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Islamic Education Development Prospects: Study of The Future and Its Challenges

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Abstract: Islamic Education Development Prospects: Study of The Future and Its Challenges. Objective: This study aims to analyze the various multidimensional challenges in the development of Islamic Education and offer strategic solutions that are transformative, not merely adaptive. **Method:** This study used a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review method, by collecting and analyzing literature from reputable journals, scientific books, and relevant reports, both national and international. The literature was selected through strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, covering publications from 2015 to 2024 and relevance to the development of Islamic education. **Findings:** This study reveals seven main challenges that hinder the development of Islamic Education, namely inconsistency with future needs, negative public perception of graduates, low achievement of eight national education standards, technological disruption and the Society 5.0 era, low digital literacy of educators, a non-contextual curriculum paradigm, and weak character education. These seven challenges are systemically interrelated and demand integrated solutions. The curriculum relevance crisis demands competency-based and integrative reform, the technology gap demands the integration of AI and contextual digital learning, and negative public perception demands performance-based communication strategies and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The innovative solutions offered include the development of a curriculum based on 21st-century values and competencies, the integration of technology and personalized learning, character strengthening based on local wisdom, institutional rebranding through multi-stakeholder collaboration, and partnerships between Islamic educational institutions and the industrial and community sectors. **Conclusion:** This study confirms that the future development of Islamic education must be rooted in a critical awareness of global dynamics, accompanied by progressive and contextual strategies. These findings provide a conceptual framework that can serve as a foundation for Islamic education reform that not only maintains Islamic identity but also strengthens the readiness of the Muslim generation to respond to future challenges in a visionary and competitive manner.

Keywords: islamic education, challenges, solutions, future.

To cite this article:

■ INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has an important contribution in shaping and developing human values and ethical behavior, both individually and in wider community groups (Aladdiin & Ps, 2019; Daheri et al., 2023; Judrah et al., 2024; Kamila, 2023; Kunaepi, 2013; Rahmawati et al., 2022; Romlah & Rusdi, 2023; Yusri et al., 2023).

However, the paradigm and prospects for the development of Islamic education remain a topic of debate among practitioners and academics. In recent years, Indonesia has also faced significant challenges in implementing Islamic education (Hajri, 2023; Husna et al., 2023; Kunaepi, 2013; Ningsih, 2021; Ruhaniah et al., 2024). Several studies reveal that only a small percentage of students have a deep understanding of their religious teachings, while the majority have only a superficial understanding (Hasanah & Fajri, 2022; Suryadi & Hayat, 2021). This phenomenon certainly raises serious concerns about the future direction of Islamic education and prompts critical questions among practitioners and academics about how Islamic education can be developed to remain relevant and effective in today's dynamic world. Therefore, serious efforts are needed to re-evaluate current Islamic education teaching strategies and approaches, which can strengthen its role in building students' moral and spiritual foundations more effectively.

The global Muslim population is projected to reach 2.02 billion by 2024, or approximately 25% of the world's total population (Wikipedia, 2024). Amid global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and political instability, many Muslim groups are disoriented in their search for sound moral and spiritual guidance. In this context, Islamic education has a significant role as a source of inspiration and solutions to complex global problems. Facing the challenges of globalization and modernization today, youth are increasingly exposed to diverse cultural ideas and influences, which can cloud their understanding of Islamic teachings. Ideally, Islamic education should play a vital role in strengthening Muslim identity, preserving traditional values, and offering clear direction in facing contemporary challenges (Anah, 2021; Ansori et al., 2024; Syarifudin et al., 2023).

The development of Islamic education has been a central theme in many previous studies.

Mansir (2022) emphasized the crucial role of teachers in shaping students' Islamic character but did not explicitly relate it to the demands of the digital age. Mulyasana et al. (2020) highlighted the need for integration between Islamic values and modern educational management, although their study remained limited to administrative aspects and lacked pedagogical innovation. Nurdin & Zubairi (2023) underscored the importance of contextualized Islamic curricula but did not propose any systematic or long-term strategies. Meanwhile, Satria (2019) and Syarif (2021) explored how Islamic education in Indonesia has begun to respond to global challenges, yet their approaches tended to be reactive and fragmented. Wahid & Hamami (2021) also asserted the necessity of renewing learning strategies to form a Muslim generation that is relevant in digital and multicultural settings, but without elaborating on implementable innovative methods.

In light of these conditions, further studies are urgently needed not only to identify the current problems in Islamic education but also to design inclusive and proactive frameworks that are relevant and strategic for addressing future challenges. Longitudinal research that adopts a multidisciplinary approach is essential to ensure that Islamic education not only survives but also contributes meaningfully to the development of a more ethical and morally grounded global civilization.

Building upon the findings of previous studies, this research expands the scope by not only analyzing the current challenges in Islamic education but also proposing a long-term, anticipatory, and transformative development framework. While earlier research primarily focused on immediate problems, this study offers a strategic approach based on global trends, technological integration, and preparedness for ongoing social change. As such, this study aims to examine the future trajectory of Islamic

education development while addressing the challenges involved in integrating religious values in the context of contemporary advancements. The main focus is to evaluate innovative educational approaches that can be applied in Islamic pedagogy and to formulate strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of Islamic education in an ever-evolving environment. Through a comprehensive analysis of both obstacles and opportunities in Islamic education development, this study aspires to contribute meaningfully to improving the quality of Islamic religious education in the years to come.

The findings of this study are expected to enrich conceptual perspectives in Islamic education by developing a framework that links core Islamic values with innovative learning strategies aligned with the demands of the digital era and multicultural societies. Furthermore, this study provides a strong foundation for curriculum design and policy formulation that are contextually relevant and adaptive, especially in responding to the social and technological changes that influence how learners comprehend and practice religious teachings. As a follow-up, the outcomes of this research will serve as the basis for developing an integrative model of Islamic education, which will later be piloted in selected Islamic educational institutions at the secondary level as part of a future educational intervention study.

■ METHOD

Research Design

This research employed a qualitative study design based on a systematic literature review, aiming to examine the future direction of Islamic education development within the context of global challenges and social transformation. This approach was chosen because it integrates various findings and perspectives from relevant scientific sources, which are then analyzed thematically and reflectively. The primary focus is on identifying trends, issues, and strategies for Islamic education development based on the results of a recent literature review, both from national and international sources. The research process followed several steps: (1) formulating the research question, (2) establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, (3) conducting a systematic literature search using selected keywords and databases, and (4) analyzing the data through thematic analysis to synthesize the findings.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the accuracy and relevance of the literature analyzed in this study, inclusion and exclusion criteria were systematically established. These criteria were applied during the literature screening stage to ensure that only sources relevant to the research objectives were included in the analysis process. Table 1 below details the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this study.

**Table 1.** Literature inclusion and exclusion criteria

Aspect	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Type of Publication	Peer-reviewed journal articles from reputable national or international journals	Opinion pieces, blogs, news articles, or non-peer-reviewed documents
Language	English or Indonesian	Languages other than English or Indonesian
Year of Publication	Published between 2015 and 2024	Published before 2015
Topic Relevance	Focused on Islamic education development, Islamic curriculum, educational challenges, and globalization	Irrelevant to Islamic education or focused solely on theology without an educational context

Accessibility	Full-text available and accessible for in-depth review	Only abstract available or inaccessible full text
Methodological Rigor	Empirical studies or literature reviews with clearly described methodology	Studies lacking methodological clarity or failing to explain data collection and analysis processes

Search Strategy

The literature search in this study was conducted systematically using five major academic databases (Scopus, Web of Science, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and Google Scholar). The search focused on journal articles published between 2015 and 2024, using keywords such "Islamic education development," "future of Islamic education," "Islamic pedagogy," "Islamic curriculum reform," and "globalization and Islamic education." Boolean operators (and, or) were applied to construct search strings tailored to each database. All retrieved articles were managed using Mendeley to eliminate duplicates. The screening process was carried out in three stages: (1) title and abstract screening for relevance, (2) full-text review based inclusion and exclusion criteria, and (3) final selection of eligible articles for thematic analysis. The literature search identified 34 studies that met the specified inclusion criteria. Figure 1 presents the literature screening process using the PRISMA approach.
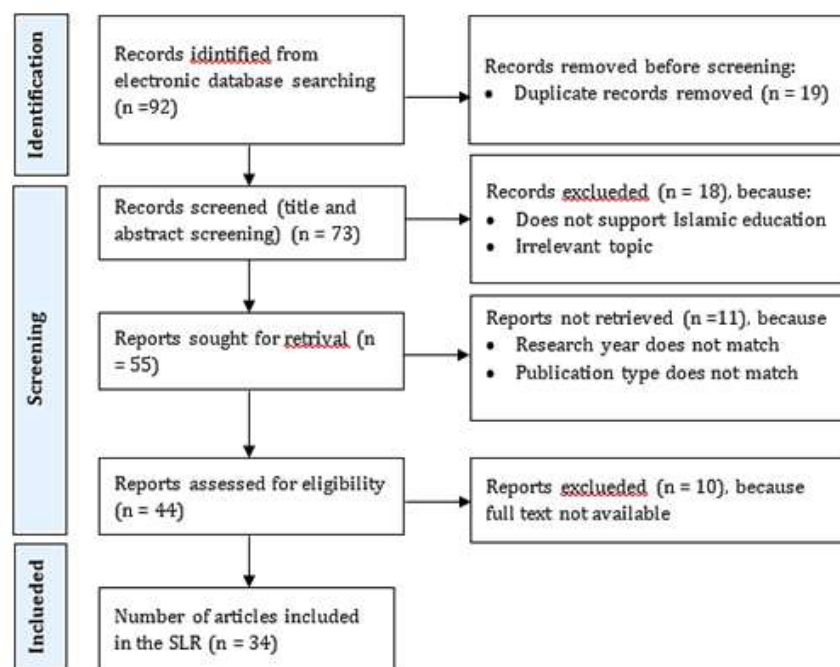
Figure 1. Literature screening process using PRISMA

Data Analysis

The selected articles were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify key patterns, recurring concepts, and emerging themes related to the future development of Islamic education. Each article was thoroughly read and coded based on recurring topics, such as curriculum reform, the role of educators, pedagogical innovation, technology integration, and the influence of globalization. The coding process was conducted manually and assisted by Microsoft Excel to group articles based on

publication year, study area, and thematic focus. The identified themes were then categorized and critically analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions. The analysis focused on exploring intersections and differences across the literature to build a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategic directions for developing Islamic education in the 21st century.

■ **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Characteristics of Included Studies

This section presents a summary of the characteristics of the 34 studies included in this systematic review, which provides a basis for examining patterns and directions of research in Islamic education. Table 2 presents a summary of the characteristics of studies that met the inclusion criteria.

Table 2. Characteristics of included studies

No.	Author(s)	Year	Study Focus	Study Type
1	Abdullah et al.	2019	Career and employability of Islamic Studies graduates in Malaysia	Qualitative and Quantitative
2	Abdurrahmansyah	2022	Issues in Islamic Education Curriculum	Theoretical
3	Alamin et al.	2022	Technology use in Islamic education materials	Qualitative
4	Arifin & Zuhria	2022	Moral education and challenges	Qualitative
5	Arifudin	2016	Integration of science and religion	Theoretical
6	Aslan	2023	Islamic Education Curriculum in Elementary Schools	Qualitative
7	Badrudin et al.	2024	Standardization of National Education	Policy Analysis
8	Darwis	2016	Character education in Islamic education	Theoretical
9	El-Mubarak & Hassan	2021	Challenges and solutions in the globalization era	Theoretical
10	Gazali	2018	Islamic boarding schools and Industrial Revolution	Qualitative
11	Hadi & Wahab	2019	Development of Islamic Education in the Digital Era	Qualitative
12	Hasan et al.	2024	Holistic Islamic education	Theoretical
13	Ilham	2020	Challenges and reform in Islamic education	Theoretical
14	Khoerudin et al.	2024	Islamic education in public universities	Qualitative
15	Latif et al.	2023	Strategic management in Islamic education	Theoretical
16	Mahazan et al.	2015	Predictors of graduate employability	Quantitative
17	Mansir	2022	Problems in Islamic Education in the Digital Era	Qualitative
18	Minan	2021	Islamic education and demographic bonus	Theoretical
19	Minarti	2022	Islamic education: theory and application	Theoretical

20	Muna	2018	Demographic bonus and Islamic education	Theoretical
21	Nudin	2020	Islamic education for adolescents	Theoretical
22	Nurlaeli	2020	Innovation in curriculum for madrasas	Qualitative
23	Pandia & Drew	2023	Islamic education for special needs children	Qualitative
24	Prstowo et al.	2021	Islamic education in Industrial Revolution 4.0	Theoretical
25	Rahardja et al.	2024	Development of the Islamic education curriculum	Qualitative
26	Rizal & Mundiri	2024	Character education challenges post-crisis	Qualitative
27	Saide & Umajjah	2018	Islamic universities and demographic bonus	Theoretical
28	Sapitri & Maryati	2022	Islamic education and character revitalization	Qualitative
29	Saputra	2021	Science and tech-based Islamic curriculum	Theoretical
30	Syukri & Rosyad	2025	Modern technology in Islamic education	Qualitative
31	Tantowi	2022	Islamic education in global transformation	Theoretical
32	Ulfat	2020	Empirical research in Islamic education	Theoretical
33	Umam	2020	Learning strategies in general schools	Theoretical
34	Wahid & Hamami	2021	Challenges and strategies in curriculum development	Qualitative

Challenges and Solutions for Developing Islamic Education

Based on the research results, it is known that the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum faces various complex and dynamic challenges. These challenges include external and internal aspects. External aspects such as future needs and demands (Arifudin, 2016; Wahid & Hamami, 2021), public perception (Tantowi, 2022), advances in science and technology (Mansir, 2022; Latif et al., 2023), and the Era of Society 5.0 and Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Hasan et al., 2024; Rahardja et al., 2024). As well as internal aspects such as the achievement of eight national education standards (Badrudin et al., 2024; Wahid & Hamami, 2021), population growth and demographic bonus (Khoerudin et al., 2024; Minan, 2021; Muna, 2018; Prstowo et al., 2021; Saide & Umajjah, 2018), character education issues (Darwis, 2016; Gazali, 2018; Saputra, 2021), and Inappropriate Curriculum Paradigms (Abdurrahmansyah, 2022; Minarti, 2022). Table 3 presents a summary of the challenges and solutions for developing Islamic Religious Education.

Future Needs and Demands

Technological developments and global dynamics have fundamentally changed the landscape of educational needs. The era of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 demands an education system that emphasizes not only theoretical knowledge but also equips students with 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking,

Table 3. Summary of the challenges and solutions for developing islamic religious education

No	Challenge	Strategic Solution
1	Future Demand Needs	Curriculum development based on future-oriented competencies and 21st-century skills
2	Public Perception	Rebranding Islamic education with innovative and responsive approaches
3	Advances of Science and Technology	Integration of digital technology in learning and ICT training for educators
4	Society 5.0 and Industrial Revolution 4.0	Development of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and digital literacy
5	Achievement and Success of the Eight National Education Standards	Continuous improvement of institutional quality, teacher competence, and governance
6	Inappropriate Curriculum Paradigm	Integration of value-based and holistic education approaches
7	Character Education Issues	Strengthening character formation through contextualized Islamic moral values

collaboration, digital literacy, and hopeful thinking (Hasan et al., 2024; Rahardja et al., 2024). However, the current Islamic education curriculum is considered unresponsive to these needs. Many Islamic educational institutions still use a learning approach based on memorization and textual reasoning, which emphasizes normative mastery of religious material rather than applied contextual understanding (Abdurrahmansyah, 2022; Minarti, 2022). This imbalance between the direction of global development and the structure of consistency results in Islamic education graduates being less relevant to the challenges of the times, both in the workplace and their social roles in society.

The solution to this problem lies not only in the form of administrative curriculum revisions but also requires a fundamental shift in the educational paradigm itself. A competency-based curriculum approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects is considered a more adaptive approach to addressing future challenges (Nurlaeli, 2020; Umam, 2020). This type of curriculum enables students not only to understand Islamic values but also to internalize and apply them contextually in their daily lives. However, the successful implementation of this approach depends heavily on the educational

ecosystem, including teacher training, authentic-based evaluation, and an institutional culture open to change. Without systemic and integrated reform, the curriculum will remain merely a formal document that will have no meaningful impact on the learning process.

Public Perception

Public perception of Islamic education is a serious challenge that requires special attention and proactive management. As noted by Tantowi (2022), public views on the effectiveness and contemporary relevance of Islamic education vary widely. Some believe that Islamic educational institutions are less capable of producing competitive graduates prepared for the global job market (Tantowi, 2022). This perception arises not only from communication issues but also stems from deeper structural issues, particularly the gap between Islamic education curricula and the needs of the modern workplace. Mahazan et al. (2015) found that Islamic studies graduates often lack critical soft skills such as leadership, communication, and adaptability, which are highly sought after in the workplace. This finding is reinforced by Abdullah et al. (2019), the lack of integration of cross-disciplinary content and a lack of practical experience in the industrial world

contribute to the perception that Islamic education lacks relevance to real-world competencies.

Therefore, it is crucial for Islamic educational institutions to demonstrate that their curricula focus not only on spiritual and moral development but also encompass knowledge and skills relevant to the needs of today's society. Showcasing the success and achievements of graduates in various academic and professional fields can strengthen public trust and change negative perceptions. This should be supported by transparency in the educational process and effective communication with the wider community, to demonstrate the goals, achievements, and social contributions of Islamic education. This proactive approach will not only address misconceptions but also foster a more comprehensive understanding of the quality and outcomes of Islamic education in an ever-evolving era.

To change public perception, Islamic education must emphasize tangible outcomes that can be directly utilized by the community. This can be achieved through involving successful graduates as ambassadors or role models, highlighting innovation and academic achievements, and engaging in social and community activities. Furthermore, Islamic education needs to demonstrate adaptability and responsiveness to developments in science, technology, and job market dynamics. Through collaboration with various parties, including industry and research institutions, Islamic education will be more integrated with the needs of the times (Wahid & Hamami, 2021). With this strategy, public perception of Islamic education can shift to be more positive, and it will be recognized as relevant and crucial in developing competent and virtuous individuals who are ready to contribute to modern society.

Advances in Science and Technology

Recent advances in science and technology have transformed the face of education globally, including Islamic education. Learning patterns previously based on lectures and memorization are now considered inadequate in the dynamic digital era. Learning resources are increasingly accessible and distributed through various online platforms, while students are becoming more active in seeking information independently. In this context, traditional approaches to Islamic education face the risk of being marginalized if they fail to adapt strategically (Mansir, 2022; Latif et al., 2023; Syukri & Rosyad, 2025). Unfortunately, resistance to technological change in Islamic education remains strong, both from teachers who are pedagogically unprepared and from institutions reluctant to innovate. This creates a gap between the learning styles of digital-generation students and stagnant teaching patterns.

To remain relevant, Islamic education needs to integrate technology substantially, not merely as an accessory or formality. The use of digital media, e-learning, and interactive content must be directed at strengthening the internalization of Islamic values in a contextual and applicable manner (Alamin et al., 2022; Hadi & Wahab, 2019). Moreover, technology can be a crucial tool for expanding the reach of Islamic preaching and social transformation based on Islamic values. However, this integration must be support by enhancing teachers' capacity in digital literacy and the development of Islamic content that is not only visually appealing but also epistemologically robust. Islamic education that can intelligently engage with technology will have more opportunities to expand its influence in an increasingly digitalized society.

Era of Society 5.0 and Industrial Revolution 4.0

The Era of Society 5.0, a continuation of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, brings far more complex and multidimensional challenges. Cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and robotics are now not only revolutionizing the industrial

world but also fundamentally changing people's ways of life and thinking. In this context, Islamic education faces pressure in adapting to the dynamic era. The relevance of learning systems that have historically been conservative and less adaptive is beginning to be questioned. Higher-order thinking skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity have become crucial for students to actively participate in an increasingly digitalized and differentiated world (Rahardja et al., 2024). When curricula and learning strategies fail to adapt to these developments, students risk experiencing a disconnect between what they learn and the socio-technological realities they face.

To address these challenges, Islamic education needs to undergo a comprehensive transformation in its curriculum, pedagogy, and learning ecosystem. The integration of technology into learning should be accompanied by innovative approaches that are contextual and relevant to future needs. In this process, Islamic values such as good morals must not be neglected. Instead, Islamic moral and ethical values must be the foundation for the application of technology and innovation (Hasan et al., 2024). By integrating digital skills and 21st-century skills with Islamic spirituality and character, students will grow into individuals who are not only technologically proficient but also possess noble character. Islamic education must ensure that every aspect of learning, whether in science, technology, or the arts, is grounded in humanitarian values and sustainability. In this way, Islamic education graduates will be able to become innovative and ethical agents of change in facing the demands of the 5.0 Society era.

Achievement and Success of Eight National Education Standards

Islamic education in Indonesia is formally bound by eight National Education Standards, which encompass standards for content, process, graduate competencies, teaching staff, facilities and infrastructure, management, financing, and assessment. However, in practice, achieving these standards remains very inconsistent, especially regarding the process and quality of teaching staff. When process standards are not met due to low teacher pedagogical quality or a lack of learning resources, graduate output struggles to meet expected competency standards (Badrudin et al., 2024; Wahid & Hamami, 2021). This problem is not isolated but reflects systemic weaknesses in the governance of Islamic educational institutions, such as weak planning, minimal managerial innovation, and inadequate ongoing quality control.

Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education must be holistic and not fragmented. Structural reforms need to be directed at two main aspects. First, strengthening the competency of teaching staff through needs-based training, including in modern pedagogy, digital literacy, and authentic assessment. Second, improving the Islamic education management system to be more adaptive, transparent, and accountability-based. This is crucial to ensure that each educational unit is not solely focused on administrative fulfillment but also truly focused on transforming the quality of learning. Without comprehensive institutional reform, efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education will be merely symbolic and will not significantly impact the overall achievement of the National Education Standards.

Population Growth and Demographic Bonus

Indonesia is projected to experience a demographic bonus in the 2030s, with the productive-age population dominating the national population. This phenomenon presents a strategic opportunity to accelerate national progress, but it also carries potential risks if not balanced with high-quality human resources with intellectual excellence and integrity (Khoerudin et al., 2024; Minan, 2021; Muna, 2018; Prstowo et al., 2021;

Saide & Umajjah, 2018). This highlights the urgent role of Islamic education in shaping youth that is not only academically intelligent but also morally and spiritually strong. However, the current Islamic education system still faces challenges in systematically and comprehensively internalizing character values into learning. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy are often taught normatively, without pedagogical strategies that truly influence students' actual behavior.

To face these challenges, Islamic education needs to transform from a verbalistic approach to values toward a transformative approach based on experience and role models. Islamic values must be presented in the context of students' daily lives through project-based learning, case studies, and consistent practice (Aslan, 2023; Sapitri & Maryati, 2022). Strengthening character education is not solely the responsibility of religious teachers but must be integrated holistically into all subjects and the school environment. Suppose Islamic education can become central to the character formation of the future productive generation. In that case, the demographic bonus will not only be an economic opportunity but also a strategic moment for building a civil society grounded in Islamic values.

Character Education Issues

Character education is a major challenge amidst the rapid cultural and technological revolution. Changes in students' mindsets and lifestyles are heavily influenced by the currents of digitalization and cultural globalization, which often carry values that conflict with Islamic moral and ethical principles (Arifin & Zuhria, 2022; Darwis, 2016; El-Mubarak & Hassan, 2021; Gazali, 2018; Saputra, 2021). The phenomenon of moral degradation among the younger generation reflects a shift in worldview, outlook on life, and values that deviate from religious principles. Students are frequently exposed to consumerist, hedonistic, and even destructive digital content,

which gradually influences their character and behavior. In this context, Islamic education faces a significant challenge in maintaining, instilling, and revitalizing noble values amidst the unlimited onslaught of information.

In response to this challenge, Islamic education must position character education as a central pillar in the curriculum and learning practices. Character education cannot be taught as formal material; it must be integrated into the entire learning process, from instructional design and evaluation strategies to teacher role models both inside and outside the classroom (Rizal & Mundiri, 2024; Wahid & Hamami, 2021). Values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, hard work, and modesty need to be instilled through habituation, social projects, and activities that stimulate moral reflection. Islamic education must boldly develop a contextual approach, address the realities of students' lives, and connect Islamic values to the concrete challenges they face daily. Thus, students will not only become intellectually intelligent but also spiritually and ethically resilient in facing rapid changes and the temptations of changing values.

Inappropriate Curriculum Paradigm

An inappropriate curriculum paradigm remains a major challenge in contemporary Islamic education. In many practices, Islamic education still emphasizes the cognitive aspect (mastery of theoretical religious knowledge), while the affective dimension (internalization and application of moral values in daily life) receives insufficient attention (Abdurrahmansyah, 2022; Pandia & Drew, 2023). As a result, students may have good conceptual understanding of religion, but this is not reflected in their attitudes and behavior. This creates a gap between knowledge and practice, where Islamic education graduates lack a life attitude that reflects the values of honesty, integrity, and empathy in real life (Minarti, 2022). If left unchecked, this can weaken the social legitimacy of Islamic education and obscure

its primary goal, which is to develop intellectually and spiritually whole Muslim individuals.

To address this issue, Islamic education needs to shift its curriculum paradigm from merely transmitting knowledge to transformative values education. This means that education functions not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a process of developing noble character and personality. This process requires a complete integration of the cognitive and affective dimensions at every stage of learning, including curriculum development, teaching methods, and learning evaluation (Ilham, 2020; Nudin, 2020). The curriculum must be designed holistically to train students not only to understand Islamic teachings but also to absorb, internalize, and consistently practice them in their social lives. This transformation will only succeed with a collective commitment from all stakeholders in Islamic education, including institutional administrators, teachers, and policymakers, to create an educational system that balances the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of values.

Interconnection Among Challenges

The challenges facing Islamic education today do not stand alone but are intertwined within a complex web of issues. Misalignment of curriculum paradigms, weak character education, delays in responding to technological developments, and the low relevance of graduates to societal needs all influence each other directly and indirectly (Abdurrahmansyah, 2022; Hasan et al., 2024; Minarti, 2022; Wahid & Hamami, 2021). For example, learning approaches that remain traditional and focused on memorization result in minimal internalization of moral values, which ultimately exacerbates negative public perceptions of Islamic education graduates. Similarly, the inability of educational institutions to effectively integrate technology has left Islamic educational institutions behind in preparing students for the digital era and Society 5.0 (Rahardja et al., 2024; Latif et al., 2023).

Furthermore, these problems are also closely related to systemic weaknesses at the institutional level, such as low-quality education management, teacher quality, and disparities in achievement of National Education Standards (Badrudin et al., 2024; Wahid & Hamami, 2021). Weaknesses in one aspect, such as teachers' inability to manage active and contextual learning, will impact other aspects, for example, efforts to strengthen character or instill noble moral values. In the context of the demographic bonus facing Indonesia, this situation is particularly worrying because Islamic education has not yet fully utilized the enormous potential of the younger generation to produce productive and integrated human resources (Khoerudin et al., 2024; Saide & Umajjah, 2018). Thus, the complexity of the challenges of Islamic education cannot be addressed with a partial approach but instead demands a systemic, comprehensive, and integrated response.

Solutions to these challenges cannot be achieved in isolation. However, they must be achieved through an integrative approach involving curriculum transformation, pedagogical innovation, institutional strengthening, and mainstreaming Islamic values in the contemporary context. A contextual and holistic curriculum will strengthen character education and increase the relevance of graduates. Meanwhile, strategic use of technology will expand the reach and effectiveness of learning while fostering 21st-century competencies. Islamic education also needs to reposition its role, not only as a preserver of traditional values, but also as an active agent of social change, shaping a generation ready to face global realities ethically and with solutions (Alamin et al., 2022; Sapitri & Maryati, 2022; Aslan, 2023).

Implications for Stakeholders

The results of this study have important implications for stakeholders in Islamic education, particularly policymakers. The government needs to formulate strategic policies that support the

comprehensive transformation of Islamic education, from curriculum aspects to teacher quality improvement and digital infrastructure. The curriculum should be directed to integrate Islamic values with 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy. Policies should also encourage Islamic education to respond to global challenges without losing its identity and noble Islamic values. Therefore, an adaptive and data-driven policy approach is essential, including support for innovative research in Islamic education (Badrudin et al., 2024; Ulfat, 2020; Wahid & Hamami, 2021).

For educators, these findings emphasize the importance of strengthening pedagogical capacity to implement active, contextual, and transformative learning methods. Teachers are no longer simply transmitters of knowledge; they must also act as facilitators, mentors, and role models of Islamic values lived in practice. Teacher training should be directed at mastering project-based learning methods, utilizing learning technology, and strengthening character and moral literacy. Teachers who can balance mastery of material, innovative methods, and character building will be key pillars in the success of the transformation of Islamic education (Aslan, 2023; Nudin, 2020).

For educational institutions, the results of this study demonstrate the need for comprehensive institutional transformation. Islamic educational institutions are required to develop a learning ecosystem that supports collaborative, digital, and values-based learning. This includes improving infrastructure, data-driven school governance, and partnerships with industry and the global community. Institutions also need to build a culture of continuous evaluation and reflection to measure the effectiveness of character and competency education programs. Thus, Islamic education will be better prepared to produce graduates who are not only proficient in religious knowledge but also competent in responding to the demands of the times, both

morally and intellectually (Latif et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024).

■ CONCLUSION

Islamic education is at a strategic crossroads, demanding profound transformation amidst the rapid flow of global change and complex internal challenges. The findings of this study indicate that the challenges faced are not merely technical or administrative, but also touch on fundamental aspects such as curriculum relevance, public perception, technology integration, and character instillation. On the one hand, the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 demands a renewed approach to Islamic education to be more adaptive to scientific developments and future skills needs. On the other hand, internal challenges such as the gap in achievement of national education standards, a non-contextual curriculum paradigm, and the character crisis among the younger generation emphasize that the transformation of Islamic education must address substantial dimensions, not merely procedural ones.

The key message of this study is that the future of Islamic education depends heavily on the ability of educational actors, both policymakers and practitioners in the field, to formulate strategies that are not merely reactive to challenges but also proactive in developing a long-term vision. Islamic education needs to balance the strengthening of spiritual values with the development of 21st-century skills through an integrative, responsive, and collaborative curriculum. Competency-based curriculum reform, active and contextual learning approaches, the use of technology, and the strengthening of moral literacy are part of the strategic solutions offered.

Limitations in this study include the inability to comprehensively address all aspects of the challenges due to the complexity of the education sector and the limited focus on the Indonesian context. Therefore, further research is expected

to reach across countries to identify best practices from other Muslim-majority countries. Further research should also test the effectiveness of the proposed solutions in the context of actual implementation in educational institutions while considering the influence of current social and technological developments on the dynamics of Islamic education. Only with a holistic and sustainable approach can Islamic education play a strategic role in shaping a generation of Muslims who excel intellectually, spiritually, and socially.

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