



Blended Learning in Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia: A Thematic Literature Review on Implementation, Challenges, and Optimization Strategies

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Abstract

This study aims to comprehensively examine the implementation of blended learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia through a systematic literature review. A total of 35 selected articles published between 2019 and 2024 were analyzed. The findings indicate that blended learning has a positive impact on increasing student motivation, understanding of materials, and learning independence. This model combines face-to-face and online learning, enabling more flexible, interactive, and adaptive learning. However, its implementation faces challenges, including limited infrastructure, uneven digital competence, and cultural resistance to technology. In addition, issues related to pedagogical and spiritual aspects, as well as evaluation and quality assurance, require special attention. Optimization strategies include strengthening teacher competencies, developing adaptive curricula, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and implementing continuous evaluation. These findings contribute to the development of a conceptual framework for improving the quality of PAI learning in the digital era.

Keywords

Blended learning; Islamic religious education (PAI); Implementation; Challenges; Strategies



Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant transformations across various aspects of human life, particularly in education. In the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0, the demand for pedagogical innovation is growing stronger, enabling the education system to adapt to changing times, meet the needs of the digital generation of students, and address the challenges of globalization (Ningsih, 2024; UNESCO, 2021). The educational paradigm, originally oriented towards the conventional model, has now shifted to a more flexible, collaborative model that utilizes information and communication technology as an integral part of the learning process (Dei, 2024).

The context of Islamic religious education (PAI) in Indonesia is inseparable from this wave of digital transformation. PAI plays a central role in shaping students' character, morals, and spirituality, particularly amid the challenges posed by moral crises and the erosion of religious values in modern society (Wantu et al., 2025). One of the major challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia today is the gap between the rapid development of digital technology and the readiness of educational institutions to integrate it effectively into learning practices (Ningsih, 2024; UNESCO, 2021).

The implementation of PAI in schools and madrassas often faces several obstacles, including monotonous learning methods, limited face-to-face time, a lack of innovation, and low active student participation (Pratiwi et al., 2022; Yani et al., 2024). Traditional learning methods are becoming increasingly less relevant for addressing students' needs in the digital era, which demands an adaptive, interactive, and contextual learning approach (Gunawan et al., 2022). This gap not only affects the quality of learning but also raises concerns regarding the preservation of spiritual values and character formation in the digital learning environment.

The presence of blended learning, which combines the advantages of face-to-face learning and online learning, is one of the strategic solutions to address the above problems (Graham, 2018; Horn & Staker, 2015). The blended learning model enables the integration of strengthening religious values with mastery of digital literacy, thereby creating a richer, more personalized, and meaningful learning experience (Wantu et al., 2025). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the implementation of blended learning across various educational institutions accelerated significantly, thereby creating new space for reflection on the effectiveness and challenges of this learning model, especially in the context of Islamic religious education (Nikmah & Mubarak, 2022). Not only as a temporary solution, but blended learning is now



considered a model for the future of education that is inclusive, adaptive, and resilient to change (Setiyawan et al., 2022).

Various studies have shown that blended learning in PAI can increase learning motivation, expand access to learning resources, and strengthen 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, collaboration, and critical thinking (Salim et al., 2024). However, several significant challenges remain, including limited technological infrastructure, access disparities between urban and rural areas, low digital competence among teachers and students, and cultural resistance to technology-based learning innovations (Syarif & Kholis, 2020; Zh et al., 2024). Furthermore, concerns have also been raised regarding the potential erosion of spiritual values and the nuances of Islamic character development if physical face-to-face interaction is reduced (Pratama, 2023).

The purpose of this article is to conduct a literature review related to concepts, implementation models, advantages, obstacles, and strategies for optimizing blended learning in PAI learning. This article aims to offer strategic recommendations that enhance the quality of Islamic religious education in the digital era.

Although studies on blended learning in general education have been conducted extensively, systematic research specifically exploring the optimization of blended learning in the context of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia remains very limited (Bulan et al., 2024). Most previous research has focused more on the technical aspects of blended learning or on general subjects, while the integration of Islamic values, spirituality, and specific challenges and strategies in digital PAI learning has rarely been studied in depth (Ratnaningsih et al., 2020).

Several previous studies have examined blended learning in Islamic education, focusing primarily on its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes, student motivation, and digital literacy skills (Salim et al., 2024; Setiyawan et al., 2022). However, these studies tend to emphasize technical implementation and general pedagogical aspects, with limited exploration of integrating spiritual values and addressing contextual challenges specific to Islamic education in Indonesia.

The novelty of this article lies in its effort to integrate global and national research results, critically analyze research gaps, and offer a synthesis of blended learning optimization strategies to strengthen the quality of PAI learning, making it adaptive and relevant to the times. It is hoped that this article will serve as an important reference for researchers, education practitioners, and policymakers in developing innovative and transformative PAI learning models in the digital era. Despite the growing body of research on blended learning, several important gaps remain, particularly in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia.



Previous studies have predominantly focused on general or technical aspects of blended learning implementation, with limited attention to integrating spiritual values and addressing contextual challenges in Islamic educational settings.

This study contributes to the existing literature by offering a systematic thematic synthesis of blended learning implementation in Islamic Religious Education. Specifically, it provides: (1) a classification of key challenges in implementing blended learning in PAI, (2) an analysis of contextual gaps within Indonesian Islamic education, and (3) a conceptual framework for optimizing blended learning that integrates pedagogical, technological, and spiritual dimensions. This contribution is expected to strengthen the development of adaptive, value-based, and contextually relevant PAI learning in the digital era.

Method

This study employs a library research methodology, using a systematic literature review, to examine the implementation of blended learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The data used in this study are entirely secondary data derived from peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, policy documents, and relevant research reports.

A total of 35 articles published between 2019 and 2024 were selected and analyzed. The literature was obtained from reputable academic databases, including SINTA-indexed journals, Scopus-indexed publications, and DOAJ-listed sources. The selection process was conducted using specific inclusion criteria: (1) studies discussing blended learning in Islamic education or PAI context, (2) publications with clear methodological rigor (empirical or conceptual), and (3) relevance to digital pedagogy and religious education.

The collected literature is analyzed through thematic content analysis, which involves identifying, categorizing, and synthesizing recurring themes across multiple sources (Naeem et al., 2023). Four principal themes are explored: (1) models and practical implementations of blended learning in PAI, (2) educational platforms and media utilized, (3) challenges and obstacles faced during implementation, and (4) strategies for optimization and actionable recommendations. The analysis process is iterative, featuring systematic note-taking, pattern recognition, and the development of synthesis matrices to discern similarities, contrasts, and research gaps within the field (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022).



Results and Discussion

Based on a thematic analysis of 35 selected studies, several key themes emerged: implementation models, digital platforms, challenges, pedagogical-spiritual issues, and optimization strategies. These findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of Blended Learning in PAI

Theme	Key Findings	Sources
Implementation Models	Flipped classroom, rotation, flex models widely used	Horn & Staker, 2015; Liu et al., 2024
Digital Platforms	LMS (Google Classroom, Moodle), Zoom and WhatsApp are widely utilized	Ajani & Khoalenyane, 2023
Challenges	Infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, cultural resistance	Daar et al., 2023; Zh et al., 2024
Pedagogical & Spiritual Issues	Difficulty in monitoring character and spiritual development	Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025
Optimization Strategies	Teacher training, curriculum adaptation, collaboration and evaluation	Utami et al., 2025

As shown in Table 1, the implementation of blended learning in PAI is shaped by interconnected dimensions rather than isolated factors. The dominance of models such as the flipped classroom, rotation, and flex approaches reflects a shift toward more student-centered, flexible learning practices. At the same time, the widespread use of digital platforms—ranging from Learning Management Systems to synchronous communication tools—highlights the central role of technology in facilitating both structured and interactive learning environments.

However, the findings also indicate that persistent challenges, including infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, and cultural resistance, constrain the effectiveness of blended learning. More importantly, the emergence of pedagogical and spiritual issues underscores a distinctive concern in Islamic Religious Education, namely, maintaining character formation and the internalization of religious values in digital learning contexts. These complexities suggest that blended learning in PAI cannot be understood solely from a technical perspective, but must be examined through a broader conceptual and pedagogical lens.

In this regard, a deeper theoretical understanding of blended learning becomes essential as a foundation for analyzing its implementation within the specific context of Islamic Religious Education.



1. Theoretical Study and Conceptual Framework Blended Learning

The findings of this study are organized through thematic analysis and contribute to a conceptual understanding of blended learning in PAI. In addition to describing existing practices, this study emphasizes the classification of challenges and proposes a conceptual framework that integrates technological, pedagogical, and spiritual dimensions.

Blended learning is a pedagogical innovation that integrates face-to-face learning with information technology-based learning (online learning). The definition of blended learning has evolved in tandem with advancements in educational technology and the increasing demand for flexibility in teaching and learning. Blended learning is defined as "a formal program of education that combines online instruction—which offers students some control over the time, place, path, and pace of learning—with learning in the physical space of a school." (Horn & Staker, 2015). It is also defined as an educational system that combines two different learning environments — namely, conventional face-to-face learning and online learning (Graham, 2018; Siddiqui et al., 2024) — to create a learning experience that is more effective, efficient, and relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

Blended learning is seen not only as a supporting tool but also as a strategic learning model for addressing educational challenges in the digital era. Furthermore, it is not just about moving materials to digital platforms, but rather about designing to maximize the advantages of both methods—the warmth and interaction of hands-on learning and the flexibility and accessibility of digital technologies.

As blended learning implementation has progressed, experts have developed several popular models widely applied across educational levels (Liu et al., 2024). The first model is the Flipped Classroom. This model inverts the traditional pattern of learning: students access the subject matter (videos, modules, readings) online outside the classroom, while face-to-face time in the classroom is reserved for discussion, problem-solving, and active learning (Mishra, 2024). Flipped classrooms are effective in supporting student-centered learning and enhancing teacher-student interaction.

The second is the Rotation Model. In this model, students move between several "learning stations" that include online learning, small group discussions, laboratory practice, and face-to-face instruction. The rotation model is very flexible and suitable for application at various levels of education, including elementary, secondary, and high school. The third is the Flex Model, in which most of the material is delivered online, while teachers provide one-on-one or small-group support as



needed. This model offers maximum flexibility and emphasizes personalized learning.

The last two are the a la carte model and the Enriched Virtual Model. The a la carte model allows students to take one or more subjects online outside of regular face-to-face learning, whereas the enriched virtual model is a variant of blended learning in which face-to-face interaction is only occasional, with the rest conducted online. The selection of blended learning models must consider students' characteristics, learning objectives, infrastructure readiness, and the socio-cultural context of educational institutions (Mishra, 2024).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning Principles

PAI in Indonesia has a distinctive dimension: it not only focuses on mastering religious knowledge but also aims to shape students' personalities, morality, and spirituality. The primary value of PAI lies in the internalization of Islamic teachings as a guide for daily life rather than merely the cognitive transmission of religious knowledge (Aldi et al., 2024; Mustakim et al., 2024).

The main objectives of PAI, as formulated in the national curriculum and academic studies (Mas'ud, 2020; Muhaimin, 2001), include several key aspects. First, the cultivation of aqidah and faith, namely forming a firm belief in Allah SWT and the values of monotheism as the foundation of thinking and acting. Second, the development of noble morals to instill commendable character and behavior according to the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith. Third, the mastery of religious knowledge, namely understanding Islamic teachings in aspects such as fiqh, Islamic cultural history, tafsir, hadith, and others, rationally and contextually. Fourth, the formation of a Muslim personality through the integration of Islamic values into social, family, and community life.

The characteristics of effective PAI learning are holistic, touching cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Ramadhan et al., 2025) and contextual, which is to link religious teachings to social realities and contemporary challenges; dialogical, by fostering a dialogical, critical, and inclusive learning atmosphere; values-based, which is to internalize Islamic values through example, habituation, and reflection. In the context of Islamic education theory, PAI learning is grounded in an integralistic and humanistic approach that views humans as spiritual, social, and intellectual beings (Hasanah et al., 2025). Islamic education aims to cultivate perfect human beings (*insan kamil*) by integrating intellect, heart, and deeds (Muvid & Kholis, 2024).

Blended Learning Integration in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

Implementing blended learning in Islamic Religious Education requires a careful, context-specific approach. The main challenge is how to ensure that the use



of modern technology and learning models can still maintain, and even strengthen, the essential purpose of PAI in building character and spirituality (Wantu et al., 2025).

The theoretical foundation of integrating blended learning in PAI encompasses four key aspects. First, collaboration: blended learning enables collaboration among students, between teachers and students, and with the wider digital community. This collaboration can improve the understanding of religious materials through group discussions, online projects, and the sharing of religious experiences (Ratnaningsih et al., 2020).

Second is contextualization. The integration of blended learning in PAI must be tailored to local needs, cultural backgrounds, and students' levels of digital literacy. Contextualization is important so that religious material is not separated from daily life and remains relevant to the challenges of the times (Susilawati et al., 2020).

Third, personalization. One advantage of blended learning is that it offers students the flexibility to learn at their own pace and in their own style. In PAI, personalization can be applied by providing reading modules, videos, podcasts, or online question-and-answer forums that reinforce personal religious reflection (Gunawan et al., 2022).

Fourth, the use of ICT in the religious realm. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in PAI learning can take various forms, including the utilization of digital Qur'an applications, interactive learning media, e-learning platforms, and Islamic social media. However, the use of ICT must be accompanied by the supervision of Islamic values and ethics, so that learning is not confined to mere digital formalism (Zh et al., 2024).

Fifth, the integration of spiritual values in digital activities. The primary challenge is to ensure that spiritual experiences and the internalization of values remain strong, even though most of the learning process occurs online. Strengthening spirituality can be done through online reflection, interactive discussions of Islamic values, and the use of multimedia that strengthens the affective and religious dimensions of students (Nursalim et al., 2024).

Several studies have demonstrated that integrating blended learning based on Islamic values can increase students' motivation, participation, and religious understanding (Salim et al., 2024). However, the success of the implementation is greatly influenced by teacher readiness, adaptive curriculum design, and a digital ecosystem that supports collaboration, contextualization, and personalization of learning (Yani et al., 2024).



Conceptual Model of Blended Learning Integration in PAI

Based on the above explanation, a conceptual framework for integrating blended learning into PAI can be formulated, as shown in Figure 1, comprising inputs, processes, and outputs. Input includes student characteristics, teacher readiness, ICT infrastructure, and school/madrasah culture. The process involves selecting blended learning models (flipped, rotation, and flex), integrating Islamic values, and using ICT ethically. Meanwhile, the outputs include increased religious understanding, strengthened character, enhanced digital literacy, and fostered student spirituality. This framework emphasizes the importance of a learning design that is contextual, collaborative, personalized, and grounded in Islamic values as its primary foundation.

Table 2. Conceptual Model of Blended Learning Integration on PAI

Input	Process	Output
Characteristics of Students	The selection model of blended learning (flipped, rotation, flex)	Increased religious understanding
Teacher readiness		Character strengthening
ICT Infrastructure	Ethical use of ICT	Digital literacy
Culture of schools/madrasah	Integration of Islamic values	Formation of student

2. Application of Blended Learning in PAI Learning

The application of blended learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia has shown significant developments, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools to adopt adaptive learning alternatives. Using Zoom for blended learning to memorize the Qur'an can increase student activity and motivation (Syarif & Kholis, 2020). In many madrasas, teachers combine online learning—utilizing WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and video conferencing—with limited face-to-face sessions to reinforce understanding of the material and monitor memorization. The findings also reveal that blended learning has become a strategic solution during the pandemic, although obstacles, such as limited network and device access and limited digital literacy among teachers and students, are still frequently encountered (Singh et al., 2021).

In modern Islamic boarding schools, blended learning is implemented by alternating face-to-face recitation with independent learning via digital materials, such as study videos, Qur'an applications, and WhatsApp discussion forums. This practice enables students to remain engaged in reciting and discussing even outside the classroom while fostering independence in their religious learning. Internationally, similar trends are observed, with Learning Management Systems



(LMSs) such as Moodle and Edmodo used for online assignments, religious discussions, and collaborative evaluations (Alturki & Aldraiweesh, 2021).

In terms of platforms, digital media integration greatly determines the quality of blended learning. Learning Management Systems (LMSs) such as Google Classroom, Moodle, and Edmodo are widely chosen because they support the structured management of materials, assignments, and feedback. For synchronous learning, Zoom and Google Meet are used in real-time for *tadarus*, discussions, or memorization evaluation sessions, while digital Qur'an apps help students with recitation and deepen their understanding of tafsir. Online forums on WhatsApp and Telegram also strengthen teacher-student communication outside formal learning hours, though there remain obstacles to device access and digital literacy (Ajani & Khoalenyane, 2023).

In terms of design, PAI blended learning combines both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous sessions include shared *tadarus*, interactive discussions, and live Q&A on material, while asynchronous sessions include video assignments, written reflections, and multimedia projects. The subject matter was also adapted: faith was taught through interactive videos and reflection journals, morality was explored through real case discussion forums, fiqh was learned using online worship tutorials, and Islamic cultural history was presented via group presentations or digital character tracing (Horn & Staker, 2015)

The positive impact of blended learning is reflected in increased motivation, learning independence, and a deeper understanding of Islamic values among students. This model also encourages student involvement, expands access to materials, and fosters teachers' creativity in designing contextual learning. However, disparities in internet access, human resource readiness, and spirituality supervision remain challenges that need to be addressed collaboratively by all stakeholders of Islamic education.

3. Implementation Challenges and Obstacles

The implementation of blended learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia faces various challenges and interrelated obstacles, spanning technical, cultural and pedagogical domains. One of the main obstacles is the limited infrastructure and human resources. There are still many schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools that lack stable internet access and adequate digital devices, particularly in rural areas and 3T (frontier, outermost, disadvantaged) regions. Not all students have personal devices, and some families must even share a single device among multiple children, limiting access to online learning. In addition, the digital competence of teachers and students also still varies. Many PAI teachers are unfamiliar with online learning technology or have not utilized digital



platforms optimally, such as the Learning Management System (LMS), video conferences, and other supporting applications (Daar et al., 2023). The limitations of digital literacy affect the low quality of interaction and the effectiveness of material delivery in the blended learning scheme.

In addition to technical constraints, cultural and institutional resistance is also a significant challenge. Conservative religious perceptions are still quite strong in some Islamic educational environments, where religious learning is considered to be best done directly and face-to-face to maintain solemnity and nuances of spirituality in value transfer. Skepticism and resistance to technology remain prevalent, both among teachers accustomed to traditional methods and at the institutional level, for example, through prohibitions on carrying mobile phones in schools, which limit opportunities for learning innovation. Many religious education institutions still view blended learning as a temporary solution rather than a long-term strategic model that needs to be systematically integrated into the institution's curriculum and vision (Rattanawan & Pakdee, 2024).

The pedagogical and spiritual aspects also present their problems. One of the primary concerns of parents and educators is the potential decline in the quality of personal interaction between teachers and students, which has been a key factor in character formation and the internalization of Islamic values (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025). Online learning often results in less-than-optimal monitoring and character development as teachers struggle to observe students' attitudes and behaviors directly. At the same time, not all families can consistently support children's learning at home, which can diminish the effectiveness of spiritual and holistic character coaching. The practice of habituating congregational worship, example, and communal value discussion, which has been the strength of religious education, is also difficult to replicate in its entirety in a virtual environment.

In addition, another challenge, no less important, concerns evaluation and quality assurance. Blended learning-based learning assessments tend to focus on cognitive aspects that are easy to measure online, while affective and psychomotor aspects, such as students' honesty, discipline, and spirituality, are difficult to observe without direct interaction. Teachers also face obstacles in ensuring the authenticity of students' work and academic integrity, as online assignments are prone to being completed by others or merely as a formality (Wardani et al., 2019). Some schools and madrasas also lack special standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure the quality of blended learning, resulting in limited monitoring and evaluation of administrative aspects rather than the quality of the process and overall learning outcomes (Hamzah et al., 2022).



These various obstacles require collective efforts from the government, schools, teachers, and parents to improve digital literacy, expand access to devices and the internet, and build an adaptive learning culture while maintaining the essence of spirituality and Islamic character in every PAI learning process.

4. Optimization Strategies and Recommendations

For blended learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to run optimally and have a lasting impact, a series of integrated strategies involving all stakeholders is necessary. The priority is to strengthen teacher competence through systematic, sustainable digital literacy training. PAI teachers must be allowed to participate in workshops, technical guidance, and intensive training on the use of digital platforms, the creation of ICT-based teaching materials, and relevant Islamic applications. Not only is mastery of technology limited, but teachers also need to be encouraged to develop Islamic content that is creative, contextual, and easily accessible to students, such as interactive videos, Islamic studies podcasts, and digital modules with an emphasis on the values of faith, morals, and worship practices (Utami et al., 2025).

Furthermore, developing an adaptive curriculum is key to achieving effective, relevant blended learning. The national curriculum needs to accommodate the integration of blended learning, both in terms of regulation and implementation, at the school and madrasah levels. The preparation of the curriculum should provide space for flexibility, allowing teachers to combine face-to-face and online learning and enabling learning innovations responsive to technological developments and students' needs. Permendikbud Number 24 of 2021 concerning Primary and Secondary Education Process Standards has opened up opportunities for the development of a more adaptive curriculum, including PAI learning. In this context, the development of teaching tools, such as lesson plans, modules, and assessments, based on blended learning needs must be supported by clear institutional policies that include the provision of infrastructure, technical guidance, and equitable technology support.

The next strategy is to strengthen collaboration between all education stakeholders, namely the government, schools/madrasas, teachers, parents, and the digital community. The government is expected to play an active role in providing digital infrastructure, expanding internet connectivity, and facilitating teacher and student training across all regions, especially in 3T areas. Schools and madrasahs must build a culture of innovation and adaptation, for example, by forming digital content development teams or teacher-learning communities. Parents need to be actively involved in the blended learning process by socializing the role of home learning assistance and educating about the benefits and governance of using digital devices for religious learning. In addition, partnerships with digital communities



and Islamic literacy activists, such as pesantren-based e-learning platforms or online study groups, can be a valuable source of inspiration, content, and technical support for teachers and students. This cross-sectoral collaboration will strengthen the innovative, adaptive, and inclusive PAI education ecosystem.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation are also vital aspects of optimizing PAI blended learning. The evaluation is not only focused on learning outcomes but also on the learning process, the effectiveness of technology use, and the impact on the formation of students' character and spirituality. The application of classroom action research by teachers can be a strategic approach to identifying real obstacles in the field, trying various innovations, and evaluating the effectiveness of methods used in a participatory manner. Schools and madrasas need to use monitoring data to develop more targeted policies and curricula. In addition, data-driven evaluations can help policymakers make informed decisions, such as adjusting learning models, enhancing platforms, and tailoring training programs to meet specific needs.

By implementing the above strategies simultaneously and in a coordinated manner, blended learning in PAI will not only be a temporary solution but also develop into a future learning model that is qualified, adaptive, and able to address the challenges of Islamic education in the digital era. The teacher competence, curriculum flexibility, stakeholder collaboration, and data-driven monitoring will strengthen a relevant, contextual, and globally competitive Islamic religious education ecosystem.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the implementation of blended learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia is not merely a technological adaptation, but a transformative approach that integrates pedagogical, technological, and spiritual dimensions. Based on a thematic analysis of 35 selected studies, the findings indicate that blended learning has significant potential to enhance student motivation, learning independence, and access to diverse learning resources. The combination of face-to-face and online learning creates more flexible, interactive, and student-centered learning environments that are relevant to the demands of the digital era. However, the study also highlights that several interconnected challenges influence the effectiveness of blended learning. These include limited infrastructure, disparities in access to digital devices, and uneven levels of digital literacy among teachers and students. Beyond technical issues, cultural resistance and concerns about the weakening of spiritual values remain critical barriers. In the context of PAI, where character formation and the internalization of religious values are



central, the shift to digital learning environments requires careful pedagogical design to ensure that spiritual dimensions are not diminished. This study contributes by offering a thematic classification of key issues and proposing a conceptual framework that emphasizes the integration of contextual, collaborative, personalized, and value-based learning. The identified optimization strategies—such as strengthening teacher competencies, developing adaptive curricula, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and implementing continuous evaluation—underscore the importance of systemic and coordinated efforts. In conclusion, blended learning in PAI should be viewed as a strategic and sustainable model for the future of Islamic education. Its success depends on educators' and institutions' ability to balance technological innovation with the preservation of Islamic values. Future research is encouraged to focus on empirical validation and the development of evaluation models that better capture affective and spiritual learning outcomes.

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