



Blended Learning and Online Learning in Islamic Religious Education: Concepts and Implementation

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Abstract

Learning innovation through the use of digital technology has encouraged the implementation of blended learning and online learning as alternatives for developing more flexible learning processes. This study aims to analyze the implementation of blended learning and online learning in the learning process. The study employed a qualitative method with a content analysis approach. All data were analyzed using content analysis through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that: (1) blended learning is implemented through the integration of face-to-face learning, online learning, and independent learning; (2) the implementation of blended learning takes place through three main stages, namely seeking of information, acquisition of information, and synthesizing of knowledge; (3) online learning is used to support the delivery of learning materials, discussions, assignments, communication, and assessment; and (4) the integration of face-to-face and online learning provides flexibility in accessing learning resources and supports the development of students' independence, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. These findings indicate that blended learning and online learning can serve as components of learning innovation that integrate direct interaction, digital technology, and independent learning activities within a structured learning process.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is an important part of human life because education is a process that guides individuals toward maturity and a better quality of life. Education plays a role in developing human physical and spiritual potential, particularly in relation to human responsibility as servants and vicegerents of Allah SWT on earth (Atroszko et al., 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2025; Vasconcelos, 2020). In the context of society and the nation, education is also an important factor in building a quality life. Through education, individuals acquire the ability to understand and address various challenges in life while developing their potential optimally. The educational process has essentially existed throughout human history and has become an inseparable part of the development of civilization (Asril et al., 2023; Guspita et al., 2025; Marcellus et al., 2021; Sukandar et al., 2024).

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Islam places education in an important position because education is concerned not only with the development of knowledge but also with the formation of human personality and behavior. Education is a process that has a specific foundation, direction, and purpose; therefore, its implementation cannot be regarded as a simple activity. Educational practice involves the application of theory into concrete actions directed toward achieving predetermined educational objectives (Falloon, 2020; Göncz, 2017). Thus, education is not merely oriented toward external actions but is also directed toward developing individuals who are able to cultivate their intellectual, spiritual, and social potential in accordance with educational objectives.

One of the important factors determining the success of the educational process is the learning method employed. Selecting an appropriate method can help students receive, understand, and process learning materials more effectively. In Islamic education, learning methods should not only be directed toward achieving cognitive outcomes but should also take into account the physical and spiritual dimensions of students (Chou & Chou, 2011; Habibah et al., 2022). Nevertheless, not every method can be applied to all learning situations because the effectiveness of a method is influenced by students' characteristics, learning materials, learning objectives, and the learning context.

The achievement of educational objectives is strongly influenced by the alignment between objectives, materials, and learning methods. Even well-designed educational objectives are difficult to achieve without appropriate methods. Learning methods determine how information and learning experiences are delivered to students so that they can be understood optimally. Therefore, the selection of learning methods needs to consider various factors related to students' characteristics, learning objectives, materials, media, and learning environments (Lestari et al., 2021; Seage & Türegün, 2020). This principle is also reflected in the educational practices of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who considered the situations, conditions, and characteristics of individuals when conveying Islamic teachings. This approach demonstrates that the learning process requires strategies that are adaptable to students' needs and circumstances.

The development of information and communication technology has subsequently brought changes to the delivery of education. The learning process is no longer limited to direct interactions conducted in the classroom but can be supported by various digital technologies that enable students to access materials and engage in learning activities more flexibly. This development became increasingly evident when the education system faced the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted the implementation of face-to-face learning (Cobo-Rendón et al., 2022; Kamera, 2022; Qamar et al., 2024). This situation encouraged educational institutions to develop alternative learning approaches by utilizing digital technology, including online learning and blended learning.

Online learning enables the learning process to take place without direct face-to-face meetings by utilizing internet connectivity and various digital platforms (Hamzah & Nurbayani, 2021; Indria et al., 2026; Irhamni & Ashari, 2023). Meanwhile, blended learning integrates face-to-face learning with online learning, allowing students to gain learning experiences through various forms of interaction and learning resources. Both forms of learning provide alternatives for addressing the limitations of conventional learning while creating opportunities to develop more flexible and student-centered learning experiences.

Although online learning and blended learning have been widely adopted as alternatives in the learning process, their implementation requires an adequate understanding of their concepts, characteristics, components, stages, and forms of learning activities (Castro, 2019). The use of technology in education does not

automatically guarantee the achievement of educational objectives. Its effectiveness still depends on how technology is integrated with learning methods, interactions between educators and students, independent learning activities, and learning management strategies. Therefore, a systematic analysis is needed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics and implementation of blended learning and online learning in the learning process.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze the implementation of blended learning and online learning in the learning process, particularly by identifying their characteristics, components, stages, and forms of learning activities that can support students' learning processes. This study is expected to provide a more systematic understanding of the use of blended learning and online learning as forms of learning innovation in the digital era.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach using content analysis. Content analysis was used to systematically identify, interpret, and analyze information contained in various written sources relevant to the research focus. This approach was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the concepts, characteristics, components, stages, and implementation of blended learning and online learning in the context of education. The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data (Bengtsson, 2016; Lindgren et al., 2020; Renz et al., 2018). The primary data comprised books and scholarly documents that directly discuss blended learning, online learning, and their implementation in the learning process. Meanwhile, the secondary data consisted of books, scholarly journal articles, and other relevant academic documents used to strengthen the interpretation of the primary data. The data sources were selected based on their relevance to the research focus and their contribution to the discussion of blended learning and online learning (Harun et al., 2026; Pohontsch, 2019; Zaitun et al., 2023).

Data were collected through document analysis by reviewing, identifying, recording, and organizing relevant information from the selected documents. The collected data were then analyzed using the stages of content analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. At the data reduction stage, the collected information was selected and categorized according to the research focus, including the definitions, characteristics, components, stages, and implementation of blended learning and online learning (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024; Arafah, 2016; Hafezi et al., 2023; Roller, 2019). At the data presentation stage, the categorized information was systematically organized in a descriptive form to identify patterns and relationships among the findings. The final stage involved drawing conclusions by interpreting the analyzed findings and relating them to the research questions, thereby providing a systematic understanding of blended learning and online learning in the learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Blended Learning in the Learning Process

The findings indicate that the implementation of blended learning represents a learning approach that integrates face-to-face instruction with online-based learning. This learning approach does not merely position technology as a medium for delivering instructional materials but also combines direct learning activities, online learning, and independent learning (Malik et al., 2017; Taufiq & R, 2025). Consequently, the learning process becomes more flexible, as students can access learning materials and engage in learning activities both inside and outside the classroom.

In its implementation, face-to-face learning is used to provide explanations, conduct discussions, facilitate question-and-answer sessions, demonstrate learning activities, and reinforce the materials being studied. Meanwhile, online learning is used to distribute instructional materials, assign tasks, conduct discussions, and provide additional learning resources that students can access independently. This pattern demonstrates an interrelationship between face-to-face learning activities and online learning activities (Ergulec et al., 2023; Kizilcec et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2021).

The findings also indicate that the implementation of blended learning provides students with greater opportunities to manage their learning activities. Students are not entirely dependent on explanations provided by teachers in the classroom but have opportunities to review learning materials, search for additional information, complete assignments, and communicate about learning activities through online media. Based on the learning composition implemented, the learning activities indicate a greater use of online learning than face-to-face learning. Online learning is used to deliver most of the learning materials and supporting activities, whereas face-to-face learning serves as a space for clarifying materials, facilitating direct interaction, and reinforcing materials previously studied online. This composition reflects the characteristics of blended/hybrid learning, namely the integration of online and face-to-face learning (Engkizar et al., 2025; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020).

Characteristics of Blended Learning Implementation

The findings identified three main components in the implementation of blended learning: online learning, face-to-face learning, and individualized learning. These three components do not operate independently but complement one another in supporting the learning process.

First, online learning is used as a means of accessing learning materials, receiving instructional information, completing assignments, and communicating with teachers and other students. The use of online media enables students to access learning resources more flexibly without having to be physically present in the classroom at all times.

Second, face-to-face learning continues to play an important role in the learning process. Direct interaction enables teachers to provide more in-depth explanations, identify students' learning difficulties, provide immediate feedback, and foster social interaction between teachers and students as well as among students.

Third, individualized learning is reflected in students' activities in independently searching for and studying learning materials. Students are given opportunities to select learning resources, manage their learning time, and develop their understanding based on materials available both online and offline. Thus, independent learning constitutes an important component of blended learning, as students are required to take responsibility for their own learning process (Geng et al., 2019; Zagouras et al., 2022).

Stages of Blended Learning Implementation

The findings indicate that the implementation of blended learning takes place through three main stages: seeking of information, acquisition of information, and synthesizing of knowledge.

Seeking of Information

At the information-seeking stage, students obtain initial information through the teacher's explanations during face-to-face learning. The teacher provides an overview of the materials to be studied and poses questions to direct students' attention toward the learning topic. Subsequently, students independently search for information through various learning resources, both offline and online. This activity provides students with opportunities to identify information relevant to the learning

topic (Hasanah et al., 2023). At this stage, students do not merely receive information but begin to develop the ability to select, compare, and relate information to the issues being discussed. The seeking of information stage also indicates the development of students' critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills. Students are encouraged to actively search for information and communicate their findings to the teacher and their peers.

Acquisition of Information

At the information-acquisition stage, students process the information obtained through independent learning activities. Learning activities are conducted individually and in groups. Students discuss the information they have found, compare it with their prior knowledge, and elaborate on the information based on the topic being studied. Interaction also takes place through online learning. Students can express their opinions or comments through the learning media used, while teachers provide responses and guidance throughout the discussion process. This condition indicates that online learning functions not only as a medium for delivering instructional materials but also as a space for academic interaction (Engkizar et al., 2026). At this stage, several student competencies are developed, particularly critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication, analysis, and decision-making skills. Group activities also provide opportunities for students to construct understanding through the exchange of ideas with their peers.

Synthesizing of Knowledge

The final stage is knowledge synthesis. At this stage, students reconstruct their knowledge based on the information-seeking, discussion, analysis, and interpretation activities conducted in the previous stages. In face-to-face learning, students present the results of their group discussions in front of the class. This activity provides opportunities for students to communicate their understanding while receiving feedback from the teacher and other students. Meanwhile, through online learning, students can upload summaries or completed assignments as documentation of their learning outcomes. The synthesis stage demonstrates that blended learning does not stop at the acquisition of information but is directed toward students' ability to process information and construct new understanding. Presentation, discussion, and summary-writing activities also contribute to the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and self-confidence.

Implementation of Online Learning

In addition to blended learning, the findings indicate that online learning is used as an integral part of the learning process. Online learning is implemented through the use of various digital platforms that enable teachers to deliver instructional materials, assign tasks, communicate with students, and conduct assessments without requiring direct face-to-face instruction.

In its implementation, teachers first prepare the learning materials and instructional media to be used. Students are then directed to join the designated learning platform. Subsequently, teachers conduct attendance checks, deliver the learning materials, provide instructional resources, facilitate question-and-answer sessions, and assign tasks to reinforce students' understanding.

Online communication media are also used to establish interaction between teachers and students. Students can raise questions regarding materials they do not yet understand, while teachers provide explanations and feedback. In some activities, students are also given opportunities to answer questions raised by their peers, allowing learning interactions to extend beyond one-way communication between teachers and students.

Student Activities in Online Learning

The findings indicate that student activities in online learning include reading or studying learning materials, attending attendance sessions, asking questions,

answering questions, participating in quizzes, completing assignments, and taking learning assessments. These activities demonstrate that online learning can be used not only to deliver instructional materials but also to organize various learning activities (Bali & Fadilah, 2019; Guangul et al., 2020). During the learning process, students are directed to study the materials provided by the teacher before participating in subsequent learning activities. Students also have opportunities to engage in discussions through online media. Teachers play a role in providing guidance, answering questions, monitoring student activities, and providing feedback on assignments and learning outcomes. Online learning also provides flexibility in accessing learning resources. Students can review previously provided materials according to their individual needs and abilities. Thus, online learning supports more flexible learning activities and provides opportunities for students to engage in independent learning.

Students' Learning Experiences and Responses

Based on the findings, the implementation of blended learning tends to provide a more flexible learning experience because students have opportunities to learn through a combination of face-to-face and online activities. Face-to-face learning provides opportunities for direct interaction, whereas online learning enables students to access materials and engage in learning activities outside classroom hours.

The research data indicate that 59% of students experienced increased learning interest, while 75% of students stated that this approach helped them understand the learning materials more deeply. These findings indicate that the integration of face-to-face and online learning has the potential to provide students with more varied learning experiences. Nevertheless, these findings should be understood within the context of the characteristics of blended learning implementation. The success of learning is determined not only by the use of technology but also by the suitability of the learning materials, learning activities, teacher and student readiness, quality of interaction, and students' ability to learn independently.

Overall, the findings indicate that blended learning is implemented through the integration of three main activities: face-to-face learning, online learning, and independent learning. These three components form an interconnected learning process. Face-to-face learning functions as a space for direct interaction and reinforcement of learning materials, online learning supports access to learning resources and learning communication, while independent learning provides students with opportunities to manage and develop their own learning processes (Engkizar et al., 2024; Sriwahyuni et al., 2025).

The learning process takes place through the stages of information seeking, information acquisition, and knowledge synthesis. Each stage involves a combination of offline and online activities and promotes the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and independent learning skills. Thus, the findings demonstrate that blended learning is not merely a combination of face-to-face learning and digital technology but rather a learning approach that integrates various forms of interaction, learning resources, learning activities, and student learning experiences within a structured process. Meanwhile, online learning serves as an important instrument for supporting flexible access, learning communication, material distribution, assignments, and assessment.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that blended learning integrates face-to-face learning, online learning, and independent learning within a structured learning process. Its implementation involves five key elements: live events, self-paced learning, collaboration, assessment, and performance support materials. The learning process is carried out through three main stages: seeking of information, acquisition of

information, and synthesizing of knowledge, which support students' critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and independent learning skills.

Meanwhile, online learning utilizes digital technologies and platforms to facilitate distance learning, including the delivery of learning materials, attendance, discussions, assignments, assessments, and feedback. Overall, blended learning and online learning provide flexible learning alternatives by integrating direct interaction, digital technology, and independent learning activities. Their effectiveness depends on the alignment of learning methods, materials, technology, students' characteristics, and educators' ability to manage the learning process.

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