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Use of the Canva Application in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Grade XI Students of State Vocational School in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the low interest and learning outcomes of students in Islamic Religious Education at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun, caused by the use of conventional lecture methods that tend to be monotonous, especially on complex and abstract marriage material. This study aims to describe the integration of the Canva application in Islamic Religious Education learning, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and analyze its impact on the learning process of class XI Accounting students. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and students. The results show that the use of Canva is able to transform marriage material into a more visual, interactive, and systematic, thus facilitating student understanding. The main supporting factor is the ease of use of Canva's features, while the main obstacle lies in the instability of the internet connection in the school environment. The implementation of this media has been proven to increase learning motivation, cognitive outcomes, and student activeness in constructing understanding through creative design. Thus, the use of the Canva application contributes as an effective pedagogical innovation in integrating digital technology with Islamic Religious Education learning to create a more dynamic, interactive, and meaningful learning experience.

Keywords

Canva Application; Learning Media; Islamic Religious Education.

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Introduction

Education is a conscious, planned, and continuous effort to create a conducive learning environment and a directed learning process. Through this process, students are encouraged to

play an active role in developing their full potential, including spiritual, intellectual, and personal potential. Through education, students are expected to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, a mature personality, optimal intelligence, noble morals, and various skills necessary to support their lives, both as individuals and as members of society (Yumriani et al., 2022). Education is a crucial part of national development, aiming to produce knowledgeable, well-mannered, and skilled individuals. To achieve these goals, the quality of learning must be considered to ensure optimal educational processes (Hidayat et al., 2025).

Islamic Religious Education is a conscious and planned effort through guidance, teaching, and training activities to achieve predetermined learning objectives (Ahyat, 2017). The goal of Islamic education is to develop students' potential in the form of abilities, knowledge, and skills so they can practice divine teachings, worship Allah, and achieve happiness in this world and salvation in the afterlife (Najwan Saada, 2020). The goals of religious education are often formulated in terms of its religious or cultural benefits for society. Religious education is positioned as a means of transmitting religious values, norms, and teachings from one generation to the next for the sake of social stability and cultural cohesion (Parker, 2021).

In Indonesia, Islamic Religious Education plays a vital role as a moral and spiritual foundation for students. Religious education must bridge traditional values with modern realities through a critical and innovative pedagogical approach, and the goals of Religious Education are often formulated in terms of its religious or cultural benefits for society (Sahin, 2018). However, significant challenges arise when material delivery methods remain stuck in conventional patterns dominated by one-way lectures. The use of traditional learning media with minimal visual or digital technology support tends to make the learning process less engaging and less effective in enhancing student understanding, including in Islamic Religious Education. This occurs because digital generation students are generally more responsive to interactive and visual-based media (Suwahyu, 2024a). The development of the education system in each period also influences character formation and learning patterns and styles in each generation (Mughtar et al., 2025).

In the ever-evolving digital era, technology has become an essential part of various aspects of life, including education. Rapid technological advancements have had a significant impact on educational development (Suwahyu, 2024b). Rapid technological developments have had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including education. Advances in information and communication technology have driven innovation in the learning process. As a result, teaching and learning activities are no longer limited to conventional methods but are beginning to utilize digital media and technology that are more effective, interactive, and tailored to the needs of modern learners (Era & Industri, 2019).

The use of technology in today's digital era has become a crucial requirement in the learning process, particularly in designing, analyzing, evaluating, developing, and implementing learning materials. Effective learning is learning that facilitates students' acquisition of the desired skills, knowledge, and attitudes, thereby fostering learning motivation and active student engagement throughout the learning process (Wulandari et al., 2022). The

use of digital technology in Islamic Religious Education assessments is not merely a modern addition but has become a crucial requirement for the education system to adapt to the characteristics of students accustomed to living in a digital environment (Abubakari et al., 2023). The use of technology-based media also contributes to increasing students' intrinsic motivation through interactive displays and engaging visuals (Putra & Ayyaisy, 2025). One example of this technology utilization is the use of the Canva application as a learning tool.

The Canva application is an online graphic design tool that teachers can use to design various learning media such as presentations, posters, infographics, and more (Badriyah et al., 2025). Canva enables collaboration between teachers and students in creating learning materials, encouraging active student participation. This platform also provides features that facilitate direct feedback, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable (Nabillah & Tanjung, 2023). Interactive learning media itself is a tool that bridges interactions between educators and students, making learning more communicative and easier to understand (Nisa et al., 2025). Similarly, interactive media enables two-way communication without the constraints of space and time (Liu et al., 2013).

Although various studies have shown that the use of digital media and the Canva app can improve student motivation and learning outcomes, previous research has not specifically examined the application of Canva in Islamic Religious Education (IS) learning, particularly on marriage, which involves complex legal concepts and abstract concepts. Furthermore, studies integrating analysis of supporting and inhibiting factors and their impact on student engagement and learning outcomes in vocational high schools are limited. Thus, there is a research gap that requires further investigation.

Based on initial observations on July 21, 2025, at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun, specifically among the 11th grade Accounting students, conducted by the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, it was found that student learning outcomes on marriage were still low, with only around 40% of students achieving the Minimum Competency (KKM), while the remaining 60% fell below the KKM (Minimum Competency) of 70. This condition was influenced by the use of monotonous lecture methods, limited use of technology-based learning media, and minimal supporting facilities within the school environment. The marriage material, which encompasses concepts such as the pillars of marriage and guardianship, is also quite complex, making it difficult to understand if presented verbally only. As a solution, the use of the Canva application in learning is considered capable of visualizing abstract concepts in a more concrete and engaging way. Through Canva, wedding material can be presented in interactive and systematic infographics, thus aligning with the characteristics of students who tend to be visual and digital. This makes learning more engaging, participatory, and easy to understand.

Therefore, this study has a novelty in empirically examining the integration of the Canva application in Islamic Religious Education learning on marriage material in grade XI of SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun, with a focus on the implementation process, supporting and inhibiting factors, and its impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions in the development of technology-based

learning media, as well as practical contributions for teachers in designing more innovative, effective, and appropriate learning that is appropriate to the needs of students in the digital era.

Method

This research was conducted to examine how the Canva application is used in Islamic Religious Education learning in class XI Accounting at State Vocational High School (SMK) 8 Sarolangun. Meanwhile, the approach used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a type of research that does not use numbers or statistics to analyze data, but rather focuses on describing and understanding a phenomenon comprehensively in its original context (Aspers & Corte, 2019). In this approach, researchers play the primary role in collecting and interpreting data, because they are directly involved with the situation and subjects being studied to understand the meaning and experiences that occur in the field (Fadli, 2021). According to Bogdan and Taylor, as quoted by Moleong, qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior, making it suitable for understanding phenomena comprehensively in their original context without using statistical analysis (Safarudin et al., 2023), the use of a descriptive qualitative approach in this study is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to deeply understand the use of the Canva application in Islamic Religious Education learning based on realities and experiences that occur directly in the field.

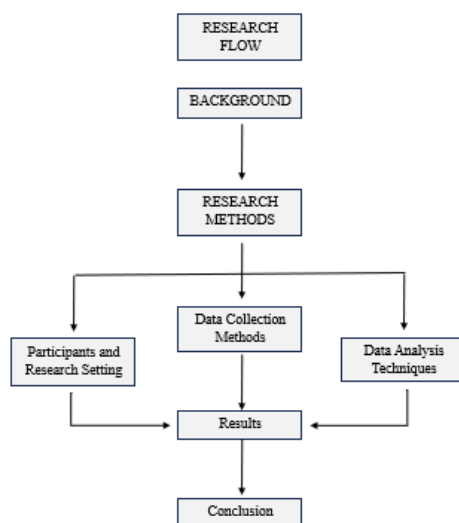


Figure 1. Research flow

This research was conducted at State Vocational High School (SMK) 8 Sarolangun located on Jalan Kalimantan, Bukit Suban Village, Air Hitam District, Sarolangun Regency. Then the subjects of this research were determined using a purposive sampling technique. The research subject is everything that is the focus of the study in the research, be it humans, objects, or institutions or organizations. The research subject is basically the party that becomes the basis for drawing conclusions from the research results (Surokim, 2016). Purposive sampling is the selection of subjects based on certain considerations (Maharani & Bernard, 2018). In this method, researchers select samples based on specific criteria that are in accordance with the research objectives, so that the selected samples are expected to provide relevant information

and answer the research problems (Nuralim et al., 2023). The research subjects consisted of Mrs. Umi Kulsum as an Islamic Religious Education teacher and class XI Accounting students of SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun as key informants. The number of research informants was 30 people.

The data sources in this study are divided into two main categories: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data originating from respondents or informants related to the variables being studied and can be collected through methods such as observation, interviews, or questionnaires (Undari Sulung, 2024). In this case, it involves the principal, curriculum vice principal, teachers, and students. Meanwhile, secondary data is information obtained indirectly from sources such as documents, literature, or relevant references, and is used to complement the primary data and strengthen the analysis in the study (Tannady et al., 2022). This includes document files obtained from the results of activities in conducting the research.

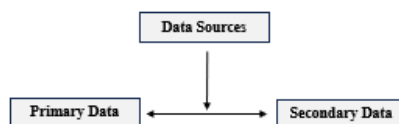


Figure 2. Data sources

The data collection technique in this study was a systematic procedure used to obtain relevant and valid information in accordance with the research objectives (Maesaroh et al., 2025). Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly observing the learning process to record behaviors and conditions occurring in the field (Hasibuan et al., 2023). In-depth interviews were conducted with informants, consisting of one Islamic Education teacher and five 11th-grade Accounting students, who were purposively selected based on their involvement and knowledge of using Canva media in learning (Rivaldi et al., 2023). Furthermore, documentation techniques were used to review archives, learning tools, and student work as supporting data (Tanjung et al., 2021). This research was conducted over approximately two months, from data collection to data analysis.

After data collection, qualitative data analysis was conducted through several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Qomaruddin, 2024). Data reduction was carried out by selecting, summarizing, and organizing relevant data. At this stage, researchers also conducted a coding process, namely labeling or coding data units based on certain categories, such as learning motivation, student activeness, and obstacles to media use. Next, the coded data was presented in descriptive narrative form for easier understanding and analysis. The next stage was theme development, namely grouping codes with similar meanings into main themes, such as the effectiveness of Canva in learning, supporting factors, and implementation barriers. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which were carried out in stages and verified through comparisons between field data and relevant theories, so that the research results were valid, accurate, and accountable. The results of this analysis were then used to answer the problem formulation and achieve the research objectives.

Finding and Discussion

Finding

Integration of the Canva Application in the Planning and Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning

The selection of the Canva application in the Islamic religious education learning process in class XI Accounting at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun is certainly based on reasons that support the use of more modern and easy-to-use learning media. The following is the reason why the Canva application was chosen as a learning medium in the Islamic Religious Education subject in class XI Accounting (Umi Kulsum, personal interview, 2026). The reason is the situation experienced before the application was used in learning, which still used conventional methods, resulting in student boredom and impacting learning outcomes: "Before using Canva, learning tended to be dominated by conventional lecture methods. Students often felt bored because they only listened to explanations, wrote, and did simple practices without any media variation. As a result, learning outcomes were low; only about 40% of students achieved the Minimum Competency (KKM). I myself initially found it difficult to use technology-based media due to my limited understanding of graphic media."

Umi Kulsum (personal interview, 2026) stated the reason for using the Canva app over others: "Canva is a solution to limited school infrastructure. We don't need a sophisticated computer lab to create high-quality media; just a cell phone and an internet connection can make learning feel modern. This is a form of innovation to prevent Islamic Religious Education (PAI) from being perceived as an outdated or boring subject."

The process of integrating the Canva app into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun begins with a systematic planning stage by educators. At this stage, teachers design learning materials, particularly on the chapter on marriage, by transforming complex legal texts into engaging visual elements. Teachers utilize Canva's various online graphic design template features to create infographics, presentations, and other creative informational media.

In practice, Canva serves as a digital tool that bridges abstract religious messages into tangible visuals for students. Students no longer simply listen to one-way lectures, but are actively involved in constructing their understanding of the pillars of marriage and the division of marriage guardians through participatory design. This demonstrates the transition from conventional methods to more modern and interactive learning in accordance with the characteristics of the digital generation. Statement (Rofiah Adawiyah, personal interview, 2026): "It's very fun and not boring anymore. Previously, we only wrote and listened to the teacher's explanation, so we often felt bored in class. Now we can learn while being creative using our own cellphones or laptops."

1. Analysis of Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Canva Use

The implementation of Canva at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun is supported by several key factors, including the application's easy accessibility via mobile and desktop devices and the availability of an auto-save feature that makes it easy to save work. Furthermore, the vocational school students' maturity in utilizing digital technology is crucial for wisely using this applica-

tion for academic purposes. Support from subject teachers and students' enthusiasm for breaking out of monotonous learning patterns also contribute positively to this process.

However, this study also identified several obstacles, particularly related to the school's geographical location in a rural area. Infrastructure limitations, such as an unstable internet connection, are a major obstacle, given that Canva requires a strong network to optimally access all of its features. Statement (Umi Kulsum, personal interview, 2026): "The main obstacle is the internet signal. Because our school is in a rural area, internet access is sometimes slow, even though Canva requires a stable network to access its features. But fortunately, our designs are automatically saved (auto-save), so they are not lost if the signal suddenly disappears."

These findings indicate that technological infrastructure remains a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of digital media implementation in schools, particularly in rural contexts. Limited internet access not only affects the speed and efficiency of using digital platforms but also has implications for teachers' flexibility in integrating technology into classroom practices. Nevertheless, teachers demonstrated adaptive strategies in addressing these challenges by utilizing Canva's auto-save feature and adjusting their working patterns according to network availability. This condition reflects that the success of technology integration in education is not solely determined by infrastructure readiness but also by teachers' digital resilience, creativity, and ability to adapt to contextual limitations. Therefore, strengthening digital infrastructure support in rural schools is essential to ensure equitable access to technology-based learning innovations and to maximize the potential benefits of digital tools in educational settings.

2. The Impact of Using the Canva Application on the Student Learning Process

The use of Canva has had a significant impact on the dynamics of Islamic Religious Education learning in 11th grade Accounting. Affectively, student motivation has increased due to the more interactive and varied classroom atmosphere. In interviews, students revealed that they are more enthusiastic about participating in lessons because they no longer simply listen to one-way lectures, which can often be boring. Transforming marriage material into creative infographics helps them grasp the sequence of the pillars of marriage more quickly.

Cognitively, this technology integration has been proven to improve student learning outcomes. Before using Canva, only 40% of students met the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM), but after the implementation of this tool, there was an increase in engagement and visual comprehension, which resulted in better academic achievement. Subject teachers confirmed that the use of appropriate media makes marriage material easier for students who are starting to mature, while also equipping them with relevant science and technology literacy.

Furthermore, the integration of Canva into learning activities also contributes to the development of students' digital literacy and higher-order thinking skills, which are increasingly important in contemporary education. Through visual-based learning activities, students are encouraged not only to receive information passively but also to analyze, organize, and represent concepts in meaningful ways. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, the use of visual media for marriage-related topics enables students to connect abstract concepts with real-life contexts, making learning more relevant and applicable. This finding suggests

that digital media integration, when aligned with pedagogical objectives, can create a more student-centered learning environment that simultaneously enhances engagement, conceptual understanding, and essential 21st-century competencies.

Discussion

The increase in student learning outcomes from 40% (before intervention) to higher after using Canva proves that visual stimulation is crucial in cognitive processes. According to the Dual Coding theory developed by Allan Paivio, humans process information through two channels, verbal and visual simultaneously (Azzahro et al., 2026). When students at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun viewed infographics about the flow of marriage while listening to the teacher's explanation, their long-term memory worked more effectively. In addition, the attentional function of visual media can attract and direct students' attention to concentrate on the content of the lesson (Khaira et al., 2025). This explains why 11th grade Accounting students found it easier to understand the sequence of pillars of marriage through Canva designs compared to simply reading text in a printed book.

Research findings show that using Canva creates a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment. This aligns with Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's Constructivism theory, where students construct their own knowledge through active experiences (Nurhasnah et al., 2024). By creating their own designs in Canva, students engage in a "learning by doing" process. Despite the challenges of signal issues in the Sarolangun area, Canva's collaborative features and easy accessibility still have a positive impact on student self-efficacy. Overall, this technological adaptation demonstrates that religious learning is not static, but can evolve dynamically with advances in science and technology to achieve the goals of comprehensive Islamic education.

Theologically, the use of Canva in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can be seen as a manifestation of the development of adaptive da'wah methods. According to Dadasaheb Salunke in Harold Lasswell's theory, this theory emphasizes that media is not just a tool, but an important part of the success of the message (Salunke, 2025). In this context, Canva acts as a modern wasilah (intermediary) that beautifies the delivery of Islamic law without changing its substance. This integration proves that Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun have implemented the principle of al-muhafadzatu 'ala qadimis shalih wal akhdu bil jadidil ashlah (maintaining good old traditions and adopting better new innovations).

The integration of Canva into Islamic Religious Education learning also reflects the transformation of pedagogical practices toward 21st-century learning paradigms that emphasize creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. The process of designing visual learning materials encourages students to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information, thereby strengthening learner autonomy and engagement. Moreover, digital-based learning experiences prepare vocational students to face future challenges by equipping them with technological competencies that are increasingly required in both academic and professional environments. Therefore, the implementation of Canva in teaching

marriage topics does not merely function as a media innovation but also as a strategic approach to bridging religious values, technological advancement, and the demands of contemporary education, ensuring that Islamic learning remains contextual, relevant, and responsive to societal changes.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Canva application in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMK Negeri 8 Sarolangun has a positive impact on the quality of learning. Previously theoretical marriage material can be presented in an interactive visual form, making it easier for teachers to deliver the material and helping students understand Islamic legal concepts more concretely. Although there were obstacles such as limited internet connection and initial technical issues, these were overcome because Canva is easy to use and supported by student enthusiasm in utilizing its various creative features. The use of Canva has also been shown to improve the motivation and learning outcomes of class XI Accounting students, as seen from increased student engagement and the achievement of the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM). Thus, Canva functions not only as a digital tool, but also as a pedagogical innovation that integrates religious values with technological literacy and reduces the boredom of conventional learning.

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