



The Relevance of Islamic Educational Values in Tere Liye's Novel *Janji* to Innovations in Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the digital era requires innovative media and instructional materials that are contextual and well-aligned with the characteristics of digital-generation students. This study analyzes the Islamic educational values presented in the novel *Janji* by Tere Liye and examines their relevance to PAI instructional innovations in the digital era. Employing a qualitative approach with a content analysis method, data were gathered through documentation techniques, utilizing the novel *Janji* as the primary data source alongside relevant academic literature as secondary data. The findings indicate that: (1) The novel *Janji* reflects essential Islamic educational values across three primary dimensions: *aqidah* (faith, divine mercy, and reliance on God), *sharia*/worship (ritual consistency and social philanthropy), and *akhlaq* (honesty, keeping promises, patience, and social empathy); (2) These Islamic educational values demonstrate strong relevance to contemporary PAI learning innovations, particularly as digital literacy-based resources, foundation materials for moral case studies (*digital storytelling*), and media for reflective character building; (3) Consequently, the novel *Janji* can be effectively integrated into instructional designs to enhance the engagement, depth, and practical relevance of technology-supported PAI learning.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid acceleration of information technology and scientific progress in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 has profoundly influenced various aspects of human life, including the spheres of education and religious practice. This ongoing wave of digitalization not only facilitates unprecedented access to knowledge and efficient communication, but also drives substantial shifts in socio-religious values. High internet penetration, algorithmic social media feeds, and interconnected virtual networks have formed a new cultural ecosystem for the younger generation, commonly referred to as digital natives. On one hand, this digital ecosystem broadens access to information and expands spaces for modern religious proselytization (*da'wah*). On the other hand, widespread digital immersion frequently brings ethical dilemmas, spiritual disorientation, and vulnerabilities in religious identity among adolescents (Gusvita & Rahman, 2022; Noviana, 2024).

In contemporary social reality, young people are routinely confronted with an influx of digital content that promotes hedonism, extreme individualism, secular mindsets, and moral relativism. Persistent challenges such as cyberbullying, exposure to explicit content, online gambling, and the prevalence of impulsive public shaming (*cancel culture*) on social media platforms signal a growing character crisis. In the religious sphere, the rise of digital platforms has given birth to the phenomenon of cyber-religion and altered traditional structures of religious authority. Consequently, religious understanding is often acquired in a fragmented, instant, and superficial manner without sufficient methodological rigor (Karolina, 2017). Religious life is increasingly displayed at a symbolic or performative level in virtual spaces, yet remains detached from the deep internalization of noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) in everyday conduct.

Faced with these complex ethical challenges in the digital era, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a vital strategic position as an intellectual, spiritual, and moral anchor for students. In principle, Islamic education extends far beyond simple knowledge transmission (*ta'lim*). It represents a comprehensive transformative journey that encompasses spiritual purification (*tazkiyatun nufus*), moral and behavioral guidance (*ta'dib*), and holistic personal development (*tarbiyah*) aimed at nurturing well-rounded individuals (*insan kamil*)—individuals who integrate deep faith, practical obedience to religious principles, and exemplary character (Alim, 2011; Aminuddin, 2006; Arief, 2002). However, in classroom practice across formal educational institutions, the delivery of PAI continues to encounter significant pedagogical constraints.

To date, PAI instructional practices often remain bound to conventional, teacher-centered paradigms that are predominantly doctrinal, textual, and focused on cognitive memorization (*rote learning*) (Kosim & Fathurrohman, 2018). Religious subjects are frequently presented as rigid compilations of legalistic rules (*halal-haram*) or textual memorization tasks, leaving little room for philosophical inquiry, personal reflection, or direct contextualization with students' everyday challenges. This formalistic model, detached from the lived experiences of digital-native learners, tends to generate disinterest (*burnout*) and

largely overlooks the affective and behavioral dimensions of learning (Djaelani, 2013; Karolina, 2017). As a result, a noticeable divide persists between the religious concepts memorized in class and the moral decisions students make in digital environments and broader social interactions.

To bridge this divide, a meaningful pedagogical reorientation and creative design in PAI media and strategies are urgently needed. PAI must transition from being perceived as a dry, prescriptive subject into an inspiring, dialogical educational experience that resonates with students' moral consciousness. One promising approach with considerable affective and cognitive value is the integration of literary fiction into religious pedagogy (*literature-based learning*). Well-crafted literary works, particularly reflective and faith-based novels, serve not merely as aesthetic entertainment (*dulce*), but as powerful instruments for moral reflection and the natural internalization of character values (*utile*) (Abrams, 2012; Nurgiantoro, 2018). Through engaging plotlines, realistic moral conflicts, and character development, literature encourages students to navigate life's ethical complexities and internalize religious principles without feeling patronized (Faisol, 2015; Indana & Fatiha, 2020).

Within modern Indonesian literature, the novel *Janji* by Tere Liye (2023) represents a notable narrative work imbued with deep spiritual, philosophical, and pedagogical meaning. Across its 448 pages, the novel presents Islamic educational values through a compelling quest narrative, following three traditional Islamic boarding school students (*santri*)—Hasan, Baso, and Kaharuddin—who are assigned to locate a former student named Bahar (Liye, 2023). Moving through diverse settings such as correctional facilities, harsh mining outposts, and urban slums, Tere Liye deliberately avoids portraying piety as a static, flawless condition from the outset. Instead, the narrative depicts the raw dynamics of sincere repentance, personal redemption, and the gradual spiritual transformation of a human being moving from past mistakes toward devoted service and genuine faith (Aimmah, 2022; Gusvita & Rahman, 2022). The novel addresses real-world issues surrounding adolescent struggles, the search for identity, selfless sincerity, and the mystery of divine decree through an accessible, communicative, and emotionally grounded storytelling style (Noviana, 2024).

Several academic inquiries have previously explored Tere Liye's *Janji*. Aimmah (2022) analyzed character education values within the novel and their broad connections to PAI. Gusvita and Rahman (2022) examined the narrative-based Islamic educational values embedded in the text. Additionally, Noviana (2024) investigated the relevance of values in *Janji* for shaping Muslim adolescent character. While these earlier works successfully cataloged specific moral themes, most remained restricted to descriptive textual analyses. None have systematically established an operational pedagogical framework detailing how the narrative values in *Janji* can be translated into digital, literature-based PAI instructional models suitable for integration into contemporary curricula, such as *Kurikulum Merdeka* and modern Learning Management System (LMS) platforms.

Herein lies the novelty and academic contribution of the present study. Beyond conducting a hermeneutic analysis of Islamic educational dimensions (*Akidah*, *Sharia*, and *Akhlaq*) in *Janji*, this research bridges textual literary findings directly with the practical demands of religious teaching in the digital era. It outlines an instructional design that embeds narrative excerpts into digital educational workflows, including digital case-based inquiries, story-infused learning modules, and creative student-produced digital media.

Based on this background, the present study addresses three main research questions:

1. What forms and interpretations of Islamic educational values emerge from Tere Liye's novel *Janji* across the dimensions of *Akidah*, *Sharia*, and *Akhlaq*?
2. How do the Islamic educational values depicted in *Janji* contextually address the challenges of Muslim character development in the digital age?
3. What instructional model can be formulated to integrate the narrative values of *Janji* into PAI learning innovations within digital learning environments?

Through these inquiries, this study aims to contribute theoretically to the interdisciplinary development of Islamic Religious Education—linking religious studies, literature, and educational technology—while offering practical guidance for educators seeking innovative media in schools and higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation of Islamic Educational Values (Triad: Akidah, Sharia, Akhlaq)

Conceptually, Islamic education represents an integrated process of physical, intellectual, and spiritual guidance grounded in Islamic tenets, aimed at cultivating mature personalities aligned with Islamic ideals (*insan kamil*) (Alim, 2011; Arief, 2002). Ontologically, the substance of Islamic educational content rests upon three interrelated core pillars: *Akidah*, *Sharia*, and *Akhlaq* (Ahmadi & Salimi, 2008; Alim, 2011).

- a. **Akidah Value Dimension (Faith):** *Akidah* serves as the foundational cornerstone of Islam, encompassing firm conviction in the heart, verbal confession, and active verification through deeds regarding Allah SWT, His angels, His revealed scriptures, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and His divine decree (*Qada and Qadar*) (Aisyah, 2020). In pedagogical practice, *akidah* education provides students with existential grounding, a sense of purpose, and psychological resilience (Alim, 2011). Rather than delivering cold theological abstractions, effective *akidah* instruction fosters an authentic spiritual consciousness that highlights the breadth of divine mercy, the ever-open door of forgiveness (*Al-Ghaffar*), and sincere peace with God's destiny (Aimmah, 2022; Gusvita & Rahman, 2022).

- b. **Sharia Value Dimension (Worship and Muamalah):** *Sharia* encompasses the comprehensive framework of normative principles governing devotional acts toward Allah SWT (*hablum minallah*) as well as social interactions with fellow human beings and the natural environment (*hablum minan-nas*) (Ahmadi & Salimi, 2008). This pillar is systematically divided into two key areas: *Ibadah Mahdah* (prescribed worship rituals, including daily prayer, fasting, and almsgiving) and *Ibadah Ghairu Mahdah / Muamalah* (social, economic, and civic affairs), which includes community care, philanthropy, support for vulnerable populations, and the stewardship of public infrastructure (Djaelani, 2013; Indana & Fatiha, 2020; Muhtarudin & Muhsin, 2019).
- c. **Akhlaq Value Dimension (Religious Morality):** *Akhlaq* represents the outward, behavioral expression of an individual's internal *akidah* and understanding of *sharia* (Syukur, 2010). According to Imam Al-Ghazali, *akhlaq* is an ingrained disposition of the soul from which actions emerge naturally without requiring forced calculation or laborious deliberation (Syukur, 2010). Moral education focuses on developing noble character traits (*akhlak mahmudah*), such as truthfulness (*shiddiq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), empathy, critical verification (*tabayyun*), and patience in avoiding hasty judgments against others (Aminuddin, 2006; Samani & Hariyanto, 2013).

Moral Disruption of the Digital Generation and Challenges in PAI Learning

The pervasive expansion of digital technology, artificial intelligence, and online networks in the 21st century has established a new social reality that continually influences the thinking patterns, social behaviors, and religious habits of young people (Gusvita & Rahman, 2022). Karolina (2017) emphasizes that the digital ecosystem presents a distinct duality in student development. While digital tools provide unprecedented access to instructional resources, they simultaneously expose learners to significant moral disruptions. These challenges are further compounded by internal pedagogical limitations within formal PAI instruction, which frequently struggles with methodological rigidity (Kosim & Fathurrohman, 2018). As noted by Djaelani (2013), school-based PAI continues to rely heavily on didactic, theoretical deliveries that struggle to connect religious values with the daily social realities of contemporary students.

Prophetic Literature as a Literary-Based Learning Strategy in PAI

To counter instructional fatigue and overly rigid teaching formats in PAI, incorporating religious literary fiction (*literature-based learning*) provides an engaging, reflective alternative (Faisol, 2015; Indana & Fatiha, 2020). Theoretically, literature and religious values share a deep, complementary relationship. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, literature serves as a powerful medium for moral examination and existential inquiry (Abrams, 2012; Nurgiantoro, 2018). Kuntowijoyo introduced the concept of Prophetic Literature to describe works that do not merely reflect social conditions, but

actively elevate human consciousness toward transcendent, liberating, and humanizing values (Faisol, 2015).

Cyber-Pedagogy and LMS Integration in Modern Religious Education

In the context of modern education, literature-oriented religious instruction must be purposefully linked with the principles of cyber-pedagogy (Karolina, 2017). Cyber-pedagogy involves far more than simply uploading print materials onto digital screens; it re-evaluates learning interactions by harnessing digital technology to build collaborative, reflective, and student-centered learning environments (Karolina, 2017). Within this framework, integrating narrative case studies into interactive Learning Management Systems (LMS) empowers students to engage critically with real-life moral dilemmas.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study connects the literary analysis of Tere Liye's *Janji* with practical PAI pedagogical design in the digital era. This framework links current digital moral challenges, the triad of Islamic educational values, and modern digital pedagogical strategies to support the holistic development of students (*insan kamil*).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative library research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moleong, 2017). A qualitative approach was adopted because it enables the thorough exploration and systematic interpretation of underlying meanings within literary narrative texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The data in this study are organized into two primary categories: primary data derived directly from the novel *Janji* by Tere Liye (published by Sabak Grip Nusantara, 2023), and secondary data gathered from authoritative theology texts, peer-reviewed educational journals, and current curriculum policy documents. Data collection was carried out through structured documentation techniques and comprehensive literature analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis paired with hermeneutic interpretation (Krippendorff, 2018; Palmer, 2005). The analytical procedures followed an integrated model adapted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) in combination with Krippendorff (2018).

Table 1. Data Collection Stages (Documentation Study)

Data Collection Stages	Operational Activities	Results / Output
Read & Re-Read	Thoroughly, carefully, and repeatedly reading the full text of Tere Liye's novel <i>Janji</i> .	Comprehensive understanding of narrative structure and moral conflict mapping.

Data Collection Stages	Operational Activities	Results / Output
Text Identification	Inventorying textual quotes and narrative dialogues relevant to the research focus.	Draft unit of moral text analysis ready for coding.
Categorization & Coding	Classifying textual data based on the triad of PAI values (Code AK = <i>Akidah</i> , SY = <i>Sharia</i> , AKH = <i>Akhlaq</i>).	Structured qualitative data coding matrix.
Literature Integration	Aligning textual data findings from the novel with secondary PAI literature and digital pedagogy theories.	Integration of primary and secondary data ready for analysis.

Table 2. Interactive Data Analysis Stages

Data Analysis Stages	Operational Activities	Analysis Purpose / Output
Data Reduction	Selecting, simplifying, and discarding novel quotes irrelevant to the PAI triadic value indicators.	Tightly filtered, focused qualitative data ready for processing.
Data Display	Organizing and categorizing identified text data into categorization matrices and narrative descriptions.	Systematic data visualization to facilitate pattern recognition and thematic mapping.
Hermeneutic Interpretation	Analyzing the deep meaning behind the novel text and character conflicts hermeneutically.	Discovery of contextual moral, spiritual, and ethical essences.
Instructional Re-Engineering	Transforming novel value interpretation results into a digital pedagogical framework (<i>cyber-pedagogy</i>).	Formulation of innovative PAI learning models and instructional strategies.

Data Analysis Stages	Operational Activities	Analysis Purpose / Output
Conclusion Drawing	Inductively formulating conclusions to address research questions and articulate novelty.	Final synthesis yielding valid, comprehensive scientific findings.

To ensure data trustworthiness and analytical rigor, credibility checks were maintained through source triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and regular peer debriefing sessions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Moleong, 2017).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The systematic content analysis indicates that the triadic Islamic educational values (*Akidah*, *Sharia*, and *Akhlaq*) present in Tere Liye's *Janji* offer meaningful, practical solutions to the moral challenges prevalent in the digital era. The narrative arcs and ethical choices made by the characters provide concrete reflections that help address the spiritual anxiety and ethical confusion experienced by modern students.

Table 3. Contextual Relevance of Values in *Janji* to Digital-Era Moral Challenges

Digital Moral Disruption Issue	Sub-Indicator Value in Novel <i>Janji</i>	Contextual PAI Relevance & Solution
Mental Health Crisis & Despair (Anxiety, FOMO, Depression)	Sincere Repentance (<i>Taubat Nasuha</i>) & Allah's Mercy (<i>Akidah</i> Dimension)	Countering spiritual despair by affirming that Allah's door of forgiveness remains open (<i>Al-Ghaffar</i>), thereby building mental resilience.
Materialism & Post-Truth (Search for False Validation)	Surrender to <i>Qada-Qadar</i> & Quiet Sincerity (<i>Akidah</i> Dimension)	Shifting life orientation from chasing worldly/virtual appreciation toward a peaceful, blessing-oriented eschatological awareness.
Religious Rigidity & Discipline (Ritual Burnout)	<i>Istiqamah</i> & Utilization of <i>Rukhsah</i> (<i>Sharia</i> Dimension)	Teaching that Islamic sharia is flexible (<i>yusr</i>) and not burdensome, training adaptive ritual discipline wherever one is.

Digital Moral Disruption Issue	Sub-Indicator Value in Novel Janji	Contextual PAI Relevance & Solution
Digital Individualism (Egoism & Social Apathy)	Philanthropy & Social Piety (<i>Sharia</i> Dimension)	Eroding digital narcissism by encouraging real social concern (<i>hablum minan-nas</i>), such as caring for orphans and nourishing the environment.
Virtual Fraud & Hoaxes (Deception & Manipulation)	Radical Honesty (<i>Shiddiq</i>) & Trust (<i>Amanah</i>) (<i>Akhlaq</i> Dimension)	Fortifying moral integrity so students avoid academic fraud, information manipulation, or irresponsible actions.
Cancel Culture & Cyberbullying (Mass Judgment)	Social Empathy & <i>Tabayyun</i> Tradition (<i>Akhlaq</i> Dimension)	Confronting bullying and hasty judgment cultures by instilling clarification (<i>tabayyun</i>) and compassion (<i>rahmah</i>).

- Transformation from Mental Crisis to Monotheistic Resilience:** Digital natives are vulnerable to depression and existential anxiety due to social media pressure. Bahar's repentance narrative emphasizes that no sin or failure is beyond repair, offering a monotheism-based psychological foundation that calms the soul.
- Reconstructing Cyber Communication Ethics:** Widespread cyberbullying and cancel culture reflect a loss of empathy in digital spaces. Bahar's refusal to judge a food thief, choosing instead to fulfill the person's needs, serves as a self-critique of netizen harshness while offering *tabayyun* and *rahmah* as solutions.
- Balancing Individual Devotion with Social Action:** The storyline demonstrates that ritual obedience (prayer) must align directly with social responsibility (philanthropy), empowering young generations to become agents of change in society.

DISCUSSION

Dialectics of Prophetic Literature and Character Education: Transforming from Doctrinal to Reflective

The findings of this study affirm that utilizing Tere Liye's *Janji* as an instructional resource creates an engaging pedagogical shift, moving away from rigid doctrinal memorization toward reflective, inquiry-driven learning (Faisol, 2015; Indana & Fatiha, 2020). Traditional PAI instruction frequently depends on passive lecture formats that position students merely as passive recipients of

moral rules (Kosim & Fathurrohman, 2018). Such approaches have shown limited effectiveness in engaging digital natives who value critical thinking, active exploration, and collaborative dialogue (Djaelani, 2013; Karolina, 2017).

Table 4. Comparison of PAI Pedagogical Approaches: Doctrinal vs. Reflective Literature-Based

Comparative Aspect	Conventional PAI (Doctrinal-Textual)	Innovative PAI (Prophetic Literature)
Primary Approach	Monologic and predominantly teacher-centered.	Dialogic, interactive, and student-centered.
Learning Method	Rote learning (rigid memorization of text/doctrine).	Empathic vicarious experience through reflection on narrative conflict.
Internalization Process	Rigid instruction and formalist indoctrination (<i>halal-haram</i>).	Subtle value transformation without feeling lectured.
Student Response	Tends to be passive; potential to induce burnout.	Active, emotional, fostering empathy and critical cognition.
Output Focus	Cognitive academic achievement alone.	Whole character formation (<i>insan kamil</i>) based on spiritual consciousness.

Formulating Cyber-Pedagogy-Based PAI Learning Innovations and LMS Integration

To connect these literary insights with the practical realities of modern schooling, this study proposes an instructional design framework grounded in cyber-pedagogy (Karolina, 2017). This design incorporates excerpts from *Janji* into standard Learning Management Systems (such as Moodle, Canvas, or Google Classroom) alongside structured collaborative learning activities.

Table 5. Operational Syntax for Cyber-Pedagogy Integration in PAI Table 5

Learning Component	Media & Method Integration Form	Student & Teacher Activities	Syntax / Operational Steps
Interactive Teaching Material	Digital Story-Injected Content	Students read novel dialogue fragments uploaded to the LMS. The teacher provides short audio/visual clips from the novel as stimuli.	1. Orientation: Introduction to the case/narrative fragment. 2. Exploration: Reading the context of the ethical dilemma.
Discussion Method	Digital Case-Based Learning (<i>d-CBL</i>)	Students engage in asynchronous discussions on LMS forums dissecting character moral dilemmas (e.g., Bahar's repentance or stealing out of hunger).	3. Case Analysis: Correlating narratives with PAI scripture/evidence (<i>Naqli</i>). 4. Asynchronous Discussion: Compiling ethical arguments in LMS forums.
Evaluation / Output	Multimodal Project-Based Learning	Students work in groups to produce digital outputs (podcasts, short videos, or e-reflection journals).	5. Creative Action: Producing digital da'wah content. 6. Evaluation & Reflection: Peer-assessment.

Table 6. Three-Step Integrative PAI Cyber-Pedagogy Framework

Step	Focus Area	Operational Description & Activities
Step 1	Digital Stimulus (<i>Digital Story-Injected Content</i>)	Screening and reading narrative fragments of <i>Janji</i> on LMS as a hook to capture student attention and interest.
Step 2	Problem Analysis (<i>Digital Case-Based Learning / d-CBL</i>)	Structured asynchronous discussions on LMS forums to critically analyze character moral dilemmas and ethical conflicts.
Step 3	Creative Expression (<i>Multimodal Project-Based Learning</i>)	Collaborative production of interactive digital works (podcasts, short videos, or e-reflection journals).
Outcome	Digital Generation Transformation	Transforming digital natives from passive content consumers into creators of positive religious content in cyberspace.

Pedagogical Implications and Relevance to Kurikulum Merdeka Policies

These findings carry direct pedagogical relevance for the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, particularly within Islamic Religious Education and Character Building (*Budi Pekerti*). *Kurikulum Merdeka* prioritizes student-centered learning, flexible contextual teaching materials, and the development of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* alongside *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* principles. Integrating the triadic values identified in *Janji* directly supports core curriculum dimensions, notably faith, piety, noble character, critical reasoning, and collaborative creativity.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

This study relies on qualitative library research utilizing content analysis and hermeneutic interpretation. Consequently, the proposed instructional framework has not yet been subjected to empirical classroom trials. Future research should implement Classroom Action Research (CAR) or Research and Development (R&D) methodologies to assess the practical effectiveness of this model and measure its concrete impact on student character development in diverse educational settings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study synthesizes three principal conclusions regarding Islamic educational values in Tere Liye's *Janji* and their pedagogical integration:

1. **The Triad of Islamic Educational Values:** The novel *Janji* reflects an integrated triad of Islamic values: *Akidah* (trust in divine forgiveness, sincere repentance, and acceptance of divine decree), *Sharia* (consistent worship rituals, practical adaptability, and social philanthropy), and *Akhlaq* (unwavering honesty, trustworthiness, social empathy, and critical verification).
2. **Contextual Relevance in the Digital Era:** These narrative themes provide practical counter-perspectives to digital-era ethical challenges, mitigating existential anxiety, checking online self-absorption, and curbing toxic digital shaming through principles of verification (*tabayyun*) and compassion (*rahmah*).
3. **Formulation of Cyber-Pedagogy Models:** This study develops a practical instructional model for PAI that combines digital story-injected prompts, asynchronous case discussions (*d-CBL*), and multimodal project creation on LMS platforms to foster active, reflective religious learning.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study is limited to a qualitative literature review approach; therefore, the proposed framework for cyber-pedagogy-based innovation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has not yet been empirically tested in actual classroom settings. Accordingly, future research is recommended to employ Classroom Action Research (CAR) or Research and Development (R&D) methods to examine the practical effectiveness of this model and assess its impact on students' character development.

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