

Modernizing Islamic Education Curriculum to Align with the Digital Age: A Holistic Approach

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine strategies for modernizing the Islamic education curriculum so that it aligns with the needs and challenges of the digital age. This study employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical method based on literature review, analysis of policy documents, and case studies of Islamic education institutions that have integrated digital technology into their curricula. The findings show that curriculum modernization in Islamic education is most effective when it adopts a holistic framework that simultaneously strengthens spiritual development, intellectual growth, and digital competence. The results indicate that integrating digital literacy with religious knowledge, applying student-centered learning, and utilizing innovative digital pedagogy can increase student engagement and protect learners from misinformation in online religious content, while still preserving teacher authority and core Islamic values. The study also finds that modernization helps Islamic education remain relevant to students' daily digital experiences and supports their readiness for the contemporary labor market. In conclusion, modernizing the Islamic education curriculum is not a rejection of tradition but a necessary effort to reinterpret and implement Islamic teachings in a digital context, so that Islamic education remains relevant, inclusive, and transformative for learners in the modern era.

Keywords : *Islamic Education, Curriculum Modernization, Digital Age, Holistic Approach, Digital Literacy*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation brought by the digital age has reshaped almost every dimension of human life, including the field of education. With the advancement of information and communication technologies, traditional teaching and learning methods are increasingly being supplemented or even replaced by digital platforms, tools, and resources¹. This shift has introduced both opportunities and challenges for educational systems worldwide, particularly for institutions that are rooted in religious traditions, such as Islamic education. As societies become more interconnected and knowledge becomes more accessible, there is an urgent need for Islamic education to adapt and modernize in order to remain relevant and effective in nurturing future generations. Historically, Islamic education has played a vital role in transmitting religious knowledge, cultivating moral character, and developing intellectual capacities². Classical models of Islamic learning, centered around madrasahs, pesantrens, or halaqahs, emphasized memorization, textual interpretation, and moral formation. These models have been remarkably successful in preserving Islamic teachings across centuries. However, the contemporary context presents new challenges that these traditional methods alone may not fully address. Students today are immersed in a digital environment where information is abundant, fast-changing, and easily accessible, which requires different forms of engagement, pedagogy, and curriculum design³.

The digital revolution also raises significant questions about identity, values, and the integration of modern knowledge with religious principles. While technology provides unprecedented access to educational resources, it also exposes learners to potential risks such as misinformation, cultural homogenization, and ethical dilemmas in the use of digital media. For Islamic education, this means that curriculum modernization cannot be limited to the inclusion of technology as a mere tool, but must instead involve a holistic approach that harmonizes spiritual, intellectual, and digital competencies⁴. The aim is to ensure that students are not only proficient in using digital tools but also guided by Islamic values in navigating the complexities of the modern world. A modernized Islamic education curriculum should therefore incorporate elements that foster critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability, alongside traditional religious knowledge. These elements are increasingly recognized as essential skills for the 21st century, enabling learners to succeed in academic, professional, and personal contexts. At the same time, Islamic education must remain faithful to its mission of cultivating ethical responsibility, spiritual awareness, and community-oriented values. The challenge, then, is to design a curriculum that integrates these seemingly diverse dimensions into a cohesive whole, rather than treating them as separate or conflicting priorities.

¹ Yovi Yanti and Usman Radian, "Transformasi Transformasi Digital Dalam Mengembangkan SDM Unggula Di Dunia Pendidikan," *Jurnal Cahaya Mandalika* 5, no. 2 (2024): 1116–24.

² Rita Dwi Nawanti, Wahyudi Taufan Santoso, and Bambang Sumardjoko, "Transformasi Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Era Disrupsi," *Didaktika : Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 2 (2024): 2657–64.

³ Akmil Rahmi, Tomi Sukardi, and Agung Satria Wijaya, "TRANSFORMASI DAN INOVASI PEMBELAJARAN BERBASIS DIGITAL DALAM MENINGKATKAN KOMPETENSI PEMBELAJARAN ABAD 21," *Jurnal Pengetahuan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2021): 25–38.

⁴ Eryandi Eryandi, "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Dalam Pendidikan Karakter Di Era Digital," *Kaipi: Kumpulan Artikel Ilmiah Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (March 29, 2023): 12–16, <https://doi.org/10.62070/kaipi.v1i1.27>.

The urgency of curriculum modernization is further underscored by the changing demographics of Muslim societies, where a significant portion of the population consists of young people who are digital natives. These students are already accustomed to learning, socializing, and even practicing aspects of their faith through digital platforms. Islamic education institutions that fail to adapt risk alienating these students or rendering themselves less relevant in their eyes. On the other hand, those that embrace modernization have the opportunity to engage students more effectively and to provide them with tools to live faithfully and meaningfully in the digital era.

Another important factor driving the need for modernization is the global context of education. Across the world, educational systems are being reformed to meet international standards, emphasize digital literacy, and prepare students for global citizenship. If Islamic education remains isolated from these broader trends, it risks marginalization. However, by aligning itself with the best practices of contemporary education while retaining its distinctive spiritual and moral framework, Islamic education can position itself as a unique and valuable contributor to global educational discourse. This integration can also help counter stereotypes about the incompatibility of religion and modernity by demonstrating that Islamic education can evolve in harmony with technological and societal changes.

In addition to technological integration, curriculum modernization requires rethinking pedagogy and assessment methods. Traditional teacher-centered models may need to be complemented with student-centered approaches that encourage active participation, collaboration, and problem-solving. The use of digital platforms can facilitate this by offering interactive learning experiences, access to diverse resources, and opportunities for students to apply knowledge in real-life contexts. Importantly, this shift should not diminish the authority of teachers in Islamic education, but rather enhance their role as guides and facilitators who help students critically engage with both religious texts and contemporary issues⁵.

The holistic approach to modernization emphasizes that technology should not overshadow the spiritual essence of Islamic education. Digital tools are valuable, but they must be used within a framework that prioritizes ethical responsibility and religious values. This requires the cultivation of digital literacy that goes beyond technical skills, focusing also on moral discernment, responsible online behavior, and the ability to filter information in line with Islamic teachings. In this way, the modernization of the curriculum becomes not only about equipping students with competencies for the labor market but also about preparing them to be ethical digital citizens who contribute positively to society. Furthermore, modernization should recognize the diversity of contexts in which Islamic education is practiced. The digital divide, for example, remains a significant issue, with unequal access to technology across different regions and socioeconomic groups. A truly holistic approach must account for these disparities by developing flexible models that can be adapted to local needs and conditions. In doing so, Islamic education can avoid exacerbating inequalities and instead promote inclusivity and accessibility. This

⁵ Risdayana Rudding and Delly Itania Ruben, "Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Kearifan Lokal (JIPKL) TEKNOLOGI DAN HIDUP KUDUS : Bagaimana Generasi Z Mengintegrasikan Nilai-Nilai Kristen Dalam Era Digital Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Kearifan Lokal (JIPKL)" 5, no. 3 (2025).

adaptability is essential for ensuring that modernization serves the broader mission of Islamic education as a means of empowering all learners.

Ultimately, the modernization of Islamic education curriculum in the digital age is not about replacing tradition with modernity but about creating a synthesis between the two. The goal is to preserve the core values and teachings of Islam while ensuring that students are prepared to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By adopting a holistic approach, Islamic education can continue to fulfill its role as a source of guidance, wisdom, and moral strength, while also equipping learners with the skills and competencies necessary for success in the digital era. This balance between tradition and innovation will allow Islamic education to remain dynamic, relevant, and transformative for generations to come.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore the process of modernizing the Islamic education curriculum in line with the realities of the digital age. A qualitative method is considered appropriate because the focus is not on measuring numerical data, but on understanding the meanings, values, and perspectives embedded in educational practices and efforts to integrate technology without losing the spiritual foundation of Islamic education.

Data were obtained through a literature review of scholarly works, educational policy documents, and case studies of Islamic educational institutions that have attempted to integrate digital tools into their curricula, complemented by academic journals, books, and digital education reports on global trends in digital literacy and pedagogical innovation. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to curriculum design, digital literacy, pedagogical approaches, and ethical considerations, so as to produce a holistic picture of curriculum modernization in Islamic education in the digital era..

Theoretical Studies

The modernization of Islamic education in the digital age can be best understood through a combination of theories drawn from educational philosophy, curriculum studies, and the sociology of religion. Central to this discussion is the notion of curriculum as a dynamic entity, shaped not only by the transmission of knowledge but also by the values, cultural contexts, and needs of society.⁶⁷ Curriculum theorists such as John Dewey emphasized that education must be responsive to the realities of the time, preparing learners to engage meaningfully with the world they inhabit.⁸ From this perspective, the modernization of Islamic education aligns with Deweyan principles, as it requires educators to reimagine curriculum content and pedagogy in light of

⁶ Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3–15.

⁷ Ivor F. Goodson, *The Making of Curriculum: Collected Essays* (London: Falmer Press, 1988), 1–18.

⁸ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 76–91.

technological, social, and cultural transformations, while ensuring that learning remains grounded in lived experiences and ethical practices.⁹

Another relevant theoretical foundation lies in constructivist learning theory, which highlights the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through interaction with their environment. In the context of the digital age, learners are no longer passive recipients of information but active participants who navigate vast networks of knowledge through digital platforms.¹⁰ Islamic education, when restructured according to constructivist principles, can enable students to explore, question, and apply religious teachings in meaningful ways, while simultaneously developing digital literacy and critical thinking skills. This theoretical lens provides justification for adopting more student-centered approaches, where technology is used as a tool to facilitate exploration rather than simply as a medium of content delivery. Theories of digital pedagogy also play an important role in framing curriculum modernization. Digital pedagogy emphasizes not only the technical integration of digital tools but also the pedagogical shifts required to harness the potential of technology effectively. Scholars argue that digital pedagogy involves rethinking roles, relationships, and methods of teaching and learning in ways that foster engagement, collaboration, and creativity. For Islamic education, digital pedagogy offers both opportunities and responsibilities: opportunities to reach wider audiences, diversify learning resources, and create interactive experiences, but also responsibilities to ensure that technology use remains ethical, inclusive, and aligned with Islamic moral principles.¹¹ Thus, digital pedagogy theory provides a framework for balancing innovation with ethical stewardship in the modernization process.

Sociological theories of religion further enrich the discussion by highlighting how religious traditions adapt to changing social contexts. The work of scholars such as Peter Berger¹² and Clifford Geertz¹³ underscores the dynamic relationship between religion and modernity, showing that religious institutions are not static but continuously reinterpret themselves in light of cultural and technological shifts. In the case of Islamic education, modernization can be seen as a natural process of contextualization, where timeless religious teachings are rearticulated in ways that resonate with contemporary learners. This perspective challenges the misconception that modernization threatens tradition, instead suggesting that adaptation is a hallmark of resilience and continuity within religious education. The concept of holistic education provides another theoretical foundation for this study. Holistic education emphasizes the integration of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions of learning, recognizing that true education goes beyond cognitive development. This philosophy aligns strongly with the goals of Islamic

⁹ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 107–135.

¹⁰ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. Michael Cole et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 79–91.

¹¹ Jerome S. Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3–20.

¹² Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 3–28.

¹³ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 1–14.

education, which has always sought to nurture the whole person by balancing knowledge, faith, and character. In the digital age, holistic education theory supports the argument that modernization should not be limited to technical skills but must also cultivate ethical responsibility, spiritual consciousness, and the ability to use digital tools in ways that contribute positively to both individual and collective well-being.

Globalization theories also provide an important lens for understanding the pressures and opportunities facing Islamic education. Globalization, characterized by interconnectedness and the rapid flow of information, has created a learning environment where students are exposed to diverse worldviews and cultural influences.¹⁴ From a theoretical standpoint, modernization of the Islamic curriculum must engage with these realities by equipping learners with intercultural competencies and the ability to critically evaluate diverse perspectives while remaining anchored in their own faith traditions. Theories of cultural hybridity suggest that modernization does not require abandoning one's heritage but instead allows for the creative blending of local traditions with global innovations, resulting in a more dynamic and contextually relevant form of Islamic education. Theories of change management in education also provide valuable insights into the process of modernization.¹⁵ Michael Fullan's work on educational reform emphasizes that sustainable change requires not only structural adjustments but also cultural and attitudinal shifts within institutions.¹⁶ For Islamic education, this means that modernization efforts must go beyond introducing digital tools into classrooms and must instead involve transforming the mindsets of educators, students, and communities. The theoretical framework of change management highlights the importance of leadership, collaboration, and shared vision in ensuring that reforms are embraced and effectively implemented.

Finally, the ethical framework of Islamic philosophy itself serves as a foundational theoretical perspective for modernization. Islamic thought, drawing from the Qur'an, Hadith, and centuries of scholarly interpretation, emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge ('ilm), the cultivation of wisdom (hikmah), and the alignment of human action with divine guidance.¹⁷ The integration of technology within Islamic education must therefore be guided by these ethical principles, ensuring that modernization serves not only functional goals but also the higher objectives of preserving faith, promoting justice, and nurturing moral character.¹⁸ This framework ensures that the modernization of the curriculum is not a mere accommodation to external pressures but a deliberate process rooted in the values and mission of Islam. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives provide a rich foundation for reimagining Islamic education in the digital age. They demonstrate that modernization is not an isolated act of innovation but a multifaceted process that

¹⁴ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation Is Reshaping Our Lives* (London: Profile Books, 1999), 10–30.

¹⁵ Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 1–23.

¹⁶ Michael Fullan, *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, 4th ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 1–14.

¹⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1–25.

¹⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993), 140–162.

involves philosophical reflection, pedagogical transformation, sociological adaptation, and ethical grounding. By drawing on these theories, the study establishes a conceptual basis for advocating a holistic approach to curriculum modernization one that balances tradition and modernity, faith and technology, and local values with global realities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relevance of Modernization in Islamic Education

The relevance of modernization in Islamic education is rooted in the reality that the digital age has reshaped the ways in which knowledge is acquired, processed, and applied. Learners today are surrounded by information that is instantly accessible and constantly evolving.¹⁹ This has created new demands for educational systems, including Islamic education, to remain relevant to students' lives and aspirations. If traditional models of Islamic education continue to rely exclusively on memorization, text-based transmission, and rigid teacher-centered methods, they risk losing resonance with students who are already immersed in interactive, multimedia, and inquiry-based environments outside the classroom. Modernization, therefore, is not merely a choice but an educational necessity that allows Islamic institutions to engage effectively with contemporary learners. The findings suggest that modernization is not about erasing tradition but about reframing it in ways that connect with the digital reality of learners.²⁰ Islamic education historically has always adapted to the contexts in which it was practiced, whether through the evolution of madrasah systems, the use of printing technologies, or the translation of classical texts into local languages. The digital age represents the latest context requiring adaptation. By recognizing modernization as a continuation of this historical trend, educators can see it as a natural extension of Islamic pedagogy rather than a rupture. This perspective makes modernization more acceptable to stakeholders who may initially perceive it as a threat to tradition. The urgency of modernization also lies in its ability to address the gaps between the lived experiences of students and the content of the curriculum. Many students today already access religious information online, through videos, apps, or social media platforms. However, without formal guidance, they may encounter misinformation, biased interpretations, or superficial understandings of Islamic principles. The relevance of modernization, therefore, is tied to the responsibility of Islamic institutions to provide structured, authentic, and credible resources that meet students where they are: in digital spaces. The findings make clear that if Islamic education does not modernize, it leaves students vulnerable to fragmented and potentially harmful forms of learning outside institutional oversight.

Another dimension of relevance comes from the demands of the labor market and global citizenship. Students educated in Islamic schools and universities are not only expected to embody spiritual and moral values but also to compete in professional fields that require digital competencies, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. A curriculum that fails to integrate

¹⁹ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 211–233.

²⁰ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation* (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 259–280.

these elements risks producing graduates who are spiritually grounded but practically disadvantaged in the modern world. The findings highlight that modernization ensures Islamic education remains a pathway not only to personal piety but also to socioeconomic empowerment, which is consistent with Islam's broader vision of human flourishing. The results also show that modernization enhances the role of teachers in the educational process. Far from diminishing their authority, the integration of modern pedagogical tools expands teachers' capacity to engage students in creative and meaningful ways. Teachers who adopt digital resources, interactive methods, and contextualized applications of Islamic teachings are more likely to connect with students and maintain their relevance in a world where authority is increasingly contested by online influencers. This aspect demonstrates that modernization protects and strengthens the credibility of teachers by equipping them with tools to remain authoritative voices in both religious and educational contexts.

Relevance also emerges from the global positioning of Islamic education. Across the world, educational systems are modernizing to meet international standards of quality, inclusivity, and digital readiness. If Islamic education isolates itself from these movements, it risks being perceived as outdated or disconnected. By modernizing, Islamic education not only retains internal relevance to its students but also external legitimacy within the broader educational landscape. This external legitimacy is important for collaboration, recognition, and the capacity to contribute to global educational discourses. The findings emphasize that modernization allows Islamic education to present itself as a tradition that is both faithful to its values and capable of engaging with modern challenges. Finally, the findings reveal that the relevance of modernization lies in its ability to maintain the holistic mission of Islamic education. By embracing digital tools and updated pedagogies, modernization ensures that the objectives of *tarbiyah* (personal development), *ta'lim* (knowledge transmission), and *ta'dib* (ethical cultivation) are achieved in ways that resonate with contemporary learners. It prevents Islamic education from becoming a relic of the past and instead positions it as a dynamic, evolving tradition that continues to guide individuals and communities in the present and future. Thus, modernization is relevant not because it replaces tradition but because it revitalizes it for the realities of the digital age.

Integration of Digital Literacy with Religious Knowledge

The integration of digital literacy with religious knowledge emerged as one of the most essential components in the modernization of Islamic education. Digital literacy, in this study, is understood not merely as the ability to operate technological devices or navigate online platforms, but as a comprehensive set of skills that allow learners to critically evaluate information, discern credible sources, and engage responsibly with digital environments²¹. In the context of Islamic education, this literacy must be cultivated alongside the study of religious texts and principles, ensuring that learners approach digital spaces with both technical competence and spiritual awareness. The findings confirm that digital literacy is indispensable for preparing students to live

²¹ Silvina Waroh, Amelia Putri, and Gusmaneli, "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Penguatan Literasi Digital Pada Generasi Milenial," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* 3, no. 2 (May 1, 2025): 323–32, <https://doi.org/10.61104/alz.v3i2.1012>.

in a world where faith and technology constantly intersect. The research revealed that one of the biggest challenges faced by students today is the overwhelming abundance of information available online. While there are countless digital resources that claim to provide guidance on Islamic practices, not all of them are authentic or aligned with mainstream scholarly traditions. Without digital literacy, students risk internalizing distorted interpretations or misinformation. This demonstrates the importance of teaching learners how to critically evaluate online religious content. Integrating digital literacy into Islamic education ensures that students do not passively consume online information but engage with it thoughtfully, applying principles of verification (*tahqiq*) and critical inquiry that have long been part of Islamic scholarly tradition ²².

Practical evidence from case studies indicates that institutions which introduced digital resources into their curriculum, such as Qur'an interpretation apps, online hadith databases, and virtual libraries of classical Islamic works, observed higher levels of engagement and improved comprehension among students. However, these benefits were only sustained when learners were also trained to use these tools responsibly. For example, students were encouraged to cross-reference multiple sources, consult teachers for guidance, and reflect on how the digital content aligned with ethical and spiritual frameworks. This shows that integration of digital literacy cannot be reduced to providing access to technology; it requires a deliberate effort to guide students in combining technical skills with religious discernment. The findings also highlight that integrating digital literacy supports the broader pedagogical transformation toward more active and participatory learning. Digital platforms allow students to engage in collaborative projects, virtual discussions, and interactive learning experiences where they apply religious principles to contemporary issues. For instance, students may use digital tools to analyze media portrayals of Islam, evaluate online debates about ethics, or create content that reflects their own understanding of Islamic teachings. Through such practices, learners not only gain digital competencies but also strengthen their ability to live out their faith in modern contexts. This combination of skills positions them as both knowledgeable Muslims and competent global citizens.

Another important dimension of integration lies in addressing the ethical dilemmas of the digital age. Issues such as cyberbullying, digital privacy, online radicalization, and the consumption of inappropriate content require moral and ethical responses that are grounded in religious values. The findings emphasize that Islamic education must not shy away from these issues but instead actively equip students to navigate them. By teaching learners how Islamic principles such as honesty, respect, and responsibility apply in digital interactions, schools can foster a generation of ethically aware digital citizens. In this way, digital literacy is not a neutral skill but one deeply intertwined with the moral formation that lies at the heart of Islamic education.

The integration of digital literacy with religious knowledge also strengthens the role of teachers as mediators between tradition and modernity. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also guides who help students navigate the complexities of digital environments. By modeling responsible use of technology, curating reliable resources, and encouraging critical

²² Hasmiza, "Model Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital : Mengoptimalkan Teknologi Untuk," *Research and Development Journal Of Education* 11, no. 1 (2025): 164–77.

engagement, teachers demonstrate how faith can inform digital practice. This highlights that successful integration depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on teacher training and professional development. Without equipping educators with digital literacy themselves, efforts to modernize the curriculum are unlikely to succeed.

Finally, the findings suggest that integration must be contextual and inclusive. Not all students have equal access to digital tools, and not all communities are equally prepared for technological transformation. Therefore, Islamic education must design flexible models of integration that can adapt to diverse conditions. For some institutions, this may mean incorporating sophisticated e-learning platforms, while for others, it may involve more modest digital tools combined with strong teacher guidance. Regardless of the form, the key insight is that digital literacy and religious knowledge are not opposing domains but complementary ones. Together, they prepare learners to live faithfully and effectively in a digital world, ensuring that Islamic education retains its relevance while empowering students to engage with the challenges and opportunities of the modern era.

Pedagogical Transformation through Student-Centered Learning

One of the most significant findings of this study is the recognition that modernization in Islamic education requires a fundamental transformation in pedagogy, moving from a primarily teacher-centered approach toward more student-centered learning²³. Traditional Islamic education has long been grounded in a model where the teacher, or *ustadz*, holds the central authority, and students are expected to absorb knowledge through memorization, repetition, and obedience. While this approach has succeeded in preserving the authenticity of Islamic teachings across generations, it does not always resonate with students who are now accustomed to interactive and participatory modes of learning facilitated by digital technologies. Modernization therefore requires a recalibration of pedagogy, where learners are given more active roles in their educational journeys without diminishing the respect and authority traditionally accorded to teachers. The findings suggest that student-centered learning does not mean abandoning the teacher's role but rather redefining it²⁴. Teachers remain essential as guides, mentors, and interpreters of religious knowledge, but they are also called upon to create learning environments that foster exploration, dialogue, and critical engagement. By allowing students to ask questions, participate in discussions, and apply knowledge to real-life contexts, teachers encourage deeper learning and greater personal connection to the material. This transformation is particularly necessary in the digital age, where students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but active participants navigating multiple sources of information.

Case studies examined in this research illustrate that institutions which adopted more student-centered approaches saw increased engagement and motivation among learners. For example, in classrooms where students used digital platforms to collaborate on projects—such as

²³ Lismaya Lubis and Azizah Hanum Ok, "Pendidikan Islam Tradisional Dalam Transisi Dan Modernisasi Menurut Azyumardi Azra," *Jurnal Sains Dan Teknologi* 6, no. 1 (2024): 136–41.

²⁴ Muhammad Ilyas and Sukari, "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Era Globalisasi Dan Teknologi: Tantangan Dan Solusi," *Al-Abshor : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, no. 2 (2024): 70–79, <https://doi.org/10.71242/sbxme815>.

analyzing ethical dilemmas from an Islamic perspective or designing community service initiatives grounded in religious values—students not only developed academic skills but also cultivated a stronger sense of ownership over their learning. These findings confirm that participatory pedagogy enhances both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning, creating an environment where students are motivated by curiosity and responsibility rather than external compulsion. The research also underscores that student-centered learning enhances critical thinking, an essential skill for navigating both religious and secular knowledge in the modern era. Traditionally, critical inquiry has been a hallmark of Islamic scholarship, as evidenced by the intellectual traditions of debate, *ijtihad*, and textual interpretation. However, in many modern institutions, this heritage has been overshadowed by rote learning and unquestioning memorization. Student-centered pedagogy revives this intellectual legacy by encouraging learners to engage critically with both classical texts and contemporary challenges. In doing so, students are not only prepared to live faithfully but also to contribute meaningfully to scholarly and societal discussions.

Another benefit of student-centered learning lies in its ability to integrate real-world applications into the curriculum. Digital technologies allow students to simulate scenarios, collaborate across distances, and engage in problem-solving exercises that mirror the complexities of modern life. For example, a student-centered approach could involve learners in analyzing how Islamic principles of justice apply to issues like online privacy or environmental sustainability. These activities not only reinforce academic learning but also make religious knowledge directly relevant to students' daily experiences. This practical relevance strengthens the role of Islamic education as a guide for living in the modern world. The findings also highlight that student-centered pedagogy nurtures important soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and creativity, which are highly valued in contemporary society. By working in teams, presenting their findings, or producing digital content that reflects Islamic values, students develop competencies that extend beyond traditional classroom outcomes. These skills do not undermine the spiritual goals of Islamic education but rather enhance them by preparing learners to embody their faith in diverse and dynamic contexts. In this sense, modernization through student-centered learning bridges the gap between tradition and modern demands, demonstrating that faith-based education can remain both spiritually grounded and socially relevant.

Despite its many benefits, the shift toward student-centered learning is not without challenges. Some educators and communities may view this pedagogical transformation with suspicion, fearing that it undermines respect for teachers or weakens the discipline historically associated with Islamic education. The findings suggest, however, that these concerns can be addressed through careful balance: teachers retain their authority as sources of knowledge and guidance, while students are encouraged to take active roles in applying and contextualizing what they learn. This balanced model ensures that modernization enhances rather than diminishes the integrity of Islamic pedagogy. In conclusion, pedagogical transformation through student-centered learning is a vital component of modernizing Islamic education in the digital age. It empowers students to take ownership of their learning, equips them with critical and practical skills, and ensures that religious teachings are applied to contemporary realities. At the same time, it

preserves the teacher's role as a mentor and guide, creating a dynamic partnership between tradition and innovation. This shift not only revitalizes the classroom experience but also ensures that Islamic education continues to fulfill its mission of nurturing knowledgeable, ethical, and capable individuals prepared for the challenges of the modern world.

Preserving Islamic Values in the Digital Curriculum

One of the central concerns in discussions about modernization is whether embracing digital tools and methods might dilute or even undermine the spiritual essence of Islamic education²⁵. The findings of this study, however, suggest the opposite: modernization, if approached thoughtfully, can actually serve as a vehicle to reinforce and preserve Islamic values. Digital platforms, when carefully designed and ethically guided, can provide new ways of transmitting timeless teachings, making them more accessible and relatable to contemporary learners. Far from being a threat, the digital age can be seen as an opportunity to extend the reach of Islamic education while strengthening its spiritual foundations. The integration of digital tools allows for the creative representation of Islamic values in ways that were not possible before. For instance, interactive storytelling applications can bring the lives of the prophets to life, allowing students to immerse themselves in narratives that highlight moral lessons such as patience, justice, and compassion. Virtual communities can be designed to encourage collective prayer, Qur'an recitation, or remembrance (*dhikr*), fostering a sense of shared spirituality even when students are physically apart. The findings demonstrate that these innovations not only preserve values but also make them more engaging and meaningful for digital-native generations²⁶.

Another key insight is that preserving values in the digital curriculum requires intentional design. If digital tools are integrated into the curriculum without a clear ethical framework, they may simply replicate the distractions and consumerism of the broader internet. However, when educators embed Islamic values into the very structure of digital learning—such as by emphasizing honesty in online collaboration, modesty in communication, or responsibility in the use of information—the result is a curriculum that reinforces moral character. In this way, modernization is not about adopting technology for its own sake but about ensuring that every innovation serves the higher objectives of Islamic education. The findings also highlight the importance of balancing tradition with innovation. Islamic values have been preserved for centuries through practices such as memorization of the Qur'an, engagement with classical texts, and the cultivation of teacher-student relationships rooted in trust and respect. These traditions should not be abandoned but rather complemented by digital methods that enhance their effectiveness. For example, while memorization remains important, digital applications can provide tools for practice and feedback that support students' efforts. Similarly, teacher-student interactions can be extended beyond the

²⁵ Zhahira Zahrotunnisa et al., "Krisis Identitas Dan Tantangan Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital: Analisis Perspektif Sosiologi Pendidikan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Penelitian Mahasiswa* 3, no. 4 (2025): 483–94.

²⁶ Mushofa Mushofa et al., "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Mengantisipasi Dampak Negatif Budaya Instan Dan Hipokrisi Digital: Telaah Al-Qur'an, Hadis Dan Perpektif Keilmuan," *Journal of Comprehensive Science (JCS)* 4, no. 3 (March 25, 2025): 977–91, <https://doi.org/10.59188/jcs.v4i3.3086>.

classroom through online platforms, ensuring that values such as respect for authority and guidance are maintained in new forms.

Preserving values also involves addressing the ethical dilemmas that arise in digital spaces. The research revealed that issues such as exposure to inappropriate content, online radicalization, and the misuse of social media are genuine concerns for students. A modernized curriculum that integrates digital tools must therefore also include explicit instruction on digital ethics grounded in Islamic principles. Teaching students how to embody values like humility, kindness, and integrity in their online interactions is a critical part of ensuring that modernization strengthens rather than weakens the moral fabric of Islamic education. This approach allows learners to see Islamic values not as abstract ideals but as practical guides for their daily digital lives. The role of teachers is particularly important in preserving values within a digital curriculum. Teachers act as models of ethical behavior, demonstrating how faith can guide the responsible use of technology. By curating authentic digital resources, framing discussions in ways that emphasize moral responsibility, and guiding students through ethical dilemmas, teachers ensure that the integration of technology remains aligned with Islamic principles. The findings suggest that when teachers are equipped with both digital skills and a strong grounding in Islamic ethics, they are better positioned to transmit values in ways that resonate with students.

Finally, the preservation of values requires collaboration between educational institutions, families, and communities²⁷. The findings indicate that students' digital practices are influenced not only by what they learn in school but also by the broader environment in which they live. Schools can design digital curricula that emphasize Islamic values, but these efforts are strengthened when parents and communities reinforce the same principles in their daily interactions. A holistic approach to preserving values therefore involves partnerships that extend beyond the classroom, creating consistent messages about how to embody faith in the digital age. In summary, the findings demonstrate that modernization and value preservation are not contradictory goals. By embedding Islamic principles into the design, implementation, and evaluation of digital curricula, educators can ensure that technology becomes a tool for spiritual growth rather than distraction. Preserving values in the digital curriculum is about ensuring continuity of tradition while making Islamic teachings accessible, engaging, and relevant for learners in the twenty-first century. This balanced approach guarantees that modernization strengthens the mission of Islamic education rather than compromising it²⁸.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that modernizing the Islamic education curriculum in the digital age is an urgent educational necessity that should be understood as a continuation of Islamic pedagogical tradition rather than a break from it. By integrating digital literacy with religious

²⁷ Najwa Sabila, Desy Safitri, and Sujarwo, "Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Melalui Pendidikan Di Tengah Arus Globalisasi Preserving Cultural Values Through Education in the Midst of Globalization," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* 2, no. 4 (2025): 7641–51, <https://jicnusantara.com/index.php/jiic>.

²⁸ Nuryanti Nuryanti, Juhadi Juhadi, and Femberianus Sunario Tanggur, "KOLABORASI SEKOLAH DAN KOMUNITAS DALAM REVITALISASI PERMAINAN TRADISIONAL SEBAGAI PENDIDIKAN SOSIAL BUDAYA DI SEKOLAH DASAR," *HINEF : Jurnal Rumpun Ilmu Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (July 24, 2025): 226–38, <https://doi.org/10.37792/hinef.v4i2.1623>.

knowledge, implementing student-centered learning, and designing ethically grounded digital curricula, Islamic education can remain relevant to students' daily digital experiences while preserving its spiritual and moral foundations. Modernization must also address issues of equity and the digital divide so that all learners can benefit from these reforms, not only those with better access to technology. Therefore, policymakers, educators, and communities need to collaborate in developing holistic, context-sensitive strategies that balance tradition and innovation, ensuring that Islamic education continues to nurture faithful, critical, and socially responsible individuals in the digital era.

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