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Holistic Pedagogical Strategies in Islamic Education in Reducing the Negative Impacts of Online Games on Students' Character

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Abstract

The development of online games among secondary school students has become a phenomenon inseparable from adolescent life and carries profound implications for character formation, particularly in fostering discipline, self-control, and religious character. Uncontrolled use of online games can shift students' priorities from academic and spiritual activities toward instant, entertainment-oriented activities. This study aims to analyze holistic pedagogical strategies in Islamic education in reducing the negative impacts of online games on students' character. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with the research subjects comprising the school principal, Islamic Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and students at SMA Negeri 5 Berau. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, while data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The results indicate that online games have an impact on declining learning discipline, weakened self-control, and reduced consistency of students' worship practices. Nevertheless, the implementation of holistic pedagogical strategies that integrate spiritual, emotional, social, and pedagogical development through the role of Islamic Education teachers as mu'allim, murabbi, muaddib, counselors, and mediators has proven capable of helping students manage online game use more wisely and strengthen religious character. This study affirms that holistic pedagogy in Islamic education has a strategic role in addressing the challenges of student character formation in the digital era.

Keywords: *Holistic Pedagogy, Islamic Education, Online Games, Religious Character*

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology over the past few decades, particularly online games, has brought about significant transformations in adolescents' lives, especially among secondary school students. In this context, online games are not merely a means of entertainment but have become an integral part of students' daily lifestyles. The



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presence of smartphones and internet access allows students to play games anytime and anywhere, creating new challenges in the field of education (Faron & Hastuti, 2024).

The phenomenon of online games is closely correlated with a decline in learning discipline. Students who play games intensively tend to have reduced study time and experience difficulties concentrating in class. This occurs because they often play until late at night, resulting in fatigue and a lack of readiness to participate in the learning process at school (Lestari & Wimbarti, 2021). Research also shows that students with online game addiction have poorer concentration compared to those who are able to control their interest in playing games (Ayu Wutama et al., 2023).

Dependence on online games indicates a major problem in self-control, where students have difficulty managing their time and emotions. Studies show that low self-control is associated with impulsive actions and aggressive behavior among students (Tri Utami, 2025). This is a concern because it relates to personality maturity and social responsibility that need to be guided at school, particularly by Islamic Education (PAI) teachers (Purnamasari et al., 2025).

Excessive involvement in the gaming world can also lead to the neglect of worship obligations and a decline in students' spiritual awareness. The greater amount of time and attention devoted to playing games shifts students' priorities away from worship practices and spiritual reflection (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023). In the context of Islamic education, this indicates the need for balance between technological development and the cultivation of students' religious character, so that education is able to respond to these challenges through appropriate approaches (Hidayat & Janan, 2023).

Considering the challenges faced, Islamic education must play an important role in shaping students' character so that they are not only academically intelligent but also possess noble morals and good self-control. A holistic pedagogical approach is highly relevant, in which education involves spiritual, emotional, social, and moral dimensions in the teaching and learning process (Amaly et al., 2022). This concept aligns with the principles of *tarbiyah* and *ta'dib* in Islam, emphasizing the formation of adab and morality as the primary goals of education (Umar et al., 2021).

The involvement of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in addressing issues related to online games is becoming increasingly important. They not only serve as instructors of religious subjects but also act as mentors and counselors, helping students understand and manage their interest in games while strengthening religious values in daily life (Amaly et al., 2022). Through these roles, PAI teachers can play a key function in assisting students to adapt to changes over time and to face the challenges present in the digital era (Andriani & Basri, 2022).

With the increasing phenomenon of online game use among students, comprehensive and integrated handling within Islamic education is required. A holistic pedagogical approach implemented by Islamic Education teachers becomes crucial in reducing the negative impacts of online games, while simultaneously encouraging the

development of students' character in a more balanced manner between academic and religious aspects.

2. Research Method

Research on holistic pedagogical strategies in Islamic education, particularly at SMA Negeri 5 Berau, focuses on efforts to reduce the negative impacts of online games on students' character. The descriptive qualitative approach employed in this study aims to explore the meanings, processes, and dynamics that occur within the educational context, especially regarding student behavior influenced by online games and the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in character development (Sugianto, 2023). By collecting data from various sources, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive empirical description of pedagogical practices implemented in the school.

The research subjects were selected purposively from the school principal, Islamic Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and students at SMA Negeri 5 Berau. This varied sample selection was intended to obtain rich and balanced data regarding the impacts of online games as well as the strategies applied by teachers in fostering students' character (Ni'mah et al., 2025). Such an approach is consistent with studies indicating that the selection of relevant subjects can enrich understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Kahadijah et al., 2023).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore the perspectives and experiences of teachers and school authorities in addressing the phenomenon of online games. Observations were carried out to gain direct understanding of students' behavior and learning practices at school (Asiah, 2025). Documentation, including records of religious activities and school programs, was used to complement the existing data (Anggraini et al., 2023).

Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Afkar et al., 2025). This process was carried out continuously, allowing the researcher to capture patterns and meanings from the collected data. To ensure data validity, this study applied triangulation techniques by involving various sources and methods (Raïs, 2023).

Online games often have negative impacts on students' character, including aggressive behavior and declining academic achievement (Asiah, 2025). In this context, Islamic Education teachers at SMA Negeri 5 Berau are expected to play an active role in guiding students' character development. Through the use of interactive media and innovative learning methods, they can minimize these negative impacts (Sugianto, 2023). Previous studies indicate that teachers' efforts in addressing the effects of online games may include integrating character values into daily learning activities (Hilmi et al., 2023).

The descriptive qualitative approach in this study provides in-depth insights into pedagogical strategies in Islamic education at SMA Negeri 5 Berau. By involving various



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relevant stakeholders, this study not only aims to analyze the negative impacts of online games but also to identify concrete steps that teachers can take in fostering students' character. The presence of appropriate and effective strategies is expected to reduce the adverse effects of online games and support the positive development of students' character (Fajriati & Bahrudin, 2021).

3. Result and Discussion

The phenomenon of online game use among students at SMA Negeri 5 Berau has been shown to be an integral part of their daily lives. Almost all students were reported to have access to digital devices that allow them to play games intensively, both at home and within social interactions. This indicates that online games are no longer merely incidental activities, but have developed into significant habitual patterns that influence learning behavior, emotional conditions, and the overall formation of students' character (Khoiril Umam et al., 2023).

3.1. Impact on Learning Discipline

One of the main findings of this study is the negative impact of online games on students' learning discipline. Based on interviews with Islamic Education (PAI) teachers as well as teachers from other disciplines, students with a high intensity of game playing tend to experience a decline in learning focus. They are more frequently late in submitting assignments and are less prepared to participate in classroom learning activities (Putu Pratiwi & Tirtayani, 2021). Observations in the school environment show that some students appear sleepy and less responsive during learning sessions, indicating that excessive online game use contributes to the weakening of their academic discipline.

3.2. Self-Control and Psychosocial Impacts

The study shows that online games not only affect learning discipline but also have a significant influence on students' self-control abilities. Guidance and Counseling teachers revealed that students often experience difficulties in managing their time between studying, playing, and resting. Dependence on online games increases the tendency to ignore time limits, which can lead to physical fatigue and emotional strain. In several cases, students exhibit irritability and difficulty accepting advice when their gaming activities are restricted, indicating weak self-control as one of the psychosocial consequences of excessive online game use (Putri & Priyono, 2021).



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3.3. Influence on Religious Character

From the perspective of Islamic education, the impact of online games on students' religious character is highly evident. The results of interviews with PAI teachers indicate a decline in consistency in performing acts of worship, particularly prayer, among some students who are involved in late-night gaming activities. Their participation in religious activities also becomes less significant when compared to students who do not have high gaming habits, indicating the potential weakening of students' spiritual awareness due to a lack of attention to worship and religious values (Kamaria et al., 2023).

3.4. Holistic Pedagogical Strategies

In response to the emerging problems, PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 5 Berau have implemented holistic pedagogical strategies to reduce the negative impacts of online games on students' character. These strategies include the integration of religious habituation into school activities, personal approaches to students, and the reinforcement of Islamic values within the learning process. Activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation (*tadarus*), and religious reflection are promoted to foster students' religious character more effectively (Khoiril Umam et al., 2023).

The role of PAI teachers in implementing these strategies is not limited to delivering instructional material, but also includes mentoring and counseling for students who are indicated to have dependence on online games. Dialogical and persuasive approaches are used to help students understand how gaming behavior affects their academic and spiritual lives. This approach is widely considered more effective than repressive prohibitions, as it provides students with opportunities to develop internal awareness (Wardani, 2025).

The results of the study indicate that collaboration between PAI teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and parents is crucial in implementing holistic pedagogical strategies. Such coordination is needed to align patterns of supervision and student guidance related to gadget use and gaming time at home. Synergy between schools and parents creates a more consistent character development environment, both in the school context and at home (Hernawati & Kurniasih, 2021).

Overall, this study affirms that online games have multidimensional impacts on the lives of students at SMA Negeri 5 Berau. Through the implementation of holistic pedagogical strategies in Islamic education, the negative impacts of gaming activities can be significantly reduced. This approach not only helps students improve learning discipline and self-control but also strengthens their religious character as the primary foundation for personality development in the digital era.



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4. Conclusion

The results of this study affirm that online games have a tangible negative impact on students' character formation, particularly in aspects of learning discipline, self-control, and religious character. Unmanaged intensity of online game use contributes to decreased focus on learning, weak time management skills, and reduced consistency in fulfilling religious obligations. These findings indicate that the influence of digital culture on students cannot be viewed merely as an entertainment issue but rather as a serious challenge in education and character development.

This study also demonstrates that holistic pedagogical strategies in Islamic education effectively reduce the negative impacts of online games on students' character. The holistic approach, which integrates spiritual, emotional, social, and pedagogical development, can help students manage their use of online games more wisely. Through religious habituation, personal approaches, and contextual educational dialogue, students are not only directed to reduce excessive gaming behavior but also guided to develop an internal awareness of their academic and spiritual responsibilities.

The role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers becomes a key factor in the success of these holistic pedagogical strategies. PAI teachers function not only as instructors of religious material but also as mu'allim, murabbi, muaddib, counselors, and mediators in the process of students' character development. This multidimensional role enables PAI teachers to more comprehensively accompany students in navigating the influence of online games, while simultaneously instilling religious values relevant to students' digital realities.

Theoretically, this study contributes to contemporary Islamic education research by affirming the relevance of holistic pedagogy as an adaptive approach in the digital era. The findings reinforce the view that effective Islamic education cannot be partial or merely normative; instead, it must integrate the dimensions of faith (iman), knowledge (ilmu), and practice (amal) within a unified educational framework. Thus, holistic pedagogy can be positioned as a strategic approach in addressing the degradation of students' character amid rapid technological development.

In practice, the results of this study have implications for PAI teachers, schools, and parents, strengthening synergy in fostering students' religious character. Schools need to support the implementation of holistic pedagogy through consistent policies and habituation programs, while parents are expected to play an active role in supervising and accompanying the use of online games within the family environment. Future research may examine the effectiveness of holistic pedagogical strategies using more diverse research designs and educational institution contexts, thereby further enriching the body of knowledge in Islamic education.

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