

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers as Exemplary Models (Usawatun Hasanah) in the Era of Disruption: A Literature Study from the Perspective of Psychology and Islamic Education

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Article Info

Article history:

Received October, 2024
Revised October, 2024
Accepted October, 2024

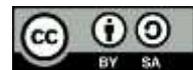
Keywords:

Islamic Education Teacher,
Usawatun Hasanah,
Example,
Era of Disruption,
Educational Psychology,
Islamic Education

ABSTRACT

The era of disruption, which is marked by rapid technological developments, changes in social values, and global information flows, creates complex challenges for the formation of students' character. In this context, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are required not only as teachers, but also as living exemplary models (uswatun hasanah). Integration of the perspectives of Psychology and Islamic Education is needed to analyze this strategic role comprehensively. This research aims to analyze the role, challenges and strategies of Islamic Education Teachers as exemplary models in an era of disruption through a literature synthesis from the perspective of Psychology and Islamic Education. Research findings show that: (1) The concept of uswatun hasanah in Islamic Education is in line with social learning theory in Psychology, where individuals learn through observation and imitation; (2) The PAI teacher's role includes being a role model in morals, wise use of technology (digital ethics), and mental resilience; (3) The main challenges include moral degradation, competition with the influence of digital media, and teacher workload; (4) Effective strategies include strengthening digital-pedagogical competence, building positive personal branding on social media, and collaborating with parents. The role of PAI teachers as uswatun hasanah in the era of disruption is becoming increasingly critical and complex. An integrative approach between Islamic values and psychological principles can strengthen teacher effectiveness in shaping the character of students. Increasing teacher competency and systemic support from educational institutions is very necessary.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The era of disruption 4.0 and 5.0 marks major changes in the social, economic, and educational order due to advances in digital technology, automation, artificial intelligence, and the integration of humans and machines. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 is

characterized by massive automation, connectivity, and digitalization, where the role of humans in various sectors is starting to be replaced by computerized systems and artificial intelligence.[1], [2], [3]This transformation has had a significant impact on the world of education, demanding

innovation in curriculum, learning methods, and digital competencies for both educators and students.[4]Education 4.0 emphasizes the importance of digital, technological, and human literacy, as well as critical thinking skills, collaboration, and adaptation to change.[5].

Entering the era of Society 5.0, the focus shifts to the humanization of technology, where innovation is directed at improving the quality of human life, solving social problems, and creating a sustainable society.[6]Education 5.0 demands the integration of advanced technologies such as AI for adaptive and personalized learning, while still placing human values at the core.[7], [8], [9]Teachers are no longer just sources of knowledge, but rather become mentors, motivators, and role models (uswatun hasanah) who guide students in facing the challenges of the times.[10].

The impact of the disruptive era on the behavior of the younger generation is complex. Digital natives tend to be more individualistic, have a low tendency to filter information, and are vulnerable to identity crises due to exposure to massive, unfiltered information.[11]Phenomena such as declining empathy, respect for authority, and increasing consumer behavior and addiction to social media are challenges in themselves.[12]Excessive exposure to social media can trigger sleep disorders, depression, externalizing behavior, and even identity crises, where teens struggle to build a healthy sense of self amidst digital social pressures. Furthermore, the phenomenon of cancel culture on social media exacerbates the instability of teens' identities and social relationships.[13].

In the context of Islamic education, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as role models is very strategic in protecting the younger generation from the negative impacts of the era of disruption.[14]. Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to be able to instill moral, spiritual, and character values through exemplary attitudes, behavior, and psychological and affective strengthening of students.[15].

Internalization of values is carried out through habituation, positive reinforcement, and educational punishment that builds students' motivation and integrity.[16]Teachers also act as facilitators of positive culture in schools, building a religious, disciplined, literate, and tolerant environment.[17]. Thus, Islamic religious education functions as a moral and identity fortress amidst the currents of globalization and technological disruption.[18].

Character education is the primary foundation for developing a generation with noble character, responsibility, and the ability to face the challenges of the times. In the Islamic educational tradition, role modeling (qudwah/uswah hasanah) occupies a central position as the most effective method for internalizing moral and spiritual values in students. Role modeling is not merely a method, but the essence of the educational process itself, where teachers, parents, and the environment become real-life figures whose behavior can be imitated and internalized by children.[19].

The concept of qudwah or uswah hasanah in Islamic education refers to concrete behavior that can be emulated by students. The Quran explicitly emphasizes the importance of exemplary behavior through Allah's statement in Surah Al-Ahzab: 21, which states that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the best role model for mankind. The Prophet's exemplary behavior extends not only to worship but also to morals, leadership, patience, and social interaction.[20]. In the context of education, teachers as warasatul anbiya (heirs of the prophets) are expected to be able to display consistent behavior between words and actions, so that they become real models for students.[21].

From a psychological perspective, humans, especially children, have a natural tendency to imitate the behavior of those around them, especially authoritative figures such as parents and teachers.[22]This imitation process is the basis for why role models are so effective in shaping character. Consistent role models will strengthen the

internalization of values, while a mismatch between words and actions can actually lead to confusion and an identity crisis in children.[23].

In the context of Indonesian education, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers occupy a central position as the spearheads in instilling moral and spiritual values in schools. This strategic role is increasingly crucial amidst the challenges of the disruptive era, where globalization, technological advancements, and socio-cultural changes have significantly impacted the character and spirituality of the younger generation. PAI teachers are not only tasked with cognitively transferring religious knowledge, but are also responsible for shaping character, guiding behavior, and instilling moral and spiritual values that serve as the primary foundation of students' personalities.[24], [25].

Islamic Religious Education teachers act as educators, mentors, role models, and motivators in developing students' religious character and noble morals. Through contextual learning, fostering worship practices, and integrating Islamic values into daily school life, Islamic Religious Education teachers are key figures influencing the formation of students' character.[26] Research shows that the success of character education is greatly influenced by teacher role models, synergy between classroom learning, school culture, and family involvement. Islamic Religious Education teachers also serve as consistent role models in their words and actions, thereby instilling the values of honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and social awareness [27].

The instillation of moral and spiritual values is carried out through various strategies, such as habituating worship (congregational prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, dhikr), value-based learning, providing advice, discussions, and strengthening religious culture in schools [28]. Islamic Religious Education teachers also utilize digital media and cross-cultural dialogue to strengthen students' understanding and tolerance in a

multicultural society.[29]. In addition, collaboration between schools, families, and communities is a major supporting factor in the successful internalization of Islamic values.[30].

The ideal of role models in Islam positions teachers, particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, as *uswatun hasanah* primary role models in shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of students. In the Islamic educational tradition, role models are not merely a method, but rather the core of the educational process, which demands consistency between words and deeds, as well as high moral integrity. Values such as honesty, responsibility, etiquette, and spirituality are the primary foundations that are expected to be internalized by the younger generation through the role of PAI teachers [31]. However, the realities of the digital age present complex challenges and often create a gap between the ideals of Islamic exemplary behavior and actual practice.

The digital era, characterized by advances in information technology, social media, and unlimited access to information, has changed patterns of social interaction, learning methods, and sources of moral authority for the younger generation [32]. Students are now more exposed to digital content that doesn't always align with Islamic values, such as individualism, hedonism, and instant gratification. This widespread use of social media also presents new challenges, such as a decline in morals, weak self-control, and an identity crisis among adolescents [33]. Islamic Religious Education teachers are faced with a dilemma: on the one hand, they are required to be ideal role models, while on the other hand, they must adapt to digital realities that often conflict with the values they teach [34].

Research shows that the main challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers include low digital literacy among educators, limitations in integrating technology with Islamic values, and a lack of institutional support for the development of character-based digital

pedagogy.[35]. In addition, the unfiltered flow of information and easy access to negative content weakens the authority of teachers as the primary source of role models.[36]. Students tend to trust digital figures or influencers on social media more than teachers at school, making the process of internalizing values increasingly challenging.[37].

However, the digital era also offers opportunities for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to innovate in learning methods and instill values. The use of digital media, learning applications, and online platforms can be leveraged to reinforce moral and spiritual messages, provided they are accompanied by strengthening digital literacy and integrating Islamic values into every digital activity.[38], [39]Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers need to develop digital competencies, become role models in the wise use of technology, and build collaborations with parents and the community to create an educational ecosystem that supports the formation of Islamic character.[40].

The gap between the idealism of Islamic exemplary behavior and the realities of the challenges of the digital era demands a paradigm shift in education. Islamic Religious Education teachers are no longer merely instructors; they must also be innovators, facilitators, and motivators capable of bridging Islamic values with the needs and challenges of the times.[41]Strengthening teacher training, developing a digital ethics-based curriculum, and synergy between schools, families, and communities are key to addressing this gap.[42].

In facing the challenges of the disruptive era, character education can no longer be understood in isolation, but rather requires a multidisciplinary approach that combines the wisdom of Islamic education traditions with the theoretical framework of modern psychology. Islamic education places role models (*uswatun hasanah*) at the core of the character-building process, where teachers and the environment serve as concrete models for students in instilling

moral, spiritual, and social values.[43], [44]However, to understand more deeply how role models work to shape behavior and character, integration with psychological theory is necessary, particularly Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory.

Bandura emphasized that the learning process occurs not only through direct instruction, but also through observation, imitation, and modeling. Children and adolescents tend to imitate the behavior of figures they consider significant, such as teachers, parents, or community leaders.[45], [46]. In the context of Islamic education, this modeling concept is in line with the principle of *uswatun hasanah*, where Rasulullah SAW is used as the main role model in all aspects of life.[47]The integration of Islamic and psychological approaches produces a holistic character education model, encompassing moral, spiritual, cognitive, and social dimensions.[48].

Recent research shows that combining Islamic values with social learning theory can strengthen the effectiveness of character education in schools. Islamic Religious Education teachers who are able to act as role models, maintain consistent behavior, and implement contextual learning strategies have been shown to be more successful in instilling the values of honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation in students.[49]. In addition, this multidisciplinary approach also emphasizes the importance of a supportive school environment, family involvement, and the wise use of digital media to strengthen the internalization of values.[50].

The integration of Bandura's theory into Islamic education also highlights the importance of self-efficacy, namely an individual's belief in their ability to behave in accordance with the values exemplified. Teachers are not only sources of knowledge but also facilitators who build students' self-confidence to emulate and internalize positive behaviors.[51]. Thus, character education is not only normative, but also applicable and contextual according to the needs of the times.[52], [53].

This multidisciplinary approach is increasingly relevant in the digital age, where students are exposed to diverse behavioral models from social media and virtual environments. Islamic Religious Education teachers are required not only to understand Islamic values but also to master psychological theory and educational technology to serve as adaptive and inspiring role models.[54]. Collaboration between theory and practice, between spiritual values and scientific approaches, is the key to building a generation with strong character, intelligence, and global competitiveness.[55], [56].

2. METHOD

This study uses a literature study method (library research) with a qualitative approach to examine the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as role models (uswatun hasanah) in the era of disruption, viewed from the perspective of psychology and Islamic education. Literature study was chosen because it allows researchers to collect, analyze, and synthesize data from various relevant library sources, such as books, journal articles, documents, and other scientific sources. This approach is very important in Islamic education research, because it provides a strong theoretical foundation, identifies research trends, and finds gaps in the existing literature.[57], [58], [59].

The research process began with the identification of the topic and focus of the study, namely the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers' role models in shaping students' character and spirituality in the digital era. Next, the researcher conducted a systematic literature search through academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and national databases, using relevant keywords and Boolean operators to narrow the search results.[60], [61], [62].

3. RESULTS

The concept of usawatun hasanah (noble role models) in Islamic education has a very strong Qur'anic foundation, especially in

QS. Al-Ahzab: 21 ("Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example...") and QS. Al-Qalam: 4 ("And indeed, you are of a great moral character"). These verses emphasize that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the main figure who must be used as a model in the formation of the character and morals of students. In the Islamic educational tradition, teachers are positioned as murabbi educators who not only transfer knowledge, but also instill values, guide spirituality, and serve as real role models in everyday behavior.

3.1 The Concept of Usawatun Hasanah in Islamic Education and Its Relevance to Psychological Theory

3.1.1 Islamic Education Perspective

Recent research confirms that Islamic education places role models as the primary method for internalizing values. The Prophet Muhammad's exemplary behavior, reflected in his morals, patience, honesty, and social concern, serves as the primary standard for Islamic Education teachers in shaping students' character. [63], [64]. Teachers as murabbi are expected to be able to display consistency between words and actions, so that they become figures who are respected and imitated by students.[65] Hasan Langgulung, for example, emphasized that Islamic education must pay attention to the psychological, spiritual, and social aspects of students, and place teachers as the main role models in the educational process.[66].

3.1.2 The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers as Uswatun Hasanah in the Era of Disruption

From a psychological perspective, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory is highly relevant to understanding the mechanisms of role modeling in Islamic education. Bandura asserts that the learning process occurs through observational learning, in which individuals imitate the behavior of models deemed significant.[67] This process involves four main stages: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation.[68].

- Attention: Students will pay attention to teacher behavior that is considered important or interesting.
- Retention: Students retain information about the behavior in memory.
- Reproduction: Students try to imitate the behavior that has been observed.
- Motivation: Students are motivated to imitate if the behavior is reinforced, such as with praise or awards.

Research at Al-Wafa Junior High School in Ciwidey, Bandung, shows that applying Bandura's theory to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning effectively increases students' readiness and motivation to learn. Teachers with strong pedagogical, professional, and social competencies are able to serve as role models that students observe and imitate. Reinforcement in the form of rewards and punishments has also been shown to increase students' motivation to imitate positive behavior.[69].

3.1.3 Convergence

The convergence between the concept of usawatun hasanah and Bandura's social learning theory is evident in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) practices. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers serve as primary role models, observed and imitated by students. The Islamic values taught by teachers serve as reinforcement or motivation for students to emulate good behavior.[70] Research in various elementary and secondary schools shows that habituation strategies, contextual learning, and teacher role models are effective in fostering students' morals and religious character.[71], [72].

Furthermore, research also highlights the importance of self-efficacy in both teachers and students. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more creative and adaptive in developing learning methods, while students with high self-efficacy are more likely to imitate and internalize positive behaviors.[73], [74]. Reinforcement and punishment applied proportionally can increase students' motivation to behave according to Islamic values.[75].

3.2 The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers as Usawatun Hasanah in the Era of Disruption

3.2.1 Role Model in Morals and Character (Moral Modeling)

Recent research confirms that the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as usawatun hasanah—primary role models in morals and character—is increasingly vital in this disruptive era marked by technological advances, globalization, and rapid social change. PAI teachers function not only as instructors of religious material but also as moral models who shape students' personalities through exemplary behavior in honesty, integrity, empathy, and tolerance in daily interactions.[76].

Instilling the value of honesty is a key focus in character education. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers serve as role models, demonstrating honesty in their words and actions, both inside and outside the classroom. A study at Muhammadiyah Vocational High School in Denpasar, for example, showed that PAI teachers actively instilled the value of honesty through habituation, learning contracts, and discipline, as well as acting as role models in avoiding academic dishonesty practices such as cheating and plagiarism.[77]. Teachers' exemplary behavior in maintaining integrity, such as arriving on time, keeping promises, and being fair, has been proven to be effective in forming the character of honest and responsible students.[78].

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also instill the values of empathy and social awareness through direct interactions, case discussions, and social practices. Research at MTs Nurul Iman and SDN Kalisari II Karawang shows that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers use discussion methods, case studies, and social activities to foster empathy, mutual respect, and concern for others. Teachers who are able to demonstrate empathy when dealing with student problems, listening to complaints, and providing solutions wisely inspire students to imitate similar behavior.[79].

In a pluralistic society, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a crucial role in instilling the values of tolerance and inclusivity. Studies in secondary schools and Islamic schools show that PAI teachers integrate tolerance values into their teaching, both through teaching materials, interfaith discussions, and hands-on practice in school life.[80]. Islamic Religious Education teachers are role models in respecting differences, teaching the importance of peaceful coexistence, and rejecting all forms of discrimination.[81] These values are crucial for building social harmony in a digital age prone to polarization and intolerance.

3.2.2 Role Model in Digital Literacy and Ethics

Recent research confirms that the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as *usawatun hasanah* (good teachers) in the era of disruption is not limited to exemplifying conventional morals, but is also crucial in shaping students' digital literacy and ethics. PAI teachers are now expected to be digital role models—demonstrating wise use of social media, being critical of hoaxes, and actively disseminating positive content in accordance with Islamic values.[82], [83], [84].

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in guiding students to use social media productively and responsibly. Research shows that Islamic Religious Education teachers who actively utilize platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok for religious learning are able to increase students' motivation, interest in learning, and expand their access to credible Islamic resources.[85] Teachers also serve as role models in limiting the consumption of negative content, educating students about digital privacy, and reminding them of the importance of good communication etiquette in cyberspace.[86].

One of the main challenges in the digital era is the rise of hoaxes and provocative content. Islamic Religious Education teachers act as "moral filters," equipping students with *tabayyun* (information verification) and critical

thinking skills before sharing or believing information on social media. A study on the *Tabayyun.id* platform, for example, showed that integrating Islamic values into digital literacy significantly increased the habit of verifying information and reduced the spread of hoaxes among students.[87], [88] Islamic Religious Education teachers also teach students to avoid negative behavior such as gossip, slander, and cyberbullying, and instill digital ethics that align with Islamic teachings.[89].

Creative Islamic Education teachers utilize digital media to disseminate positive content, such as learning videos, podcasts, infographics, and online discussions about Islamic values.[90] This innovation not only improves the quality of learning, but also creates a healthy and inspiring digital culture in the school environment.[91] Islamic Religious Education teachers also encourage students to actively create and share educational content, so that they become not only consumers but also producers of positive content.[92], [93].

3.2.3 Role Model in Lifelong Learning (Lifelong Learner)

Recent research confirms that the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as *usawatun hasanah* (good role models) in the era of disruption lies not only in their moral and spiritual exemplars, but also in their ability to serve as role models in lifelong learning. PAI teachers are expected to demonstrate an open attitude to new knowledge, adapt to innovative learning methods, and be humble in the teaching and learning process, thereby inspiring students to continue learning and developing amidst the rapid changes of the times.[94].

As lifelong learners, Islamic Education teachers are required to continually update their knowledge and skills, both in the fields of Islam and educational technology. Research shows that teachers who actively participate in training, seminars, and professional development are able to improve the quality of their learning and the relevance of the material they teach.[95] In the era of the

Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0, Islamic Education teachers must be open to various sources of knowledge, both from classical and digital literature, and be able to integrate Islamic values with developments in science and technology.[96] This open attitude is also reflected in the teacher's willingness to accept input, engage in self-reflection, and collaborate with colleagues to improve the learning process.[97].

Adapting to innovative learning methods is one of the main indicators of lifelong learners. Innovative Islamic Education teachers utilize digital technology, project-based learning methods, group discussions, simulations, and contextual learning to increase student participation and creativity.[98] Studies in various schools show that the use of digital media, learning applications, and online platforms not only increases students' motivation to learn, but also expands access to credible Islamic sources.[99] Adaptive Islamic Education teachers are also able to adjust learning strategies to students' needs and characteristics, and respond to the challenges of globalization and technological disruption with creative solutions.[100].

Humility (tawadhu') is an important characteristic that Islamic Education teachers must possess as *usawatun hasanah* (good teachers). Research confirms that humble teachers are not afraid to admit limitations, are open to criticism, and are willing to learn from anyone, including students.[101] This attitude creates an inclusive, dialogical, and mutually respectful learning atmosphere, so that students feel comfortable asking questions, discussing, and developing their potential.[102] Teachers who consistently demonstrate humility in daily interactions will be real role models for students, fostering a spirit of lifelong learning.

3.2.4 Role Model in Mental and Spiritual Resilience (Resilience)

Recent research confirms that the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as *usawatun hasanah* (good role models) in the era of disruption is vital in building

students' mental and spiritual resilience. PAI teachers serve not only as instructors but also as role models who instill optimism, patience (*as-shabr*), and trust in God in facing life's challenges and the pressures of the times.[103], [104].

Islamic Religious Education teachers with strong personality competencies are able to foster students' self-confidence, commitment, self-control, and composure in facing academic and social challenges. A study at SMPN 3 Katingan Hilir showed that 78% of student interactions showed improved self-regulation after guidance from Islamic Religious Education teachers, with the values of patience and trust in God serving as key psychological anchors when facing difficulties.[105]. Islamic Religious Education teachers exemplify an optimistic and resilient attitude, and teach that every challenge is an opportunity to grow spiritually, in line with the principle of faith-based coping.[106].

Islamic Religious Education teachers guide students through lectures, discussions, counseling, and collective worship practices such as congregational prayer, *dhikr*, and communal prayer. This approach effectively helps students manage emotions, build self-confidence, and develop positive behaviors. For students from troubled family backgrounds, Islamic Religious Education teachers build coping mechanisms by instilling a positive attitude, self-control, patience, and sincerity, as well as fostering spiritual activities such as *dhikr* and reading the Quran.[107]. The stories of the Prophet and his friends are also used to instill the values of patience and trust in facing life's trials[108].

Research confirms that integrating Islamic values such as patience, trust in God, gratitude, and sincerity is highly effective in strengthening students' mental resilience. These values help them manage stress, anxiety, and the pressures of life, as well as fostering inner balance.[109]. Islamic Religious Education teachers also act as spiritual mentors who connect the subject matter with the students' inner experiences, creating a supportive and meaningful

learning environment.[110]. A psycho-theological learning model that combines theological reflection, spiritual guidance, and worship practices has been proven to increase students' resilience, optimism, and emotional stability. [111].

3.3 Challenges Faced by Islamic Education Teachers

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in the era of disruption face complex external and internal challenges, demanding continuous adaptation and innovation to remain relevant in shaping students' character. Key external challenges include the onslaught of global values that often conflict with Islamic morals, the powerful influence of peer groups and social media, and diverse parenting styles.

Globalization and advances in information technology accelerate the flow of new values that are not always in line with Islamic principles, so that students are easily exposed to content that can weaken their Islamic identity.[112], [113]Islamic Religious Education teachers must be able to act as filters and guides, equipping students with critical understanding so they can sort information and adhere to Islamic values amidst the strong currents of globalization.[114]The influence of peer groups and social media is also significant, where social interactions in both the virtual and real world can shape students' behavior, mindsets, and even morals. Social media, in addition to being a learning tool, is also a source of distraction and the potential for spreading values that conflict with Islamic teachings.[115].

Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to be creative in utilizing social media as a medium for preaching and learning, while also educating students about digital ethics and media literacy.[116]Meanwhile, diverse parenting styles, ranging from authoritarian to permissive, influence students' readiness to receive religious education at school. Islamic Religious Education teachers often have to fill the void in parents' role in character

formation, especially for students who come from families with limited attention or less conducive environments.[117]The internal challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers are no less severe, including limited digital-pedagogical competencies, high workloads, and psychological exhaustion (burnout).

Many Islamic Education (PAI) teachers still struggle to integrate digital technology into their lessons due to a lack of training, limited infrastructure, and resistance to change. Yet, mastery of technology is crucial for creating interactive, effective, and modern learning.[118].

Furthermore, the high workload resulting from administrative demands, classroom management, and expectations of being a moral role model often leads to teachers experiencing stress and psychological exhaustion. This burnout can reduce motivation, reduce the quality of teaching, and even impact teacher-student relationships.[119], [120]To address these challenges, various strategies have been identified in the literature. Strengthening digital training, collaboration between teachers, developing learning communities, and support from educational institutions are essential to improving the digital-pedagogical competency of Islamic Religious Education teachers.[121]Teachers also need to develop psychological resilience and stress management skills to remain capable of fulfilling their role as role models for students.[122]In the context of character building, consistency between a teacher's words and behavior is the main key to ensuring that students emulate Islamic values in a real way.[123].

The integration of character values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation into the curriculum and contextual learning has been proven effective in shaping students' character. Furthermore, parental and community involvement is crucial for strengthening the synergy of character education at school and at home. Research also highlights the importance of curriculum innovation, ongoing teacher

training, and policy support that is responsive to global and local challenges.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Strategy for Strengthening the Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers as Uswatun Khasanah

Strengthening the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as role models in the era of disruption requires a comprehensive strategy encompassing self-development, innovative learning methods, building personal connections, and systemic school support. This strategy aims not only to enhance professional competence but also to strengthen teachers' spiritual, mental, and social dimensions so they can serve as relevant and inspiring role models for students.

Improving Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher competencies through digital citizenship training is crucial for facing the challenges of the digital era. This training equips teachers with digital literacy skills, media ethics, and the use of technology in learning, enabling them to guide students to become responsible and ethical digital citizens.[124]. In addition, an understanding of contemporary adolescent developmental psychology is key to enabling teachers to respond to the behavioral dynamics, emotional needs, and moral challenges faced by today's students.[125]Self-development also includes spiritual and mental strengthening through self-reflection, such as dhikr, sunnah prayers, and self-reflection, which have been proven to increase teachers' sincerity, patience, and resilience in carrying out their educational duties.[126]Teachers who have high spirituality tend to be more disciplined, responsible, and able to provide effective moral guidance to students.[127].

Innovation in learning methods is a key requirement for effective communication of Islamic Religious Education teachers' role models in the digital age. The use of digital media such as inspirational videos, creative Islamic preaching content, and interactive learning apps has been shown to increase student

motivation, understanding, and engagement in religious learning.[128]Teachers who are able to package exemplary values in digital format not only expand the reach of preaching, but also adapt to the learning styles of the millennial and Z generations who are very familiar with technology.[129]. In addition, the integration of contextual learning that links religious material to everyday life, as well as the use of discussion, project, and simulation methods, can strengthen the internalization of Islamic values in students.[130]This innovation also encourages students to emulate the teacher's behavior, as emphasized in Bandura's social learning theory, where students learn through observation and imitation of relevant models.[131].

Personal connections between teachers and students are a crucial foundation for building trust, motivation, and positive emotional bonds. Islamic Religious Education teachers need to build rapport through empathetic communication, individual approaches, and openness, both in the real world and online.[132]. Effective interpersonal communication, both verbal and nonverbal, such as praise, advice, and positive expressions, can create an inclusive and conducive learning atmosphere.[133]. Furthermore, collaboration with guidance and counseling (BK) teachers is highly strategic in addressing students' psychological, social, and moral issues. The synergy between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and BK teachers enables comprehensive case management, from providing motivation and counseling to fostering religious character through joint programs. This collaboration also strengthens the role of teachers as facilitators, mentors, and role models in shaping students' character holistically.

Systemic support from the school is crucial to the success of the strategy to strengthen the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as good role models. Creating a school culture that is religious, disciplined, tolerant, and collaborative creates an ecosystem that supports exemplary

practices. School programs such as fostering worship, religious activities, literacy, and mutual cooperation must involve the entire school community, including the principal, teachers, staff, and parents.[134]. Appreciation and recognition for teachers who are role models, both in formal and informal forms, can increase teacher motivation and professionalism.[135]. Furthermore, ongoing training, the provision of digital resources, and policies responsive to teacher needs are key supporting factors. This support also includes advocacy to increase social recognition of the strategic role of Islamic Education teachers in shaping the nation's character.

Strategies to strengthen the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as role models must integrate spirituality, professional competence, and learning innovation. Teachers who maintain sincerity of intention, strengthen their spirituality through self-reflection, and continuously develop digital and pedagogical competencies will be better prepared to face the challenges of the disruptive era.[136]. Innovation in learning methods utilizing digital media and contextual approaches strengthens the appeal and effectiveness of teacher role models. Meanwhile, building personal connections and collaboration with the guidance and counseling department, along with systemic school support, creates an educational ecosystem conducive to student character development.[137].

4.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study of the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as role models (uswatun hasanah) in the era of disruption has significant theoretical and practical implications, particularly in enriching the discourse on the integration of psychology and Islamic education to address contemporary educational issues. The theoretical implications lie in strengthening the conceptual foundation and developing integrative models that combine modern psychological principles with Islamic educational values and methodologies.

Practically, the results of this study serve as an important reference for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, educational institutions (LPTK), and policymakers in designing continuing professional development (PKB) programs that are relevant and responsive to current needs.

The integration of psychology and Islamic education broadens scientific horizons by offering a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and addressing educational challenges. Recent studies confirm that combining psychology—particularly developmental, educational, and positive psychology—with Islamic education can produce a more holistic, adaptive, and contextual learning model.[138] This integration not only enriches Islamic educational theory with scientific perspectives on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of students, but also provides a new framework for developing curricula, learning strategies, and assessments that are more relevant to the needs of today's students.[139].

Conceptually, this integration encourages the emergence of educational models that emphasize the importance of balanced intellectual, spiritual, and emotional development. For example, the application of multiple intelligences (MI) theory in Islamic education opens up opportunities to identify and develop each student's unique potential while simultaneously instilling contextual Islamic values.[140]. In addition, the integration of positive psychology in Islamic education has been shown to improve students' psychological well-being and academic achievement through learning strategies that foster optimism, meaning in life, and happiness.[141] Another study highlighted the importance of developmental psychology principles in designing Islamic Education curriculum, so that learning materials and methods are appropriate to the developmental stages of students.[142].

Another theoretical implication is the strengthening of a more inclusive and adaptive Islamic education paradigm to the changing times. The integration of

psychology and Islamic education enables the development of a curriculum that is responsive to students' individual, social, and cultural needs and able to address the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and societal pluralism.[143].

Practically, the results of this study serve as an important reference for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, LPTK (Institutional Training Institutions), and policymakers in designing and implementing relevant continuing professional development (PKB) programs. First, for PAI teachers, the integration of psychology and Islamic education provides a foundation for continuously improving pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies.[144] Teachers are encouraged to participate in training that combines digital literacy, developmental psychology, and innovative learning strategies based on Islamic values, so they can deliver inspiring, inclusive, and adaptive learning.[145].

Second, for LPTK, the results of this study will be the basis for designing an integrative teacher education curriculum, emphasizing the importance of mastering educational psychology, learning technology, and Islamic values simultaneously.[146] LPTK can develop training, workshop, and mentoring programs that emphasize collaboration between lecturers, practitioners, and educational psychologists to equip prospective teachers with competencies relevant to the challenges of the 21st century.[147]. In addition, LPTK can also adopt blended learning and experiential learning-based training models to increase the effectiveness of teacher professional development.[148].

Third, for policy makers, this study provides strategic recommendations for formulating educational policies that support the integration of psychology and Islamic education in curriculum development, assessment, and teacher development systems.[149] Policies that respond to the needs of teachers and students, such as providing ongoing training, incentives, and digital infrastructure support, are crucial for

improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. Furthermore, policies that encourage collaboration between schools, LPTKs (Institutions for Islamic Education), and professional communities can strengthen the educational ecosystem that supports the development of Islamic Education teacher character and competence.[150].

5. CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a central and strategic role as role models (*uswatun hasanah*) in shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of students amidst the challenges of the disruptive era characterized by technological advances, globalization of values, and rapid social change. Literature studies from the perspective of psychology and Islamic education confirm that the effectiveness of the role of PAI teachers as role models is greatly influenced by the integration of professional competence, personality, and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the times.

Psychologically, the role model of Islamic Religious Education teachers has proven to be the most effective method for internalizing Islamic values in students. The religious learning process takes place not only cognitively, but also affectively and psychomotorically, with students imitating the teacher's behavior, attitudes, and habits in their daily lives. Islamic Religious Education teachers who are consistent between words and actions, disciplined, honest, patient, and compassionate, are more easily emulated by students, allowing Islamic values to be internalized naturally and sustainably. This role model is also strengthened by the application of principles of educational psychology, such as providing educational rewards and punishments, empathetic communication, and an individual approach that takes into account students' developmental needs.

In the digital era, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers face new challenges in the form of a rapid flow of information, the influence of social media, and changing

patterns of social interaction that can threaten students' moral integrity and religious identity. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are required to be adaptive and innovative in utilizing technology as a medium for learning and preaching, without losing the essence of the Islamic values they teach. The use of digital media, inspirational videos, and creative content based on Islamic values are important strategies for reaching and positively influencing students. Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must also be able to build personal connections (rapport) with students, both in person and online, and collaborate with other teachers, parents, and the community to create an educational ecosystem conducive to character building.

From an Islamic education perspective, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as role models is not limited to delivering teaching materials, but also serves as spiritual guides, motivators, facilitators, and evaluators in the process of character building for students. Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to instill the values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy through habituation, contextual learning, and the integration of Islamic values into all school activities. Research also shows that the success of character building is greatly influenced by the synergy between teachers, schools, families, and the social environment. Support from school policies, a character-based curriculum, and ongoing teacher training are key supporting factors in strengthening the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as role models.

The practical implication of these findings is the need to strengthen continuing professional development (PKB) programs for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, emphasizing the integration of pedagogical, psychological, and spiritual competencies. PAI teachers need to be equipped with training in digital literacy,

adolescent developmental psychology, and innovative learning strategies relevant to current needs. Furthermore, spiritual and mental strengthening through riyadhah nafsiyah (self-reflection), habituation of worship, and self-reflection are crucial for maintaining teachers' integrity and moral resilience in facing the pressures and challenges of the profession. Schools also need to create a culture that supports exemplary practices, recognizes exemplary teachers, and encourages collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the community.

Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on integrating psychology and Islamic education to address contemporary educational challenges, particularly in the context of character formation and strengthening students' religious identity. This integration results in a more holistic, adaptive, and relevant educational model to the challenges of globalization and digitalization. Practically, the results of this study serve as an important reference for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, educational institutions (LPTK), and policymakers in designing teacher professional development programs, character-based curricula, and educational policies responsive to current needs.

Thus, it can be concluded that the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as role models (*uswatun hasanah*) in the era of disruption is crucial in shaping students' character, morals, and spirituality. The success of this role is largely determined by the integration of professional competence, personality, technological adaptation, and systemic support from schools and the community. Strengthening training programs, learning innovation, and cross-sector collaboration are key to strengthening the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as primary role models for the younger generation of Muslims who are characterized, resilient, and adaptable to changing times.

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