order to implement this method, it requires collaboration between teachers, students, and the school to create an innovative and inclusive learning environment.

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