

Analysis of the Relevance of Doug Belshaw's Digital Literacy Concept to Islamic Religious Education Learning at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng

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Abstract:

This study analyses the relevance of eight elements of holistic digital literacy by Doug Belshaw within the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. In the digital era, IRE plays a strategic role in character formation to face challenges such as disinformation and radicalism. However, digital literacy is often misunderstood as merely technical skills. This research aims to fill the research gap by analysing how the elements of Cultural, Cognitive, Constructive, Communicative, Self-confidence, Creative, Critical, and Civic can strengthen the achievement of IRE in developing students' critical thinking and character at vocational schools. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The main findings indicate: (1) Students are not yet productive digitally; (2) Students have not utilised digital media for IRE; (3) The dominant use is for entertainment/games; (4) Students' interest in digital IRE remains low; and (5) Students are operationally literate in technology, but their utilisation is superficial. These findings suggest that critical, constructive, self-confidence, and civic elements in students are still weak.

Keywords — Digital Literacy, Doug Belshaw, Islamic Religious Education Learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has fundamentally transformed the direction of education in the 21st century. The era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 demands educational institutions to adapt, placing learners within a globally connected learning ecosystem where digital technology becomes the main medium for accessing, evaluating, and communicating information [1]. Learning is no longer limited to physical classrooms but has expanded into dynamic, complex, and data-rich virtual spaces [2]. However, this rapid progress

brings with it significant ethical and social challenges. Unlimited access to information also opens the door for the spread of disinformation (hoaxes), hate speech, misinformation, and the infiltration of radical ideologies targeting the younger generation. [3]. The post-truth phenomenon, where emotional narratives are more influential than objective facts, poses a serious threat to students' critical reasoning. [4]. Therefore, the urgency of education is no longer solely focused on technical skills, but has shifted towards the ability to navigate the digital ecosystem critically, ethically, and responsibly.

In this context, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a very strategic role. IRE not only functions as a transfer of religious knowledge, but more fundamentally, as a pillar of character building and a moral fortress [5]. The main mission of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is to instil spiritual values, ethics, and noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*), which are essential in guiding students to interact and make decisions in a digital world filled with values [6]. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is demanded to be relevant, providing practical moral guidance on ethical dilemmas arising from technological innovation. To bridge the mission of PAI with the demands of the digital era, the concept of Digital Literacy becomes a key competency. However, digital literacy is often misunderstood as merely technical skills (for example, the ability to operate gadgets or software) [7]. Educational researcher and thinker, Doug Belshaw [8], offers a much more holistic and comprehensive framework. Belshaw maps digital literacy into eight essential elements, which include Cultural, Cognitive, Constructive, Communicative, Confidence, Creative, Critical, and Civic aspects. This framework goes beyond operational skills, emphasising critical thinking, cultural awareness, and ethical participation as a digital citizen, which aligns closely with the character-building objectives in Islamic Education (PAI).

Overall, these eight elements emphasise that digital literacy is a comprehensive spectrum of competencies, combining technical, cognitive, social, and ethical skills. Although various studies have examined the importance of integrating technology or digital literacy in general within Islamic Religious Education learning. [9], [10], [11], There remains a research gap in the in-depth analysis of the specific relevance of the eight holistic elements of Belshaw within the context of Islamic Religious Education learning in Indonesia. In the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK), particularly SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, this adds significance to the research. SMK students are prepared to enter a highly digitalised working world, so they require not only technical competencies but also ethical maturity, spirituality, and critical thinking skills.

Based on the background above, this research aims to critically analyse the conceptual and practical

relevance of Doug Belshaw's eight digital literacy elements with the practices and objectives of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam) at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. This study seeks to answer the question: To what extent are these eight digital literacy elements relevant and can they be integrated to strengthen the learning outcomes of PAI, focusing on character development and students' critical reasoning skills in the digital era?

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. [12]. The researcher focuses on exploring the meaning, interpretation, and processes that occur in Islamic Education (PAI) learning at the research site. The case study research type is used because this study concentrates on an in-depth and holistic investigation of a specific and limited 'case' [13]. The case studied is the process and practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng in relation to Doug Belshaw's eight elements of digital literacy. As explained by Robert K. Yin (2018), a case study allows researchers to explore contemporary phenomena in depth within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly visible. [14].

This research was conducted at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, Banyuwangi Regency. The selection of this location was purposive, based on its unique characteristics as a vocational education institution under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah organisation, which has a dual mandate: to produce graduates who are technically ready for work as well as possessing a strong Islamic character. The research subjects (informants) were chosen through purposive sampling to obtain rich and relevant data. The key informants in this study include; Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and students.

The data collection techniques in this study utilise data triangulation, which includes non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis in this study employs the interactive

analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), consisting of three simultaneous activities: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification [15]. The validity check of the data uses source triangulation and technique triangulation methods.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observation, interviews, and documentation at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, five main findings were obtained regarding the digital literacy conditions of students in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning.

A. *Students are not yet able to utilise digital media to become productive students.*

Most students already have digital devices such as smartphones and laptops, but their utilisation has not yet been directed towards productive activities. They rarely use document processing applications, presentation tools, or collaborative platforms to support their school assignments. Students' digital activities remain largely consumptive, such as watching entertainment videos or accessing social media without a clear learning purpose. This indicates that their productive skills and digital time management still need to be improved so that technology can effectively support the development of their vocational and spiritual competencies.

Students are not yet able to use digital devices productively because they have not mastered the cognitive element, which is the ability to think and manage information to produce digital products [8]. Furthermore, the low constructive ability is evident from the lack of initiative in creating digital works such as educational videos, vocational blogs, or digital portfolios. Digital confidence also remains low because some students feel unable to use productivity applications. In fact, vocational students need to be trained through project-based digital learning to develop their thinking and creative skills independently [16].

B. *Students have not yet been able to utilise digital media to support Islamic Religious Education learning, even though the teacher has provided good guidance.*

Guru PAI has endeavoured to utilise various digital platforms such as YouTube, Google Classroom, and social media to support the learning

process. However, student participation remains low. Most students only follow instructions to complete tasks without further exploration of the digital learning resources provided. Additionally, it was found that some students still tend to commit plagiarism because they have not yet understood the proper ethics of using digital sources.

Guru PAI has directed students to use digital sources, but students do not yet possess good communicative and critical skills. The communicative element relates to the ability to use language and digital platforms appropriately [8]. Students still struggle to assess the credibility of sources, indicating a weakness in critical elements. Additionally, awareness of the norms for using digital sources (academic ethics), which are part of the citizenship elements, is also low. In fact, digital literacy-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning needs to emphasise the reinforcement of digital ethics so that students can use technology responsibly [17].

C. *Students tend to utilise digital media for playing games and entertainment..*

Most of the students' digital device usage time is spent on playing online games, watching videos, or accessing entertainment applications. This tendency impacts a decline in learning motivation and the effectiveness of time use. Their digital activities have not been directed towards educational game-based learning or competency-based vocational training. This phenomenon indicates a gap between students' technological skills and their awareness of the purpose of its use.

The tendency to play games indicates that students have untapped creative potential. If managed well, interest in games can be utilised in game-based learning to enhance motivation and participation [18]. However, the lack of self-awareness and digital responsibility demonstrates weaknesses in the elements of confidence and citizenship (confident and civic elements). In fact, digital literacy education should guide students in managing their time and understanding social responsibilities in the digital world [19].

D. *The teacher is endeavouring to implement digital literacy-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI), but some students are not yet interested.*

The PAI teachers at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng have endeavoured to integrate digital literacy into their teaching through the use of online resources and the creation of simple digital media. However, observations indicate that only some students show high enthusiasm for digital learning. The factors contributing to this include a lack of confidence in using learning technology and low intrinsic motivation towards PAI lessons.

The difference in students' interest in digital learning is caused by their low confidence (confident element) in using digital media. The cultural element (cultural element) also has an influence because the material presented by teachers has not fully aligned with the digital cultural context of the students. In fact, effective learning strategies must integrate students' cultural contexts to be more meaningful and communicative [20]. Teachers need to adjust their digital communication style to match students' learning styles in order to increase engagement [21].

E. *Students are already tech-savvy but have not yet been able to utilise it for learning.*

Students generally have mastered the basic use of digital devices such as smartphones, social media applications, and instant messaging. However, their skills are still limited to operational aspects and have not yet developed towards academic utilisation. They are not yet able to utilise the internet for research, information analysis, or the production of digital scientific works. This means that their digital literacy skills remain superficial and have not yet touched on critical and creative thinking aspects.

Students are already able to operate digital devices, but they have not yet learned to use them for critical thinking or creation. This condition indicates that basic cognitive skills have not yet developed into critical (critical element) and constructive (constructive element) thinking abilities. True digital literacy is not only about technical skills but also about the ability to understand, evaluate, and create meaningful digital information [22].

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the eight elements of digital literacy by Doug Belshaw (Cultural, Cognitive, Constructive, Communicative, Confidence, Creative, Critical, and Citizenship) are highly relevant to be integrated into Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam - PAI) learning at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. The study found a significant gap; firstly, students generally have mastered the cognitive elements at a basic level (able to operate gadgets), but their digital literacy remains superficial. Secondly, this ability has not developed to higher aspects, as evidenced by the low scores in the constructive element (students are still consumers, not yet productive in creating works) and the creative element (potential exists, but is misdirected towards entertainment). Thirdly, the most fundamental weakness lies in the critical element (inability to evaluate sources of information) and the citizenship/civic element (seen from practices of plagiarism and lack of digital ethics). Fourthly, the low interest and participation of students in digital PAI learning also indicate a weakness in the confidence element.

The integration of the eight Belshaw elements, particularly strengthening the Critical, Constructive, and Citizenship elements, becomes crucial. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning is not enough to merely utilise technology as a tool, but must actively teach ethics, critical reasoning, and digital responsibility. The pedagogical implications are that IRE teachers need to implement strategies such as project-based learning or digital storytelling to cultivate these eight elements in a balanced manner, in order to achieve the main goal of IRE, which is the formation of noble character (akhlaq) in the digital era.

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