

The Effect of Podcast Utilization as a Learning Medium on Students' Islamic Religious Education Learning Outcomes

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Abstract

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This study aims to examine the effect of podcast utilization as a learning medium on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The research employed a library research method using a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained from various written sources, including scientific journals, articles, books, and previous studies relevant to the use of podcasts in learning and student learning outcomes. Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by reading, recording, and reviewing literature related to the research topic. Data analysis utilized content analysis by categorizing, comparing, and drawing conclusions from findings reported in previous studies. The results indicate that the use of podcasts as a learning medium has a positive effect on students' Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes. Podcasts possess flexible characteristics, are easily accessible, and can be repeatedly utilized, enabling students to understand learning materials more effectively. Furthermore, podcasts enhance students' motivation, interest, and learning autonomy because they can be accessed anytime and anywhere. Podcast-based learning also facilitates repeated learning, thereby strengthening students' memory retention and long-term learning outcomes. Therefore, podcasts can be considered an effective, innovative, and relevant learning medium for supporting Islamic Religious Education instruction in the digital era.

Keywords: podcast, learning media; Islamic Religious Education; learning outcomes; digital learning

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INTRODUCTION

Learning media constitute an essential component of the instructional process that significantly contributes to students' learning success. Learning media can be defined as any tool or resource used to convey instructional messages while stimulating students' thoughts, feelings, attention, and willingness to learn. Consequently, learning media facilitate purposeful, structured, and meaningful learning experiences. One of the technological innovations that has recently gained considerable attention in education is the use of podcasts. Audio podcasts, available through platforms such as Spotify, can serve as an effective medium for distance learning and supplementary learning resources. They enable students to prepare for classroom activities, reinforce learning materials, and participate more actively in classroom discussions. A podcast is essentially a digital audio file uploaded to an online platform for public access and distribution. As a form of digital communication, podcasts enable users to exchange information and knowledge interactively, although they are often considered comparable to traditional radio broadcasts (Armiati & Hidayatm, 2024).

The integration of digital technology into education has encouraged educators, including teachers of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), to adopt innovative instructional media in classroom practice. Unlike conventional radio broadcasts, which are accessible only according to predetermined schedules, podcasts provide users with the flexibility to select, access, and replay learning content whenever needed. This flexibility represents a significant innovation that has become increasingly popular among students. One of the challenges frequently encountered in Islamic Religious Education is students' declining interest resulting from monotonous instructional methods. Therefore, creating a more dynamic and engaging learning environment has become increasingly important. Listening to educational audio content, such as podcasts, offers an alternative approach to addressing this challenge. Podcasts encourage learners to think critically, stimulate emotional engagement, and promote independent learning. As members of Generation Z, contemporary students have grown up in a technologically advanced environment and are highly familiar with various digital platforms. However, these technologies are often utilized primarily for entertainment rather than educational purposes. Consequently, teachers play a crucial role in guiding students to use digital technology productively, and educational podcasts represent one practical approach to achieving this objective (Saputri et al., 2025).

The rapid advancement of digital technology has also transformed access to educational resources. Today, social media and digital platforms have become integral components of the learning process. Among these platforms, Spotify has emerged as one of the most widely used applications, not only for music streaming but also for educational content through podcast features. According to Philips, a podcast is a digital audio file that can be played free of charge through online platforms anytime and anywhere, making it a highly accessible learning resource for students (Husein et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the successful implementation of podcast-based learning depends largely on students' digital literacy. Digital literacy encompasses the ability to access, evaluate, interpret, and utilize digital information effectively, ethically, and responsibly. Students with higher levels of digital literacy are more capable of maximizing podcasts as learning resources by accessing educational content, understanding instructional materials, and integrating newly acquired knowledge into critical and reflective thinking processes. Therefore, the integration of podcast-based learning media with strong digital literacy skills represents a key strategy for improving educational quality in the digital era. This synergy enables students not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop critical thinking, creativity, adaptability, and lifelong learning skills required to meet contemporary educational challenges (Kurniasari et al., 2024).

In today's digital era, podcasts have increasingly been recognized as an alternative instructional medium across various educational settings. Podcasts are distributed as audio or video recordings published through digital platforms and can be accessed by users with internet connectivity via electronic devices. As a learning medium, podcasts are considered effective and efficient because they are easily accessible without age restrictions and allow learners to study at their own pace. Previous studies have demonstrated that podcast-based learning improves students' listening comprehension, concentration, and engagement during instructional activities (Kurniasari et al., 2024).

Although previous studies have reported the educational benefits of podcasts, relatively limited research has specifically synthesized their influence on learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. Most existing studies focus on podcasts as general learning media without comprehensively examining their contribution to students' understanding of Islamic learning materials. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of podcast-based learning media on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education through a comprehensive review of previous scholarly literature. The findings

are expected to provide theoretical insights and practical recommendations for educators in utilizing podcasts as an innovative, effective, and relevant instructional medium to support Islamic Religious Education in the digital age.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a library research design. This method was selected because the study aimed to examine the effect of podcast-based learning media on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) by synthesizing findings from previous scholarly studies.

The data consisted entirely of secondary sources obtained from scientific journal articles, books, conference proceedings, and other relevant academic publications discussing podcast-based learning media and students' learning outcomes. The literature was selected based on its relevance to the research objectives to ensure the credibility and validity of the findings.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by systematically reading, identifying, recording, and reviewing literature related to the use of podcasts in learning and their influence on students' learning outcomes. Relevant publications were then organized according to the research focus to facilitate subsequent analysis.

The data were analyzed using content analysis. The analysis involved several stages, including collecting relevant literature, categorizing the publications based on major themes, comparing the findings of previous studies, identifying recurring patterns, and synthesizing the evidence to draw comprehensive conclusions regarding the effect of podcast-based learning media on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education.

Through this systematic literature review, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of podcasts as an innovative digital learning medium and their contribution to improving students' cognitive achievement, learning motivation, and independent learning in Islamic Religious Education.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The literature review indicates that the use of podcasts as a learning medium has a positive influence on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). This positive impact is primarily attributed to the distinctive characteristics of podcasts, which are flexible, easily accessible, and can be replayed repeatedly according to students' individual learning needs. Within the instructional process, podcasts function not only as a medium for delivering learning materials but also as an effective tool for enhancing students' comprehension of the subject matter.

Previous studies demonstrate that podcasts improve students' understanding because they enable learners to listen to instructional explanations repeatedly until they fully comprehend the content. Furthermore, the systematic and communicative presentation of learning materials through audio facilitates students' understanding of concepts, particularly in Islamic Religious Education, where learning materials are predominantly narrative and conceptual in nature (Kurniasari et al., 2024).

In addition to improving comprehension, podcasts contribute to increased learning motivation. As an innovative instructional medium that differs from conventional teaching methods, podcasts capture students' attention and encourage greater participation in learning activities. This increased engagement subsequently enhances students' enthusiasm

and active involvement during the learning process. Moreover, podcasts support self-directed learning because they can be accessed anytime and anywhere without temporal or spatial limitations. Consequently, students can regulate their own learning schedules according to their individual needs, which is consistent with contemporary educational approaches that emphasize learner autonomy (Armiati & Hidayat, 2024).

Another significant finding concerns the role of podcasts in facilitating repeated learning. The ability to replay instructional content enables students to reinforce both memory and conceptual understanding of the material they have studied. As a result, podcasts contribute not only to immediate comprehension but also to long-term knowledge retention. Overall, the literature consistently indicates that podcast-based learning makes a substantial contribution to improving students' learning outcomes by enhancing comprehension, motivation, and independent learning (Mayangsari & Tiara, 2019).

Discussion

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), a podcast is generally defined as digital audio content stored in MP3 format that can be streamed or downloaded through electronic devices such as smartphones, computers, or tablets. With technological advancement, podcasts have evolved beyond audio-only formats to include video-based content (MP4), allowing users to access multimedia learning resources free of charge. Merriam-Webster defines a podcast as digital audio content distributed through the Internet using the Really Simple Syndication (RSS) system, while Bonini describes podcasts as an on-demand service that enables users to select content according to their individual interests and preferred listening time (Saputri et al., 2025).

These characteristics distinguish podcasts from conventional instructional media and make them particularly suitable for contemporary learning environments. Podcasts offer several educational advantages. First, they function as valuable learning resources by providing students with access to instructional materials beyond classroom settings. Second, podcasts are highly efficient because their relatively small file sizes facilitate storage, downloading, and distribution through computers or mobile devices with Internet access. Consequently, students can conveniently access learning materials regardless of time and location. Third, podcasts are easy to use, allowing learners either to stream or download educational content according to their preferences. Finally, podcasts require relatively low internet bandwidth, making them accessible even in areas with limited digital infrastructure (Husein et al., 2024).

Despite these advantages, podcasts also possess several limitations. Since podcast-based instruction primarily relies on audio communication, it may not adequately support practical or laboratory-based learning activities that require visual demonstrations. Furthermore, students may experience reduced engagement when listening to lengthy instructional recordings if the content lacks variation, background music, or other engaging features. In addition, producing high-quality educational podcasts often requires supporting equipment such as microphones and audio editing software, which may present challenges for some educators (Husein et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of podcasts as instructional media can also be understood from the perspective of learning outcomes. Learning refers to relatively permanent changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior resulting from experience and planned instructional activities. Accordingly, learning outcomes represent the competencies achieved by students following their participation in educational activities. Oemar Hamalik argues that learning outcomes are reflected in observable behavioral changes, while Winkel defines them as internal capabilities that become integrated into an individual's competence. Similarly, Nana Sudjana describes learning outcomes as competencies

acquired after participating in structured learning experiences designed by teachers (Nurrita, 2018).

Based on these perspectives, learning outcomes encompass students' achievement in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills following the instructional process. Bloom's taxonomy further classifies learning outcomes into three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain involves intellectual development ranging from basic knowledge acquisition to higher-order evaluation. The affective domain concerns values, attitudes, and behavioral dispositions, whereas the psychomotor domain relates to the development of practical skills and coordinated physical performance (Nabillah & Abadi, 2019).

Students' learning outcomes are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include learning interest, aptitude, motivation, and individual learning strategies. Students with stronger motivation and appropriate learning strategies are generally more likely to achieve better academic performance. External factors include the school environment and family support, both of which significantly influence students' educational development. A supportive learning environment encourages academic achievement and facilitates students' intellectual and personal growth (Nabillah & Abadi, 2019).

In this context, the use of innovative instructional media such as podcasts represents an effective strategy for improving the quality of learning. Creative and technology-based learning media reduce classroom monotony, increase students' engagement, and facilitate more effective knowledge transfer. Consequently, podcasts not only enhance students' cognitive achievement but also foster learning motivation, independent learning, and sustained participation in educational activities (Tafonao, T., 2018).

Previous studies further emphasize that podcasts possess four distinctive characteristics that differentiate them from other audio media: episodic organization, downloadable content, streaming capability, and segmented topics. Podcasts also provide diverse educational themes, including business, technology, design, education, entertainment, and religion, enabling learners to select content according to their interests. Geoghegan and Klass (2007), as cited in Imarshan (2021), argue that podcasts empower individuals by expanding opportunities for communication and knowledge sharing.

Furthermore, Aufderheide (2020), as cited in Imarshan (2021), explains that podcasts increasingly function as public media. Examples include The New York Times and Gimlet Media, which produce podcast content emphasizing factual, credible, and high-quality journalism. Such podcasts create unique social spaces in which audiences develop a sense of community through shared listening experiences. This demonstrates that podcasts not only function as educational media but also contribute to broader processes of information dissemination, public engagement, and social interaction.

Overall, the literature consistently demonstrates that podcast-based learning is an effective instructional innovation for Islamic Religious Education. By combining flexibility, accessibility, and learner-centered features, podcasts enhance students' understanding, motivation, and independent learning while supporting meaningful learning experiences in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this literature review, it can be concluded that the use of podcasts as a learning medium has a positive effect on students' learning outcomes in

Islamic Religious Education (IRE). As digital learning media available in both audio and audiovisual formats, podcasts offer flexibility, accessibility, and convenience, enabling students to access learning materials anytime and anywhere according to their individual learning needs. These characteristics make podcasts highly relevant to contemporary educational practices in the digital era, particularly in supporting the teaching and learning process of Islamic Religious Education.

The findings indicate that podcast-based learning enhances students' understanding of instructional materials by presenting content in a systematic, communicative, and repeatable format. The opportunity to replay learning materials allows students to reinforce their comprehension and improve long-term knowledge retention, especially for Islamic Religious Education topics that are predominantly narrative and conceptual. Consequently, podcasts function not only as a medium for delivering instructional content but also as an effective tool for improving the overall quality of students' learning experiences.

In addition to improving comprehension, podcasts positively influence students' learning motivation and engagement. As an innovative alternative to conventional instructional methods, podcasts create a more interesting and interactive learning environment that encourages students to participate actively in the learning process. Their integration into educational practice also supports the development of independent learning by allowing students to regulate their own learning schedules according to their individual preferences and learning styles. Such flexibility represents an essential component of modern education, where self-directed learning and digital competence are increasingly important.

Furthermore, podcasts provide educators with opportunities to implement more creative, flexible, and technology-oriented instructional strategies. Their use contributes not only to students' cognitive achievement but also to the development of learning motivation, active participation, and autonomous learning skills. Therefore, podcasts can be considered an effective, innovative, and appropriate instructional medium for Islamic Religious Education in the digital era.

In conclusion, the optimal utilization of podcast-based learning media has the potential to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education while supporting meaningful, engaging, and student-centered learning experiences. It is therefore recommended that educators integrate podcasts into instructional practices as complementary learning resources that facilitate both classroom and independent learning. Future studies are encouraged to employ empirical research designs involving experimental or mixed-method approaches to further examine the effectiveness of podcast-based learning across different educational contexts and student populations.

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