

Revitalization of Islamic Religious Education Through Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Age

Mufarrichatuz Zakiyah¹, Muhamad Arif²

¹ Institut Al Azhar Menganti Gresik - Indonesia

Corresponding Authors : muhamadarif070593@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The revitalization of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a strategic effort to strengthen its role in adapting to the digital era's technological advances. This study aims to describe the revitalization of IRE through the professionalism of IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik, outlining their strategies to enhance professionalism and identify challenges faced. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, analyzed using pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, and repeated observations. Findings reveal that IRE teachers enhance professionalism by leveraging technologies such as Smart TVs, PowerPoint, Canva, Quizizz, Google Classroom, and AI for interactive learning, engaging in continuous training, and collaborating via the Teacher Subject Discussion Group (MGMP). The madrasah supports this through digital-focused training and workshops. Challenges include limited digital facilities, insufficient direct interaction in online learning, and uneven technological proficiency among teachers. Solutions involve capacity building and cross-stakeholder collaboration to support digital transformation in education. This study contributes to understanding IRE teacher professionalism in the digital era, offering practical insights for technology-based learning strategies, although its scope is limited to one madrasah, suggesting broader future research.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Teachers, Professionalism, Revitalization, Digital Era

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has become a nation with widespread and significant dependence on internet usage. According to data published by Hootsuite, 73.7% of Indonesia's population uses social media for their activities and work. (Hootsuite (We are Social), nd) This figure continues to rise year after year. Data indicates that the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 202.6 million at the beginning of 2021, marking a 15.5% increase, or 27 million people, compared to the previous year. ¹A significant issue in Indonesian education is the low quality of education across various levels, both formal and informal. This low quality of education hinders the development of human resources in Indonesia. Currently, society, including teachers, has entered the digital era and an era that has surpassed the age of computer technology. Given these conditions, it is certain that the number of people using digital technology will be far greater, even reaching remote rural areas.²

The education system is currently experiencing disruption, leading to concerns and doubts about whether the old system can keep up with the new digital-based system. Therefore, educators must develop their existing core competencies to address the challenges of this disruptive era. With the emergence of the Society 5.0 revolution, the demands on the competencies required of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers have increased. Regarding the professional competencies of IRE teachers, one essential skill is the ability to

¹ Agus et al., "Developing the Event, Duration, Latency, and Interval (EDLI) Assessment Techniques to Measure Student Engagement and Motivation in Islamic Religious Education Online Courses," *Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 21, no. 1 (2024): 201–16, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v21i1.7154>.

² Agus Yudiawan et al., "Successful Online Learning Factors in COVID-19 Era: Study of Islamic Higher Education in West Papua, Indonesia," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* 10, no. 1 (2021): 193–201.

use Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Adevia Indah Kusuma highlights several factors contributing to the low quality of education in Indonesia, particularly related to teacher quality. Teachers are the primary component of education, as other elements such as curriculum, infrastructure, and facilities are meaningless without teachers to implement and utilize them. Given the critical role of teachers, it has been agreed that teaching is a professional profession requiring various qualifications to ensure it is performed effectively. These professional requirements continue to evolve in line with the demands of the times.³

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the use of technology in education. However, the adoption of technology by teachers still faces challenges, such as a lack of digital skills, limited access to equipment and stable internet connections, and uncertainty about the effectiveness of technology in the learning process.⁴ In this rapidly evolving digital era, technological advancements have significantly transformed the educational landscape. Developments in information and communication technology have had a profound impact, including in the field of education.⁵

The professionalism of teachers in developing digital-based learning media requires every educator to enhance their capabilities. Teachers, particularly IRE teachers, play a crucial role in strengthening students' religious attitudes. Therefore, it is essential for every teacher to broaden their knowledge, both in general and particularly in religious matters.⁶ According to Suryadi, as cited in Suwarna, the designation of a professional teacher can be achieved by possessing four professional characteristics: 1) Professional capacity, which includes intelligence, attitudes, values, skills, and achievements in their work simply put, teachers must master the material they teach. 2) Professional effort, which is the competence to facilitate student learning. 3) Professional time devotion. 4) Professional remuneration that ensures the well-being of the teachers and their families.⁷

Teacher professionalism must be developed, encouraged, and utilized so that they take responsibility for shaping the direction of education and achieving high-level ideas and projects, which in turn will contribute to making the nation advanced and dignified. Islamic Religious Education places great emphasis on the role of teachers in managing Islamic education. The availability of professional teachers is crucial in shaping a generation rooted in strong faith, piety, and equipped with skills in science and technology.⁸

As professional educators, teachers must demonstrate high performance by possessing specific expertise not found in other professions. For example, a teacher who understands the professional definition of teaching can deliver materials and teaching methods, as well as use learning tools and digital media such as computers and online internet resources. Therefore, fostering innovative teaching skills, creativity, and the use of communication and information technology is critical for teachers, as the digital era facilitates their ability to keep up with

³ Badrul Mudarris, "Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era; Efforts to Improve the Quality of Educational Institutions," *ALSYS* 2, no. 6 (2022): 712–31, <https://doi.org/10.58578/alsys.v2i6.640>.

⁴ Dwi Indah Lestari and Heri Kurnia, "Implementation of Innovative Learning Models to Improve Teachers' Professional Competence in the Digital Era," *JPG: Journal of Teacher Education* 4, no. 3 (2023): 205–22.

⁵ Heejeon Suh, "Parents' Perception and Current State of Forest Experience SMART Based Creativity Education for Young Children," *Advanced Science and Technology Letters* 92, no. 11 (2015): 52–57, <http://dx.doi.org/10.14257/astl.2015.92.11>.

⁶ Aas Siti Sholichah et al., "Strengthening Teacher Professionalism in Developing Religious Digital Literacy (A Study at the Al-Bayan Islamic Middle School in Jakarta)," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 01 (2022): 433–54; M. Arif, "A Recent Study on Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Competencies in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Education and Learning* 19, no. 2 (2025): 587–96, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i2.21311>.

⁷ Andi Egi Harkam, "The Concept of Teacher Professionalism According to KH. M. Hasyim Asyari and Its Relevance to Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era" (PhD Thesis, IAIN Bone, 2022), <http://repositori.iain-bone.ac.id/1036/>.

⁸ Eva Latipah et al., "Curriculum Reconstruction: Alignment of Profile, Body of Knowledge, and Learning Outcomes of the Indonesian Islamic Education Study Program," *Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 20, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i1.7756>; Sepriadi et al., "The Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Facing the Challenges of Digitalized Learning," *International Journal of Post Axial: Futuristic Teaching and Learning*, October 10, 2025, 214–20, <https://doi.org/10.59944/postaxial.v3i4.494>.

technological advances. IRE teachers can leverage this to deliver lessons, ensuring the success of the learning process if they master information technology.⁹

Several studies highlight the importance of IRE teacher competencies in the digital era, emphasizing the need for continuous reinforcement, particularly given findings that many IRE teachers still have low digital literacy.¹⁰ As noted by Arif et al., the advent of the digital era requires teachers not only to develop the four basic competencies but also to incorporate digitalization skills as a necessity.¹¹ Thus, the integration of the digital era into education, particularly Islamic Religious Education, presents opportunities for innovation in developing digital-based teaching materials and media.¹² Conditions support both students and teachers in creating dynamic, inclusive learning aligned with Islamic values.¹³

Field findings from research conducted at MTsN Gresik reveal that professionalism in the digital era for IRE teachers is attributed to those appointed by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs with official teaching assignments. Furthermore, the deputy head of curriculum at MTsN Gresik explained that to support teaching skills in the digital era, IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik are trained to operate smart TVs and use learning applications such as Wordwall and Canva. At the initial implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the school also brought in specialized tutors or instructors to guide teachers in developing and applying the curriculum, thus improving teaching quality through the use of digital media. Based on interviews with the deputy head of curriculum at MTsN Gresik, the researcher identified a discussion point requiring in-depth study regarding the professionalism of IRE teachers, with the main research focus being Revitalizing Islamic Religious Education: Professionalism of IRE Teachers at MTsN Gresik in the Digital Era. This study aims to explore the strategies employed by IRE teachers to enhance their professionalism in the digital era and to identify the challenges they face in the process of revitalizing Islamic Religious Education in the digital era. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia, in line with ongoing technological advances.

Indonesia has become a country with a massive internet dependency. Data published by Hootsuite shows that 73.7% of the Indonesian population uses social media for their activities and work.¹⁴ This figure continues to increase year after year. Data shows that internet users in Indonesia reached 202.6 million at the beginning of 2021, an increase of 15.5%, or 27 million, compared to the previous year.¹⁵ A significant problem in education in Indonesia is the low quality of education at various levels, both formal and informal. This low quality of education hampers human resource development in Indonesia. Currently, society, including teachers, has

⁹ Sutarto Sutarto and Dewi Purnama Sari, "Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies to Build Inclusive Religious Character for University Students," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 14, no. 4 (2022): 4, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i4.2332>.

¹⁰ Sepriadi et al., "The Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Facing the Challenges of Digitalized Learning."

¹¹ Muhamad Arif et al., "A Recent Study on Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Competencies in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 19, no. 2 (2025): 587–96.

¹² Muhammad Sanusi, "Transforming Islamic Education in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities for the Young Generation," *Attractive : Innovative Education Journal* 6, no. 3 (2024): 206–15, <https://doi.org/10.51278/aj.v6i3.1479>; Efendi Sugianto, "The Role of Islamic Religious Education in the Development of Students Spirituality and Morality in the Digitalization Era," *Sustainable Journal* 7, no. 2 (2024): 412–22, <https://doi.org/10.32923/kjmp.v7i2.5135>.

¹³ Muhammad Dzihab Aminudin Syukri et al., "Integrating Modern Technology in Islamic Religious Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Teachers," *The Journal of Academic Science* 2, no. 4 (2025): 1148–56, <https://doi.org/10.59613/a05ebs36>.

¹⁴ Hootsuite (We are Social): *Indonesian Digital Report 2023 | Lecturer, Practitioner, Consultant, Speaker/Facilitator of Digital Marketing, Internet Marketing, SEO, Technopreneur and Digital Business*, nd, accessed October 5, 2024, <https://andi.link/hootsuite-we-are-social-indonesian-digital-report-2023/>.

¹⁵ ANTARA News Agency, "Survey: Indonesian Internet Users Increase Year by Year," ANTARA News Bangka Belitung, accessed October 5, 2024, <https://babel.antaranews.com/berita/280053/survei-pengguna-internet-indonesia-naik-dari-tahun-ke-tahun>.

entered the digital era, an era that has surpassed the era of computer technology. Given these conditions, it is certain that the number of people using digital technology will significantly increase, even in remote rural areas.

Currently, the education system is experiencing disruption, which has raised anxiety and doubt about whether the old system can cope with the new digital-based system. Therefore, educators must develop the basic competencies they already possess to meet the challenges of this disruptive era. With the emergence of the *Society 5.0* revolution, the demands for competencies that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must have are increasing. Regarding the professional competency of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, one of the competencies that must be possessed is the ability to use ICT (Information and Communication Technology). Adevia Indah Kusuma explained several factors that cause the quality of education in Indonesia to remain low, namely related to teacher quality. Why teachers? Because teachers are the main component of education. Various other educational components, such as curriculum, infrastructure, and others will mean nothing if there are no teachers to implement and use them. Because of the importance of a teacher, it has been agreed that teachers are professionals who require various requirements to ensure that their profession can be carried out properly. These professional requirements continue to evolve in accordance with the demands of the times.¹⁶

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the use of technology in learning. However, teacher adoption of technology still faces challenges, such as a lack of digital skills, limited access to equipment and a stable internet connection, and uncertainty about the effectiveness of technology use in the learning process.¹⁷ In this rapidly evolving digital era, technological change and advancement have significantly altered the educational landscape. Developments in information and communication technology have had a significant impact, including in the field of education.¹⁸

Teacher professionalism in developing digital-based learning media requires every teacher to develop their abilities. Teachers, especially religious teachers, play a crucial role in strengthening students' religious attitudes. Therefore, it is crucial for every teacher to broaden their knowledge, both in general and religious areas.¹⁹ According to Suryadi in Suwarna, the title of professional teacher can be achieved by possessing four professional characteristics: 1) Professional capacity, encompassing intelligence, attitudes, values, skills, and achievements in their work. Simply put, teachers must master the material they teach. 2) Professional effort, *encompassing the ability to teach their students*. 3) *Professional devotion* in time management. 4) Professional rent, which can improve the well-being of themselves and their families.²⁰

Teacher professionalism must be developed, encouraged, and utilized so that they have the responsibility to determine educational paths and achieve these high-level ideas and projects, which in turn will lead to a developed and dignified nation. Islamic Religious Education places great emphasis on the role of teachers in the management of Islamic education. The availability of professional teachers truly determines a generation that must be born with the strength of faith and piety, equipped with the skills to learn science and technology.

¹⁶ Mudarris, "Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era: Efforts to Improve the Quality of Educational Institutions."

¹⁷ Lestari and Kurnia, "Implementation of Innovative Learning Models to Improve Teachers' Professional Competence in the Digital Era."

¹⁸ Lestari and Kurnia, "Implementation of Innovative Learning Models to Improve Teachers' Professional Competence in the Digital Era."

¹⁹ Sholichah et al., "Strengthening Teacher Professionalism in Developing Religious Digital Literacy (A Study at the Al-Bayan Islamic Middle School in Jakarta)"; Arif, "A Recent Study on Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Competencies in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review."

²⁰ Harkam, "The Concept of Teacher Professionalism According to KH. M. Hasyim Asyari and Its Relevance to Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era."

As professional educators, teachers must demonstrate excellent performance by possessing specific skills not possessed by other professions. For example, a teacher who understands the professional definition of teaching can provide learning materials and methods, as well as learning formats and tools using digital media such as computers and the internet online. Therefore, teaching innovation skills, developing creativity, and utilizing communication and information technology for teachers is crucial, as the digital era makes it easier for teachers to keep up with advances. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers can utilize this as a means of delivering lessons, ensuring that the learning process is successful if teachers master information technology.

Several studies discussing the importance of Islamic religious education teacher competency in the digital era have highlighted the need for ongoing strengthening, particularly the finding that many Islamic religious education teachers still lack digital literacy,²¹ a challenge that remains to be addressed. As Arif et al. noted, the advent of digitalization requires teachers to not only develop four core competencies but also to incorporate digitalization competencies as a necessary requirement.²² Therefore, the advent of the digital age in education, particularly in Islamic religious education, presents an opportunity for innovation in the development of digital-based media and teaching materials.²³ This environment supports students and teachers in creating dynamic, inclusive learning that aligns with Islamic values.²⁴

Field findings obtained by researchers at MTsN Gresik indicate that professional status for Islamic Religious Education teachers in the digital era is assigned to those appointed by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and holding official decrees specifying their respective teaching duties. Furthermore, the deputy head of curriculum at MTsN Gresik explained that to support teaching skills in the digital era, Islamic Religious Education teachers at MTsN Gresik are trained to operate smart TVs and are taught to use learning applications such as Wordwall and Canva. At the beginning of the implementation of the independence curriculum, the school also brought in special tutors or instructors to guide teachers in the development and implementation of the curriculum, thereby improving the quality of teaching through the use of digital media.²⁵

Based on the results of interviews with the curriculum vice principal of MTsN Gresik, the researcher found a discussion space that needs in-depth research,²⁶ regarding the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers, with the main focus of the research theme being Revitalization of Islamic Religious Education: Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at MTsN Gresik in the Digital Era. This study aims to determine the strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving their professionalism in the digital era and to identify the obstacles faced by teachers in the process of revitalizing Islamic religious education in the digital era. Thus, this study is expected to provide an important contribution to the development of Islamic religious education in Indonesia, along with the continuous advancement of technology.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspectives, where participants are individuals who are interviewed, observed, or asked to provide data, opinions, thoughts, and

²¹ Sepriadi et al., "The Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Facing the Challenges of Digitalized Learning."

²² Arif et al., "A Recent Study on Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Competencies in the Digital Age."

²³ Sanusi, "Transforming Islamic Education in the Digital Age"; Sugianto, "The Role of Islamic Religious Education in the Development of Students Spirituality and Morality in the Digitalization Era."

²⁴ Syukri et al., "Integrating Modern Technology in Islamic Religious Education."

²⁵ Interview with Mr. Musofan as the Deputy Head of Curriculum at MTsN Gresik, October 9, 2024 in the Deputy Head of Curriculum Room at MTsN Gresik.

²⁶ Robert K. Yin, *Design & Method Case Studies* (Rajawali Pers, 2018).

perceptions. This research is conducted through investigation and observation of all research objects, revealing all facts as they exist during the research process.²⁷

The research model employed is a case study design, striving to examine as much data as possible regarding the subject under study, namely the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers at MTsN Gresik in the digital era. Creswell states that a case study is research conducted on an object referred to as a case, carried out in-depth and comprehensively in collecting data, and the results of the case study can be analyzed and identified essentially to provide data based on natural conditions that have been reduced, evaluated, and concluded using various data sources.

The data sources in this study are divided into two types: primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained directly from key informants, namely three IRE subject teachers at MTsN Gresik, covering teachers of Fiqh, Islamic Cultural History (SKI), and Akidah Akhlak, as well as the deputy head of curriculum and the school principal. Secondary data includes relevant literature, such as books, journals, and other scientific works that support a deeper understanding of the research topic.²⁸ The data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is conducted to directly observe the situation and activities at MTsN Gresik. In this case, the researcher uses a moderate participation observation technique, where the researcher participates in some activities but is not fully involved. Interviews are conducted using a semi-structured interview guide, allowing respondents to provide in-depth explanations of the topics being studied. Documentation refers to the collection of data in the form of texts, images, audio recordings, or videos related to school activities that support the research findings.

The data collection instruments in this study include observation sheets to record findings during observations, interview guidelines to assist the researcher in conducting systematic interviews, and documentation that includes various types of data, both written and visual. All these instruments are used to ensure that the data collected is complete, organized, and relevant to the research focus. In analyzing the data, this study employs several analytical techniques from Yin,²⁹ including pattern matching to check the alignment of data with initial predictions, building explanations to delve deeper into complex findings, and time-series analysis to observe changes in technology use over time. To enhance data accuracy, the researcher also conducts repeated observations to ensure the collected data is valid and consistent.

To ensure data validity, this study refers to the construct validity technique, which involves using multiple sources of evidence from interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain more comprehensive and mutually supportive data. Additionally, a clear chain of evidence is used to substantiate conclusions, and key informants are asked to review the report to ensure the findings align with the actual conditions in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Strategies of Teachers in Enhancing Professionalism in the Digital Era

Amid the rapid development of technology, integrating technology into learning has become an undeniable necessity, including in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction. The school principal plays a strategic role in ensuring that IRE teachers can adapt and effectively utilize technology to improve the quality of learning. Therefore, policies supporting

²⁷ John W. Creswell et al., "Advanced Mixed Methods Research Designs," *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* 209, no. 240 (2003): 209–40.

²⁸ Muhamad Arif, "Independent Learning Model in Developing Elementary School Students' Learning Skills," *Journal of Islamic Elementary School* 3, no. 2 (2018): 1–7; Muhamad Arif et al., "Trends and Challenges in Islamic Education Learning Media for Early Childhood: A Systematic Literature Review," *Pratama Widya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 10, no. 1 (2025): 46–64.

²⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sixth edition (SAGE, 2018).

the integration of technology in education need to be systematically designed for effective implementation within the madrasa environment, as explained by Mr. Pamuji , the school principal, as follows:

" The principal's policy in supporting IRE teachers to integrate technology into learning is outlined in the RKM (Madrasah Work Plan), which includes the RKT (Annual Work Plan). This plan incorporates the madrasa's policy to strengthen technology in learning to support IRE teachers. "

Mr Moh. Mushofan , the deputy head of curriculum, explained the role of the deputy head in supporting IRE teachers to integrate technology into learning, as follows:

"The deputy head of curriculum will organize workshops for all teachers at MTsN Gresik to create technology-based learning tools, such as PowerPoint, Canva, and other applications, by inviting competent resource persons. This applies not only to IRE teachers but to all teachers. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to participate in training programs at the Surabaya Religious Training Center by receiving official assignments to attend activities organized by the center ."

This aligns with the statement of Mr. Achmad Mukhlisin, an IRE teacher (Islamic Cultural History), who explained how IRE teachers integrate technology into learning, as follows:

"In an effort to improve the quality of learning, IRE teachers integrate technology by using various digital applications as learning tools. With technology, teachers can deliver material in a more varied manner, such as through instructional videos, interactive quizzes, or e-learning platforms that support deeper student understanding. Additionally, technology integration helps teachers provide more effective evaluations, making learning more structured and aligned with the needs of students in the digital era."

Mr Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi also stated that integrating technology into IRE learning is essential for enhancing teaching effectiveness through the use of information technology (IT), as he explained:

"IRE teachers integrate technology into learning by maximizing the use of information technology (IT). The use of IT in learning enables teachers to deliver material more innovatively, making it easier for students to understand the concepts being taught. Various digital media are used to enhance learning effectiveness. Additionally, teachers can utilize technology for evaluations, such as online quizzes or digital assessment systems. Thus, the use of IT in IRE learning not only supports teaching effectiveness but also helps students develop digital skills relevant to the times."

Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah also explained how IRE teachers integrate technology into learning, emphasizing addressing and correcting misunderstandings in digital media, as follows:

"Now is the digital era, and smartphones have a significant influence on students. Therefore, schools need to prioritize measures to prevent students from being swayed by negative influences. Additionally, when lectures or content are misrepresented or fragmented on social media, teachers address and correct these issues. However, in the classroom, we already use laptops or digital TVs as aids."

According to Mr. Pamuji , the madrasah has a specific policy for developing interactive and engaging digital teaching materials for students. One of the main policies implemented is the provision of Smart TVs in every classroom as a learning medium. This is because the use of smartphones by students is prohibited in the madrasah environment, as surveys indicate that their negative impacts outweigh their benefits. With Smart TVs, technology-based learning can still be implemented without involving students' smartphone use. This facility is provided by the madrasah with support from parents, making learning more interactive and engaging. As he stated:

"One of the madrasa's policies is to provide Smart TVs in every classroom for learning purposes, as students are not allowed to use smartphones. Surveys show that smartphones have more negative impacts than benefits in the madrasa environment. Therefore, the madrasa's policy to develop digital technology ensures that learning is interactive and engaging for students, with Smart TVs facilitated by the madrasa and supported by parents."

Similarly, Mr. Moh. Mushofan, the deputy head of curriculum, implemented a policy to gradually encourage all teachers to integrate technology into learning by mandating at least one to three digital learning sessions per year. Teachers are encouraged to use various media, such as PowerPoint, Canva, AI, and YouTube, to enhance teaching effectiveness and creativity. This step aims to ensure that all teachers can optimize technology to support more interactive and engaging learning for students, as follows:

"Gradually, we instruct that out of several learning sessions, at least one to three should be conducted digitally each year. This ensures that all teachers at MTsN Gresik can integrate technology into their teaching for students. For example, teachers should be able to use media like PowerPoint, Canva, or trending tools like AI to deliver lessons, as well as applications like YouTube."

In preparing teaching materials, IRE teachers need to understand the conditions and characteristics of students to ensure that the materials delivered are engaging and suitable for their needs. By considering students' interests, learning styles, and comprehension levels, IRE teachers can design more interactive, relevant, and effective teaching materials to enhance student understanding. As stated by Mr. Achmad Mukhlisin:

"Understanding students' conditions is a consideration for creating engaging teaching materials for them."

In line with Mr. Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi's strategy for developing digital-based teaching materials, he stated:

"Creating as many digital-based works as possible."

Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah's strategy for developing digital-based teaching materials involves using laptops and various interactive technologies, such as Quizizz, for more engaging learning evaluations. Additionally, teachers use story-based videos from YouTube as supporting media to prevent students from feeling bored or monotonous during learning. However, when selecting videos, teachers ensure the sources are verified to guarantee the content is appropriate and valid for students. As she stated:

"Through laptops, learning can be conducted using Quizizz and similar technologies. Additionally, we incorporate story-based videos, as sometimes students get bored and find it monotonous to listen to stories or read. We use YouTube videos, but we also check the sources."

According to Mr. Pamuji, specialized training for IRE teachers to enhance digital skills is rarely conducted, but the madrasah generally organizes training twice a year, in the first and second semesters. These trainings aim to develop digital skills for all teachers, including the use of Android-based technology. Additionally, the activities focus on competency-based approaches and strengthening digital skills, enabling teachers to integrate technology into learning more effectively. As he stated:

"Specialized training programs for IRE teachers are rarely held, but comprehensive training, which requires funding, is provided for all teachers twice a year, in the first and second semesters. The goal is to develop digital skills for teachers. Several aspects need reinforcement, including skills in using Android-based digital tools, so workshops are held twice a year to enhance competency and digital skills for teachers."

Mr Moh. Mushofan, the deputy head of curriculum at MTsN Gresik, explained that the madrasah provides a platform for IRE teachers to enhance digital skills through the Teacher Subject Discussion Group (MGMP). Each year, various trainings are held within the MGMP, such as training on creating IT-based learning media, with competent resource persons invited. Additionally, MTsN Gresik regularly conducts digital literacy training to support continuous innovation and adaptation by teachers in delivering lessons to students, as he stated:

"We provide a platform called MGMP (Teacher Subject Discussion Group), where at least once a year, trainings are held, such as training on creating IT-based learning media, with competent resource persons invited. At MTsN Gresik, we also conduct digital literacy training continuously to support teachers' innovation and adaptability in delivering lessons to students."

Mr Achmad Mukhlisin explained the importance of improving digital skills for IRE teachers to make learning more engaging and less monotonous. Teachers need to explore

various digital learning media, such as PowerPoint, Canva, and Quizizz, to make students more interested and active in learning. Additionally, educational videos from YouTube can be an alternative to clarify material, provided the sources are verified. Other efforts include participating in training, sharing experiences with fellow teachers, and seeking online references to stay updated with technological developments in education. With continuous creativity and innovation, IRE learning is expected to become more enjoyable and effective for students. As he stated:

"To make learning more exciting and not monotonous, we as IRE teachers must continuously hone our digital skills. We can't stick to old methods; we need to explore using PowerPoint, Canva, or applications like Quizizz to make students more interested. Sometimes they get bored with just lectures, so we can include relevant YouTube videos, ensuring the sources are checked for safety. Additionally, we can learn together through training, sharing with fellow teachers, or searching for online references to stay updated with technology that can be used for teaching. The more creative we are, the more enjoyable learning will be for students."

IRE teacher Mr. Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi continuously improves digital skills by participating in various trainings, whether organized by the madrasah, MGMP, or external parties. However, training alone is not enough. Teachers must also apply what they learn, such as creating learning media with Canva or PowerPoint and using applications like Quizizz and Google Classroom for student evaluations. The more frequently technology is used in teaching, the more experienced and creative teachers become in delivering material. As he stated:

"To keep up with the times, we as IRE teachers must continuously learn and hone our digital skills. One way is by participating in training, whether organized by the madrasa, MGMP, or external parties. But it's not enough to just attend; we must also apply what we learn. For example, after learning to create learning media with Canva or PowerPoint, we try to implement it in the classroom. If there's training on using applications like Quizizz or Google Classroom, we try them for student evaluations. The more we use technology in teaching, the more accustomed and creative we become."

Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah, an IRE teacher, strives to improve digital skills by participating in training, both offline at the madrasa and online through the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Pintar platform. These trainings are officially recognized by the Ministry, helping teachers develop technology-based learning media more effectively. As she stated:

"Teachers must keep up with developments, so now, in addition to offline training provided at the school for developing media, teachers also participate in online training through the Ministry's Pintar platform, which is officially recognized by the Ministry."

The principal of MTsN Gresik, Mr. Pamuji, builds a comprehensive digital learning ecosystem by developing various laboratories, libraries, and improving teachers' human resources. All aspects of the madrasah are directed toward digitalization to make learning more innovative, adaptive, and interactive for students. As he stated:

"To build an innovative and adaptive digital learning ecosystem, we must implement it comprehensively within the madrasah environment. It's not just students learning, but also the infrastructure and teachers' capabilities. To develop this ecosystem, we have established Science Labs, Language Labs, Religious Labs, Social Studies Labs, libraries, and computer labs, all based on digital technology, starting from shaping students' character to digital-based information. This is the comprehensive ecosystem for building innovative and adaptive digital learning in the madrasah. We cannot develop digital learning in the madrasah. small parts but must be done so holistically to make learning more interactive and engaging for students."

The deputy head of curriculum proposed a digitalization program, including the provision of 31 Smart TVs in every classroom to support teaching and learning activities. For management, the Smart TV remotes are returned to the teachers' room after lessons. As he stated:

"The deputy head of curriculum submits programs to the principal, which have been followed up, resulting in 31 Smart TVs placed in every classroom, from 7A to 9J. All classrooms at MTsN Gresik now have Smart TVs to support digital teaching and learning processes. Every technology has its strengths and weaknesses. At MTsN Gresik, we

manage this by ensuring that after lessons, the Smart TV remotes are returned to the teachers' room."

Mr Achmad Mukhlisin, an IRE teacher, fosters innovative and adaptive attitudes in students by encouraging them to explore and create through digital media, such as producing educational content or interactive presentations. The goal is for students to not only be technology consumers but also creators who use it positively. As he stated:

"To make students more innovative and adaptive, we as IRE teachers must give them space to explore. One way is to encourage them to create through digital or social media, such as assigning them to make educational content, like short videos, infographics, or light articles that can be shared on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok. Additionally, we can involve them in creating digital presentations using Canva or PowerPoint to get them to present material in more engaging ways. As IRE teachers, we teach them not only to consume technology but also to become creators who use it for positive purposes."

Mr Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi's strategy to foster innovative and adaptive attitudes in students involves forming groups in each class and assigning them to create digital works related to the learning material. Through video tutorials, infographics, or podcasts, students not only understand the theory but also develop creativity and skills in using technology positively. As he explained:

"One way to foster innovative and adaptive attitudes in students is by forming teams or groups in each class. These groups can be assigned to create digital works related to the material, such as video tutorials on the correct procedures for wudu and prayer, infographics on the pillars and conditions of valid worship, or light podcasts discussing Islamic laws in daily life. This way, they not only learn the theory but also practice and convey their understanding in a more creative manner."

IRE teacher Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah emphasized the importance of innovation in teaching methods to stay aligned with technological developments. One effort is using digital platforms, such as interactive learning applications and educational social media. Additionally, she stresses the importance of openness to change by continuous learning through training, webinars, and sharing experiences with fellow educators. This enables teachers to be more adaptive in facing digital-era challenges and remain relevant in educating students. As she stated:

"IRE teachers must always innovate in developing teaching methods to keep up with technological developments. One way is by trying various digital platforms that support learning, such as interactive learning applications and educational social media. Additionally, teachers must be open to change by continuously learning through training, webinars, and sharing experiences with fellow educators. This way, teachers can be more adaptive in facing digital-era challenges and remain relevant in educating students."

The principal, Mr. Pamuji, enhances the effectiveness of digital learning in the madrasah through comprehensive evaluation using EDM (Madrasah Self-Evaluation). This evaluation covers infrastructure, teaching methods, approaches, and human resources, resulting in various digitalization programs. Some implemented efforts include digital libraries, digital-based laboratories, and digital counseling for students in need. Additionally, the madrasa has begun implementing a digital classroom concept, piloted in two classes (7A and 7B), where all students use laptops for learning. In the future, this program will be further developed with the hope that all grades can adopt digital-based learning. Furthermore, each classroom is equipped with minimal facilities such as Smart TVs to support the teaching and learning process. As he stated:

"To enhance the effectiveness of digital learning in developing the RKM (Madrasah Work Plan), we conduct EDM (Madrasah Self-Evaluation), evaluating comprehensively, from infrastructure, teaching methods, approaches, human resources, and so on. This evaluation identifies the most effective ways for digital learning in the madrasah, resulting in digitalization programs such as digital libraries, labs, and digital-based counseling for students with issues, handled by the counseling and student affairs teams. Additionally, we have digital classrooms. This year, we are piloting two digital classes where all students use laptops for learning, namely 7A and 7B. We will continue to

develop this toward effective digital learning in the madrasa, starting with these two classes, but gradually, it's possible that the second and third grades will increasingly adopt digital learning. We are piloting one class specifically due to the significant funding required, such as the minimum provision of Smart TVs in every classroom."

Mr Moh. Mushofan added that the strategy to enhance the effectiveness of digital learning at MTsN Gresik involves maximizing the use of available infrastructure, particularly Smart TVs. Teachers are encouraged to use them as teaching aids, especially as projection screens (LCDs) connected to laptops. Additionally, teachers are advised to use personal modems to ensure smooth internet access for learning. As he stated:

"We urge all teachers at MTsN Gresik to make the best use of available infrastructure, especially Smart TVs, to support learning. Besides Smart TVs, we also use our personal modems to support learning activities. Ultimately, we use the Smart TVs as LCDs, not using the remotes, but as LCDs connected to laptops, ensuring that learning remains effective."

Mr Achmad Mukhlisin, an IRE teacher, explained the strategy for effective communication with students through digital media, stating:

"One way to maintain effective communication with students is by creating class groups on social media, such as WhatsApp or Telegram. In these groups, we can share materials, make announcements, or answer questions about lessons. Additionally, the groups can serve as discussion platforms, so if someone doesn't understand, they can ask directly, and their peers can help answer. Importantly, these groups should be used for learning-related matters to avoid becoming casual chat spaces that lose focus on the material. If needed, we can also use Google Classroom or other platforms for more organized and structured communication."

In line with Mr. Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi's opinion, he stated:

"One way we can communicate effectively is by monitoring students' activities on social media not in an overly controlling way, but more as guidance. For example, if a student frequently posts something inappropriate, we can provide gentle guidance. Or if they create positive content, we can give appreciation to encourage them. Additionally, we can use social media to share light materials, motivation, or simply connect with them to maintain communication and make them feel closer to the teacher. The key is to keep the approach relaxed so they feel comfortable."

Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah added:

"Teachers also provide guidance to students to avoid being easily influenced by negative things in the digital world and can remind them through digital media like WhatsApp."

The strategies implemented by IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik to enhance professionalism in the digital era include using various technologies in learning, improving competencies through continuous training, and collaborating with fellow teachers through the Teacher Subject Discussion Group (MGMP). The use of technologies such as Smart TVs, PowerPoint, Canva, Quizizz, Google Classroom, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) enables the learning process to become more interactive and engaging.

Table 1: Digital Strategies of IRE Teachers at MTsN Gresik in Strengthening Professionalism

Aspect/Media	Findings at MTsN Gresik	Impact on Teacher Professionalism
Smart TV	Used to present material visually and interactively, making it clearer for students to understand.	Teachers become more creative in using digital media to enhance student learning motivation.
PowerPoint & Canva	Helps teachers present material with creative, engaging, and easily understandable designs for students.	Teachers master presentation design skills to support innovative learning.
Quizizz	Utilized for fun and interactive quizzes to assess student understanding.	Teachers can evaluate learning in a more engaging way, fostering student involvement.

Google Classroom	Used for managing materials, assignments, and digital communication between teachers and students.	Teachers can effectively and efficiently manage digital classrooms in line with digital era demands.
AI (Artificial Intelligence)	Starting to be used for creating questions and chatbots to answer student queries.	Teachers are assisted in task automation, material personalization, and become more adaptive to new technologies.
Annual Training (Training , MGMP, Surabaya Religious Training Center)	Teachers regularly participate in training on learning technology and religious moderation.	Professionalism improves through mastery of technology, teaching strategies, and integration of Islamic values.
Digital Class Groups (WhatsApp/Telegram)	Used for communication, sharing materials, discussions, and academic announcements.	Teachers become more flexible in interacting with students outside face-to-face hours.
Digital Ethics	Teachers instill an understanding of information verification and responsible use of digital media in students.	Teachers act as guides for Islamic digital literacy for students.

Additionally, the madrasa plays a role in supporting the enhancement of teacher professionalism by providing workshops and training facilitated by the Surabaya Religious Training Center . IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik also utilize digital platforms to establish effective communication with students, such as through WhatsApp groups and Google Classroom, to support more flexible and efficient interactions.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

In the effort to revitalize Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in the digital era, IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik face various challenges that affect the effectiveness of learning. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, several key challenges have been identified. In implementing digital learning for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at MTsN Gresik, the madrasah faces several challenges. Based on interview results, the primary challenge is the limited competence of human resources (HR) in mastering digital technology. Teachers still need to enhance their skills in using technology as an effective learning medium.

Another significant challenge is the limitation of supporting facilities and infrastructure. The available facilities at the madrasah are still far from sufficient to support optimal digital learning. This is influenced by limited budgets, as funding for madrasahs is very constrained. As a result, procuring technological devices such as computers, stable internet connections, and other digital learning media poses a significant challenge.

Nevertheless, the madrasah continues to seek solutions to overcome these challenges, both by improving teachers' digital competencies and finding more efficient alternatives for procuring facilities. Given these challenges, synergy between the school, teachers, and support from various stakeholders is necessary to ensure that digital learning in IRE can be implemented more optimally. As stated by Mr. Pamuji , the principal of MTsN Gresik:

"The first challenge is that our human resources need to improve their digital competencies. The second is the facilities, which are still far from adequate, and this is a fundamental challenge because we are constrained by funding, and funding for madrasahs is very limited."

The deputy head of curriculum, Mr. Moh. Mushofan , stated:

"Of course, there are challenges, such as some of our senior teachers who are not proficient in IT and find it difficult. Therefore, for teachers who are less IT-savvy, they will be assisted by those already familiar with IT, so they can collectively keep up with the development of digital learning."

In the process of revitalizing Islamic Religious Education in the digital era, IRE teachers face two main challenges: internal and external. Internally, many teachers still lack proficiency in learning technologies, making the application of digital methods in teaching less optimal. Externally, the lack of facilities and infrastructure, such as technological devices and internet access, hinders the effectiveness of digital learning. Additionally, the limited madrasah budget makes it difficult to fully realize improvements in digital learning facilities. According to Mr. Achmad Mukhlisin's statement:

"The biggest challenge lies in human resources. Many of us still lack understanding of learning technology. For example, some are not very familiar with using digital platforms to teach students, whether it's Google Classroom, Canva, or other interactive applications. As a result, when asked to use technology in teaching, they sometimes get confused and revert to conventional methods. This is what we need to improve gradually. If we don't learn, we'll keep falling behind."

He further added:

"From the external side, the most noticeable challenge is facilities and infrastructure. We want digital learning to run better, but if the facilities don't support it, the implementation is only half-hearted. Then there's the budget issue; our madrasah has limited funds. So, we have to find alternative ways to utilize technology despite these limitations."

Mr Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi, an IRE teacher, also faces various challenges, both internal and external. He stated:

"Lack of knowledge about technology makes it difficult for them to utilize various digital platforms for learning."

He added:

"The external challenge faced is the lack of experience in using IT, which makes the adaptation process to technology slower and less optimal."

Based on an interview with Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah, one of the internal challenges faced by IRE teachers in the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era is the change in students' attitudes post-Covid-19 pandemic. The lack of supervision during online learning led to students being overly exposed to gadgets without adequate oversight, impacting their behavior and ethics, such as the use of impolite language.

Teachers must work harder to gradually restore students' character, considering that each student comes from a different environmental background. However, the limited learning time at school, which is only about two hours per week, poses a distinct challenge in reshaping students' positive attitudes. This often results in the changes teachers strive for not being sustainable, as students are not yet adapted to the values being taught. As she stated:

"Currently, the most noticeable decline in students is their attitude post-Covid. As teachers, we have to work extra hard because students lacked school supervision due to gadgets. Teachers try to restore these traits little by little, as students come from different environmental backgrounds. Issues like the impolite language used by students arise. Even at school, we sometimes lack time, with only two hours a week, so when students are directly in front of us, we can advise them. But because they are not recognized immediately, those traits are often known, revert to their original state."

Mr Pamuji, the principal of MTsN Gresik, faces challenges in facilities and infrastructure due to limited funding, employing various strategies to address them. Efforts include collaboration with external parties, such as the city government, Gresik Regency government, and social security fund holders. Additionally, the principal communicates with parents who have greater financial capacity to support the madrasa's digital programs, particularly digital classes, which are specifically utilized for their own children. Thanks to these efforts, the madrasa's development can continue. As he stated:

"To address these challenges, since we face many constraints in facilities and infrastructure related to funding, we undertake various efforts to collaborate with external parties, communicate with third parties willing to contribute to the madrasah, including the city government, Gresik Regency government, and social security fund holders. Alhamdulillah, these efforts have enabled the madrasah's development to progress. Lastly, we communicate with parents who have greater financial capacity, and they willingly support their children's participation in the madrasah's digital programs,

particularly digital classes, which are not used generally but specifically for their own children."

In line with the efforts of Mr. Moh. Mushofan, the deputy head of curriculum at MTsN Gresik, in providing solutions to address challenges in implementing technology in IRE learning, he stated:

"The solution is peer collaboration, communicating with colleagues, and conducting activities like workshops on creating learning media. Furthermore, if there are invitations to attend training at the Surabaya Religious Training Center, we will facilitate by providing official assignments so that teachers can participate in those activities."

To address internal and external challenges in the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era, Mr. Achmad Mukhlisin formed a working group as a platform for sharing and exchanging teaching materials. Additionally, they select learning media that suits the surrounding conditions to ensure the learning process runs optimally. As he stated:

"A teacher working group is formed to serve as a platform for sharing and exchanging teaching materials. Selecting media that suits the surrounding conditions ensures optimal implementation."

In line with Mr. Abdul Ghofur Iswahyudi's opinion on providing solutions to internal and external challenges in the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era, he stated:

"Forming an MGMP and selecting IT that suits the work environment."

To address internal and external challenges in the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era, Ms. Dwi Qo'idatul Ummah implements a habituation strategy. They not only remind students in the classroom but also outside the classroom, such as during Dhuha prayers or after Zuhr prayers. By providing brief reflections during these moments, it is hoped that students can develop better attitudes in their daily lives. She stated:

"We remind them more diligently through habituation. We may remind them in class and add reminders outside class, such as during Dhuha prayers or after Zuhr prayers, with brief reflections so that students can improve their attitudes."

In implementing these strategies, several challenges are faced, such as limited technological facilities and infrastructure, lack of supervision during online learning, and varying levels of technological proficiency among teachers. Efforts to overcome these challenges include collaboration with various stakeholders, improving teachers' skills in using digital technology, and forming working groups to share experiences and learning innovations.

DISCUSSION

Strategies of Teachers in Enhancing Professionalism in the Digital Era

The strategies implemented by MTsN Gresik to enhance professionalism in the digital era include using Smart TVs, PowerPoint, Canva, Quizizz, Google Classroom, and AI to deliver material interactively. The use of technology in learning is increasingly developing, enabling teachers to present material in a more interactive and engaging manner. The use of devices like Smart TVs allows students to view material in a clearer visual format.³⁰

According to research conducted by Ishaq Hunain, Smart TVs serve as a tool for digital literacy education while being an effective means to increase student motivation and learning outcomes. The use of Smart TVs in the learning process not only enriches the visual and interactive learning experience but also encourages students to be more independent in exploring material. Additionally, this research confirms that the integration of this technology impacts increased learning creativity, where students are more active in developing their understanding and skills through various digitally available educational content.³¹

Meanwhile, PowerPoint and Canva help teachers present material with more creative designs. According to a study by Muhammad Arya Arjuna, PowerPoint plays a significant role in supporting learning effectiveness. The study shows that training teachers to use PowerPoint

³⁰ Lesley Friend, "IRE and Content Area Literacies: A Critical Analysis of Classroom Discourse," *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 40, no. 2 (2017): 124–34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03651990>.

³¹ Ishaq Hunain, "Implementation of Digital Literacy Strengthening Through Multimedia Smart TV in SKI Learning for Class XI at MAN 2 Pamekasan" (diploma, STATE ISLAMIC INSTITUTE OF MADURA, 2023), <https://doi.org/10/IshaqHunain-BAB%20V.pdf>.

attractively can improve the quality of material delivery and student learning motivation. The results reveal that 82% of training participants were able to create and utilize PowerPoint effectively and successfully apply it in learning activities, contributing to a more interactive and engaging learning experience.³²

Canva plays a crucial role in achieving maximum learning effectiveness. The study highlights how Canva can be used as an innovative tool for creating learning media, enabling teachers to present material in a more engaging, interactive, and easily understandable way for students.³³ With its intuitive graphic design features and diverse customizable templates, Canva helps teachers in creating presentations, infographics, instructional videos, and other visual materials that support more effective information delivery.³⁴ The use of Canva in the learning process also encourages active student engagement, enhances material comprehension, and strengthens a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience. This research confirms that technology integration in education, particularly through platforms like Canva, is a strategic step in supporting learning methods that align with modern developments while enhancing teachers' digital competencies in the modern era.³⁵

Additionally, platforms like Quizizz provide students with opportunities to assess their understanding through interactive and enjoyable quizzes.³⁶ According to Akhmad Dalil Rohman, the use of Quizizz in learning significantly enhances students' critical thinking skills. This interactive learning medium not only aids teachers in delivering material but also increases student engagement and motivation in the learning process.³⁷

Through integration with Wordwall, Quizizz provides various challenging quiz-based activities that motivate students to think logically and analytically while offering real-time feedback to help students quickly evaluate their understanding. Although this research demonstrates the effectiveness of Quizizz, challenges such as technology access disparities and the need for teacher training still need to be addressed for optimal implementation.³⁸

Google Classroom serves as a primary tool for managing assignments and learning materials digitally. Through this platform, teachers can upload teaching materials, assign tasks, and provide direct feedback to students. According to Afaf Wafiqoh Nusaibah, the use of Google Classroom in learning plays a crucial role in supporting a more flexible and effective teaching and learning process. Google Classroom enables educators to manage classes digitally, facilitating the uploading of materials, assignments, and communication between teachers and students. The platform also supports the Merdeka Belajar concept by providing broader access to learning resources and increasing student engagement. However, the research

³² Muhammad Arya Arjuna et al., "Utilization of Power Point Application in Islamic Religious Education Learning to Increase Student Learning Motivation at SMP PAB 1 Klumpang," *Maslahah: Journal of Community Service* 2, no. 1 (2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.56114/maslahah.v2i1.127>.

³³ Hasrian Rudi Setiawan, "Management of the Use of Audio-Visual Media Based on Canva Application in Islamic Religious Education Subjects at Junior High Schools in Hamparan Perak District," *Integrasi: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 2, no. 3 (2024): 259–70, <https://doi.org/10.56114/integrasi.v2i3.11970>.

³⁴ Hasnahwati Hasnahwati et al., "Technology-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning Innovation in the Independent Curriculum," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 14, no. 1 February (2025): 1487–94, <https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.1497>.

³⁵ Novelti Novelti et al., "Technical Training on the Utilization of Artificial Intelligences Chat Gpt and Canva for Vocational High School Teachers in Creating Current-Based Learning Media," *Journal of Human and Education (JAHE)* 4, no. 6 (2024): 6, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jh.v4i6.2084>.

³⁶ Crystal Callista Anak Yunus and Tan Kim Hua, "Exploring a Gamified Learning Tool in the ESL Classroom: The Case of Quizizz," *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research* 8, no. 1 (2021): 103–8.

³⁷ Awang Dhany Armansyah and Fitriah M. Suud, "Online IRE Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Yogyakarta Between Opportunities and Challenges," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 3 (2022): 1105–17, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v5i3.2278>.

³⁸ Akhmad Dalil Rohman and Tri Noor Khaliza, "Innovation of Quizizz-based Wordwall Learning Media: An Alternative in Improving Students' Critical Thinking in the 21st Century," *Jurnal Masyarakat Berdikari dan Berkarya (Mardika)* 2, no. 2 (2024): 2, <https://doi.org/10.55377/mardika.v2i2.10159>.

also highlights challenges in its implementation, such as teachers' and students' readiness to adopt technology and limited internet access in some areas.³⁹

Meanwhile, the use of AI in learning is increasingly developing, such as using chatbots to answer student questions or AI applications to assist in creating exam questions.⁴⁰ According to Muhammad Dewa Zulkhi's research, artificial intelligence (AI) plays a significant role in improving learning quality by facilitating personalized material, automating teacher tasks, and providing rapid feedback to students. In the Merdeka Curriculum, AI helps foster student creativity and critical thinking through flexibility in learning methods. However, the research also highlights challenges such as algorithmic bias and the potential for reduced learning motivation due to over-reliance on AI. Therefore, teachers must ensure that AI is used wisely to support essential educational interactions and enhance learning effectiveness.⁴¹

The combination of these technologies enables IRE teachers to create a more dynamic learning environment. Not only does it facilitate material delivery, but it also increases student engagement in the learning process. With these technologies, teachers can ensure that Islamic religious education is not solely about delivering theory but is accompanied by deeper practice and exploration. IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik continuously strive to enhance their professional competencies, particularly in mastering materials and learning technologies, to deliver a more effective and innovative learning process. One of the steps taken is participating in annual training on learning technologies at the madrasa, MGMP, or the Surabaya Religious Training Center. Through these trainings, teachers not only deepen their understanding of teaching materials but also develop skills in using technology as a teaching aid, enabling them to adapt teaching methods to modern developments and student needs. Advancements in educational technology require teachers to continuously develop their digital skills. Therefore, participating in annual training on learning technologies is a key strategy for IRE teachers. These trainings provide new insights into the use of current technologies in learning, allowing teachers to continually update their teaching methods.

According to Putri Puspa Dewi, annual training attended by IRE teachers is a primary strategy for enhancing their professional competencies. IRE teachers are encouraged to participate in various training programs, such as education and training, seminars, workshops, and training sessions facilitated by schools or related institutions. These activities aim to deepen understanding of teaching materials, improve teaching skills, and develop more innovative learning strategies. Additionally, annual training serves as a platform for teachers to adapt to technological advances and the latest teaching methods, thereby improving teaching quality and student learning motivation.⁴²

At the madrasa level, these trainings are often organized as part of teacher professionalism development programs. Additionally, the Teacher Subject Discussion Group (MGMP) serves as a platform for teachers to share experiences and strategies in integrating

³⁹ Afaf Wafiqoh Nusaibah Nusaibah and Betty Mauli Rosa Bustam Bustam, "The Urgency of Technology The Urgency of Technology in Islamic Education Learning to Realize the Independent Learning Program & Progressive Islamic Education: Utilization of Technology in Islamic Education Learning, The Urgency of Utilizing Technology in Islamic Education Learning," *Qolamuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.55120/qolamuna.v8i2.892>.

⁴⁰ Z Zubairi and N Nurdin, "The Challenges of Islamic Religious Education in the Industrial Revolution 4.0," *SCAFFOLDING: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 4, no. 3 (2022): 386–96; Siti Zuhriyeh et al., "Digital Transformation of Islamic Education: An Artificial Intelligence-Based Teaching Module Development Study," *Edunesia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan* 6, no. 2 (2025): 1113–26, <https://doi.org/10.51276/edu.v6i2.1255>; Z Zulkifli et al., "Technology and Learning Media in Islamic Religious Education," *Permata: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 5, no. 1 (2024): 175–94.

⁴¹ Muhammad Dewa Zulkhi, "The Urgency of Artificial Intelligence in the Era of Independent Curriculum," *PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION (SNKP)* 2, no. 1 (2024): 435–39, <https://ejournal.ummuba.ac.id/index.php/SNKP/article/download/2135/1165>.

⁴² Putri Puspa Dewi et al., "Principal Strategy in Improving the Professional Competence of Islamic Education Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tigo Nagari," *Journal of Education and Counseling (JPDK)* 4, no. 4 (2022): 5834–41, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpdk.v4i4.6403>.

technology into Islamic religious education. This activity allows teachers to learn from best practices applied by their colleagues. Research by Fatmawati states that MGMP plays a crucial role as a platform for teacher professionalism development. Through MGMP, teachers can discuss, share experiences, and enhance competencies in developing teaching tools, teaching methods, and learning evaluations. However, the research also highlights challenges in MGMP implementation, such as participants' lack of discipline, limited funding, and minimal involvement of experts as resource persons. Therefore, more effective management strategies are needed to ensure MGMP optimally contributes to improving teacher professionalism and educational quality. (nd) In line with Husna Amalia's opinion, MGMP plays a significant role as a platform for teachers to develop themselves and improve learning quality. This forum enables teachers to discuss, share experiences, and innovate teaching methods to be more effective. For MGMP to function optimally, good management is required through planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. Thus, MGMP can positively contribute to enhancing teacher professionalism and educational quality.⁴³

The Surabaya Religious Training Center is also one of the institutions that regularly conducts training for IRE teachers. In these trainings, teachers are not only taught how to use technology but also how to optimize its use in the context of learning based on Islamic values. By participating in these trainings, IRE teachers can become more confident in implementing technology in their classrooms. The Surabaya Religious Training Center plays a significant role in enhancing IRE teacher professionalism through various trainings, one of which is religious moderation training. According to Wahyu Catur Perdana's research, this training not only improves teachers' understanding of moderation concepts in education but also directly impacts classroom management and student character formation. With an interactive approach, the training helps teachers apply values of nationalism, tolerance, and anti-violence attitudes in learning. Additionally, participant satisfaction with the program is quite high, indicating its effectiveness in supporting teacher professionalism in an increasingly dynamic educational era.⁴⁴

IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik utilize digital class groups as a platform for communication between teachers and students, as well as for sharing materials and announcements. In the digital era, communication between teachers and students is no longer limited to face-to-face classroom interactions. The use of digital class groups, such as WhatsApp or Telegram, allows teachers to stay connected with students at any time. Through these groups, teachers can share learning materials, provide announcements, and answer student questions more flexibly.

Reny Nabilla and Tina Kartika explain that the use of WhatsApp groups has many benefits in education, particularly in communication between teachers, students, and parents. WhatsApp groups serve as an effective medium for delivering academic information, class schedules, assignments, and important announcements quickly. Additionally, the platform facilitates teacher guidance for students, enables students to discuss and ask questions directly, and helps parents monitor their children's learning progress. With features that support communication and coordination, WhatsApp groups become a practical tool in enhancing learning effectiveness and stakeholder engagement in the educational process.⁴⁵

Besides serving as a communication medium, these digital groups also function as an active discussion platform between students and teachers. Students can ask about material they

⁴³ Husna Amalia, "Management of Subject Teachers' Consultative Meeting Development (MGMP) as an Effort to Improve the Professional Competence of Islamic Education Teachers," *Darussalam Journal: Journal of Education, Communication and Islamic Legal Thought* 11, no. 1 (2019): 132–47, <https://doi.org/10.30739/darussalam.v11i1.453>.

⁴⁴ Wahyu Catur Perdana, "Improving Teacher Professionalism Competence Through Religious Moderation Training at the Surabaya Religious Training Center," *Proceedings of Annual Islamic Conference for Learning and Management* 1 (December 2024): 626–35.

⁴⁵ Reny Nabilla, "WhatsApp Groups as a Communication Media for Online Lectures," *Jurnal Aktif: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 4, no. 2 (2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.30596/interaksi.v4i2.4595>.

don't understand, share additional references, or discuss developing religious issues. With these groups, learning becomes more collaborative, providing students with broader access to the knowledge they are studying.

Although WhatsApp groups have many benefits in education, research by Reny Nabilla and Tina Kartika also reveals some shortcomings. One major challenge is the limitation in interaction, where text-based communication often leads to miscommunication or misunderstandings. Additionally, continuous notifications can disrupt concentration for teachers, students, and parents. WhatsApp groups are also less effective for delivering complex material compared to other more interactive learning platforms. Another challenge is the potential lack of active participation from group members, which may cause important information to be missed or poorly conveyed.⁴⁶

However, the use of digital class groups must be monitored to prevent misuse. Teachers need to establish clear rules for their use, such as ensuring discussions remain focused on learning materials and are not used for non-academic purposes. With the right approach, these digital groups can be an effective tool for enhancing teacher-student interaction in Islamic religious education. Providing students with an understanding of ethics in using digital media, particularly in disseminating religious information, is crucial. In the digital era, religious information can be easily accessed by anyone via the internet. However, not all circulating information has valid and reliable sources. Therefore, IRE teachers have a significant responsibility to educate students about ethics in using digital media, especially in sharing religious information.

Digital ethics is a set of norms and values that regulate individual behavior in using technology and digital media responsibly. Digital ethics is essential for maintaining morality and spiritual values in the digital era. Technology users, including students and educators, need to understand boundaries in interacting online, avoid spreading hoaxes, and use digital media positively and productively. Islamic Religious Education plays a role in instilling digital ethics from an early age, enabling the younger generation to face digital world challenges with a wise and responsible attitude.⁴⁷

According to Novita Nur 'Inayah, digital ethics is crucial for creating a safe and comfortable communication space. Digital media users must prioritize awareness, responsibility, honesty, and virtue in their interactions. Digital ethics includes respecting others, avoiding the spread of hoaxes, and using polite language in communication. Additionally, users need to be cautious in sharing information to avoid offending or harming others. By understanding and applying digital ethics, it is hoped that society can utilize technology positively and responsibly in the era of Society 5.0.⁴⁸

Teachers must teach the importance of verifying information before sharing, especially information related to Islamic teachings. Students need to understand that spreading false or unclear information can lead to misunderstandings in comprehending religion. Additionally, teachers can provide examples of how to find valid references, such as from recognized Islamic texts or trusted sources. Teachers can also encourage students to use social media more wisely. Students need to understand that the digital world is not only a place to consume information but also to spread positive values. With proper guidance, educational students can use digital media to share Islamic content and maintain ethics in online interactions.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Sulaiman et al., "Analysis of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Problems and Solutions in Facing the Development of the 21st Century," *JiIP-Scientific Journal of Educational Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2024): 4256–67.

⁴⁷ Fatikh Rahma et al., "Strengthening Spiritual Values and Morality in the Digital Era Through Islamic Religious Education," *JEMARI (Journal of Elementary Madrasah Education)* 6, no. 2 (2024): 94–103.

⁴⁸ Novita Nur Inayah Novita, "Strengthening Digital Ethics Through the Material 'Etiquette in Using Social Media' in Islamic Religious Education Subjects in Shaping Students' Characters Facing the Era of Society 5.0," *Journal of Education and Learning Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.56404/jels.v3i1.45>.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

One of the main challenges is the limited competence of educators in mastering digital learning technologies. Not all teachers have the same proficiency in using digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Canva, or other interactive applications. Some teachers, who are not yet accustomed to technology, tend to revert to conventional teaching methods, making the use of technology in learning suboptimal. Additionally, generational differences among educators cause disparities in technology adaptation, with senior teachers often facing difficulties in understanding and applying digital tools in the learning process.

Cahya Fajar Budi Hartanto revealed that many educators still face difficulties in mastering technology in education. The main challenges include limited skills in using digital devices, lack of training, and factors such as age and educational background that slow adaptation to technology-based systems. Additionally, limited access to adequate devices, uneven internet networks, and a lack of supportive policies for technology use are also obstacles. If not addressed successfully, the education sector risks fall further behind other sectors that have advanced in technology utilization.⁴⁹

Another factor posing a challenge is the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure for digital learning. Devices such as computers, stable internet networks, and access to various learning applications are still limited. This limitation is exacerbated by the constrained educational budget of madrasas, making the procurement of digital facilities a lower priority. As a result, despite the desire to optimize technology-based learning, its implementation is hindered by insufficient infrastructure support.

Asyifah Luthfiyah revealed that one of the main factors hindering the implementation of digital learning is the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Many educational institutions still face limitations in technological devices, such as computers, stable internet networks, and other supporting facilities needed for digital-based learning.⁵⁰ In addition to challenges related to educators and facilities, changes in student attitudes post-pandemic also pose a distinct challenge in revitalizing IRE learning. Excessive gadget use during online learning has influenced students' habits and behavior. One of the most noticeable impacts is a decline in politeness in communication and weakened discipline in the learning process.

Nasucha's research shows that excessive gadget use during online learning not only affects eye health but also influences student attitudes. Students who use gadgets for extended periods tend to experience fatigue, reduced focus, and diminished social interaction with peers and teachers. Additionally, unsupervised gadget use can distract students with social media or online games, reducing learning effectiveness. Therefore, it is crucial for students to manage gadgets, use time to maintain a balance between learning and other activities.⁵¹

This makes it more difficult to control students in terms of ethics and character. Limited interaction time at school, with only a few hours per week for IRE, requires teachers to work harder to reshape students' character values. Differences in family and environmental backgrounds also reinforce this challenge, as many students bring habits from home that are not aligned with the disciplinary values at school. Surtini revealed that the lack of direct supervision during online learning makes it harder to control students in terms of ethics and character. Without teacher oversight in the classroom, students tend to be less disciplined, less serious about learning, and even pretend to follow lessons without truly understanding the

⁴⁹ Cahya Fajar Budi Hartanto et al., "Readiness of Human Resources in Education in the Diffusion of Information Technology Innovation in Educational Institutions," *Proceedings of the Industrial Research Workshop and National Seminar* 13, no. 01 (2022): 01, <https://doi.org/10.35313/irwns.v13i01.4300>.

⁵⁰ Asyifah Luthfiyah et al., "Optimizing Facilities and Infrastructure to Support the Learning Process," *Harmoni Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2025): 90–103, <https://doi.org/10.62383/hardik.v2i1.1004>.

⁵¹ Muhammad Raihan Nasucha et al., "Synergizing Islamic Religious Education and Scientific Learning in the 21st Century: A Systematic Review of Literature," *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 11, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2023.11.1.109-130>.

material. Additionally, the role modeling and character-building typically provided by teachers are neglected, leading to a decline in values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline. This situation is worsened by the lack of parental involvement in supervising children during home learning, weakening control over student behavior.⁵²

The revitalization of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in the digital era faces various challenges, particularly for teachers at MTsN Gresik. Some of the main challenges include limited facilities and infrastructure related to funding, suboptimal use of technology in learning, and the need to enhance teacher competencies in addressing digital-based educational developments. To address these issues, various solutions have been implemented to ensure the learning process runs more effectively.

One of the solutions applied is establishing collaboration with various parties, including the city government, Gresik Regency government, and social security fund holders. These efforts aim to gain support for madrasa development, particularly in procuring facilities to support digital learning systems. Additionally, the madrasah communicates with parents who have greater financial capacity to contribute to digital madrasah programs, especially digital classes designated for their own children.

Furthermore, to improve teaching quality, IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik actively communicate and collaborate with peers. They participate in activities such as workshops on creating learning media to hone skills in using technology in the teaching and learning process. Teachers are also facilitated to attend training programs organized by the Surabaya Religious Training Center, with official assignments provided to develop their professional competencies. As a collaborative effort, the madrasa also established the MGMP (Teacher Subject Discussion Group) as a platform for teachers to share experiences, exchange teaching materials, and select learning media suitable for the madrasa environment. With MGMP, teachers can more easily find solutions to various challenges they face in the teaching process, making the applied learning methods more relevant and effective.

In addition to improving facilities, infrastructure, and teacher competencies, another solution is building student character through the habituation of religious values in daily life. IRE teachers strive to remind and instill these values not only in the classroom but also outside, such as during Dhuha prayers or after Zuhur prayers. By providing brief reflections on Islamic morals and behavior on various occasions, it is hoped that students will increasingly understand and apply religious values in their lives. With these strategic steps, it is expected that the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education at MTsN Gresik can proceed more optimally. Collaboration between the madrasah, teachers, parents, and external parties is key to creating better and more relevant religious education in the digital era.⁵³

CONCLUSION

The professionalism of IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik in the digital era is reflected through their mastery of four main competencies: pedagogical, professional, social, and personal. Teachers utilize technology (Smart TVs, PowerPoint, Canva, Quizizz, Google Classroom, and AI) to create interactive learning, enhance their skills through annual training, build effective communication with students and parents via digital groups, and instill ethics in using digital media. However, teachers also face internal challenges such as limited technological proficiency, low digital literacy, and changes in student attitudes, as well as external challenges including limited facilities, internet connectivity, and budgets. To address these, the madrasah undertakes various efforts, such as collaboration with external parties,

⁵² Surtini Surtini, "The Impact of Online Learning on Student Character at Smkn 2 Nawangan," *JH (Jurnal of Humanities)* 8, no. 02 (2021), <https://ejournal.stkippacitan.ac.id/ojs3/index.php/jh/article/download/938/688>.

⁵³ E Saputra et al., "Online Learning in Covid-19 Pandemic: New Student Perspective at Islamic Religious Education Program," *Al-Ishlah: Journal of Education* 13, no. 2 (2021): 1367–73.

forming teacher working groups, and conducting training and workshops to improve digital competencies.

The professionalism of IRE teachers at MTsN Gresik in the digital era is evident through the use of learning technologies, competency enhancement via training, strengthening digital communication, and fostering digital media ethics, despite facing internal and external challenges. Theoretically, this research contributes to strengthening the study of IRE teacher professionalism in the digital era by emphasizing the integration of the four teacher competencies. Practically, these findings provide a reference for madrasas and teachers in developing technology-based learning strategies and enhancing digital literacy. However, this study is limited in scope, focusing only on one madrasa, so its results cannot yet be broadly generalized. Therefore, future research is recommended to cover a more diverse range of madrasas, employ mixed methods, and further explore the impact of digital technology use on student learning outcomes and character formation.

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