The Role of Muslim Intellectuals in the Transformation of Islamic Education in Indonesia: An Analysis of Physical and Non-Physical Works

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Abstract
This study examines the contribution of Muslim scholars to the transformation of Islamic Education in Indonesia by highlighting two main forms of work: physical work in the form of establishing institutions, curricula, and infrastructure, as well as non-physical work in the form of ideas, methodologies, and educational ethics. Through a systematic literature review approach, this study found that the synergy between the institutional and intellectual dimensions built by figures such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, Nurcholish Madjid, Azyumardi Azra, Haedar Nashir, and Quraish Shihab became an important foundation for the renewal of Islamic Religious Education. Physical works provide an implementative space for strengthening the values of religious moderation and digital literacy, while non-physical works form a framework of ethics and rationality in modern Islamic learning. The results of the analysis show that the integration of moderation, digitalization, and Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Religious Education expands the function of religious education as a means of forming an inclusive and civilized society. However, methodological limitations in existing studies require a longitudinal and mixed methods approach to verify the causal relationship between intellectual ideas and the transformation of Islamic education. In practical terms, this study recommends strengthening empirical research on Islamic Religious Education, providing digital ethics training for educators, and promoting collaboration among universities in developing a values-based and technology-based Islamic curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia is designed to shape Muslims who are well-rounded individuals, combining religious knowledge, social ethics, and intellectual capabilities relevant to the needs of the nation. Classical and modern literature affirms Islamic Religious Education as cultural capital that plays a role in the reproduction of social values and the formation of the intellectual habitus of students (Rosyidin & Arifin, 2021). This ideal concept requires Islamic Religious Education to not only be a normative discipline, but also a cognitive and ethical

resource in a pluralistic society (Gemar, 2023).

However, at the empirical level, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education between 2020 and 2025 shows heterogeneity in implementation: some universities and madrasas have successfully integrated religious moderation and digital literacy into their curricula, while others have declined in quality due to limited resources, teacher capacity, and conservative institutional orientation (Abidin, 2021; Mukhibat et al., 2024; Oktavia et al., 2023). These differences reflect the varying abilities of institutions to translate progressive educational ideas into effective learning practices (Abishev et al., 2025; Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Armita, 2025; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025; Kasmar et al., 2019).

In this context, the role of Muslim intellectuals is crucial: they not only produce theoretical ideas, but also pioneer real educational infrastructure (schools, madrasas, universities, learning modules) that link theory to practice. Historical examples such as the Muhammadiyah education movement pioneered by KH. Ahmad Dahlan show how physical works (school networks) synergize with reformist thinking to create systemic change (Maraulang, 2025). Although the literature has examined the thoughts of figures and curricular reforms, there is an important gap: a lack of causal evidence linking the presence of physical/non-physical works with measurable outcomes such as scientific publication productivity, graduate involvement in the Islamic economy, or social leadership roles after leaving the institution. The novelty of this study is the development of a dual-track framework (physical vs. non-physical) to assess these impacts and recommend an evaluation design that allows for causal inference (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Jaafar et al., 2025; Mukhibat et al., 2024).

METHODS

This study uses a systematic literature review approach oriented towards conceptual and empirical synthesis regarding the transformation of Islamic Education and the role of Muslim scholars in Indonesia. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for tracing the historical and intellectual traces of figures whose contributions are dual in nature, both in the form of physical works such as educational institutions and non-physical works in the form of ideas, thoughts, and educational values. As emphasized by Huberman, (2014), literature studies enable researchers to develop a deep understanding of text-based social phenomena without being constrained by the limitations of space and time that hinder field research. The research stages were carried out in layers to ensure the relevance, repeatability, and validity of the data synthesis. The process began with the identification of keywords such as "Islamic Religious Education," "Muslim intellectuals," "religious moderation," "cultural capital," and "AI in Islamic education." The search was conducted through national and international databases, including SINTA, Scopus, Taylor & Francis, and Heliyon. Researchers only included sources that had undergone peer review, were published between 2018 and 2025, and were relevant to the Indonesian context or offered a theoretical framework that could be adapted. This systematic approach is in line with the principles of scientific literature search recommended by Engkizar et al., (2022; 2023; 2024); Hamdi & Desvia, (2025); Kaema & Ulwi, (2025); Rosyidin & Arifin, (2021), namely ensuring that each source has a clear conceptual contribution to the formation of academic arguments.

The literature screening stage was conducted in stages. First, initial identification was carried out based on relevant keywords. Second, screening was carried out at the title and abstract level to assess initial suitability. Third, a full-text review is conducted to ensure the methodological and substantive relevance of each article. Fourth, thematic data extraction is carried out, which includes the categorization of physical works (institutions, curriculum, infrastructure), non-

physical works (thoughts, methodologies, values of moderation), as well as outcomes and implementation challenges. This four-stage approach follows a framework widely used in contemporary Islamic education policy research (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and narratively using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes three main components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Through this process, each piece of data is simplified, displayed in narrative or tabular form, and verified through cross-source comparison. This approach enables researchers to understand the relationship between the physical and non-physical works of scholars in the process of Islamic education transformation, as well as to identify consistent patterns of contribution across different historical periods and institutional contexts.

To reduce bias and maintain objectivity, source triangulation was conducted by combining various types of literature. In addition to journal articles, this study also referred to policy documents, institutional reports, and relevant academic conference proceedings related to the development of Islamic Religious Education. (Mukhibat et al., 2024) emphasizes that literature triangulation is important to broaden the validity of interpretations and reduce publication bias, especially in Islamic education studies that are still dominated by domestic sources. This triangulation approach was also used in the study Engkizar et al., (2023); Oktavia et al., (2024); Rosyidin & Arifin, (2021) to ensure a balance between national and international perspectives in reading the phenomenon of Islamic education in Indonesia. Methodological limitations are acknowledged in this study. Because it relies on secondary sources, this study cannot produce empirical causal inferences, as noted by Huberman, (2014) in their methodological study. In addition, some important data, such as internal university reports or the results of surveys of Islamic Education alumni, cannot be fully accessed, so some conclusions are inferential. Nevertheless, the interpretations produced still have a strong academic basis through cross-confirmation from various reliable sources. For further research, it is recommended that a longitudinal or mixed methods design be applied to empirically verify the relationship between the works of Muslim scholars and the achievements of Islamic education in the future.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study findings show that the Islamic Education curriculum in Indonesia for the 2020–2025 period has undergone a significant thematic shift. This shift is marked by the addition of modules oriented towards strengthening religious moderation, increasing digital literacy, and implementing case study-based learning that is relevant to the socio-religious context of society. In a number of State Islamic Higher Education Institutions and general higher education institutions, this curriculum reformulation focuses not only on cognitive aspects, but also on the formation of social awareness and religious ethics that are adaptive to the changing times (Mukhibat et al., 2024). In practice, the integration of values of tolerance and moderation is often realized through the development of thematic modules that address current issues, such as diversity, radicalism, and the relationship between religion and science (Abishev et al., 2025; Afwadzi et al., 2024; Aryasutha et al., 2025). This effort marks a shift in the orientation of Islamic Religious Education from merely transferring knowledge to education that fosters critical thinking and an open attitude towards diversity.

Although the direction of curriculum policy shows progress, its implementation in the field is not yet fully uniform. Differences in institutional readiness, lecturer capacity, and the availability of digital learning resources are factors that influence the successful implementation of the curriculum (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Several State Islamic Higher Education Institutions with strong research and academic networks have been able to develop adaptive curriculum models and

evaluation systems based on religious moderation achievements. Conversely, some other institutions still face obstacles in monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of new modules, so that curriculum innovation is only partially implemented. This phenomenon confirms that the success of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum reform is not only determined by the design of formal documents, but also by the ability of institutions to build a collaborative learning ecosystem oriented towards strengthening national values and social ethics (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021).

Historical and contemporary studies show that Muslim scholars' contributions to Islamic education in Indonesia are not only at the ideological level, but also in the development of concrete and sustainable educational infrastructure. Figures such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan through the Muhammadiyah movement and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari through the *pesantren* tradition have laid the institutional foundations for the birth of a well-organized modern Islamic education system (Maraulang, 2025). The establishment of schools, madrasas, and Islamic universities are physical works that open up wider access to education, while also serving as institutional means to instill values of renewal and nationalism. In contemporary times, these efforts have been continued with the establishment of state Islamic universities that have transformed from State Islamic Institutes into State Islamic Universities, demonstrating the continuity of the role of intellectuals in strengthening institutional capacity and the relevance of Islamic education to social development (Rosyidin & Arifin, 2021).

Furthermore, the existence of a network of educational institutions established by Muslim scholars has helped shape an academic ecosystem that encourages curriculum innovation and capacity building for educators. Through this network, lecturers and religious teachers have the opportunity to collaborate in research, community service, and the renewal of teaching methods in line with the principles of religious moderation (Maraulang, 2025). Graduates from these institutions not only bring scientific competence, but also a social mission that strengthens the position of scholars in the public sphere, both as intellectual leaders and agents of social change (Rosyidin & Arifin, 2021). Thus, the physical works produced by these figures are not merely symbols of institutional success, but structural foundations that enable Islamic education to develop as a moral and cultural force for the nation.

The ideas of Indonesian Muslim scholars such as Nurcholish Madjid, Azyumardi Azra, and Quraish Shihab played an important role in shaping the ethical, epistemological, and methodological framework of modern Islamic Religious Education. Through their ideas, Islamic education is directed not only to instill religious dogma, but also to develop critical thinking and openness to social change (Efendi, 2018). Nurcholish Madjid, for example, emphasizes the importance of rationality, democracy, and openness in understanding Islamic teachings as the foundation for the advancement of civilization. Azyumardi Azra's thinking then broadens this horizon by emphasizing the integration of religious and general knowledge in the context of multicultural Indonesia (Mariyono et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab, through his contextual interpretation approach, reinforces the relevance of Quranic values to modern life and public education (Nasihin et al., 2023). These ideas collectively form a new methodological orientation for Islamic Religious Education that emphasizes dialogue between religious traditions and contemporary humanitarian challenges.

In the context of educational practice, the non-physical contributions of these figures have become a source of inspiration for the development of teaching materials, teaching methods, and teacher training that emphasize moderation, tolerance, and moral literacy. Religious moderation programs integrated into the Islamic Education curriculum in various universities show positive indications of an increase in students' openness, reflective abilities, and critical literacy towards religious differences (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Preliminary studies have found that

students who follow a moderation-based curriculum tend to be more inclusive in interpreting religious texts and in cross-religious social interactions (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021). However, longitudinal and causal empirical evidence is still limited, so the claim of the long-term effectiveness of the program cannot yet be scientifically confirmed. Therefore, further research with a control design and layered measurements is needed so that the influence of non-physical works by scholars on the formation of public ethics can be verified more systematically.

The development of digital technology and artificial intelligence in the last five years has brought significant changes to Islamic Education learning practices. A number of institutions, both State Islamic Higher Education Institutions and general higher education institutions, have begun to adopt digital platforms and develop AI-based adaptive learning modules to increase the interactivity and personalization of the learning process (Rifah et al., 2024). These innovations include not only the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) and multimedia content, but also the development of educational chatbots and automated evaluation systems that help teachers or lecturers monitor students' cognitive and affective development. This phenomenon has become more widespread since the COVID-19 pandemic forced educational institutions to rapidly and comprehensively digitize their curricula. In this context, digitization is not only understood as a technical necessity, but also as a strategic opportunity to expand access to Islamic education and strengthen religious literacy in the digital space (Nasution et al., 2025).

However, a number of recent studies remind us that the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence in Islamic religious education needs to be accompanied by a solid Islamic ethical framework so as not to shift the values of spirituality and sincerity that are at the core of religious education (Rifah et al., 2024). Without the integration of moral principles and religious responsibility, technological innovation has the potential to reduce values, where system efficiency replaces the human dimension and spiritual guidance. Therefore, Muslim scholars emphasize the need to develop ethical guidelines for the use of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic education, covering aspects of algorithmic justice, data security, and etiquette in digital interactions. These efforts must also be followed by training for teachers and lecturers so that they are able to use technology wisely and ensure that digital content is in line with the principles of *maqaṣid al-syari'ah*, namely protecting the intellect, religion, and morals of students (Nasution et al., 2025).

Islamic Religious Education as a Mechanism for Producing Cultural Capital

Islamic religious education can be understood as a social mechanism that produces and reproduces cultural capital in society. Within Pierre Bourdieu's framework, cultural capital is not only an accumulation of formal knowledge, but also includes symbols, values, and social legitimacy recognized by both academic and public communities (Gemar, 2023). Educational institutions as physical works play a role in formalizing this social recognition through diplomas, accreditation, and institutional reputation, while non-physical works in the form of thoughts, ethics, and methodologies provide content and direction for that recognition (Ichwan et al., 2024). Its relevance in the context of Islamic Religious Education is evident when madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic universities not only produce knowledgeable graduates but also build the social identity of Muslim scholars as holders of symbolic and moral authority in the public sphere. Thus, Islamic Religious Education serves a dual function: as a means of transmitting religious knowledge and as an arena for the formation of social legitimacy through the cultural capital it produces.

The balance between physical and non-physical works is key to ensuring that Islamic Religious Education does not lose its transformative power. Physical works such as institutions and curricula provide operational capacity and space for

implementation, while non-physical works in the form of ideas, values, and scientific ethos provide normative orientation for the direction of change (Rosyidin & Arifin, 2021). When one element is neglected, the educational process loses its dynamism: without institutions, ideas are difficult to realize; without ideas, institutions become mere administrative vessels without a vision for renewal (Maraulang, 2025). The policy implications of this understanding demand an integrative strategy to strengthen Islamic Religious Education, focusing not only on physical development such as buildings and laboratories, but also on teacher capacity building, curriculum reform, and the activation of alumni networks to strengthen the academic ecosystem (Amalia, 2025). As emphasized by Miles (2020), every curricular reform must be based on research findings on organizational culture and quality management so that non-physical reforms can be quickly internalized into sustainable institutional practices.

The role of KH. Ahmad Dahlan in the history of Islamic education in Indonesia shows a tangible form of synthesis between ideas of reform and institutional action. Through the establishment of a network of modern schools and madrasas under the Muhammadiyah movement, Dahlan introduced an educational paradigm that combined religious knowledge with science and general knowledge (Maraulang, 2025). This step marked an important shift from traditional teaching models to a more rational, open, and relevant education system that met the needs of modern society. In this context, Muhammadiyah schools not only functioned as places for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as social laboratories where educated Muslim generations were born, capable of competing in the public sphere without abandoning their Islamic identity. Dahlan's efforts became the starting point for the formation of a productive Islamic education ecosystem that bridges tradition and modernity.

The impact of the educational movement pioneered by KH. Ahmad Dahlan was long-term and systemic. The Muhammadiyah school network then developed into a national education system that contributed greatly to curriculum standardization, teacher professionalization, and the formation of a solid alumni network in various fields of life (Rosyidin & Arifin, 2021). The existence of this network not only strengthened the intellectual legitimacy of Muslim scholars in the academic realm, but also changed the socio-religious structure by presenting Islam as a cultural force oriented towards progress. Through a combination of physical works, namely educational institutions, and non-physical works in the form of work ethic, rational thinking, and social vision, Dahlan demonstrated how Islamic education can be an instrument of social transformation and the formation of Indonesia's cultural capital in a sustainable manner.

The role of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari in the history of Islamic education in Indonesia occupies a fundamental position due to his ability to maintain the authenticity of the *pesantren* tradition while opening up space for innovation in the face of modern dynamics. Through a teaching system based on classical Islamic texts and moral education, Hasyim Asy'ari emphasized the *pesantren* as a center for the transmission of religious knowledge oriented toward the character and spiritual development of students (Mariyono et al., 2023). However, behind his steadfastness in preserving tradition, he also introduced the principle of cultural adaptation, which allowed *pesantren* to adjust to the social needs of the community without losing their core values. The educational model developed placed the *kyai* not only as teachers, but also as moral and social leaders who connected religion with the realities of people's lives. In this context, *pesantren* grew as institutions that not only educated, but also shaped social habits based on contextual Islamic values.

The intellectual and institutional legacy of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari subsequently transformed Islamic boarding schools into educational institutions capable of

innovating amid the tide of globalization. Many boarding schools began integrating general curricula such as science, technology, and entrepreneurship into their religious teaching systems, enabling students to acquire not only spiritual competence but also professional skills (Mukhibat et al., 2024). This adaptation strengthened the position of Islamic boarding schools as relevant and competitive institutions, while maintaining the continuity of the intellectual traditions of Islam in the archipelago. Through this model, Hasyim Asy'ari succeeded in passing on an educational paradigm that emphasized a balance between *al-muhāfaẓah 'alā al-qadīm aṣ-ṣāliḥ* (preservation of good traditions) and *al-akhdzu bi al-jadīd al-aṣlaḥ* (acceptance of new things that are better). Thus, *pesantren* are not only moral bastions of society, but also agents of social transformation capable of connecting classical values with the challenges of modernity.

Nurcholish Madjid and Azyumardi Azra are two Indonesian Muslim scholars who have played an important role in the renewal of Islamic thought, particularly in the non-physical realm related to intellectual paradigms and the direction of national education. Through his idea of social ijtihad, Nurcholish Madjid emphasized the importance of freedom of thought, rationality, and openness to change as the foundation for the advancement of Muslims (Efendi, 2018). He sought to erode narrow views that placed religion in a sacred space separate from social reality, replacing them with an approach that viewed Islam as a source of dynamic public ethics. Madjid's thinking has had a major influence on the renewal of the Islamic Education curriculum in higher education, particularly in encouraging the integration of religious values and modern science. Thus, he not only offers a conceptual framework, but also instills a rational and dialogical ethos in the practice of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Azyumardi Azra reinforces the historical and sociological dimensions of Islamic educational reform by emphasizing the importance of integrating religious and secular knowledge in the context of a pluralistic society (Mariyono et al., 2023). Through his historical research and intellectual reflections, Azra asserts that Islam in the archipelago has a cosmopolitan scholarly tradition that enables cross-cultural and cross-civilizational dialogue. This idea forms the basis for the development of an inclusive curriculum that not only emphasizes religious orthodoxy but also values epistemological diversity and human experience. By placing plurality as an integral part of Islamic identity, Azra helped shape the direction of Islamic education policy to be more adaptive to global challenges. The synergy between Madjid and Azra's ideas resulted in a new paradigm of Islamic education that balances rationality and spirituality, while also strengthening the role of Muslim scholars as bridges between tradition and modernity.

Haedar Nashir and Quraish Shihab are two important figures in the landscape of contemporary Islamic education thought and policy in Indonesia. As Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, Haedar Nashir plays a strategic role in promoting the institutional transformation of Islamic education through an approach of religious moderation based on human ethics and public rationality (Amalia, 2025). He emphasizes that Islamic education must be a means of strengthening civilization, not merely reproducing exclusive religious values. Through his leadership, Nashir has succeeded in integrating progressive Islamic values into Muhammadiyah's educational policies, both at the school and university levels, as well as in teacher and lecturer regeneration programs. His role in articulating religious moderation has also made Muhammadiyah a model of an Islamic educational institution that is adaptive to social and technological changes, while consistently upholding Islamic moral principles.

Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab has made a significant contribution through his scientific works and interpretations that emphasize a contextual approach to the

Quran as the basis for the development of humanistic and dialogical Islamic education (Nasihin et al., 2023). Through his tafsir al-Mishbah and various scientific speeches, he presents a cool, rational, and open-minded face of Islam, which has inspired the formulation of teaching materials and curricula for Islamic Religious Education in various institutions. His thoughts not only enrich academic substance but also build symbolic strength for Indonesian Muslim scholars in the public sphere. By positioning the Quran as a source of universal values capable of guiding modern life, Quraish Shihab played a role in shifting the paradigm of Islamic education from being normative-doctrinal to reflective and communicative. The synergy between Haedar Nashir and Quraish Shihab's thoughts shows that the renewal of Islamic education requires a combination of institutional vision and intellectual wisdom to shape a moderate, critical, and integrity-driven Muslim generation.

The role of Muslim scholars shows that the success of Islamic education reform in Indonesia is not solely determined by the power of ideas, but also by the social legitimacy attached to these figures. Social legitimacy functions as symbolic capital that enables reform ideas to be widely accepted by the community and educational institutions (Rosyidin & Arifin, 2021). Figures such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, Nurcholish Madjid, and Azyumardi Azra have had a major influence because they were able to build public trust through their moral integrity and intellectual exemplarity. This legitimacy is an important prerequisite for educational innovation not to be seen as a threat to tradition, but rather as a continuation of authentic Islamic values. Thus, the success of Islamic Religious Education reform depends on a balance between scholarly authority and social acceptance that allows new ideas to take root culturally.

In addition to social legitimacy, the success of transformation is also largely determined by the ability of scholars to translate abstract ideas into operational curricula and strong institutional network support (Maraulang, 2025). Ideas for reform will lose momentum if they are not followed up with institutional instruments capable of ensuring sustainable implementation. In this context, networks of schools, universities, and religious social organizations play an important role as institutional spaces for realizing the intellectual vision of leaders into tangible educational practices. On the other hand, the availability of adequate human and financial resources is a factor that ensures the continuity of renewal programs. Without such support, change will only remain at the level of discourse without producing measurable transformational impacts. Therefore, the integration of ideas, institutions, and resources is the main foundation for the success of Islamic education reform oriented towards the formation of a knowledgeable, moderate, and character-building society.

Integrated religious moderation program in the Islamic Education curriculum

The integrated religious moderation program in the Islamic Education curriculum at various universities has shown encouraging initial results. A number of studies show that students involved in moderation-based curricula have higher levels of tolerance and better critical thinking skills regarding religious issues (Mukhibat et al., 2024). The implementation of religious moderation modules also encourages a new awareness of the importance of respecting differences of opinion and strengthening social cohesion among students from different backgrounds. (Afwadzi et al., 2024) noted that the learning process based on dialogue and value reflection is able to foster an open attitude and reduce stereotypes towards other religious groups. These results show that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can be an effective means of shaping a more moderate and inclusive religious orientation if it is implemented consistently and accompanied by adequate institutional support.

However, a number of methodological criticisms need serious attention. Many studies related to religious moderation still use pre-post designs without control

groups or involve relatively small sample sizes, making it difficult to ascertain whether changes in student attitudes are truly caused by curriculum interventions (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021). External factors such as family background, social environment, and exposure to digital media also have the potential to influence research results. Miles et al., (2020) emphasize the importance of caution in drawing causal conclusions from descriptive studies, because without strong empirical evidence, claims that moderation programs have successfully overcome the symptoms of radicalism are still premature. Therefore, a more rigorous research approach needs to be developed so that the effectiveness of religious moderation policies can be assessed objectively and replicated across institutional contexts (Zaharah, 2024).

To strengthen this empirical basis, a number of researchers recommend the use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs involving longitudinal cohorts so that the effects of moderation programs can be observed continuously (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Concrete outcome indicators such as increased student participation in inclusive social activities, involvement in humanitarian organizations, and a decrease in intolerant behavior need to be used as measures of program achievement, suggesting that the evaluation of values-based education programs should also include ethical and affective dimensions, not just cognitive aspects. Within the policy framework, strategic steps that can be taken include strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system, providing continuous training for lecturers and religious teachers, and developing measurable ethical indicators to assess the internalization of moderation values (Amalia, 2025). This approach is expected to strengthen the effectiveness of the religious moderation curriculum, while also making Islamic Religious Education a strategic instrument in building a peaceful and civilized religious society.

Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence: Integrating Islamic Values into Educational Technology

Advances in educational technology, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), multimedia modules, and AI-driven tutoring systems, have opened up enormous opportunities for expanding access to and improving the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education. A number of preliminary reports indicate that the application of this technology can strengthen the personalization of learning and increase student participation in various Islamic educational institutions (Rifah et al., 2024). Through the integration of Artificial Intelligence, the learning process becomes more adaptive to the individual needs of students, allowing lecturers to adjust the material according to their level of understanding and learning style. However, this progress also presents new challenges. Without a clear ethical framework, the digitization of education has the potential to cause alienation of values, where spiritual interactions between teachers and students are replaced by algorithm-based mechanical relationships (Nasution et al., 2025). Therefore, technological development must always be balanced with ethical reflection so that the objectives of Islamic education are not displaced by pragmatic and commercialized learning.

In this context, the non-physical works of Muslim scholars play an important role in formulating digital ethics principles and value frameworks for the application of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic education. They act as moral guardians who ensure that technological innovations remain grounded in *maqaṣid al-syariʿah*, namely protecting human reason, religion, and morality (Rifah et al., 2024). The development of ethical guidelines, the preparation of an Islamic value-based digital curriculum, and teacher training are strategic agendas to ensure that the use of Artificial Intelligence not only increases efficiency but also strengthens the spiritual dimension in the educational process (Nasution et al., 2025). On the other hand, lecturers and

educators need to be actively involved in the design of digital content so that technology functions as a *wasīlah* (intermediary) that reinforces the mission of Islamic preaching and teaching, not merely as a neutral instructional tool. Thus, digital Islamic education can grow as a learning space that remains humanistic and rooted in Islamic values.

The practice of applying Islamic values in educational technology needs to be realized through concrete programs, such as the development of Islamic-based Artificial Intelligence ethics modules, digital competency certification for Islamic Education teachers and lecturers, and collaboration between educational institutions and technology developers in designing ethical and inclusive learning systems (Amalia, 2025). In addition, empirical research is also needed to measure the impact of Artificial Intelligence use on learning outcomes, internalization of religious values, and student resilience to exposure to radical digital content. Longitudinal studies and randomized controlled trials (RCTs) can be used to assess the extent to which the integration of Islamic ethics into digital systems influences the religious behavior and attitudes of students. With a balanced approach between technological innovation and value integration, Islamic Religious Education has the potential to become a pioneer in building a modern Islamic education model that remains rooted in spirituality, ethics, and humanity.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia is the result of dynamic interactions between ideas, institutions, and social contexts developed by Muslim scholars across generations. Physical works such as the establishment of educational institutions, curricula, and modern learning systems provide a platform for the reproduction of Islamic values that are adaptive to changing times. Meanwhile, non-physical works such as the thoughts of Nurcholish Madjid, Azyumardi Azra, Haedar Nashir, and Quraish Shihab have broadened the intellectual horizons of Islam through rationalization, pluralism, and a contextual approach to religious texts. The synergy between these two domains has created a new paradigm for Islamic Religious Education that balances tradition and modernity, and encourages Islamic education to focus on shaping moderate, reflective, and globally competitive citizens. In the contemporary context, the role of scholars is also increasingly important in directing digitalization and the integration of Artificial Intelligence to be in line with Islamic ethical values. Islamic Religious Education not only functions as a moral instrument, but also as a social laboratory that combines spirituality, science, and technology. Thus, Islamic education reform in Indonesia should be viewed not merely as a change in curriculum, but as a cultural movement that strengthens the moral and intellectual capacity of the nation. Future efforts will require collaboration between educational institutions, the government, and the academic community to ensure the systemic continuity of this transformation.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, because it is based on a literature review, the analysis relies on secondary data and therefore cannot produce strong causal inferences between educational interventions and social change. Second, most of the literature reviewed is still descriptive in nature and does not use empirical designs such as experiments, quasi-experiments, or longitudinal cohorts, which are necessary to assess the long-term impact of Islamic Education moderation and digitization programs. Third, limited access to internal data from educational institutions, including program evaluation results and alumni surveys, has led to some inferential interpretations. Nevertheless, the systematic and triangulation approach in this study still provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the direction of Islamic education reform in Indonesia. For further research, a mixed methods approach is recommended, focusing on empirical evaluation of the

effectiveness of Islamic Education policies, the integration of values in educational technology, and the contribution of Muslim scholars in building public ethics in the digital age.

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