

## **Student Perceptions of Digital Learning Strategy Innovation at Universiti Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin Terengganu Malaysia**

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**Abstract:** Strategic innovation in learning in the 21st century is very important to improve the quality of education that is relevant to the demands of modern developments. The use of technology, the application of project-based learning models, and the integration of Islamic values in social and global life are strategies that can be implemented effectively to achieve educational goals. This study aims to determine various innovations in learning strategies at Universiti Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through direct observation of the lecture process at the Faculty of General Studies & Further Education (FPUL) UniSZA, in-depth interviews with several students, and document analysis in the form of digital learning media. Data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Based on the research results found, it appears that the learning process has used a collaborative, digital, and contextual approach. The use of digital media such as KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules developed by educators from Sultan Zainal Abidin University (UniSZA), as well as learning that integrates Problem Based Learning (PBL), Blended Learning and Project Based Learning methods is evidence of innovative efforts in the learning system.

**Keywords:** Strategy Innovation, Learning, Sultan Zainal Abidin Islamic University

**Abstrak:** Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) memiliki peran strategis dalam membentuk karakter peserta didik yang berlandaskan nilai keadilan, empati, dan relasi sosial yang setara. Namun, praktik pembelajaran PAI masih kerap memuat bias gender yang bersumber dari konstruksi sosial, bukan dari nilai autentik ajaran Islam. Pemikiran Nur Rofiah mengenai keadilan hakiki, rahmah universal, dan kesalingan menawarkan kerangka nilai yang dapat memperkaya internalisasi karakter berkeadilan gender dalam pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis integrasi ketiga nilai tersebut ke dalam pembelajaran PAI melalui pendekatan Asset-Based Thinking (ABT), yang berfokus pada penguatan potensi positif peserta didik. Metode penelitian menggunakan studi pustaka dengan

analisis isi terhadap karya-karya Nur Rofiah, literatur feminisme Islam, teori pendidikan agama, dan pendekatan ABT. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa keadilan hakiki dapat ditransformasikan melalui penguatan fitrah kesetaraan manusia; rahmah universal melalui pembelajaran empatik yang menumbuhkan kepedulian lintas gender; dan kesalingan melalui model pembelajaran kolaboratif yang menempatkan siswa sebagai mitra belajar yang setara. Pendekatan ABT terbukti relevan dalam mendukung internalisasi nilai melalui strategi berbasis aset individual, relasional, dan spiritual, sehingga pembelajaran PAI menjadi lebih dialogis, konstruktif, dan berorientasi karakter. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan desain pembelajaran PAI yang mengintegrasikan ABT untuk memperkuat nalar kritis, keadilan, dan relasi kesalingan di sekolah maupun madrasah.

**Kata Kunci:** Inovasi Strategi, Pembelajaran, Universitas Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin

## **Introduction**

One form of innovation in the rapidly developing world of education is the use of digital technology. The use of various media such as e-learning platforms, interactive videos, and educational applications provides easy access to information while creating a more engaging and interactive learning experience. Sultan Zainal Abidin University Malaysia, as one of the leading Islamic institutions in Southeast Asia, has various innovative learning strategies, producing graduates who not only master religious knowledge but are also able to adapt to social, technological, and cultural changes. Based on the results of interviews with several students and observations at the Faculty of General Studies & Further Education (FPUL) UniSZA, it is clear that the learning process has used a collaborative, digital, and contextual approach. The use of digital media such as KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules developed by educators from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), as well as learning that integrates Problem Based Learning (PBL), Blended Learning, and Project Based Learning methods are evidence of innovative efforts in the learning system.

This shows that this innovative learning strategy is driven by the university's vision, namely to become a leader for contemporary integrated Islamic universities. These findings align with research by Adinda Zahara et al., which demonstrate that the use of information technology, such as digital learning applications, e-learning platforms, and interactive media, significantly contributes to increasing student motivation, expanding the

reach of education, and supporting a more personalized and contextual learning process. This study also provides strategic advice for curriculum developers and educators to optimize the use of technology in learning, while emphasizing the importance of digital transformation as a step towards the sustainable modernization of Islamic education.<sup>1</sup> Based on the above explanation, it appears that the learning strategy innovations at UniSZA are a response to the shifting modern paradigm. However, an in-depth study is still needed to determine the form and benefits of these innovations in improving the quality of learning and graduate competencies.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing various learning strategy innovations at UNISZA Malaysia through a qualitative approach, drawing on data from observations, interviews, and a literature review of previous research. This study aims to analyze the perceptions of students at Universiti Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) Terengganu, Malaysia, towards the innovation of digital learning strategies implemented in the lecture process, identify the level of effectiveness of innovation of digital learning strategies in increasing students' understanding, participation, and learning motivation, and examine the suitability of innovation of digital learning strategies with Islamic values that are the character and identity of Islamic educational institutions

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of scientific studies in the field of education, particularly Islamic education and learning technology. The results of this study can enrich theoretical perspectives on the integration of innovative digital learning strategies with Islamic values and serve as a reference for further research examining similar themes. Practically, the results of this study can be used as evaluation material and considerations for Sultan Zainal Abidin Islamic University in designing, developing, and implementing more effective digital learning strategies that are tailored to student needs. Furthermore, this research can also serve as a reference for lecturers in developing innovative, interactive digital learning designs that are oriented towards improving the quality of learning.

## Method

This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The location of this research was at the Faculty of General Studies & Advanced Education (FPUL) UniSZA Terengganu Malaysia from August 23

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<sup>1</sup> Zahrah, A., dkk., "Inovasi Pembelajaran PAI Berbasis Teknologi Informasi: Transformasi Digital dalam Pendidikan Islam", *Akhlaq Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Filsafat* 2, no. 3 (2025), p. 119-131.

to September 6, 2025. The subjects in this study were students of the Faculty of General Studies & Advanced Education (FPUL) UniSZA. The data collection technique in this study used data triangulation techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation to ensure the validity of descriptive information. The data analysis technique in this study reduced unnecessary data related to learning innovation strategies and described or created graphic tables for data presentation and drawing conclusions.

## **Result and Discussion**

Learning strategy innovation is essentially a systematic effort to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes through approaches, methods, and technologies that are more relevant to the needs of the times. 21st-century education no longer focuses solely on delivering content, but rather on how students build knowledge, higher-order thinking skills, and character through authentic and meaningful learning experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Innovation strategies in learning have different emphases so they will be effective if the preparation is met. Therefore, when selecting or designing learning strategies, educators need to consider the following factors: (a) The competencies to be achieved by students. The extent to which competencies or goals are achieved greatly influences the type of experience students need to obtain in the learning process, (b) Characteristics of the material. The essence of the material discussed in learning also plays a role in determining the learning experiences that must be provided to students in the learning process. Understanding material based on concepts requires different learning experiences compared to understanding material based on procedures or skills, as well as values and attitudes, (c) Student background.<sup>3</sup>

## **Student Perceptions of Digital Learning Strategy Innovation**

Based on observations and interviews with students, researchers found that learning at UniSZA Terengganu Malaysia consistently innovates in learning strategies to adapt to the demands of 21st-century education without abandoning Islamic values. In the interviews, UniSZA students conveyed that the innovative learning strategy is digital learning, which provides significant opportunities for individuals to develop independent learning, accessing various sources and research methods relevant to their

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<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Abdau Yazid et al, "Implementation of the Use of E-Learning Media in Learning: Strategies and Innovations", *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches* 4, no. 2 (2024), p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>Fathimah Raniyah, et al., "Development of Creative and Innovative Learning Strategies for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the Digital Era", *Dewantara: Journal of Social Humanities Education* 3, no. 2 (2024), p. 29–37.

learning needs. Through this access, students can design their learning more independently, considering their vision and goals for future development.

It is in this context that students are highly motivated to undertake learning. This aligns with the research findings of Abdon Ramirez & Esteben Inga, who stated that motivation to become a professional individual plays a crucial role in empowering everyday experiences, particularly in encouraging innovative practices such as community education projects, experiment-based learning, and integrated knowledge development through learning communities.<sup>4</sup> Digital learning is a learning approach that uses technology and digital-based media to present material, either through software, platforms, online applications, or various other forms of digital content.<sup>5</sup>

In an interview, UniSZA students stated that digital learning is facilitated by digital platforms such as Zoom meeting applications, WhatsApp groups, and KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules. These learning strategies support learning, including online learning and other digital methods. Through the use of these platforms, students can demonstrate their learning progress gradually through projects they work on over time. This process allows learning to occur not only in the classroom but also integrated with students' real-life experiences.

The platform allows students to share experiences, strengthen the learning process, and overcome difficulties in understanding new knowledge. According to Chander N, the use of platforms in digital learning can update the concept of andragogy in virtual and non-virtual learning contexts through the use of learning objects relevant to students' interests and learning needs.<sup>6</sup> The effectiveness of digital learning is highly dependent on adequate connectivity and the use of more productive communication platforms such as WhatsApp Groups and UniSZA integrated platform for meaningful learning activities.

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<sup>4</sup> Abdon Ramirez & Esteben Inga, "Educational Innovation in Adult Learning Considering Transformation for Social Inclusion", *education sciences* 12, no. 882 (2022), p. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Isti Sufiana, et al, "Learning Transformation: Bridging Digital Learning and Conventional Models", *As-Sulthan Journal of Education (ASJE)* 1, no. 4 (2025), p. 823-834.

<sup>6</sup> Chander N, et. al, "Conceptualizing Inclusive Learning and Development: A framework towards Entrepreneurial Competency Practices for Sustainability", *Sustainability* 12, no. 6905 (2020), p. 7.

Several universities have adopted virtual learning platforms such as EDUMAX to facilitate lecturers in conducting online classes.<sup>7</sup> The use of this platform enables a more structured, interactive, and flexible learning process, improving the quality of learning while expanding educational access for all students. Field observations indicate that UniSZA students combine digital learning with other learning strategies using digital media in their implementation. The following are innovative learning strategies used by UniSZA Malaysia students:

Table 1. Learning Strategy Innovation at UniSZA

| No. | Types of Innovation            | Implementation                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Benefit                                                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Digital Technology Integration | The use of Zoom Meeting, WhatsApp group, KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules. | Facilitate the learning process and access learning materials          |
| 2   | Project Based Learning         | Creating a digital da'wah project in the form of a video and uploading it to YouTube.                                                                                                                                 | Cultivating creativity in preaching                                    |
| 3   | Blended Learning               | Lectures via zoom meetings and e-learning forums.                                                                                                                                                                     | Facilitates the face-to-face learning process remotely and is flexible |
| 4   | Problem Based Learning         | Group discussion to solve problems presented by the teacher.                                                                                                                                                          | Improve students' analytical and critical thinking skills              |

In addition to the use of digital platforms, UniSZA students implement innovative learning strategies that utilize digital media, making the learning process more open, dynamic, and flexible. Based on the results of interviews and field observations, researchers found that the use of digital

<sup>7</sup> Anisa Permata Sari & Munir, “Utilization of Digital Technology in Learning Innovation to Increase the Effectiveness of Classroom Activities”, *Digital Transformation Technology (Digitech)* 4, no. 2 (2024), p. 980.

media such as YouTube, Classroom, Zoom Meeting, WhatsApp as a medium for reporting learning outcomes, for example by making videos of da'wa uploaded on YouTube. Group discussions are held on WhatsApp or Zoom meeting. As for innovating these learning strategies by implementing problem-based learning and project-based learning, which have become key strategies in strengthening students' critical thinking skills. Problem-based and project-based learning are student-centered learning. Students are actively involved and enjoy the educational process in the classroom, but also outside the classroom environment.<sup>8</sup> This approach emphasizes how to make students enjoy learning by providing positive encouragement and creating a fun and challenging learning environment, thereby increasing student creativity and making the learning process more effective and interesting.



Figure 1. Combination of PJBL, PBL and Blended Learning with the KeLIP Platform

Based on the results of observations, the Innovation strategies used in student learning at UniSZA, including the integration of digital technology with project-based learning and problem-based learning, represent a constructivist learning paradigm that places students as active learning subjects. The integration of digital technology in learning is not just the use of hardware or applications, but rather a meaningful integration between technology, pedagogy and learning content.<sup>9</sup> Through Zoom Meeting,

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Hafizd Fauzi, et al., "Integration of Islamic Values and Learning Innovation in Islamic Religious Education in Higher Education from an Academic and Religious Perspective", *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal* 2, no. 2 (2025), p. 186–196.

<sup>9</sup> Luthfi Febriani, et al., "The Effectiveness of Innovative Learning Spaces Based on Digital Technology in Islamic Education Learning", *AEJ (Advances in Education Journal)* 1, no. 4 (2025), p. 350.

WhatsApp group, KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules.) allows lecturers to personalize learning, facilitate rapid feedback, and monitor student progress more accurately.

The implementation of strategies in project-based and problem-based learning is a combination of digital learning that can encourage students to think critically, innovatively, and independently. Project-Based Learning is a strategy that organizes learning around complex, contextual projects that require students to investigate, collaborate, and produce work in the real world.<sup>10</sup> According to Thomas, PjBL is effective because it connects academic knowledge with real-world practice, making learning more meaningful. When combined with digital learning, for example through online research, multimedia design, and digital presentations, PjBL can foster creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. PjBL increases student engagement and independence in learning while strengthening 21st-century skills.<sup>11</sup>

Project Based Learning strategies have proven effective in a variety of subjects, improving student learning outcomes in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and creative domains. The success of this model is greatly influenced by the educator's ability and creativity in designing, managing, and packaging project activities into meaningful, challenging, and relevant learning experiences tailored to students' needs.<sup>12</sup> Project-based learning offers a variety of pedagogical benefits, including encouraging students to become active learners, creating more dynamic classroom interactions, and transforming the role of the lecturer into a facilitator guiding the learning process. This model also develops students' critical and creative thinking skills while giving them the opportunity to manage their own project completion activities. Through direct involvement in projects, students gain a deeper understanding of concepts and are better able to internalize them.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John Larmer and John R. Mergendoller, "Seven Essentials for Project Based Learning", *Educational Leadership* 69, no. 1 (2010). P. 34-37.

<sup>11</sup> Bell S, "Project Based Learning for the 21st Century", *The Clearing House* 83, no. 2 (2010), p. 39-43.

<sup>12</sup> Irfan Riskiana Raja Nugraha, "The Effectiveness of Project Based Learning Strategy in Improving Student Creativity", *Journal of Social Studies Research and Education (JPPI)* 17, no.1 (2023), p. 39-47.

<sup>13</sup> Tuti Mutia, "The Effectiveness of Interactive E-Modules Based on Project Based Learning on Students' Creative Thinking Skills", *Geodika: Journal of Geographical Science and Education Studies* 9, no. 1 (2025), p. 42-51.

Project-based learning differs from Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which places real-world problems as the primary learning trigger. Students learn by analyzing problems, identifying knowledge needs, seeking information, and formulating solutions. According to Barrows and Tamblyn, PBL is effective in developing clinical reasoning, critical thinking, and independent learning skills.<sup>14</sup> Dengan Digital platform support such as KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules, PBL and PJBL discussion forums become richer and more authentic because students can explore global sources and model solutions virtually. Digital platform integration can provide infrastructure and tools for developing project-based learning and problem-based learning.

Based on the results of interviews with several UniSZA students, in addition to the use of the KeLIP Platform, a combination of problem-based learning and project-based learning with digital media, UniSZA students implemented a blended learning strategy, which is a way to combine the advantages of face-to-face and digital learning in one integrated learning design. This model offers flexibility in time and place, allowing students to access materials independently while still receiving social interaction and direct guidance from educators. According to Musa, blended learning is a learning model that combines face to face learning with digital learning.<sup>15</sup> This model emphasizes a balance between direct classroom interaction and online learning activities, allowing communication and delivery of material to take place without the constraints of space and time.

Students not only receive material directly from lecturers but can also access various learning resources independently through digital platforms. Blended learning also integrates various Multimedia based technologies, such as learning websites, CD-ROMs, streaming video, email, and voice messages, which can be accessed via computers and mobile devices. The use of technology is an effort to enable the learning process to be more flexible, interactive, and rich in learning resources.<sup>16</sup> While digital learning offers easy access and independence, face-to-face learning still plays a crucial role in providing reinforcement and direct feedback between lecturers and students.

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<sup>14</sup> Hmelo Silver CE, "Problem Based Learning: What and How Do Students Learn", *Educational Psychology Review* 16, no. 3 (2004), p. 235.

<sup>15</sup> Lalima & Kiran Lata Dangwal, "Blended Learning: An Innovative Approach", *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 5, no. 1 (2017), p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> Walib Abdullah, "Blended Learning Model in Improving Learning Effectiveness", *Fikrotuna: Journal of Islamic Education and Management* 7, no. 1 (2018), p. 859-861.

Therefore, combining digital and face-to-face learning in blended learning is an effective strategy for improving the quality and effectiveness of the learning process.

Based on the description above, it can be understood that UniSZA students use four learning strategies to complement the development of adaptive, collaborative, and competency-oriented learning. The implementation of these digital learning strategies is combined with other learning strategies. When implemented with careful learning planning, they can improve student competency, increase student engagement, enhance learning depth, and enhance readiness to face academic and professional challenges. Based on interviews with UniSZA students, the appearance of the KeLIP Platform, or digital-based Learning Strategy Innovation, at Sultan Zainal Abidin Islamic University, Terengganu, Malaysia, is as follows:



Figure 2. Platfrom Integrated KeLIP UniSZA.  
(<https://kelip.unisza.edu.my/>)

The image above shows that UniSZA's KeLIP Integrated Platform is a digital learning system designed as part of the transformation of higher education towards a technology-based learning model. According to UniSZA students quoted in the article Effective Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies, KeLIP functions as an integrated Learning Management System (LMS) that combines various online learning components, such as the provision of digital lecture materials, interactive discussion forums, online assessment systems, and features for continuous monitoring of student learning progress.<sup>17</sup> A study by Arum Putri Rahayu et al. found that the use of technology, such as platforms, in collaborative learning at three private universities in Magetan was categorized as very high, with an average score

<sup>17</sup> Nur'aini & Devi H. A., "Effective Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategies", *Arriyadhah Journal* 12, no. 2 (2025), p. 3

of 4.2. This finding indicates that lecturers and students have optimally utilized technology to support collaborative learning processes. Various digital tools, such as online collaboration applications, learning management systems, and electronic communication media, help create faster, smoother, and more productive interactions. Furthermore, technology also facilitates access to learning resources, allowing students to collaborate more flexibly without being limited by space and time.<sup>18</sup>

### **Effectiveness of Implementing Digital Learning Strategy Innovations**

Based on interviews with students, researchers found that the effectiveness of implementing innovative digital learning strategies at UniSZA is an innovation that brings new breakthroughs to the world of education, enabling a more productive and valuable learning process. The use of various digital devices and platforms not only helps lecturers deliver material in a more systematic and engaging manner, but also encourages active student engagement and strengthens their digital literacy skills and competencies.



Figure 3. Interview with UniSZA Students

Mas Bobby, a UniSZA student, stated that the success of technology utilization in learning is largely determined by planning readiness, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and the ability of educators to manage and integrate technology into learning strategies. This is confirmed in Anita's research, which shows that the implementation of innovative

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<sup>18</sup> Arum Putri Rahayu, et al, "Innovation of Collaborative Learning Methods in the Digital Era: A Case Study of Magetan Private Universities", *Edu Cendikia: Scientific Journal of Education* 4, no. 2 (2024), p. 374.

digital learning strategies has been proven to improve the quality of learning interactions, both between lecturers and students and between students.<sup>19</sup> Digital-based learning models enable more flexible, collaborative, and student-centered learning.<sup>20</sup> Through the use of the KeLIP platform, interactive media, and Zoom learning applications, students can learn at their own pace and style, while lecturers can monitor their learning progress more accurately. With adequate pedagogical and technological competencies, innovative digital learning strategies not only improve the efficiency of the learning process but also significantly impact the achievement of learning outcomes and skill development.<sup>21</sup>

The implementation of KeLIP at UniSZA supports problem-based learning, project learning, and blended learning, a combination of face-to-face and digital learning that provides flexibility for lecturers and students in managing time, learning resources, and academic activities. Through KeLIP, students can access learning resources anytime and anywhere, thus creating an independent and active learning process. From the analysis of interview and observation results, it can be understood that innovation in learning strategies at UniSZA plays an important role in increasing the effectiveness of material delivery through digital technology, developing students' critical and reflective thinking skills regarding Islamic issues, fostering the spirit of da'wah and social responsibility through project-based learning, and achieving contextual integration of Islamic values with modern science. In terms of learning effectiveness, Mas Bobby assessed that the use of digital media such as learning videos, online discussion forums, interactive quizzes, and digital platforms can improve students' understanding of the course material. This finding reinforces the constructivist perspective, which positions students as active subjects in constructing knowledge through interactions and learning experiences. However, this study also shows that the effectiveness of digital learning depends heavily on the creativity and competence of lecturers in designing innovative and interactive learning strategies.

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<sup>19</sup> Anita et al, "Utilization of Digital Media in Islamic Religious Education Learning: A Systematic Analysis of Impacts, Challenges and Implementation Strategies", *Edukasiana: Journal of Educational Innovation* 4, no.4 (2025), p. 2067-2078.

<sup>20</sup> Envilwan Berkat Harefa, "Efektivitas Pembelajaran daring Mata Kuliah Fisika di Peruguruan Tinggi", *Educativo: Jurnal Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (2022), p. 75-83.

<sup>21</sup> Maulida Riska Yulianti, "Educational Management Strategy to Increase the Effectiveness of the Digital Learning Process", *JPDSH Journal of Basic Education and Social Humanities* 3, no. 9 (2024), p. 593.

### **Alignment of Digital Learning Strategy Innovation with Islamic Values**

Based on the results of interviews with UniSZA students, as an Islamic institution, students assess that UniSZA's digital learning strategies are generally aligned with Islamic values. The use of technology is seen as a supporting tool to improve the quality of education without neglecting aspects of ethics, manners, and moral responsibility. Students hope that future digital learning innovations will increasingly integrate Islamic values, such as academic honesty, discipline, and Islamic character building. Mas Boby said that the learning strategy innovation at UniSZA is not only technological but also based on humanistic and transformative Islamic philosophy. Students consider innovative digital learning strategies quite effective in improving the understanding of lecture material. The use of platforms such as KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules that can access learning videos, learning materials and virtual discussions is considered capable of clarifying abstract concepts.

This strategic innovation also encourages active student involvement in the learning process, particularly through online discussions and digital project-based assignments. Through the implementation of the Platform, which is part of digital learning, students have the flexibility to organize their study time because the learning process is not limited to classroom activities. This digital learning model utilizes information technology as a means of delivering knowledge, enabling the learning process to take place without the limitations of place and time. According to Try Wardati Khusniyah & Prima Rias Wana, the presence of the Platform, which is an innovative digital learning strategy, is not intended to replace conventional learning, but rather functions as a complement and strengthen the face-to-face learning system that has been implemented previously.<sup>22</sup>

Based on the interview results, students viewed innovative digital learning strategies as aligned with Islamic principles, which view science and technology as a means to achieve general welfare. The use of digital platforms and interactive media is seen as an effort to optimize the process of seeking knowledge, as long as its use is directed towards beneficial goals and does not conflict with Islamic values. Thus, technology in learning is understood not as an end in itself, but as a supporting tool to improve the quality of

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<sup>22</sup> Try Wardati Khusniyah & Prima Rias Wana, "Perceptions of Elementary School Teacher Education Students on E-Learning-Based Learning Innovations", *Wahana Sekolah Dasar* 28, no. 1 (2020), p. 6.

education. Students believe that digital learning strategies at UniSZA prioritize moral and ethical values, both in interactions between lecturers and students and between students. Ethical communication in online forums, the use of polite language, and mutual respect in virtual discussions reflect the application of Islamic values in the digital space. Digital learning innovations that prioritize ethics are considered capable of creating a conducive and dignified learning environment.<sup>23</sup>

The alignment of this digital learning strategy innovation with Islamic values is also reflected in efforts to instill academic honesty and integrity. UniSZA students stated that they recognize that easy access to information in digital learning must be balanced with moral awareness to avoid plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and misuse of technology. Academic dishonesty refers to student behavior such as cheating on exams, copying friends' answers either directly or through copy pasting, and taking material from the internet without citing legitimate sources, which constitutes plagiarism. Furthermore, cheating also occurs when students sign attendance sheets even though they are not attending lectures, prepare small notes or cheat sheets during exams, and copy other people's work.<sup>24</sup>

Digital learning strategies that emphasize originality of work, transparency of assessment, and strengthening of academic ethics are considered relevant to Islamic values of honesty (*sidq*) and trustworthiness.<sup>25</sup> Innovations in digital learning strategies encourage students to have a greater sense of responsibility and discipline in their learning process. The flexibility of time and place in digital learning requires students to manage their time independently and responsibly. This aligns with Islamic values, which emphasize discipline, commitment, and sincerity (*istiqāmah*) in the pursuit of knowledge.<sup>26</sup> UniSZA students said they believe that digital learning can be a means to develop strong character if designed with the right evaluation and monitoring system.

Overall, Mas Bobby, a UniSZA student, believes that innovative digital learning strategies have the potential to foster Islamic character when holistically integrated with Islamic values. Integrating Islamic content,

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<sup>23</sup> Means B, Tayoma & Jones K, "Effectiveness of Online and Blended Learning", *Teachers College Record* 115, no. 3 (2013), p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> Ainul Yaqin & Suadi, "Academic Fraud in Digital Learning Modes in Higher Education", *Hikmah* 19, no. 2 (2022), p. 98-99.

<sup>25</sup> Reza Andri Astuti et al., "Development of Islamic Religious Education Learning Videos on Avoiding Backbiting and Carrying Out Tabayun Regarding the Conformity of Islamic Values in the Context of Digital Communication", *SCRIPT Journal* 13, no. 1 (2025), p.6.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Attas, S.M.N., "Islamic and Secularism,"

reflecting spiritual values, and fostering positive attitudes in digital learning can strengthen students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions.<sup>27</sup> Digital learning is not only oriented towards academic achievement but also contributes to the formation of individuals with knowledge, morals, and Islamic character. The results of the study indicate that students at Universiti Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia (UniSZA) generally have a positive perception of the innovative digital learning strategies implemented. This positive perception aligns with the views of Muhtamar Sokheh & Noor Azida Batubara that digital learning can increase student flexibility, effectiveness, and independence in higher education.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that UniSZA students generally assess the innovative digital learning strategies at UniSZA as aligned with Islamic values and that innovative digital learning reflects their readiness to face technology-based educational transformation. The use of technology is seen as a means to improve the quality of education without neglecting morals, ethics, and moral responsibility. Digital learning is considered to have significant potential in shaping Islamic character when integrated with values such as academic honesty, discipline, ethics in interactions, and spiritual awareness in the pursuit of knowledge.

## Conclusion

Innovation in learning strategies at Universiti Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia has developed significantly through the transformation of methods, the use of digital technology, and the strengthening of the integration of Islamic values with modern science. The form of innovation in learning strategies at UniSZA is the use of digital media such as KeLIP (Knowledge and eLearning Integrated Platform), a platform for flexible education through various Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and Micro-Credential (MC) modules developed by educators from Universiti Islam Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), as well as learning that integrates Problem Based Learning (PBL), Blended Learning and Project Based Learning methods, which are evidence of innovative efforts in the learning system.

The benefits of this innovative learning strategy include increasing the effectiveness of delivering material through digital technology,

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<sup>27</sup> Ash Shifa Annur et al., "Transformation of Islamic Religious Education Learning Model Based on Digital Literacy: Conceptual Analysis, ITQAN: Journal of Educational Sciences 16, no. 2 (2025), p. 264.

<sup>28</sup> Muhtamar Sokheh & Noor Azida Batubara, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Learning Management Systems (LMS) in Internalizing Islamic Values in Islamic Religious Education", ARJI Action Eesearch Journal Indonesia 7, no. 4 (2025), p. 2786.

developing critical and reflective thinking skills, fostering a spirit of da'wah and social responsibility through project-based learning, and realizing the integration of Islamic values with modern science in a contextual manner. This demonstrates that this innovative learning strategy is driven by the university's vision of becoming a leader for contemporary integrated Islamic universities.

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