# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM BY DIGITIZING LEARNING IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COURSES AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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| Keywords: | ABSTRACTS |
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| Digitalization, Islamic Religion Courses, General Universities | Religious learning in public universities requires an innovative approach to facing the digital era and implementing the Independent Curriculum. The main focus is technology to increase interaction between students and religious learning materials. Various digitalisation strategies, including online learning platforms, multimedia content, and interactive applications, are described to strengthen understanding of religious concepts and relevant values. The digitalisation of learning in Islamic religious courses on campus will correct deficiencies in conventional learning that have been carried out so far and can answer the challenges and opportunities associated with the digitalisation of religious learning, as well as the implications for student learning experiences and the effectiveness of lecturers' teaching. Through this approach, religious learning in public universities is hoped to become more dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to student needs in the current digital era. The approach to this research uses qualitative methods to understand, explain, and describe phenomena or problems from a more in-depth perspective. This research aims to provide new experiences in learning Islamic religion in public universities and change learning from conventional to digital, which impacts enjoyable learning and achieving learning outcomes. |

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The spirit and ideals of implementing the educational process produce a generation of people with quality and character. The character is based on the cultural values of the nation and religion. One of the government's efforts is to implement religious learning at every level of education. Religious learning started at the elementary level of education and continued to the college level. The character itself is a picture of an attitude that understands very well what should be done, an attitude that refers to the values of Islamic religious teachings or relies on divine values.(Bahiyah 2022).

Religious education carried out continuously still leaves many problems; if you refer to data from the Ministry of Women and Child Protection in the span from January 2023 to September 2023, cases of violence recorded amounting to 19,593 cases of violence recorded throughout Indonesia. The data was collected from the online protection information system for women and children (symphony PPA). Of the total number of cases, women numbered 17,347 and men with a total of 3,987. When viewed in terms of age, the dominant victims of violence are in the age range of 13 to 17 years, with a percentage of 38%. The highest number of cases of violence is in sexual violence, reaching 8,585. Then, in physical violence, there were 6,621 cases, and in psychological violence, there were 6,068 cases. (Kementrian Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak 2020).

These data and figures show that religious learning in education units has not been effective. There are still many obstacles found in the learning process, so the learning results do not significantly impact character building. The independent curriculum is a breakthrough made by the Ministry of Education, where learning is integrated with digital devices, a transformation that integrates learning by utilising technology. So far, Islamic religious courses still use conventional models; this is one indicator that learning Islamic religious courses is ineffective.

The allocation of learning time in Islamic religious courses is minimal; in General Universities, Islamic religious courses are given once during the lecture process. Islamic religion courses are only given in the initial semester. This research was conducted at the informatics engineering program of Indraprastha University, PGRI Jakarta, which has become one of the study programs with the most significant numbers of students. In learning Islamic religious courses, there are still minimal achievement figures for the size of Islamic religious courses. With an average class of 36 students, only 2-5 are theoretically correct related to religion. This means that only 13.8% of achievement in religious courses; the rest experience many obstacles in learning. (Aziz 2011).

Classical learning patterns are an obstacle to achieving Islamic religious courses, especially for students of the informatics engineering study program, where learning is very close to technological devices. The independent curriculum provides freedom in the learning process, with the aim that lecturers and students can agree on the learning model to be used so learning objectives can be achieved in the independent curriculum by integrating with technological devices that have become a necessity in human life. The role of technology in human life has become increasingly significant with the times. (Imran et al. 2023).

The conventional model tends to be less interactive, where learning often takes place in the form of lectures or monologues by lecturers, without giving much space for discussion and interaction between students. Students become less motivated to be

actively involved in learning due to a lack of opportunities to participate and contribute to discussions or learning activities of Islamic religious courses. The learning pattern is still one-way, while in the independent curriculum, the learning model is more student-centred. Conventional learning models often have fixed schedules limiting lecturers' and students' interaction time. This can make it difficult for students to get additional help or clarification on material that is difficult to understand (Fajriati & Murtiyasa, 2023).

Learning evaluations with conventional models tend to be limited to written examinations or individual assignments, which may not thoroughly reflect the student's understanding and ability in Islamic Religion courses. Students who have physical or mobility barriers in accessing lecture halls or campus facilities which may hinder their participation in learning. The conventional model uses very little technology in the learning process, causing learning to be less exciting and less relevant to the needs of today's students. Overcoming these obstacles requires innovation in learning approaches, including technology integration, responsive curriculum development, and increased student engagement in the learning process. In addition, a more inclusive and student-centred approach can also help overcome some of the obstacles associated with the conventional model of learning in Islamic Religion courses at PTU. (Nurzannah and Setiawan 2020).

The learning system that has been implemented already uses a learning management system (LMS), where students can access everything in just one application. The use of technology in learning is very relevant to current conditions, so the learning process can naturally be integrated with digital devices. (Strakos et al. 2023)Religious courses are currently still delivered using conventional learning models that make learning boring, which impacts the learning outcomes of Islamic religious courses. The process of digitising learning in Islamic religious courses must be carried out, with learning technology becoming easier and by its conditions. (Shetu et al. 2021).

Digitising the learning of Islamic religious courses will encourage students to be interested in learning, and there has been a changed perspective on learning Islamic religious courses so far. Religion courses became as crucial as other courses, so there was no more scientific approach. Students tend not to be too serious in participating in religious courses. There is an assumption that religious courses are just aborting obligations, even though this is the foundation for students. Whatever students achieve outside, religious values will guide their lives. Religious values will teach a high human attitude so that students have compassion and empathy for fellow creatures created by God. (Roni Juliansyah, Rosihan Arbi Said, and Masniati Murni Ritonga 2022).

Digitalisation in learning Islamic religious courses at PTU utilises the learning management system, and the learning process has also been integrated with technological devices. The Covid pandemic that hit became the forerunner of changes in learning patterns by utilising more technological devices. Although it seems forced in principle, in developed countries, the learning process has maximally utilised technological devices that continue to develop. With the digitisation of learning, Islamic religion courses at PTU can encourage students to add information and insight related to their religious values. The speed of information and flexibility in learning make students not dichotomy religious courses and others. (Grigoriev et al. 2020).

The Merdeka Curriculum gives General Universities (PTU) autonomy to design their curriculum, including Islamic Religion courses. The digitalisation of learning can

be one of the strategies to implement the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religion courses at PTU. One of them is that PTU can use an online learning platform (e-learning) that can be easily accessed via smartphone devices to provide learning materials, assessments on assignments, and discussions virtually. Digital content should be developed using Islamic religion course material. Digital content can be e-books, learning videos, animations, simulations, and other digital resources that support interactive learning. (Loisa, Paramita, and Sari 2022).

To enrich learning, use open learning resources such as lecture recordings, online journals, and other digital references. This gives students more comprehensive access and increases their understanding of Islamic material. Develop or use mobile applications that support Islamic learning, such as applications for reading the Qur'an. There are several reasons why students have no desire to bring scriptures. Sacred value is one of several reasons stated by students that all learning devices are now in one device that students hold, and it is the expertise of these devices owned by all students. (Achmad Dicky Santoso et al. 2023).

The obstacles to learning Islamic religious courses at PTU are more due to the classical learning style; this is contrary to the current trend of life, where almost every aspect of life can be accessed easily through applications attached to digital devices. Digitisation of Islamic courses in Public Universities (PTU) is essential in enriching and improving the quality of Islamic learning in higher education environments. Combining technology with Islamic teaching materials is expected to improve the quality of learning, expand accessibility, and enrich the learning experience of students at Public Universities. (Nurfirdausi, Rukajat, and Ramdhani 2022).

Digitisation of Islamic religious courses at public universities can increase flexibility. Learning materials can be accessed anytime and anywhere, making it easier for students to learn. Students can set learning patterns at their own pace. Using exciting and interactive digital learning media can increase student learning motivation. The digitalisation of learning allows lecturers to use various innovative and creative learning methods to change the confusion that students have experienced in learning Islamic religious courses on campus. (Pramila-Savukoski et al. 2023).

The use of technology can help lecturers to provide more personalized feedback or assessments to students. Students who feel that the expected grades are not achieved quickly can propose activities to increase their grades quickly. The response will take place quickly through learning rotation, and both lecturers and students can learn the process and assessment anywhere and anytime. Students learn to be independent and adaptive learners, essential skills in the digital age. The digitalisation of direct learning is very helpful for students in developing the digital skills needed in the work world. The digitalisation of Islamic courses at PTU has many benefits that can improve the quality of learning and help students understand and apply Islamic values in their lives. (Ucu, Paturusi, and Sompie 2018).

Digitalising Islamic courses in public universities (PTU) is becoming increasingly important in information and communication technology development. Digitisation allows accessibility of learning materials from anywhere and anytime. Students can access materials, assignments, and learning resources whenever needed, increasing learning flexibility. The use of technology in Islamic learning can enrich the student learning experience through multimedia content, simulations, and online interactions that are more interesting and interactive. The digitalisation of Islamic courses provides

opportunities for students to develop digital skills relevant to present and future needs (Chanifudin & Nuriyati, 2020).

With digitalisation, educational institutions can reduce the cost of printing, distributing, and storing physical teaching materials. In addition, digitalisation can also reduce the time needed for learning administration and management. Digital learning media can help students to understand Islamic concepts more quickly. In today's digital era, PTU must follow technological developments so as not to be left behind in implementing learning. The digitisation of Islamic courses helps universities to remain relevant and competitive in the digital era. Thus, the digitisation of Islamic courses at PTU is a must and an opportunity to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic religious education to contemporary challenges and needs.

## B. METHOD

This research was conducted at Indraprastha University PGRI Jakarta during one semester of learning Islamic religious courses. This research uses qualitative methods. At the data collection stage, the focus is descriptive, namely data that can describe or describe the characteristics of an event or object of research without measuring it quantitatively—emphasis on taking in-depth and comprehensive data about the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research emphasises the importance of context in understanding the phenomenon under study. Context can include cultural, historical, political, or social aspects that influence the experiences of individuals or groups. (Lexy J. Moleong 2019).

The following are the steps and stages of data collection techniques in this study.

Figure 1. Research steps
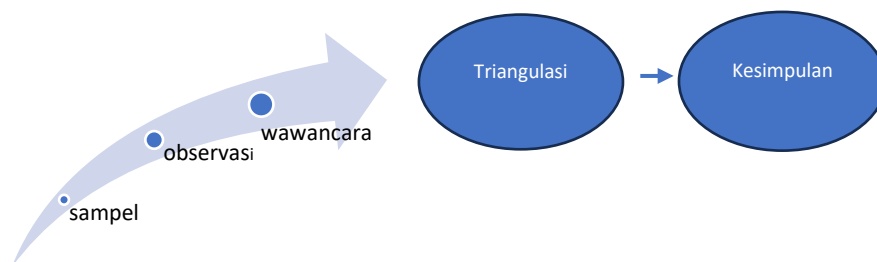


### Sample

The sample was used as an object in the study to test the extent of the effectiveness of digitising Islamic religious course learning. Of the 43 study groups in the Informatics Engineering study program that were sampled in the study, there were five classes. (Ayomi 2021).

Table 1 Number of classes used as research objects for digitisation of Islamic Religion course learning

| Nama Kelas | Jumlah Mahasiswa |
|---|---|
| R1A | 36 |
| R1B | 36 |
| R1C | 36 |
| R1D | 36 |
| R1E | 37 |

**Observation**

This activity is one of the main methods in qualitative research that involves systematic and structured observation of the phenomenon under study. Observations in qualitative research emphasise the interaction between lecturers and students in digitising learning Islamic religious courses. Researchers seek to understand the meaning and dynamics of such interactions. Observation can help researchers understand the meaning and interpretation given by the people involved in the phenomenon under study. The learning activities carried out become a means to make observations. (Ardiansyah, Risnita, and Jailani 2023).

**Interview**

The interview aimed to find the equation of data obtained in the previous step. One is to get in-depth information about the subject or research topic. Interviews allow researchers to explore respondents' experiences, views, and understandings in detail. Interviews can help develop theories or a deeper understanding of concepts. Interview data can be used to test hypotheses, validate existing theories, or generate new theories. Through interviews, researchers can identify patterns, themes, and trends from conversations with respondents. It helps describe and understand variations in experiences or views related to the research topic. (Robinson 2014).

**Triangulation and conclusion**

Triangulation is an approach in qualitative research used to improve the validity and reliability of findings by combining different data sources, methods, theories, or researchers. This approach allows researchers to look at the phenomenon under study from different points of view and verify the appropriateness of findings obtained from different sources. This technique is carried out to combine data from previous steps in the form of observations, interviews and other data sources to obtain conclusions based on the validity obtained. Re-ensure the accuracy of existing data to provide conclusions to the study. Increase the depth and breadth of understanding that is, get a more complete and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under study. The combination of the data obtained then makes one into a conclusion of the research results found (Farquhar, Michels, and Robson 2020).

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
**Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Public Universities**

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the initiatives in higher education in Indonesia that aims to provide more flexibility to students in determining the course of education. This aims to strengthen students' understanding, skills, and personalities to be better prepared to face challenges in the era of globalisation. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasises the development of a competency-based curriculum, where students are free to choose models and learning styles adapted to the latest conditions. Implementing the Independent Curriculum encourages active involvement of students in the learning process.

Universities must conduct a thorough analysis of student needs, job market demands, and institutional readiness to implement the Independent Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasises the development of a curriculum that is oriented towards developing student competencies. Universities must design curricula that allow students to choose courses that match their interests, needs, and career goals. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires the development of innovative and interactive learning methods. Universities need to apply a student-centred learning approach, facilitate discussion and collaboration, and utilise digital technology in the learning process. (Mudrikah et al. 2022).

The Merdeka curriculum enables the use of diverse and innovative digital learning resources. Universities must develop relevant, interactive, and accessible digital learning resources for students. One of the changes in learning in the independent curriculum is that learning is no longer centred on lecturers but student-centred learning. The conventional model of learning is only one way; this is what makes students bored and bored; if this has happened, then do not expect an increase in the quality of learning. Implementing the Independent Curriculum at PTU has many benefits that can improve the quality of learning and help students reach their maximum potential.

Five classes were used as samples for this research object; the research process was carried out for one semester by applying digitalisation of learning in Islamic religion courses at the informatics engineering study program of Indraptasta University PGRI Jakarta. Learning with conventional models is still applied in the technological era; this indicates the non-achievement of learning in Islamic religious courses on campus. The first step taken in the five classes is to completely change the learning model used by making everything digital. Teaching modules that have been in printed form are converted into digital form. The management system (LMS) becomes a central portal in learning and is supplemented by learning applications available for free on the Google Play Store.

Meetings in lectures are 60% online and 40% offline; offline learning is more about communicating the learning steps that will be carried out while occasionally discussing changes in learning patterns. This aligns with the learning objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, where the learning process must be adapted to technology. Freedom in the independent curriculum aims at lecturers and students in using learning models or methods that can adapt to learning needs, where the main principle is that learning can be achieved. For students of the informatics engineering study program who are very close to technology, this has become an initial model for developing Islamic religious course learning using digital devices.

From the observations, students look enthusiastic when teaching materials are distributed through digital devices. From here, students think that fun learning is

illustrated by utilising existing technology as part of learning. Students no longer have to bring teaching materials in the form of books. Although not too much of a burden, teaching materials must alternate daily in and out of their bags; this reality is an obstacle to learning. The expression of no appetite for learning can be seen on students' faces, who look upset after knowing that the teaching materials to be studied are not there. This is a small picture that hampered Islamic religious learning at PTU.

The flexibility of digitalisation in learning Islamic religious courses on campus gives a pleasant first impression. Students can access teaching materials anytime and anywhere. Digitalising Islamic religious course learning is a step in implementing an independent curriculum in the campus environment. From here, there is no more dedication to learning. So far, there is an assumption that Islamic religious courses at PTU are irrelevant if learning by utilising technological devices; this perspective ultimately hinders its achievement in Islamic religious courses on campus.

Departing from preliminary data that the success of learning Islamic religious courses only reached 13.8%, around 86.2% of students are still experiencing difficulties. Many learning difficulties are due to the learning process no longer relevant to the times. An independent curriculum with student-centred learning makes learning more interactive. Students are so enthusiastic about conducting discussions. Many opportunities are given to students to present their arguments during learning. If class time is insufficient, the discussion continues through digital devices so students understand the material thoroughly.

The Merdeka curriculum encourages the development of 21st-century skills such as creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and effective communication. These skills are important in preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of today's digital and globalisation era. Implementing the Independent Curriculum encourages universities to develop capacity in terms of curriculum design, competency-based learning, and educational technology. Refraction in learning will be very useful to students when interacting with the outside world.

Implementing the Independent Curriculum in public universities is critical in facing the dynamics of educational development and the demands of community needs in the digital era. The Merdeka Curriculum provides opportunities for students to participate in their learning process and self-development actively. This increases students' sense of responsibility, motivation, and independence in managing their education. By providing flexibility to students, especially by digitising the learning of Islamic religious courses so that there is no more dedication to learning at Universitas Indraptasta PGRI Jakarta, it can produce graduates who are by the needs of industry and the job market.(Baharuddin 2021).

**The Effectiveness of Digitalization of Islamic Religious Course Learning at PTU**

Effectiveness can be seen in the learning process carried out in Islamic religious courses. The learning atmosphere changes from passive to active. Students feel given ample space to conduct discussions without being limited by time, even though learning in class and online is complete. However, the discussion continues through WhatsApp or learning system management (LMS); lecturers and students can access it anytime. The learning model is applied based on the needs of the learning material, whereas the learning model often used is project-based learning.

The digitisation of Islamic religious learning on campus provides new experiences in learning religion. Unlimited access to material obtained information is extensive. The digitalisation of learning can increase student motivation and interest in learning Islamic Religion courses. This can be seen from student attendance in class, participation in discussions, and online learning platforms. The availability of adequate infrastructure and technology is an essential factor in the effectiveness of the digitalisation of learning. Digitalising learning can be an effective strategy to improve the effectiveness of learning Islamic courses at PTU. (Hasmiza and Humaidi 2023).

The interview was conducted to find out the extent of the effectiveness of digitising Islamic learning at PTU. The interview was conducted by filling out a goggles form, distributed to all students who were members of five classes. The data obtained shows that digitalisation in Islamic religious courses is something that students eagerly await because it is already a digital era, so it is appropriate that learning is time to switch to someone familiar with the technology. So many conveniences are obtained in digitising religious learning. Students have the assumption that there are many sacred values in it, so it often becomes an obstacle to learning. For example, students seem to avoid correctly if they are required to bring the Qur'an, and the sanctity of the book makes student activities less flexible while many student activities seem relaxed.

There is fear and guilt if the scriptures are not correctly preserved, while the students' character still wants to be free. This feeling of hesitation is often used as a reason for students to be less severe about learning Islam. With digitisation, everything becomes one in an application, let alone many explanations provided between technology devices that contain the application of the Qur'an with the Qur'an in the form of mishap. With smartphone specifications owned by students, all applications needed for learning can be accessed easily. Students use this facility to prepare additional learning materials for Islamic religious courses.

Other flexibility in digitising Islamic religious course learning to conduct studies can be done quickly through digital platforms, with learning management systems and applications that can be accessed for free, such as googgleclasroom or Google Forms. Lecturers can make their assessments quickly, and students can respond quickly. Every file sent has a notification as login information. From here, students have the opportunity to make grade improvements if they are considered lacking or want to add value to be greater than before (Ni'mah, Chamalah, and Azizah 2021).

This is simply communicated through digital devices in their respective hands. The speed of information transformation provides convenience in improving the quality of learning. Digitalisation in Islamic courses is a form of implementation of the Independent Curriculum, where one of the platforms is 21st-century learning, which focuses more on the use of technology. Islamic religious learning in the context of the 21st century should emphasise developing critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative skills. This means passively understanding religious texts and encouraging critical analysis, reflection, and application in everyday life. Technology in Learning: Utilizing digital technology and online platforms to present learning materials, facilitate discussions, and enable collaboration between lecturers, students and fellow students.

Integrate learning with real situations and problems students face in everyday life so that they can relate Islamic concepts to the current context. Adopt a learning approach that involves students actively in the learning process, such as group

discussions, collaborative projects, and simulations. Focus on students' needs and interests in the learning process so that the material taught is relevant and valuable for their lives. Learning Evaluation enables formative assessment, where students get continuous feedback to improve their understanding. Assessments should also reflect real-world situations and the context of everyday life. Applying these principles in Islamic learning can make the course more relevant and valuable for students facing challenges and changes in modern society.

Figure 2 picture of student formative value deductions in the learning management system (LMS)

Mata Kuliah  : Agama

Koreksi Nilai  :
Entri Nilai
On Time

*Catatan : Gunakan titik atau koma untuk angka desimal. contoh : 70.05.
*Catatan : Nilai akhir akan dipublikasi oleh bagian akademik

| No | NIM | Nama | Tugas (20%) | UTS (30%) | UAS (50%) | Nilai Akhir | Bobot | Simbol |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 201943500689 | Andria Tama | 80 | 80 | 83 | 81.5 | 3.75 | A- |
| 2 | 202343500095 | MUHAMMAD RAIHAN THAARIQ | 90 | 90 | 95 | 92.5 | 4 | A |
| 3 | 202343500353 | ZAHRA MALIKA AFIFI | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 4 | A |
| 4 | 202343500363 | ADI SAPUTRO | 87 | 87 | 85 | 86 | 3.75 | A- |
| 5 | 202343500365 | TRI ADJI SAPUTRA | 87 | 85 | 90 | 87.9 | 3.75 | A- |
| 6 | 202343500370 | YOGI PRADANA | 85 | 83 | 87 | 85.4 | 3.75 | A- |
| 7 | 202343500371 | LELIANA MEILANI | 87 | 85 | 88 | 86.9 | 3.75 | A- |
| 8 | 202343500372 | SAMSUDIN | 87 | 85 | 87 | 86.4 | 3.75 | A- |
| 9 | 202343500380 | SAZA FADILAH | 88 | 87 | 88 | 87.7 | 3.75 | A- |
| 10 | 202343500382 | NURUL AZIZAH AZAHRA | 88 | 87 | 88 | 87.7 | 3.75 | A- |
| 11 | 202343500383 | RISKA KUSWITA | 87 | 85 | 90 | 87.9 | 3.75 | A- |
| 12 | 202343500385 | SITI MUSAROFAH | 90 | 90 | 93 | 91.5 | 4 | A |
| 13 | 202343500388 | MUHAMMAD ARIFFACHRURAZI | | | | 0 | 0 | |
| 14 | 202343500395 | GILANG SEPTHIAN SYAPUTRA | 87 | 80 | 83 | 82.9 | 3.75 | A- |
| 15 | 202343500397 | SYAHRUL RAMADHAN | 87 | 85 | 90 | 87.9 | 3.75 | A- |
| 16 | 202343500400 | RAFLI APRIADI | 85 | 80 | 78 | 80 | 3.75 | A- |
| 17 | 202343500402 | AHMAJI SETIAWAN | 88 | 85 | 87 | 86.6 | 3.75 | A- |
| 18 | 202343500407 | MUHAMMAD NUZULY | 85 | 80 | 82 | 82 | 3.75 | A- |

This result shows that the rotation of Islamic religious course learning as a form of independent curriculum implementation has a dominant effectiveness. The lowest grade a student gets (A-) is converted to 90. Thus, the digitisation of learning in Islamic religious courses in five classes, which are the object of research, has succeeded in answering the problems of Islamic learning in conventional models.

It is hoped that the results of this research can be a reference to improve the quality of learning in Islamic religious courses. The research is still local and can be developed to a greater extent, as well as in other courses. Digitalisation in learning has become necessary in the midst of a technological era closely related to human life today. Although there are still often obstacles that can hinder digital learning, especially related to the internet network, because, in principle, if digital talk becomes an inseparable unity between the technological devices used and the internet network, it is hoped that the government can provide cheap internet services for students so that digitalisation of learning can also be implemented throughout the region.

D. CONCLUSION

Digitalisation has brought significant changes in how public universities learn Islam. Digital technology allows easier access to learning materials and facilitates interaction between lecturers and students. Digitalisation has made Islamic learning more flexible and accessible to students from various backgrounds and locations. This expands learning opportunities and increases student participation. Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum by digitising learning in Islamic courses has increased learning effectiveness. Students can learn more independently and actively, while lecturers can use various digital tools and resources to improve teaching and understanding of

religious concepts. Digitalisation enables the application of 21st-century skills-based learning approaches, such as critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative skills. This is due to the demands of the times that emphasise the development of adaptability and innovation; digitalization can be a source of opportunity for the development of Islamic education in public universities. Thus, through implementing the Merdeka Curriculum by digitising learning in Islamic Religion courses, public universities can strengthen their commitment to educational innovations that accommodate the needs and demands of the times.

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