Design of Islamic Religious Education Learning Media Based on *Virtual Reality* (VR): Traces of The Prophet Muhammad Saw's Struggle in Mecca and Medina

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Abstract:

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning often faces challenges in presenting abstract materials and requires a more interactive and immersive approach. In this context, Virtual Reality (VR) technology offers the potential to create a more in-depth and contextual learning experience. This study aims to design VR-based learning media with the theme "Traces of the Prophet Muhammad's Struggle in the Cities of Mecca and Medina." This media is designed to introduce students to the Prophet Muhammad's da'wah struggle through an immersive interactive experience. The design method used is the ADDIE (Analysis and Design) model, with the CoSpaces Edu platform that can be accessed through various devices such as smartphones, tablets, and simple VR headsets. The design results show that this media has advantages in presenting historical materials with 3D visualization, increasing student engagement through quiz and reflection features, and instilling Islamic character values. However, this media also faces challenges related to infrastructure and user readiness. Overall, this VR-based learning media has great potential in increasing the effectiveness of PAI learning with a more innovative and meaningful approach.

Keywords: *Virtual Reality*, Interactive Media, Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Learning Media, Learning Media Innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, particularly in developing good morals and ethics in accordance with Islamic teachings. Through PAI learning, students are taught not only the cognitive aspects of religious teachings, but also the spiritual values that serve as the foundation for everyday life. These values contribute to the development of students' social and emotional attitudes, which are essential for shaping individuals with Islamic character and personality (Putra, 2025). PAI aims to provide a deep understanding of Islamic teachings that are applicable to modern society, especially in the current era of globalization and digitalization. The challenges of an increasingly advanced era demand that religious learning be not only theoretical, but also applicable and contextual so that religious values can be internalized and practiced in real life (Pitri et al., 2025).

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects and prioritizes social skills such as communication, empathy, and cooperation has proven effective in helping students internalize religious values comprehensively (Hikmah, 2025). Thus, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning not only equips students with religious knowledge, but also forms social sensitivity and positive attitudes that support community life (Sabhana et al., 2024). Furthermore, effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning must be able to address the challenges of the digital era that bring changes in students' learning styles. Integrating technology into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is an important strategy to increase student motivation and engagement, so that religious learning can be more engaging and relevant to their current needs (Febrianti et al., 2025).

However, despite its strategic role in shaping students' character, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in schools still faces various challenges that hinder its effectiveness and student interest in learning. One of the main problems is low student interest in PAI, caused by conventional and less engaging learning methods, such as the dominance of lectures and the use of monotonous textbooks. This condition is exacerbated by inadequate allocation of learning time, where PAI subjects are often placed in the last period of the lesson, causing students to become bored and have difficulty concentrating (Megawati, 2025). In addition, limited teacher competence in managing classes and developing innovative learning methods is also a major inhibiting factor. Limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, including interactive learning media, also exacerbates this condition, making it difficult to achieve PAI learning objectives optimally.(Melinda et al., 2025)

Many schools still lack varied and interactive learning media, such as teaching aids, digital media, and adequate teaching materials. This condition causes Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning to focus solely on cognitive aspects and does not accommodate affective and psychomotor aspects, so that students tend to only understand theory without being able to implement religious values in everyday life (Megawati, 2025). This is because there are still significant obstacles related to the professionalism and innovation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' teaching, especially in adopting modern learning technologies. Many Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers still use traditional methods that are less interesting for students who are accustomed to digital technology, so this has an impact on low student motivation and engagement in learning (Berutu, 2025). This condition demands innovation in digital technology-based learning that can meet the needs of today's students.

Technology-based learning media innovations such as *Virtual Reality* (VR) have great potential to increase students' interest and understanding of subject matter. VR media can provide an interesting and interactive learning experience, so that abstract concepts in Islamic Religious Education become more real and easier for students to understand. Research by Pohan (2025)shows that the use of digital technology, including interactive applications, animated videos, and *e-learning platforms* , can make Islamic Religious Education learning more dynamic, visual, and interesting for students who are a generation that is very familiar with technology. In addition, this learning media innovation not only increases learning motivation but also encourages students' active involvement in the learning process, which contributes to improving critical and creative thinking skills.

Research by Oleh Fitri et al., (2025)shows that the use of VR technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can improve learning effectiveness by providing concrete visual simulations, such as virtual experiences in understanding the Hajj pilgrimage or interacting directly with Islamic teachings. Furthermore, this medium can accommodate various student learning styles and bridge the gap between theory and practice, making learning more relevant to the needs of today's students living in the digital age. Therefore, designing VR-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning media is crucial to address existing learning challenges and support the creation of an effective, engaging, and meaningful learning process. (Yansyah et al., 2025).

The Virtual Reality (VR) -based learning media developed in this study carries the theme "The Struggle of the Prophet Muhammad's Da'wah in Mecca and Medina." This theme was chosen because it has high historical and spiritual value and is relevant in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, especially to instill the exemplary and fighting spirit of the Prophet Muhammad in students. Through VR technology, students can experience an immersive and contextual learning experience, following the journey of the Prophet Muhammad's da'wah from his time in Mecca, which was full of obstacles, to his success in Medina. This technology not only presents a more realistic visualization of history, but also arouses students' emotions and empathy for the struggles of the Prophet and his companions. Thus, this media is expected to be able to present learning that is not only cognitive, but also touches the affective and psychomotor aspects of students.

The formulation of the problem in this study is: 1) How is the design of VR-based PAI learning media with the theme "The Struggle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW's Da'wah in Mecca and Medina"? 2) What are the advantages and limitations of the VR-based PAI learning media that have been designed ? The objectives of this study are: 1) Designing interactive VR-based PAI learning media with the theme "The Struggle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW's Da'wah in Mecca and Medina" 2) Identifying the advantages and limitations of the designed learning media as material for evaluation and further development.

The development method used in this study is the ADDIE model (*Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation*), but in the scope of this study it is only focused on the *Analysis* and *Design stages* without carrying out direct implementation into the learning process in the classroom. The ADDIE model was chosen because it has a systematic and structured flow in the media development process, starting from needs analysis, media concept design, to creating *a prototype of* VR-based learning media.

II. CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL STUDY

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the Educational Context

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a conscious and planned effort to guide students to know, understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings as a comprehensive guide to life. The main goal of Islamic education is to shape students into individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals , so that they are able to practice spiritual values in their daily lives (Nasrullah & Albina, 2025). Islamic education is not only oriented towards cognitive religious aspects, but also emphasizes the development of character, morals, and spirituality as the main foundation in shaping students' social and emotional attitudes (Siregar & Hasibuan, 2024).

In its learning process, Islamic Religious Education emphasizes the integration of three main domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain relates to understanding Islamic teachings, the affective domain concerns the attitudes and spiritual values instilled in students, while the psychomotor domain encourages students to actualize these values in real behavior. The integration of these three aspects aligns with the goal of Islamic education, namely to shape complete Muslims who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals, and are able to contribute positively to society (Yasir, 2025).

Learning Media in Education

Learning media are all forms of tools or means used to help convey learning materials, so that the teaching and learning process becomes more effective, communicative, and interesting. The existence of media functions as a communication bridge between teachers and students, which not only conveys information, but also facilitates the understanding of abstract concepts in a more concrete and visual way (Agustin et al., 2025). In the context of modern learning, media is no longer passive, but plays an active role in creating an interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The main function of learning media is to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and attractiveness of learning, which ultimately can trigger student learning motivation (Ali et al., 2025).

To function optimally, learning media must meet several criteria. First, the content presented must be relevant and contextual, tailored to the characteristics and needs of students. Second, the media must be interactive, enabling students to actively engage in the learning process. Third, the media must be easily accessible and usable in both face-to-face and online learning *settings*. In today's digital age, various forms of media, such as instructional videos, interactive animations, and social media *platforms* like YouTube, can be alternatives to support more dynamic and engaging material delivery (Yusnaldi et al., 2025).

***Augmented Reality* (AR) and *Virtual Reality* (VR) Technology**

Augmented Reality (AR) and *Virtual Reality* (VR) are two innovative digital technologies that have brought about a major transformation in the world of education. AR is a technology that enriches the real world with virtual elements such as images, videos, or animations through devices like *smartphones* or tablets. This technology allows users to see digital objects that blend in *real-time* with their physical surroundings (Gunawan, 2023). In contrast, VR creates a digital environment completely separate from the real world. By using devices such as VR *headsets*, users can experience a fully immersive and interactive learning experience in a virtual world (Azmi et al., 2024).

The main characteristic of AR is its ability to simultaneously combine the real and virtual worlds, creating a contextual and immersive learning experience. Meanwhile, VR provides a more immersive and comprehensive experience by immersing students in simulated worlds, such as virtual laboratories, historical tours, or places of worship, that cannot be accessed directly (Azmi et al., 2024). The fundamental difference between AR and VR lies in the level of engagement: AR enhances existing realities, while VR constructs new, entirely digital realities. In the context of religious education, AR and VR can be used to interactively visualize Islamic historical events, the Hajj pilgrimage, or the stories of the prophets, so that students can understand the material more concretely and meaningfully.

Theoretical Foundations of *Virtual Reality* (VR) - Based Media Design

a. Cognitive Theory *of Multimedia* Learning

This theory was put forward by Richard Mayer, who stated that learning is more effective when information is presented through a combination of words and images simultaneously. VR as a multimedia learning medium is able to combine visual, audio, and interactive elements, which can improve the understanding of complex concepts in a way that is more easily digested by the human brain. The use of VR allows students to learn through direct, multisensory experiences, thereby maximizing cognitive processes such as information processing and the formation of new knowledge schemes (Dhitya & Setiyowati, 2024). VR-based media supports this theory by providing immersive visual representations and providing more realistic interactive *feedback*, which encourages students to build a stronger understanding of the learning material.

b. Constructivism Learning Theory

Constructivism emphasizes that learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through experience and interaction with the environment. This theory was developed largely by Piaget and Vygotsky, who emphasized the importance of social context and interaction in learning. VR media provides an immersive and interactive learning environment, allowing students to explore, experiment, and collaborate in real or simulated contexts. This aligns with the principles of constructivism, which encourage experiential and discovery-based learning. Students can connect new knowledge with existing knowledge, making the

learning process more effective and meaningful (Azmi et al., 2024).

c. *Experimental Learning* Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of direct experience in the learning process. Kolb stated that effective learning occurs when individuals experience a situation, reflect on that experience, form concepts from those reflections, and ultimately apply them to new situations. VR media provides opportunities for students to virtually experience real-world situations, such as historical simulations, pilgrimages, or scientific experiments that are difficult to conduct in conventional learning. Thus, students can learn more meaningfully through reflection on experiences gained in virtual environments (Supriyantomo & Fauzan, 2024).

Previous research on *Virtual Reality* (VR) Based Learning Media

Technology-based learning media innovations such as *Virtual Reality* (VR) have significant potential to enhance students' interest and understanding of subject matter. Research by [[[VR]] Azmi et al., (2024) demonstrates the significant potential of *Virtual Reality* (VR) in learning, particularly for abstract material. VR can visualize complex concepts in interactive 3D, thus facilitating student understanding and increasing motivation, engagement, and cognitive abilities.] This study also shows that VR supports self-directed learning and can transform traditional learning methods into more engaging and meaningful ones.

Research Firdaus, (2024) confirms that VR can create immersive learning experiences, encouraging students to actively participate in the learning process and improving their overall learning outcomes. This immersive learning experience can improve information retention and help students understand difficult material in a more enjoyable and memorable way.

Similar research Siahaya, (2024) also shows that implementing VR in education has significant potential to increase student engagement, learning motivation, and material comprehension. VR creates a practical and immersive learning environment, encouraging students to engage directly and actively in learning. However, challenges such as high costs, limited infrastructure, and the need for training for educators remain major obstacles to VR implementation in many educational institutions, particularly in Indonesia.

three studies underscore that the use of VR in education can improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes, particularly in delivering abstract or difficult-to-understand material using conventional methods. However, its implementation still requires infrastructure support and teacher capacity building for optimal and sustainable use.

III. MEDIA DESIGN RESULTS

Analysis of Learning Needs and Problems

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching the history of the Prophet Muhammad's missionary struggle in Mecca and Medina is often delivered in a conventional narrative format, resulting in a lack of student engagement and engagement in understanding Islamic historical values. Students have difficulty visualizing the events and settings that occurred during the Prophet's time, resulting in a lack of in-depth understanding and internalization of the material's moral values. Therefore, contextual, interactive learning media are needed, capable of providing an immersive learning experience.

Media Name and Type

The designed learning media is titled "Traces of the Prophet Muhammad's Struggle in the Cities of Mecca and Medina," and is a *Virtual Reality* (VR) medium based on *the CoSpaces Edu platform* . This media carries an exploratory approach, where students can explore the virtual environments of the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, each presenting important events in the Prophet Muhammad's preaching.

Media Specifications

This media can be accessed through a browser *on* desktop and mobile devices*,* and *supports* immersive VR mode *when* used with *Google Cardboard devices* or other simple VR *headsets*. For non-VR access, students can still explore the virtual environment through full-screen mode *on* devices such as *smartphones*, tablets, or laptops, so its use is flexible and does not require expensive special equipment. Specifically, this media consists of five main parts:

First, the initial menu displays two main gates, the Mecca Gate and the Medina Gate, as a starting point for students' exploration. Second, the City of Mecca presents simulations of important places and events such as the Cave of Hira (where the first revelation was revealed), the Kaaba during the pre-Islamic era, and the Ukaz Market, as well as interactions with figures opposing the Islamic mission, such as Abu Jahl, and supporters, such as Abu Talib. The main values emphasized in this section are patience and steadfastness.

Third, in the city of Medina, students are taken to strategic sites like the Prophet's Mosque, the Medina market, and major events like the Battle of Badr and Uhud, presented in a lighthearted and educational way. Companions like Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Khattab, and the

Ansar are presented as avatars to support the narrative of the struggle. Values instilled in this section include brotherhood, mutual cooperation, and the spirit of struggle.

Fourth, this media provides interactive quizzes and educational games in the form of guessing places, multiple-choice questions about events, and matching figures and their roles in the history of da'wah. Finally, there is a final reflection section, where students virtually "sit" in a park in Medina, listening to reflections and moral messages from an avatar of the Prophet (with voiceover and no facial visualization), which emphasizes the importance of emulating the morals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

How to use

Students access the media through a *CoSpaces Edu link* using their individual devices. After selecting a city to explore, they virtually explore historical sites while reading or listening to narration. Interactions occur by clicking on objects, answering quizzes, and completing learning missions. The media can be used individually or in groups with teacher guidance, either in VR headset mode or on a regular screen.

Innovative Aspects of Media

The "Traces of the Prophet Muhammad's Struggle in the Cities of Mecca and Medina" learning media has several innovative aspects that support students' comprehensive learning process. The main innovation lies in the immersive and contextual learning experience, where students are invited to explore the cities of Mecca and Medina in a virtual format. Through this approach, students do not simply see images or read text, but rather feel as if they are directly present, witnessing the historical events of the Prophet Muhammad's mission. This media also integrates values-based learning and historical visualization, so that students not only understand the flow of events but also can absorb the Prophet's exemplary morals, such as patience, courage, and the spirit of brotherhood and struggle. The visual simulation of events makes these values easier for students to internalize.

Furthermore, this media is designed with the principle of flexible access, allowing its use through various devices, such as *smartphones*, tablets, laptops, and even simple VR *headsets* like *Google Cardboard*. This makes the media widely usable without the need for high-tech devices. Interactivity and reflection are also innovative characteristics of this media. The availability of quiz features, light games, and reflection sessions at the end of the lesson make the learning process not only cognitive, but also touches the affective aspects of students. Thus, learning becomes more enjoyable, meaningful, and memorable for students.

IV. DISCUSSION

Media Advantage Analysis

The Virtual Reality (VR) -based learning media "Traces of the Prophet Muhammad's Struggle in the Cities of Mecca and Medina" has several advantages that support the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. First, this media provides an immersive and interactive learning experience, so students can feel as if they were directly present at the historical events of the Prophet Muhammad's preaching. This is in line with findings Supriyantomo & Fauzan (2024) stating that VR technology can improve the understanding of complex material through immersive and interactive visual presentations, so that students are more motivated and active in the learning process. Second, this media is designed with high access flexibility, can be used through various devices such as *smartphones*, tablets, laptops, or simple VR *headsets*. This flexibility is important to reach more students without the need for expensive devices, in accordance with recommendations in studies on the use of VR media in learning that emphasize the importance of technological accessibility (Baroroh et al., 2024).

Third, the integration of interactive quiz features and educational games in this media supports active learning and enhances students' cognitive engagement. According to Khotima et al., (2024), the use of VR in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can improve students' critical thinking skills through contextual and intellectually challenging situation simulations. Furthermore, reflection sessions with the Prophet's avatar narrative provide an affective dimension that helps internalize moral values, strengthening character learning. Fourth, this media accommodates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner, thus aligning with the holistic learning principles recommended in modern Islamic Religious Education (PAI) (Agustin et al., 2025). The exploratory approach and contextual narrative make learning not only informative, but also meaningful and memorable for students.

Media Deficiency Analysis

Despite its many advantages, VR-based learning media also faces several limitations. First, technical constraints such as the need for a stable internet connection and compatible devices can be a barrier for some schools, especially those with limited infrastructure. This aligns with findings Baroroh et al., (2024) that indicate infrastructure is a major challenge in implementing VR in schools. Second, the use of VR

requires adaptation time for teachers and students to optimally utilize the media. Some teachers may be unfamiliar with this technology and therefore require special training. This was also highlighted by Khotima et al., (2024) those who highlighted the need for mentoring and training in implementing VR technology for effective implementation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning.

Third, developing high-quality, pedagogically relevant VR content requires significant time and financial resources. VR media creation must consider both pedagogical aspects and material substance to ensure that the media is not only visually engaging but also effective in achieving learning objectives (Yasir, 2025). Finally, while VR media can be used in non-VR modes, the most optimal learning experience still occurs when using VR devices. This can limit the immersive experience for students who only access the media through traditional screens.

V. CONCLUSION

a Virtual Reality (VR) -based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning media entitled "Traces of the Prophet Muhammad's Struggle in the Cities of Mecca and Medina." This media is designed to provide an immersive, contextual, and meaningful learning experience, especially in understanding the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad's da'wah. By utilizing the *CoSpaces Edu platform* and simple devices such as *Google Cardboard*, this media can be flexibly accessed by students via *smartphones*, tablets, or laptops.

This learning medium has several advantages, including providing an interactive and immersive learning experience, strengthening understanding of the material through 3D visualizations, and instilling the exemplary values of the Prophet Muhammad through historical simulations that address cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Furthermore, the integration of quizzes and reflection features makes the learning process more active and engages with character development.

However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed, such as the need for compatible devices, stable internet access, and teacher and student readiness to operate technology. Developing quality content also requires time, funding, and adequate technical competence. Addressing this requires training for educators, pedagogically appropriate content development, and infrastructure support from educational institutions.

Overall, this VR-based learning medium offers an innovative alternative to enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. If developed and implemented with the right strategy, this medium has significant potential to strengthen students' understanding of religious material, foster Islamic character values, and create a fun and meaningful learning environment in the digital age. Suggestions for implementing VR-based learning media include providing training for teachers and students to maximize the use of this technology. Furthermore, it's crucial to ensure adequate infrastructure and develop more affordable and relevant VR content to support effective learning.

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