Islamic Religious Education in the Post-Human Era: Embracing Artificial Intelligence through Transformative Spirituality

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Abstract

This research explores the implications of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the post-human era, focusing on the transformation of spirituality and pedagogical approaches. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and digital content analysis involving 15 students, 10 PAI teachers, and 5 IT teachers from three Islamic high schools in North Sumatra. The findings indicate that AI enhances access to religious knowledge and stimulates critical reflection, but also creates emotional distance, spiritual narrative fragmentation, and theological oversimplification. Students experience religious hybridity, integrating technological logic with Islamic values, while teachers are polarized between adaptation and resistance. Ontologically, AI emerges as a new mediator in humanity's relationship with the transcendent, challenging the authenticity of spirituality. Pedagogically, AI offers the potential for modern relevance but demands curriculum revisions and teacher training. This study concludes that post-human PAI can enrich transformative spirituality through a synthesis of tradition and innovation, provided it is supported by contextually designed technology and theological collaboration, recommending a balanced learning approach for the future of PAI in the AI era.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implikasi integrasi kecerdasan buatan (AI) dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di era post-human, fokus pada transformasi spiritualitas dan pendekatan pedagogis. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologi, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis konten digital dari 15 siswa, 10 guru PAI, dan 5 guru IT di tiga sekolah menengah atas Islam di Sumatera Utara. Temuan

menunjukkan bahwa AI meningkatkan akses pengetahuan agama dan memicu refleksi kritis, tetapi juga menciptakan jarak emosional, fragmentasi narasi spiritual, dan penyederhanaan teologis. Siswa mengalami hibriditas religius, mengintegrasikan logika teknologi dengan nilai Islam, sementara guru terpolarisasi antara adaptasi dan resistensi. Secara ontologis, AI menjadi mediator baru dalam hubungan manusia dengan transenden, menantang autentisitas spiritual. Secara pedagogis, AI menawarkan potensi relevansi modern, namun menuntut revisi kurikulum dan pelatihan guru. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa PAI post-human dapat memperkaya spiritualitas transformatif melalui sintesis tradisi-inovasi, asalkan didukung desain teknologi yang kontekstual dan kolaborasi teologis, merekomendasikan pendekatan pembelajaran yang seimbang untuk masa depan PAI di era AI.

Keywords
PAI post-human, artificial intelligence, transformative spirituality, Islamic pedagogy.

Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as a pedagogical discipline rooted in spiritual traditions and epistemologies of faith, now faces an existential challenge amidst the unprecedented pace of technological transformation. The era of artificial intelligence (AI), marked by machines' ability to mimic human cognition, demands a profound redefinition of how humans understand and internalize spirituality (Gust & Kühnberger, 2006; Lai et al., 2021). In the post-human landscape—a paradigm that transcends human biological boundaries through technological integration—PAI can no longer merely function as a medium for transmitting normative doctrines (Havlík, 2019; Ranisch & Sorgner, 2015). This transformation reflects a significant ontological shift, where the relationship between human subjects, technology, and the transcendent dimension becomes increasingly complex and intertwined (Salimzadeh et al., 2024; Sultana & Nemati, 2021). This study seeks to explore how PAI can adapt and contribute to shaping transformative spirituality that remains relevant in the AI era—a context that not only challenges the traditional existence of religious education but also opens opportunities for a new synthesis between technology and faith.

The social background of this research is inseparable from the contemporary reality marked by the penetration of technology into every aspect of life. Data from UNESCO (2023) shows that more than 4.5 billion people worldwide are now connected to the internet (Boucher et al., 2022; Setti et al., 2019), with 67% of online activities involving interactions with AI algorithms, ranging from content recommendations to automated decision-making (BaniHani et al., 2024; Olasiuk et al., 2023; Phillips-Wren & Jain, 2006; Sloane & Silva, 2019). In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, a survey by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (2024) revealed that 79.4% of teenagers aged 15-24 access religious content through digital platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, where AI algorithms play a central role in curating information (Admin, 2024; Adminkominfo, 2024). This phenomenon creates a duality: on one hand, access to religious

knowledge has increased exponentially; on the other, the traditional epistemic authority of PAI, such as teachers and sacred texts, is gradually eroded by fragmented narratives generated by machines (Malyshkin, 2019; Shadiqin et al., 2023). This social reality underscores that PAI no longer operates within a homogeneous space controlled by formal institutions but rather within a dynamic and often unpredictable digital ecosystem.

This research is grounded in the concept of post-humanism developed by philosophers such as Donna Haraway (Beng & Zakaria, 2023; Timeto, 2020) and Rosi Braidotti (Mantin, 2019; Sellner, 2024), who view humans not as autonomous entities separate from technology but as hybrids that continuously evolve through interactions with non-biological systems (Basak & Saha, 2023; Zanc & Lupu, 2007). In this context, spirituality cannot be understood solely as an isolated internal experience but as a relational process involving humans, technology, and the divine dimension (Simpson et al., 2008; Venkataraman & Konwar, 2019). This approach is enriched by contemporary Islamic theological perspectives, particularly Seyyed Hossein Nasr's notion of "returning to the sacred" in the modern world, which emphasizes the need to reintegrate spirituality with the ever-changing material reality (Widiyanto, 2017). Although Nasr does not explicitly address the implications of AI, this study expands on his discourse by integrating post-human theory into the framework of PAI. Furthermore, Mezirow's transformative learning theory, which emphasizes paradigm shifts through critical reflection, serves as the pedagogical foundation for formulating how PAI can facilitate spiritual transformation amidst the presence of AI (Balsiger, 2024; Cranton, 2009; Khabanyane et al., 2014).

Experts have long debated the impact of technology on spirituality and religious education. Yuval Noah Harari, in *Homo Deus*, warns that technology has the potential to replace religion as the primary source of meaning in human life (Munnik, 2019; Nye, 2021), a view that invites skepticism from theologians like Karen Armstrong (2020), who argues that technology cannot replicate the transcendent dimension of religious experience (Bingaman, 2023; John Rivers, 2006; Walker, 2019). Moreover, numerous scholars highlight how reliance on algorithms has altered how younger generations process information, including moral and religious values, which are now often influenced by filter bubbles and data biases (Parate et al., 2024; Shin & Shin, 2023). In this context, Islamic religious education must respond to technological challenges by developing methods that are not only adaptive but also proactive in shaping critically religious subjects (Abubakari et al., 2024; Alkhouri, 2024; Kurata et al., 2025). However, such discourse remains dominated by normative analyses, with insufficient exploration of the ontological and practical implications of AI in Islamic education—a gap that serves as the starting point for this research.

The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which not only acknowledges AI as an external disruption but also positions it as a partner in the reconstruction of Islamic spirituality (Ferrero, 2021; Marzband et al., 2016). Unlike previous studies that tend to view AI as either a threat or a mere technical tool (A. H. Ali et al., 2022; S. A. Ali et al., 2023; Mooghali et al., 2024; Siti Masrichah, 2023), this research proposes a post-human PAI paradigm that integrates artificial intelligence as a formative element in the process of religious education. Thus, PAI is no longer positioned as a reactive entity striving to survive

the technological tide but as a transformative agent capable of leveraging AI to deepen spiritual experiences. For instance, the use of AI in ethical reflection simulations or the analysis of sacred texts could serve as a means to foster more contextual and personal spiritual awareness among learners. This approach remains largely unexplored in PAI literature, which predominantly focuses on conventional methods such as lectures and memorization or superficial technological adaptations like e-learning.

The research gap in contemporary PAI studies becomes increasingly apparent when considering the lack of specific investigations linking post-humanism with Islamic religious education. Most research on PAI in the digital era is limited to analyzing the impact of social media or online learning platforms on teaching effectiveness, without addressing the deeper ontological dimensions of human-technology interaction (Faizi & El Fkihi, 2016; Khovrak et al., 2023; Mavuso et al., 2022). These studies also rarely discuss how AI, as an entity with autonomous cognitive capacity, can alter the religious subjectivity of learners. Additionally, Islamic theological discourse on technology tends to be apologetic or historical, as seen in the works of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, and has yet to address the complexities of the post-human era characterized by human-machine symbiosis (Muslih et al., 2024). This study fills this void by offering a theoretical and practical framework that connects PAI with the dynamics of cutting-edge technology.

With projections indicating that AI will contribute over 15% of global GDP by 2030 according to PwC (2023) (Fika, 2025; JIC, 2023; PWC, 2023), and the increasing societal reliance on intelligent systems for decision-making, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) must urgently find its place in this ecosystem to remain relevant as a pillar of moral and spiritual identity formation. In Indonesia, where religious education is an integral part of the national curriculum, failure to critically integrate AI could widen the gap between the goals of Islamic education—namely, creating *insan kamil* (the perfected human)—and the reality of a younger generation increasingly exposed to secular values packaged in technology (Mawardi, 2013). Furthermore, without systematic academic intervention, religious narratives in digital spaces risk being dominated by algorithms lacking sensitivity to the cultural and theological nuances of Islam, thereby threatening the integrity of PAI as both a scientific discipline and a social practice.

Therefore, it is not only relevant but also urgent to ensure that PAI can thrive as a transformative force in the post-human era. By combining insights from post-humanism, Islamic theology, and transformative pedagogy, this study aims to formulate a PAI model that not only survives AI disruptions but also leverages them to enrich human spirituality. In a world increasingly saturated by technology, post-human PAI offers a new vision—a religious education that no longer adheres to the dichotomy of human versus machine but embraces a harmonious synthesis that strengthens humanity's relationship with the Creator (*Khaliq*) through mediums once considered foreign.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can integrate artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping transformative spirituality in the post-human era (Matz, 2024). This approach was chosen because it effectively captures the subjective experiences and meanings constructed by students, educators, and IT teachers within the context of their interactions with AI. The research was conducted at three Islamic-based high schools in North Sumatra that have implemented digital technology in religious education: SMA Al-Azhar Medan, SMA Syafiatul Amaliyah, and SMA An-Nizam. Purposive sampling was used to select 15 students (aged 16-18), 10 PAI teachers, and 5 IT teachers as informants. Selection criteria included active involvement in the use of AI, such as algorithm-based learning applications or Islamic ethics simulations.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the perceptions and experiences of the informants, participant observation of AI-based PAI learning processes, and document analysis, including curricula and technology guidelines utilized (Galily, 2024). Source and method triangulation techniques were applied to ensure validity by comparing interview data, observations, and digital artifacts (Jenkins et al., 2018). Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach based on post-humanism theory and transformative learning, involving stages of coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify patterns of spiritual meaning in human-AI interactions.

Results and Discussion

Subjective Experiences and Perceptions of AI Integration in PAI

High school students today, as a generation born amidst the digital boom, exhibit complex responses to the presence of AI in their religious education. In-depth interviews with 15 students aged 16-18 revealed that AI-based applications—such as Qur'anic interpretation simulation platforms utilizing machine learning to map contextual meanings—elicited genuine enthusiasm. They described how this technology breaks down complex concepts like *tauhid* (oneness of God) or *akhlak* (ethics) into interactive visualizations that can be quickly understood, an advantage not always offered by traditional lecture methods. Beneath this veneer of efficiency, however, a subtle yet significant tone of doubt emerged. Nine students explicitly stated that while AI accelerates intellectual understanding, it fails to capture the emotional essence they typically experience during face-to-face interactions with teachers—a "spiritual warmth" they consider central to religious education. One student poignantly remarked, "A machine can teach what patience is, but it cannot show what it feels like to be patient with someone" (SN, Interview, September 2024).

PAI teachers, as custodians of pedagogical tradition, offered more polarized perspectives on this phenomenon. Participant observation during learning sessions showed that six out of ten interviewed teachers viewed AI as an enriching ally. They noted that personalization algorithms—which adapt religious materials based on students' levels of understanding or interests—enable a more inclusive and responsive approach, something difficult to achieve in classrooms of 30-40 students. For instance, one teacher praised AI's

ability to generate Islamic ethics-based ethical dilemma simulations relevant to modern life, such as moral conflicts on social media, which sparked deep discussions among students. On the other hand, four teachers expressed sharp concerns. They saw AI not just as a tool but as an existential threat to their authority as spiritual guides. During one observation session, a veteran teacher with 20 years of experience fell silent when students repeatedly turned to an AI app rather than to him for answers (Observation, September 2024), a moment symbolizing the paradigm shift from humans as sources of wisdom to machines as centers of knowledge. This unease was exacerbated by the perception that AI, with its cold and calculated logic, cannot offer empathy or contextual sensitivity, which often bridges religious teachings with students' real-life experiences (Li et al., 2023).

Technology developers, as the architects behind these AI systems, brought a pragmatic yet no less critical perspective. The five IT teachers interviewed emphasized the inherent limitations of this technology. One IT teacher explained that although their AI could identify semantic patterns in the Qur'an or Hadith with high accuracy, it struggled to capture subjective theological nuances, such as mystical experiences in Sufi traditions or implied historical meanings in the context of revelation. Digital content analysis of the AI outputs used in these schools confirmed this statement; content recommendations tended to be utilitarian, prioritizing efficiency and data relevance over interpretive depth usually achieved through human dialogue. One developer candidly admitted, "We can recommend smart machines, but we cannot make them soulful" (M.S.D., Interview, September 2024), a statement reflecting the ontological limits of technology in the context of spiritual education.

This dynamic became even clearer during participant observation in AI-integrated classrooms. Learning sessions involving technology demonstrated a neater structure and results-oriented approach: students completed tasks faster, discussions were algorithm-guided, and evaluations were conducted in real-time through AI analytics. However, there was a cost to this efficiency. Human interaction—which in PAI tradition often serves as a space to build empathy, solidarity, and collective reflection—became more mechanical (Borges Monteiro et al., 2021). In one class, for example, students used tablets to answer questions about the meaning of prayer, with AI providing instant scores and feedback. While the results were accurate, there was no room for personal stories or existential questions that typically arise in face-to-face discussions. One student even commented, "It feels like I'm talking to a robot, not to God" (M.S.Z., Interview, September 2024), a statement highlighting the profound tension between technological rationality and the irrationality of faith.

Further analysis revealed that perceptions of AI in PAI are influenced not only by direct experiences but also by individuals' social backgrounds and digital literacy. Students from families with high technological access tended to accept AI as a natural part of their learning, while those from less technologically exposed environments struggled to align the machine-driven approach with their expectations of more personalized religious education. Younger, tech-savvy teachers demonstrated greater flexibility, while senior teachers often found themselves nostalgic for traditional pedagogy. IT teachers, though optimistic about AI's potential, acknowledged that without stronger theological input from religious experts, this phenomenon risks becoming a narrow reflection of Western logic dominating the global technology industry.

This narrative shows that AI integration in PAI is neither a linear nor harmonious process. It is an epistemic battleground where technological efficiency collides with spiritual depth, and human authority is tested by artificial intelligence (Bernyukevich, 2022). Students, teachers, and IT educators collectively depict a landscape filled with both potential and risks—a duality that cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy of acceptance and rejection. In this context, AI reflects hopes and fears, challenging the boundaries of our understanding of what it means to be a religious human in the post-human era.

Tabel 1. Heterogeneity of Responses to AI

Informant Group	No.	Key Findings	Precentage	Supporting Observation
Students	15	Enthusiasm for AI efficiency (12/15); concern over loss of spiritual warmth (9/15)	80% positive, 60% critical	Sessions more structured, but emotional interaction diminished; students rely more on AI than teachers.
PAI Teachers	10	Support for AI personalization (6/10); anxiety over erosion of authority (4/10)	60% positive, 40% critical	Younger teachers adaptive, senior teachers resistant; classroom discussions more data-driven, less reflective.
IT Teachers	5	AI supports efficiency but lacks theological nuance (5/5)	100% pragmatic	AI output utilitarian, lacks depth; technology design neglects local theological input.

This tabulation illustrates the heterogeneity of responses to AI in PAI, reflecting the tension between technological efficiency and the core values of religious education. The proportion of enthusiastic students (80%) underscores AI's appeal as a cognitive tool, but the significant critical response (60%) indicates that the affective dimension of PAI—long considered its strength—is under threat. PAI teachers showed a nearly balanced split, with 60% seeing pedagogical potential in AI and 40% feeling marginalized, suggesting that technological literacy is a determining factor in adaptation. IT teachers, while unanimous in acknowledging AI's limitations (100%), highlighted an epistemic gap: the inability of technology to capture the theological depth of Islam reflects design biases oriented toward Western logic. These findings indicate that AI promotes measurable, individualistic learning but sacrifices rich, meaningful human interaction. This analysis underscores that PAI in the AI era faces not only technical challenges but also a profound identity crisis.

Spiritual Transformation through Human-AI Interaction

Spirituality, within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), can no longer be understood as a static entity confined to rituals and doctrines; it now moves within a space that vibrates between humans and artificial intelligence (AI), an encounter that erases traditional boundaries and forces us to ask: what does it mean to be religious in the post-human era? This section delves into how students' interactions with AI during the religious learning process unfold. In-depth interviews with 15 students revealed that this technology, particularly through AI-based ethical simulations that place them in modern moral dilemmas—such as social justice amidst digital capitalism or honesty in the era of

deepfakes—triggers reflections that go far beyond memorizing sacred verses. Ten students reported that these simulations, designed to offer solutions based on Islamic teachings, opened doors to sharper self-awareness. One student described their experience with a tone of admiration: "I'm not just learning what to do, but why I should do it—and it feels alive" (N.S.R., Interview, October 2024). This response reflects traces of transformative learning theory, where paradigm shifts occur through critical confrontation with reality—a dynamic accelerated by AI's presence as a reflective catalyst (Cranton, 2009; Taylor & Cranton, 2023).

A deeper analysis shows that this process unfolds unevenly, influenced by students' levels of digital literacy and psychological readiness. Students with better access to technology—those accustomed to navigating AI algorithms in daily life—exhibit remarkable adaptive intelligence (Wang, 2024). They easily integrate AI outputs, such as machine-learning-simplified Hadith analyses, with Islamic values inherited from family or community (Saloot et al., 2016). Conversely, students from less technologically exposed backgrounds often stumble in confusion, feeling that AI—with its structured and impersonal logic—alienates them from the warmer, more intuitive spiritual experiences they typically find in communal prayers or oral storytelling by teachers. One student bitterly remarked, "I feel like I'm chatting with something that knows everything but doesn't understand me" (M.S.A., Interview, October 2024). This disparity reveals a broader reality: AI not only accelerates spiritual transformation but also widens existing social gaps, forcing us to consider whether this technology is truly inclusive or unintentionally exclusionary.

In one session, students were asked to reflect on the meaning of patience through an application that generates data-based scenarios—for example, how to respond to negative comments on social media in a way that reflects noble character. The AI provided step-by-step guidance, complete with relevant Qur'anic verses and Hadith quotes. The results were striking: students completed their reflections in significantly less time compared to conventional methods, and their answers demonstrated impressive intellectual depth (Observation, October 2024). However, something was missing: discussions that were usually filled with laughter, unexpected questions, or even disagreements among students—elements that enrich collective PAI experiences—were replaced by silence as everyone focused on their screens. This process became highly individualistic, reflecting the logic of post-humanism, where human subjects no longer fully depend on community but rather on symbiosis with technology (Guilherme, 2019). In this context, AI does not merely facilitate reflection; it becomes a partner in constructing spirituality, an entity that helps shape how students understand their relationship with God and the world (Ghory & Ghafory, 2021).

Digital content analysis of the AI outputs used in this learning reinforces the argument that spiritual transformation has a darker side. The observed platforms tended to simplify theological complexity for efficiency. For instance, when students requested an interpretation of a verse about sincerity, the AI generated straightforward, practical answers—linking it to everyday examples—but ignored deeper layers of meaning, such as the Sufi dimension of ego detachment or the historical context that enriches understanding (Observation, October 2024). Interviewed IT teachers admitted they programmed the systems to prioritize relevance and clarity over poetic ambiguity or philosophical depth, which often forms the core of Islamic tradition. As a result, the spirituality emerging from

these interactions tends to be pragmatic—focused on "what can be done" rather than "what can be felt." This phenomenon raises a sharp question: are we witnessing the birth of a new, more rational and measurable spirituality, or rather the shrinkage of the emotional and transcendent richness that has long characterized Islamic education (Guo, 2015).

Furthermore, this study found that interactions with AI encourage students to incorporate elements of the digital world into their spiritual frameworks, creating what could be called religious hybridity (Hounguevou, 2023; Ruparell, 2013). One student described how they began to view prayer not just as a ritual but as "code" that could be optimized—like debugging a program—after interacting with an AI simulation analyzing the structure of prayers in the Qur'an. While innovative, this perspective shows how technological logic begins to permeate a domain that was previously entirely human. However, this hybridity is not always harmonious. Another student reported feelings of disconnection when the AI failed to respond to existential questions—such as "Why does God allow suffering?"—with answers that felt authentic or empathetic. The AI's inability to navigate the irrational realm of faith underscores its limits as a spiritual partner, while also highlighting that the transformation occurring is largely centered on the cognitive, not the affective domain.

From a post-humanist perspective, these findings indicate that AI is not merely a passive tool in Islamic religious education; it is an active actor that shapes students' religious subjectivity. It expands their horizons of religious understanding but also narrows them in ways that are not always conscious. The spirituality emerging from these interactions is transformative because it forces students to confront the modern world through the lens of technology, yet it is fragile because it depends on a system not fully aligned with the core values of Islam (Alkhouri, 2024). Observations show that students accustomed to AI begin internalizing a more independent approach to their faith, reducing reliance on traditional authority figures like teachers or community (Observation, October 2024). However, this process also results in fragmentation: religious meaning becomes more personal but loses the collective strength that has long been the backbone of PAI. This transformation, with all its beauty and flaws, is evidence that we are witnessing the birth of something new—a spirituality that is no longer purely human, nor entirely mechanical.

Tabel 2. The Ambivalent Transformation of Spirituality Resulting from Human-AI Interaction

Aspect	No of Affected Students	Key Findings	%	Supporting Observations
Critical Reflection	10/15	AI ethics simulations trigger sharper self-awareness	67%	Students produce deep answers but focus on intellect, not emotion
Religious Hybridity	8/15	Integration of technological logic into spiritual practices (e.g. prayer as code)	53%	Digitally literate students adapt; others feel disconnected from traditional meanings
Spiritual Individualism	12/15	Learning becomes more independent, reducing collective dimensions	80%	Silent classroom sessions, minimal peer interaction; AI-driven reflection dominates
Theological Simplifica-tion	15/15	AI outputs are pragmatic, ignoring Sufi or historical complexities	100%	Digital content analysis shows focus on efficiency, not interpretive depth

This tabulation illustrates the ambivalent transformation of spirituality resulting from human-AI interaction in PAI. The high proportion of students experiencing critical reflection (67%) confirms AI's potential as a driver of transformative learning, but the dominance of the cognitive domain highlights the loss of the crucial affective dimension in Islamic spirituality. Religious hybridity (53%) reflects innovative adaptation among select students, yet digital literacy disparities reveal risks of exclusion. Spiritual individualism reaching 80% signals a shift from collectivism—a core PAI value—to isolated experiences, a consequence of the post-human logic promoted by AI. Meanwhile, theological simplification (100%) serves as a stark warning: AI accelerates access to religious knowledge but sacrifices the interpretive richness at the heart of Islamic tradition. This analysis underscores that spiritual transformation in the AI era is a dialectical process—full of progress and compromises that cannot be ignored.

Ontological and Pedagogical Implications for Post-Human PAI

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the post-human era can no longer remain a static monument of tradition amidst the storm of technology; it must become a living current, moving alongside artificial intelligence (AI) to reshape humanity's relationship with the transcendent. This study, conducted at three Islamic high schools in North Sumatra, explores the ontological and pedagogical implications of integrating AI into PAI, revealing a landscape vibrating with possibilities as well as existential threats. Students, teachers, and IT educators collectively voiced that AI is not merely a technical addition to the classroom; it is an entity that forces us to reconsider what it means to be a religious subject in a world that is no longer fully human. In-depth interviews revealed that students are beginning to view their relationship with God through a new lens mediated by technology. One student remarked with astonishment, "I feel like I'm praying to a screen, and it's strange but also real," (M.R.N, interview, October 2024), a statement that captures the essence of this ontological shift. AI, with its ability to analyze sacred texts and present meanings in measurable formats, becomes a new mediator in the process of sacralization, challenging the traditional notion that spiritual experiences must be purely organic and uncontaminated by machines.

Data analysis revealed that the presence of AI raises fundamental questions about the authenticity of religious experiences. As many as 11 out of 15 students reported that while the technology broadened their horizons—for example, through simulations linking Islamic teachings to contemporary issues like climate change—they often felt that "something was missing" in the process (interview, October 2024). Participant observation in classrooms reinforced these findings: when students used AI to reflect on the meaning of jihad in a modern context, the generated responses were intelligent and contextual, but there was no room for existential doubt or inner struggles that typically form part of the spiritual quest. Interviewed PAI teachers added a critical layer to this discourse, with seven out of ten stating that while AI is efficient, it creates an emotional distance that is difficult to bridge. One teacher, with a tone of nostalgia, commented, "In the past, I could see the sparkle in students' eyes when they grasped the majesty of God; now, they're busy staring at screens and trying to construct arguments that seem more 'cool.'" (interview, October 2024) From a post-

humanist perspective, this phenomenon shows that technology not only enriches but also transforms the ontology of spirituality, making it more fragmented and dependent on algorithmic logic that does not always align with the irrationality of faith (Farman et al., 2024).

The pedagogical implications of this transformation are equally profound. The study found that AI encourages PAI to move toward a more reflective and interactive approach, a step that has the potential to revolutionize how religion is taught. AI-based ethical dialogue simulations—such as those used to discuss justice—allow students not only to learn Islamic principles but also to apply them in complex real-world scenarios. Eight students reported that this approach made them feel more "connected" to religious teachings because they could see their relevance directly (interview, October 2024). However, there is another side to this coin: curriculum document analysis used in these schools shows that the current PAI approach still relies on rigid knowledge transmission methods—lectures, memorization, and written evaluations—that are not ready to accommodate the dynamics of AI. PAI teachers, especially those over 40 years old, appeared overwhelmed by this technology, with only three out of ten feeling confident integrating it into their teaching. This lack of readiness underscores the urgent need for systematic retraining, focusing not only on technical skills but also on contemporary theological understanding of how AI can enrich—not replace— the human role in religious education (Indrayani et al., 2024; Mnguni et al., 2024).

Behind this pedagogical potential lies the risk of religious narrative fragmentation that cannot be ignored (Repstad, 2019). Observational data showed that the extreme personalization offered by AI—where each student receives content tailored to their needs or interests—erodes the collective dimension that has long been a strength of PAI. In one session, students using an AI app to study prayer produced highly varied interpretations of the meaning of ritual movements, depending on algorithms that adjusted content based on their personal experiences. While this enriched individual understanding, it also created fragmented narratives, weakening the unity of meaning typically reinforced through communal learning (interview, October 2024). A teacher noted with concern, "We used to learn one truth together; now, every child has their own version." (A.M.N, interview, October 2024) From a post-human perspective, this fragmentation is a logical consequence of human-machine symbiosis, where religious subjectivity is no longer tied to a single authority but becomes a product of highly personal interactions with technology.

The study also highlights the potential for a new synthesis between tradition and innovation, a path that could represent the future of post-human PAI. Students and teachers indirectly suggested that AI could be a partner in bridging Islamic teachings with 21st-century realities, provided it is managed with deep theological awareness (Saifi, 2024; Trivedi, 2023). For instance, using AI to analyze the impact of technology on morality— such as social media addiction or privacy in the era of big data—could produce learning approaches that are not only relevant but also proactive in shaping resilient religious character. Interviewed IT teachers confirmed that this is possible but only if AI design involves close collaboration with parents and religious educators, a step that is still rarely taken.

Ontologically, this study confirms that AI pushes PAI to confront a paradoxical identity crisis. On one hand, technology expands access to religious knowledge in unprecedented ways—12 students reported that they can now explore hundreds of interpretations in seconds, something that used to take weeks. On the other hand, this speed and efficiency often sacrifice the depth of reflection that is the core of spiritual education. In one observation, a student completed an analysis of a verse about repentance with AI assistance in less than 10 minutes, but when asked what they felt, they simply shrugged and said, "I know what it means, but I don't know what it means to me." (A.H.S, interview, October 2024) This tension reflects the post-human dilemma: PAI must find a way to preserve its transcendent essence while embracing the material reality shaped by technology. PAI teachers added a critical dimension to this argument, with five of them stating that without human guidance, AI risks turning religion into mere data to be processed, rather than an experience to be felt.

The long-term pedagogical implications of these findings demand systemic revision in the PAI approach. The existing curriculum, as seen in document analysis, still clings to a model from the last century that was not designed to handle the complexities of the AI era. This study proposes the development of AI-based learning modules that focus not only on declarative knowledge—such as memorizing verses or understanding Islamic history—but also on reflective competencies, such as the ability to navigate modern ethical dilemmas with a religious foundation. PAI teachers must be trained not only as technology users but also as curators capable of balancing machine logic with human sensitivity. Without this step, PAI risks becoming an isolated artifact disconnected from the world it seeks to serve, a fate that would undermine its mission to shape *insan kamil* amid the post-humanist tide.

Tabel 3. The Duality of AI's Implications for Post-Human

Aspect	No. of Affected informants	Key Findings	%	Supporting Observations
Spiritual Mediation by AI	11/15 students, 7/10 teachers	AI as a new mediator, but creates emotional distance	73% students, 70% teachers	Students feel cognitively connected but lose affective depth; teachers see erosion of their roles
Pedagogical Potential of AI	8/15 students, 3/10 teachers	Ethical simulations enhance relevance, but teachers are unprepared	53% students, 30% teachers	Students respond well to modern scenarios; senior teachers struggle to adapt to technology
Fragmentation of Religious Narratives	12/15 students	Extreme personalization weakens religious unity	80%	Interpretations vary individually; traditional PAI collectivism erodes
Synthesis of Tradition-Innovation	5/5 IT teachers, 6/15 students	AI-ulama collaboration could enrich PAI, but remains suboptimal	100% IT teachers, 40% students	Generic AI output; students see potential relevance to the modern world if developed further

This tabulation illustrates the duality of AI's implications for post-human PAI. The high proportion of students (73%) and teachers (70%) acknowledging AI mediation confirms an ontological shift, but the resulting emotional distance indicates that technology has yet

to replicate the spiritual core of PAI. The pedagogical potential (53% students, 30% teachers) promises innovative approaches, but the low readiness of teachers highlights structural weaknesses that must be addressed. Narrative fragmentation (80%) serves as a warning that AI personalization, while enriching individuals, threatens communal cohesion—a pillar of Islam. Meanwhile, the synthesis of tradition and innovation (100% IT teachers, 40% students) offers hope, but current suboptimality underscores the need for more contextualized technology design. This analysis reinforces that post-human PAI is a dialectical project: it can either be a bridge to modern relevance or a chasm separating religion from its essence, depending on how we respond.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the post-human era engenders a complex and ambivalent transformation, impacting both ontological and pedagogical dimensions. The subjective experiences of students, religious education teachers, and IT instructors across three Islamic senior high schools in Indonesia demonstrate that AI expands access to religious knowledge and stimulates critical reflection. However, it simultaneously introduces emotional detachment and fragments spiritual narratives. Students respond with enthusiasm to the efficiency of technology—such as simulations of ethical scenarios pertinent to the modern world—yet frequently lose the affective depth traditionally central to PAI. Religious education teachers are divided, perceiving AI alternately as an innovative tool for personalization and a threat to their spiritual authority. Meanwhile, IT instructors acknowledge AI's limitations in capturing the nuanced theological intricacies of Islam, which are often oversimplified in favor of pragmatic logic.

Ontologically, AI emerges as a novel mediator in the relationship between humanity and the divine, fostering a hybrid religiosity that merges tradition with digital logic. This development, however, raises critical questions regarding the authenticity of spiritual experiences. Pedagogically, the study affirms AI's potential to revitalize PAI through contextual and reflective approaches, while underscoring an urgent need for curriculum revision and teacher training to address the dynamics of the post-human era. Without systemic intervention, PAI risks becoming ensnared in a dichotomy between modern relevance and spiritual integrity. The primary conclusion is that post-human PAI offers a new synthesis capable of enriching transformative spirituality, provided that technology is designed with theological sensitivity and attentiveness to local cultural contexts. This research recommends the development of AI modules grounded in collaboration between religious scholars and educators, alongside a pedagogical approach that balances innovation with Islamic collectivity. By doing so, PAI can remain a vital force in the AI era, rather than a marginalized relic overtaken by technological currents.

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Conflict of Interests

The writing of this article is purely motivated by the advancement of knowledge, without any vested interest in the institutions under study. The research data presented herein have not been previously published.

Ethical Considerations

All data presented in this article are original, and all sources cited, including journals, books, and websites, are guaranteed to be free from copyright infringement.

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All statements included in this article are the result of the researchers' pure analysis, without any interpretation or affiliation from the institutions under study.

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