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HYBRID PEDAGOGY AND DIGITAL LITERACY IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT AN OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this research was to analyze the implementation of hybrid pedagogy and its impact on students' digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education at Universitas Terbuka Indonesia. A qualitative field work design was used for data collection, through interviews, LMS observation and document analysis. The results demonstrate that hybrid pedagogy allows flexible learning with asynchronous resources and synchronous interaction. However, the students' variation in digital literacy affects their participation in synchronous classes and digital assignments for digital discussions. The study also finds issues such as the digital divide, limited access to digital devices, platform usability, large class sizes, and unequal institutional support. The findings of this study indicate that hybrid Islamic religious education needs to be developed more sophisticatedly in areas of digital literacy, lecturers' pedagogical preparedness, and inclusive institutional support to spur academic engagement, ethical reflection, and spiritual growth.

Keywords: Hybrid Pedagogy, Digital Literacy, Islamic Religious Education, Open University, Distance Education

ABSTRAK: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi pedagogi hibrida serta implikasinya terhadap literasi digital mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian



lapangan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi terhadap Learning Management System (LMS), dan analisis dokumen. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pedagogi hibrida mampu mendukung fleksibilitas pembelajaran melalui perpaduan antara sumber belajar asinkron dan interaksi sinkron. Namun demikian, perbedaan tingkat literasi digital mahasiswa berpengaruh terhadap keterlibatan mereka dalam kelas sinkron, diskusi daring, dan penyelesaian tugas berbasis digital. Penelitian ini juga mengungkap sejumlah tantangan dalam implementasi pembelajaran hibrida, seperti kesenjangan digital, keterbatasan akses terhadap perangkat digital, kendala penggunaan platform, jumlah mahasiswa yang besar dalam satu kelas, serta dukungan institusional yang belum merata. Oleh karena itu, Pendidikan Agama Islam berbasis pedagogi hibrida perlu dikembangkan secara lebih terarah melalui penguatan literasi digital mahasiswa, peningkatan kesiapan pedagogis dosen, dan penyediaan dukungan institusional yang inklusif agar pembelajaran dapat berlangsung lebih efektif, reflektif, dan bermakna.

Kata Kunci: *pedagogi hibrida, literasi digital, Pendidikan Agama Islam, universitas terbuka, pendidikan jarak jauh.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has affected higher education, especially in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of online and blended learning models and challenged universities to rethink instructional practices to ensure access, flexibility, and continuity of learning.¹ In this sense technology has become part of the texture of teaching and learning today and not an add-on.² In response to these changes, one of the pedagogical models that has emerged is hybrid pedagogy.³ It combines asynchronous learning activities (e.g., independent access to digital material) with synchronous interaction between lecturer and students. The model provides for communication, discussion, and feedback but gives students flexibility.⁴

Hybrid pedagogy is a must in open and distance learning institutions where students are generally from diverse geographical, academic, and socio-economic backgrounds.⁵ Hybrid pedagogy is a must in open and distance learning institutions where students are generally from diverse geographical, academic, and

¹ Songyan Hou, "Impact of COVID-19 on Open Universities Worldwide: Case Studies from Asia, Africa and Europe," *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal* 18, no. 1 (2023).

² Irwin DeVries, "Open Universities and Open Educational Practices: A Content Analysis of Open University Websites," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, no. 4 (2019).

³ Aras Bozkurt, "The Historical Development and Adaptation of Open Universities in Turkish Context: Case of Anadolu University as a Giga University," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, no. 4 (2019).

⁴ Alan Tait, "Open Universities: The next Phase," *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal* 13, no. 1 (2018).

⁵ John S. Daniel, "Open Universities: Old Concepts and Contemporary Challenges," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, no. 4 (2019).



socio-economic backgrounds.⁶ Therefore, the use of digital technology in this field should not only offer access to learning materials but also meaningful interaction, reflective discussion, and moral understanding.

Digital literacy is crucial for a successful hybrid learning experience. Students will participate in technology-mediated learning environments, utilize digital resources, participate in online discussions, communicate through digital platforms, and complete assignments, but students' variation in digital literacy may affect their participation in the learning activities.⁷ Students with higher digital literacy are more active participants, while students with low digital competence have difficulty navigating learning platforms, synchronous sessions, and online tasks.⁸

The topic of hybrid learning and digital literacy is not new in higher education research. Unfortunately, in the context of Islamic religious education, especially in open universities, the intersection of these two subjects has rarely been explored.⁹ Most studies have focused on higher education in general, and little is known about the particulars of distance-based Islamic religious education. The learning environment is different in open universities because of the extensive use of digital platforms, the geographical dispersion of students, and the greater autonomy of the learners.¹⁰

Considering this background, this study aims to analyze the implementation of hybrid pedagogy and its implications for the digital literacy of students of Islamic Religious Education at Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia. This study is guided by 3 research questions, namely, (1) to what extent is hybrid pedagogy implemented in Islamic religious education in the context of open universities? (2) How does the digital literacy of students affect their degree of participation in hybrid learning? (3) What are the challenges for lecturers and students in the implementation of hybrid pedagogy?

This study contributes to the discussion of technology-mediated Islamic education by exploring the practice of hybrid pedagogy in the open and distance learning environment. The results can provide useful insight to lecturers, institutions, and policymakers to develop more inclusive and pedagogically

⁶ Hanmo Jeong, "Rethinking Open Universities: What Makes Them Unique?," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, no. 4 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v20i4.4163>.

⁷ Shuyang Yu and Dan Wang, "Quantitative SWOT Analysis on Factors Influencing the Sustainable Development of Non-Academic Education in China's Open Universities: A Case Study of Beijing Open University," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 14, no. 20 (2022).

⁸ Insung Jung, "Personalized Education for All: The Future of Open Universities," *Open Praxis* 16, no. 1 (2024).

⁹ Rulinawaty, Ojat Darajat, and Brightly Avi Jonathans, "E-Learning Practised Innovation towards Knowledge Management and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in Open University, Indonesia," *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 26, no. 3 (2025).

¹⁰ Aminudin Zuhairi, Maria Rowena Del Rosario Raymundo, and Kamran Mir, "Implementing Quality Assurance System for Open and Distance Learning in Three Asian Open Universities: Philippines, Indonesia and Pakistan," *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal* 15, no. 3 (2020).



meaningful hybrid learning models. This research specifically is on the role of the development of digital literacy, the pedagogical readiness of lecturers, and the support of the institution in strengthening Islamic religious education in open university contexts.

METHOD

A qualitative fieldwork design was used in this study to investigate the implementation of hybrid pedagogy and its implications for students' digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia.¹¹ A qualitative approach was considered suitable for the study as it aimed to investigate instructional practices, learning experiences, and pedagogical challenges in their natural educational context. This study was more about the lecturers' and students' experiences of hybrid learning and how digital literacy shaped participation, interaction and engagement in distance-based Islamic religious education rather than statistically measuring learning outcomes.

The research was carried out in the Islamic Religious Education course offered by the open and distance learning system.¹² The participants were 20 lecturers and 100 undergraduate students directly involved in hybrid learning activities in the post-pandemic period. Participants were selected based on purposive sampling related to the research objectives. Lecturers who had experience in designing, managing or facilitating hybrid instructional activities were included. The student participants were selected from those actively enrolled in the Islamic religious education courses, who participated in online or hybrid learning sessions. The student participants came from different academic programs, age groups, geographical origins and self-reported levels of digital literacy to ensure diverse perspectives are included.

Data were collected through interviews, nonparticipant observation, and document analysis. The interviews were used for the lecturers and students to explore their experiences of hybrid pedagogy, digital learning practices, interaction patterns, and challenges in using digital platforms. The interviews were conducted between November 2025 and March 2026 and lasted on average 15 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded (with permission of the participant) and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Nonparticipant observations were carried out for LMS to study instructional delivery, student participation, discussion forums, assignment submission procedures, and the use of digital learning tools. In addition, relevant documents, such as course syllabi, lesson plans, digital learning materials, and institutional guidelines, were analyzed to understand how hybrid pedagogy was formally designed and implemented.

¹¹ Aïcha Cissé and Andrew Rasmussen, "Qualitative Methods," in *Comprehensive Clinical Psychology*, Second Edition, vol. 3 (2022).

¹² Maiss Ahmad and Stephen Wilkins, "Purposive Sampling in Qualitative Research: A Framework for the Entire Journey," *Quality and Quantity* 59, no. 2 (2025).



Data were analysed using thematic analysis.¹³ The analysis began with familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents. Initial codes were then created to identify recurring ideas concerning hybrid pedagogy, digital literacy, student engagement, lecturer readiness and structural challenges. These initial codes were then clustered into larger themes through a process of comparison and interpretation. Key themes were further refined to ensure they reflected the research questions and were supported by evidence across multiple data sources. Analytical memos were written throughout the process to facilitate reflexive interpretation and to maintain consistency in the development of themes.

Several strategies were employed to improve the trustworthiness of the study. Data triangulation was done by comparing results from interviews, LMS observations and document analysis. Peer debriefing was used to review the evolving interpretations and reduce researcher bias. Also, the identities of the participants were anonymized for confidentiality, and all data were used only for research purposes. Ethical considerations were taken into account by obtaining informed consent from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the aims of the study, that they were voluntary participants and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The integration of hybrid pedagogy in Islamic Religious Education at an open university has significantly reshaped the teaching and learning landscape, particularly in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. This innovative approach combines traditional classroom methods with digital technologies to foster a dynamic, interactive learning environment. As a result, educators and students alike have embraced new modalities of engagement, leading to a more flexible and accessible educational experience that caters to diverse learning needs and circumstances. As education increasingly moves online through various digital platforms, differences in students' digital skills become more critical. These differences affect how engaged students are and influence how well instruction works overall. This situation shows how teaching methods and technology skills work together in Islamic Religious Education, especially in open and distance learning. It highlights the challenges that teachers face and the chances to enrich students' learning experiences in a fast-changing educational environment.

Hybrid Pedagogy in Islamic Religious Education at an Open University

Hybrid pedagogy has become increasingly relevant in Indonesian higher education, particularly following the rapid expansion of digital learning after the COVID-19 pandemic. This evolution is closely linked to the growth of open and distance learning systems in Indonesia, where flexibility and accessibility are

¹³ Muhammad Naeem et al., "A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023).



crucial for accommodating a diverse student population.¹⁴ Clarifying how hybrid pedagogy specifically addresses the needs of remote, working, and socio-economically diverse students can deepen policymakers' and educators' understanding of its practical benefits.

A notable example of how hybrid pedagogy is implemented within a fully distance-based educational framework is Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia's most prominent open university. Here, integrating asynchronous self-directed learning with synchronous online interactions offers a practical, effective approach for educators and policymakers to enhance student engagement. This approach aligns with Indonesia's national mandate for open higher education, which aims to increase access to higher education for working adults, students in remote areas, and learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, flexibility, learner autonomy, and scalability are fundamental principles that shape hybrid pedagogy in Indonesian open universities.¹⁵ The adoption of hybrid pedagogy in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in Indonesia raises specific pedagogical considerations, such as how it can effectively foster moral awareness, ethical reasoning, and spiritual values amid digital delivery.¹⁶ Clarifying these aspects helps demonstrate its tailored relevance to IRE's unique goals within Indonesian higher education.

Indonesian open universities highlight the importance of asynchronous learning in hybrid pedagogy. This educational approach is typically assessed through various measures of effectiveness, such as student engagement, course completion rates, and overall learning outcomes. By thoroughly exploring these aspects, the research provides valuable insights that can help policymakers and educators evaluate and improve the effectiveness of hybrid learning models. Synchronous online sessions complement asynchronous learning by enabling real-time interaction between lecturers and students. In IRE courses, these synchronous sessions are typically used to clarify complex religious concepts, discuss ethical and social issues from an Islamic perspective, and address students' questions regarding the interpretation and application of spiritual teachings. These sessions are essential for maintaining dialogical learning and strengthening students' sense of connection in an otherwise independent learning environment. Students' digital literacy significantly influences the effectiveness of hybrid pedagogy in Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia. Recognizing digital literacy as a foundational skill can empower students and educators, fostering confidence in navigating digital learning environments and promoting active participation.

¹⁴ Francisco Javier Hinojo-Lucena et al., "A Tour of Open Universities through Literature: A Bibliometric Analysis," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, no. 4 (2019).

¹⁵ Gan Chanyawudhiwan, Kemmanat Mingsiritham, and Wachira Brahmawong, "An Analysis of Digital Competencies of the Digital Open Universities," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 44, no. 4 (2023).

¹⁶ Ahmad Nabil Amir and Tasnim Abdul Rahman, "Mohd. Kamal Hassan's Concept and Framework of Islamization of Knowledge," *Madinah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, no. 1 (2025).



Limited digital skills are a significant challenge for some students in Indonesia. Many struggle to use learning platforms, keep track of digital assignments, or engage in online discussions. This can limit their access to learning resources and reduce their involvement in class.¹⁷ In Islamic Religious Education, these challenges can affect not only academic performance but also students' chances for deep reflection and engagement with religious topics.

From an instructional standpoint, lecturers' readiness to adopt effective teaching methods is crucial to the successful implementation of hybrid pedagogy. However, varying levels of digital and pedagogical competencies, along with resistance to change, can pose significant barriers. Exploring these challenges and potential institutional or infrastructural limitations offers a more complete understanding of implementation hurdles and strategies to overcome them, helping policymakers and educators plan more effectively.¹⁸

Hybrid teaching is an effective way to deliver Islamic Religious Education in Indonesian open universities. With the right digital skills, willing lecturers, and institutional support, hybrid learning can maintain high teaching quality.¹⁹ It also keeps the essential reflective and ethical aspects of Islamic Religious Education. This method helps open universities in Indonesia reach more students and effectively address the challenges and opportunities of learning with technology in a diverse, spread-out society.

Digital Literacy and Student Engagement in an Open University Environment

Digital literacy is a significant factor in promoting student engagement in open university learning.²⁰ In an open and distance learning environment where students manage their educational experiences, the ability to navigate digital platforms and complete online learning tasks effectively is essential for active and meaningful participation. Analysis and observations conducted within the Learning Management System (LMS) indicate that a majority of learning activities—ranging from accessing course modules to actively participating in discussion forums and submitting assignments—necessitate varying degrees of digital competence, from basic to advanced.

Engaging in conversations with students highlights that digital literacy is an essential factor in increasing participation in learning activities. Mastery of digital tools contributes to a notable improvement in students' confidence and

¹⁷ Muhammad Husni Arifin, "The Role of Student Support Services in Enhancing Student Persistence in the Open University Context: Lesson from Indonesia Open University," *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 19, no. 3 (2018).

¹⁸ M Thoharun and Muhid, "Integrative Learning from the Perspective of Hadith: Islamic Values, Ethics, and the Development of Science and Technology," *Madinah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, no. 2 (2025).

¹⁹ Francisco Javier Hinojo-Lucena et al., "A Tour of Open Universities through Literature: A Bibliometric Analysis," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, no. 4 (2019).

²⁰ Lisa Dwi Ningtyas, Yuli Rahmawati, and Riyadi, "Development of Learning Environment Instruments in Distance Education at the Open University," *Educational Process: International Journal* 16 (2025).



motivation.²¹ This proficiency may lead educators to consider developing digital skills as a strategic approach to enhance classroom participation.

Conversely, students with limited digital literacy often encounter persistent obstacles that hinder their ability to navigate the Learning Management System (LMS) and submit assignments seamlessly. These struggles can create barriers that detract from their overall engagement and enthusiasm for learning, ultimately affecting their academic experience. The influence of digital literacy on engagement was also palpable during synchronous online sessions. Students noted that those familiar with video conferencing tools and online communication features were significantly more inclined to ask questions, respond to lecturers, and participate actively in discussions. In contrast, students with limited digital skills often became passive during live interactions, expressing technical anxiety and fear of making mistakes as reasons for their lack of participation.

Lecturers have noted that differences in students' digital literacy skills significantly shape the way they interact in online settings. These varying levels of proficiency create a dynamic environment that shapes discussions and collaborations in fascinating ways! They noted that learners with robust digital competencies were notably more responsive to discussion prompts and constructive feedback, while those with weaker skills frequently required repeated guidance and technical support. This discrepancy placed additional instructional demands on educators, particularly within large-scale open university courses, where the challenge of engaging diverse learners is most pronounced.

New insights from recent interviews reveal a fascinating connection between digital literacy and student engagement. Those students who confidently navigate digital tools found themselves not only more engaged but also motivated in their learning journey. They experienced greater control, which encouraged them to dive deeper into their studies and participate more actively. Students who struggle with digital skills often feel frustrated and disconnected. This frustration can lead to fewer interactions with course materials and less discussion with peers. This highlights the importance of digital literacy in today's education.

Recent studies have uncovered an intriguing reality:²² in the context of open universities, digital literacy is not just a bonus – it's a fundamental skill essential for effective learning. Both students and lecturers agree that without a solid foundation in digital literacy, students face significant hurdles in fully engaging with hybrid learning experiences. This is particularly true in the field of Islamic Religious Education, where a lack of digital skills can stifle opportunities for reflective discussions and ethical reasoning, crucial elements for reaching key educational goals.

The findings reveal an intriguing connection: student engagement in open universities is closely tied to their digital literacy skills. Interview insights highlight

²¹ Francisco Javier Lacarcel and Raquel Huete, "Digital Communication Strategies Used by Private Companies, Entrepreneurs, and Public Entities to Attract Long-Stay Tourists: A Review," *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 19, no. 2 (2023).

²² Jeong, "Rethinking Open Universities: What Makes Them Unique?"



a consistent theme: enhancing these competencies is essential. To foster greater participation, dynamic interaction, and lasting learning in hybrid environments, institutions must prioritize strategies that build digital literacy into their instructional design. By doing so, they can truly revolutionize the learning landscape, empowering students to excel in today's digital world.

Instructional Flexibility and Lecturer Pedagogical Readiness

The hybrid pedagogy in Islamic religious education provides more flexibility for the lecturers to design the learning activities by combining the asynchronous materials and synchronous interaction.²³ The open university environment allows such flexibility where lecturers can share learning resources through the LMS, create online discussions, and use synchronous sessions to explain complex religious concepts. The results also indicate that flexible teaching does not necessarily lead to effective learning. Pedagogical skills and strategies such as interactive activities and the formation of a supportive online community should be used by lecturers to engage learners meaningfully in the learning process.

The quality of hybrid instruction largely depends on the pedagogical preparedness of the lecturers. Interviews indicate that lecturers must progress from the technical use of digital platforms to the capacity to design meaningful online interactions. In this way, hybrid pedagogy asks lecturers to design learning sequences, produce reflective discussion questions, provide feedback with a sense of immediacy, and motivate students to link Islamic teachings to contemporary social and ethical issues.

Lecturers also faced challenges in stimulating interaction in large classes in an online environment. The platforms offered access to learning materials, but the large student numbers made it difficult for the lecturers to follow up on individual engagement and provide tailored feedback. The condition particularly limited the depth of interaction, especially in discussion-based activities that are central to Islamic religious education. Therefore, lecturers primarily utilized synchronous sessions to clarify course content rather than engage in dialogue exchanges

Another important finding concerns the different levels of lecturers' readiness for hybrid pedagogy. In some cases, the features of LMS, video conferencing tools, and digital learning materials could be advantageous for the lecturers. However, other teachers still needed support in designing interactive learning activities and managing online discussions, indicating a significant gap in their pedagogical skills that could affect effective teaching in a hybrid environment. That means professional development can't just be technical training on how to use the platform. There is a need for ongoing professional development of teachers in pedagogical skills associated with digital instructional design, online facilitation, assessment strategies, and the development of reflective learning in religious education. The effect of digital literacy on engagement was also observable in students' participation during synchronous online sessions. Students noted that

²³ Rebecca E. Heiser, "The Emergence of the Open Research University Through International Research Collaboration," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 24, no. 3 (2023).



those familiar with video conferencing tools and online communication features were more inclined to ask questions, respond to lecturers, and engage in discussions. In contrast, students with limited digital skills tended to remain passive during synchronous sessions, citing technical anxiety and fear of making mistakes as barriers to participation.

The results indicate that the lecturer's pedagogical readiness is an important factor in the success of hybrid pedagogy in Islamic religious education. Therefore the institution should develop the lecturers with the digital tools and the pedagogical skills for their effective use.²⁴ In the open university setting, the preparedness of lecturers can enhance the quality of interaction, foster student engagement, and preserve the ethical and spiritual aspect of Islamic religious education in the technology-based learning environment, specifically in building a more inclusive and responsive learning environment that is able to accommodate the various needs of students.

Structural Challenges in Hybrid Learning Implementation

The pedagogical design and the structural and institutional conditions influence the hybrid learning use in Islamic religious education in open universities. Although digital platforms offer opportunities for flexible access to learning materials and interaction, the findings show that several structural challenges continue to impact the quality and equity of hybrid learning. Some of these challenges include disparities between access to digital infrastructure, platform usability differences, large class sizes, limited institutional support, and an absence of consistent guidelines for hybrid course design.²⁵

One of the hardest problems was the uneven availability of digital infrastructure. Other determinants for students' participation in hybrid learning were stability of internet connections, availability of adequate digital devices, and affordability of data packages. Remote students and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds struggled to participate in synchronous sessions, access media-rich learning materials, and submit assignments on time. In this context, hybrid learning could enhance access to education, but it could also reproduce pre-existing inequalities in the presence of uneven digital infrastructure.

The usability of the digital learning platforms also shaped the students' learning experiences.²⁶ Students said they struggled with the learning management system, with understanding what teachers expected in class, with remembering due dates, and with dealing with lots of different digital tools. These challenges were particularly manifested in asynchronous learning activities that required the students to take control of their own learning. Where navigation within the platform was less clear, students' engagement with learning materials and online

²⁴ Chanyawudhiwan, Mingsiritham, and Brahmawong, "An Analysis of Digital Competencies of the Digital Open Universities."

²⁵ Della Raymena Jovanka et al., "Determinants of E-Learning Services: Indonesian Open University," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 1 (2023).

²⁶ Zuhairi, Raymundo, and Mir, "Implementing Quality Assurance System for Open and Distance Learning in Three Asian Open Universities: Philippines, Indonesia and Pakistan."



discussions was less consistent. This means that the effectiveness of hybrid learning is not only about having digital platforms but also about making them accessible, clear, and user-centered.

Another structural constraint in the implementation of hybrid pedagogy was the size of the classes. In the open university, the lecturers often have a significant number of students dispersed out in the online learning spaces. This restricts their ability to track participation, provide personalized feedback, and engage in ongoing dialogue. The problem is more serious for Islamic religious education, as the subject matter demands reflective thinking, ethical reasoning, and dialogical interaction. The discussion in online classes tends to be superficial, and the lecturers focus on content delivery rather than pedagogical engagement, thus leading to a lack of critical thinking and deeper examination of the ethical and reflective dimension of Islamic religious education. This limits students' opportunities for meaningful engagement and deepening their understanding of the subject material. Institutional support also added to the quality of hybrid learning.

Much of the tech infrastructure was already in place. However, the results indicate that the support provided to lecturers and students was not always systematic, thus leading to different qualities of hybrid learning experiences, especially in the training on effective use of technology and pedagogical strategies, which impacted student engagement and learning outcomes. More work still needs to be done in digital instructional design, online assessment, and reflective discussion. There is a need for more direct instruction to students on the use of LMS tools such as online discussions and electronic submission of assignments. Hybrid learning can become a technical solution rather than a pedagogically meaningful model, in the absence of support systems, resulting in student disengagement and failure to meet learning outcomes.

A further structural problem is the absence of consistent guidelines for the design of hybrid courses. Without clear institutional standards, instructional practices will likely vary from course to course. As an example, some lecturers may be using asynchronous delivery of content and some more interactive activities, while others may be using synchronous methods or a combination of both, leading to a wide variety of teaching approaches within the same program. The variation may affect students' learning experience and result in inconsistency in the quality of Islamic religious education. Thus, open universities should make more transparent policies on course design, interaction patterns, assessment methods, lecturer workload, and student support in the context of hybrid learning.

These findings indicate that addressing structural challenges is necessary for effective and equitable hybrid pedagogy. This is very important in the field of Islamic religious education, where the educational process is not only oriented towards the transmission of knowledge but also towards moral self-reflection and spiritual formation. Open universities need to strengthen their digital infrastructure, offer learning opportunities for low bandwidth, improve the usability of the LMS, develop clear rules for hybrid learning, and provide continuous pedagogical support to the lecturers and students. These efforts are



important so that hybrid learning is inclusive and accessible and in line with the ethical and educational goals of Islamic religious education.

Implications for Islamic Religious Education in an Open University Context

The findings of this study have implications for the design and implementation of Islamic religious education in an open university environment. The first point is that digital literacy must be understood as an integral part of Islamic religious education, not a separate technical skill.²⁷ Students' interaction with religious content in hybrid learning is directly dependent on their access to learning materials, online discussions, digital information assessment, and communication via digital platforms. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education courses should incorporate activities that strengthen students' digital literacy while also supporting ethical reflection and responsible digital behavior.

Secondly, hybrid pedagogy in Islamic religious education should achieve the balance between asynchronous and synchronous learning. Asynchronous learning provides flexibility for students from various geographic, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds. They can independently access the course materials and complete the learning tasks. But the synchronous interaction is still important for the clarification of complex religious concepts, discussion of ethical issues, and dialogic engagement between lecturers and students. The hybrid model should therefore be well designed so that both modes are integrated in a structured and pedagogically meaningful way.

Third, the pedagogical readiness of lecturers is important for the effective implementation of hybrid Islamic religious education. The results indicated that lecturers require more than technical competence in the use of digital platforms.²⁸ They also need to know how to design reflective learning activities, facilitate online discussions, provide constructive feedback, and guide students in linking Islamic teachings with contemporary social realities. Therefore, the professional development programs should include not only the operation of LMS but also digital pedagogy, online assessment, and strategies to promote ethical and spiritual reflection in technology-mediated learning.

They also need to know how to design reflective learning activities, facilitate online discussions, provide constructive feedback, and guide students in linking Islamic teachings with contemporary social realities. Therefore, the professional development programs should include not only the operation of LMS but also digital pedagogy, online assessment, and strategies to promote ethical and spiritual reflection in technology-mediated learning.²⁹ Such types of supports are especially

²⁷ Maria Nascimento Cunha, Tinashe Chuchu, and Eugene Tafadzwa Maziriri, "Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities for Open Universities and Massive Online Open Courses in the Digital Revolution," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning* 15, no. 12 (2020).

²⁸ Enala Sharon Lufungulo et al., "Innovations and Strategies During Online Teaching in an EdTech Low-Resourced University," *SN Computer Science* 4, no. 4 (2023).

²⁹ Gopal Datt and Gagan Singh, "Learners' Satisfaction With the Website Performance of an Open and Distance Learning Institution: A Case Study," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 22, no. 1 (2021).



important in Islamic religious education, since meaningful learning depends on continuous interaction, reflective engagement, and open access to learning materials.

And lastly, hybrid pedagogy is not just about the use of digital platforms in religious education. It can be developed as a context sensitive pedagogical approach to encompass flexibility, accessibility, digital literacy and ethical-spiritual goals of Islamic religious education. In the context of open universities, this approach can contribute to making religious education relevant, inclusive and pedagogically meaningful in technology-mediated learning environments.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to explain the implementation of hybrid pedagogy and its impact on students' digital literacy in Islamic religious education at Universitas Terbuka Indonesia. The results indicate that hybrid learning can be flexible in learning through the use of asynchronous resources and synchronous interaction. Students can self-study material and interact in real-time with other students and instructors. The model is relevant to open and distance learning and therefore caters to students from diverse geographical, academic, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Students with higher digital skills also reported higher levels of confidence in finding learning resources, participating in online discussions, and completing digital assignments. Students with insufficient levels of digital literacy faced challenges in gaining access to the learning management system and engaging in hybrid learning activities that eventually affected their academic performance and involvement in the course.

The study pointed to the pedagogical preparedness of the lecturers and the support from the institutions. Hybrid pedagogy is effective in large distance learning environments when teachers design reflective learning activities, promote interaction in the online environment, and provide feedback. Structural barriers, however, such as unequal access to the internet, lack of digital devices, usability of platforms, large class sizes, and lack of support can be barriers to hybrid learning.

The findings of this study show that open universities need to increase digital literacy in Islamic religious education, improve the digital pedagogical competence of their teachers, and provide inclusive support systems for their students. Future studies may examine hybrid pedagogy in other Islamic higher education institutions, and long-term impacts on students' digital literacy, ethical thinking, and spiritual development.

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