

Challenges and Innovations in the Islamic Education System

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Abstract. Examining the issues, developments, and adjustments that the Islamic educational system has made in response to shifting times, global dynamics, and technological breakthroughs is the aim of this research. Data was gathered using a qualitative approach using the library research method, including literature, policy papers, and prior study findings. The results of the theme analysis demonstrate that the Islamic education system faces a variety of issues, both global and national. These problems include the industrial revolution, government regulations, disjointed learning methodologies, and the expectations of 21st-century competence performance. At the national level, the low accreditation and recognition of religious educational institutions is also a major obstacle. As a result, several innovations have been developed, including interactive teaching techniques, the adaptable curriculum that combines contemporary science with Islamic ideals, and the use of digital technology in the classroom. In addition, the Islamic education system also shows efforts to adapt to the times through the transformation of educational orientation, the adoption of 21st-century methods, and the integration of intra-, co-, and extra-curricular learning. These findings show that despite facing complex challenges, the Islamic education system in Indonesia has great potential to develop adaptively, innovatively, and relevantly in responding to current and future educational needs.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Educational Innovation, Global Challenges

Introduction

The Islamic Education System is a unit consisting of various elements that work together and are structured to form human beings with Muslim personalities, by the values of Islamic teachings sourced from the Qur'an and al-Sunnah (Bakar, 2020; Kendiani & Apriani, 2020). The implementation of this system in every Islamic educational institution is not the same, depending on some factors, such as the purpose of the institution, its strengths and weaknesses, and other aspects. So the results of each institution may also be different (Karolina et al., 2023; Nurhalimah, 2023).

The level of educational services provided by Islamic boarding schools and religious education institutions may be used to measure the efficiency of the Islamic education system's implementation. The quality of this service is determined by a variety of elements, including Minimum Competency Achievement (CKM) and accreditation. CKM is a fundamental competence criterion that students must meet in specific topics, including reading and numeracy. Literacy and numeracy skills are very important in the school environment and society because they are the foundation for the development of logical, critical, and analytical thinking skills. With a good mastery of literacy and numeracy, students have stronger provisions to face challenges in the era of globalization and technology.

The importance of CKM in Islamic education is also supported by national policies that focus on improving the quality of learning in religious-based education units. Based on data from the 2023 Indonesian Education Report and the 2025-2045 Indonesian Education Roadmap, there is an increase in the achievement of the minimum competency of literacy and numeracy of students at all levels of education organized by the Ministry of Religion in 2023 compared to 2021. This increase shows that the government's efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education through various policies have yielded significant improvements. However, despite the increase,

the achievement of the minimum competency of students in religious education institutions is still lagging compared to general education units.

Based on the Comparison of the Minimum Competency Achievement of Education Unit Students organized by the Ministry of Religion in 2021 and 2023, the minimum competency achievement in education units (at the elementary/junior high/high school level) organized by the Ministry of Religion has increased from 2021 to 2023. Reading literacy increased from 48.4% to 58.1%, while numeracy increased from 29.8% to 50.9%. This shows an improvement in the quality of learning and the effectiveness of educational methods applied in religious education units.

On the other hand, based on the Comparison of Minimum Competency Achievement of Religious Education Units with General Education Units, the achievement of minimum competencies in educational units organized by the Ministry of Religion compared to general education units as a result of the achievement of minimum competencies at all levels of education organized by the Ministry of Religion is still far behind. Data shows that the percentage of literacy and numeracy skills in general education units is higher than that of religion-based education units at all levels.

Accreditation is another criterion that may be used to measure the quality of educational services provided by Islamic boarding schools and religious education institutes. In the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), accreditation refers to the acknowledgment of an educational institution by an authorized agency once it has been determined that the school fulfills specific requirements or criteria. The National Accreditation Board for Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education (BAN-PDM) Assessor, Irma Suryani, said, "Accreditation is a tool for quality assurance and one of the ways to protect our children from inappropriate educational services."

In terms of the achievement of accreditation scores, data from the Ministry of Religion (2024) shows that the number of Islamic boarding school educational institutions that have been accredited is still relatively low. Of the 1,998 Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools that organize Equality Education (PKPPS), only 70 have obtained accreditation. However, in 2024, there are positive developments with the targeting of 223 Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools to follow the accreditation process by BAN-PDM.

Based on the Data on the Gap in the Number between Accredited and Unaccredited Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools, it is illustrated that Accreditation in Islamic higher education institutions also still shows a gap. Of the 59 state Islamic higher education institutions, only 11 have received superior accreditation (A), while 6 institutions are still not accredited. The same condition occurs in private Islamic higher education institutions, where out of 876 institutions, only 11 have obtained superior accreditation, while 317 institutions have not been accredited. This data illustrates that there are still many Islamic educational institutions that need to improve the quality of their services to meet accreditation standards.

Two areas of the process that need to be addressed in the implementation of Indonesia's Islamic education system are the achievement of the smallest competencies gap and the low number of accreditations in Islamic boarding schools and religious educational institutions. As a result, this article will discuss the problems in implementing the Islamic education system, including both global and current challenges in Islamic boarding school education and religious education in Indonesia. In response to these problems, innovation in the development of the Islamic education system, as well as adaptability to technological changes and changing times, are critical to ensuring that Islamic education stays relevant and competitive.

Based on the background information provided above, this study aims to address a number of significant questions, including: (1) what obstacles have Indonesia faced in implementing the Islamic education system?, (2) what kinds of innovation have been and can be used in the development of the Islamic education system?, and (3) how well-equipped is the Islamic education system to adjust to changing technological advancements and societal demands? It is hoped that this study will be able to pinpoint and evaluate the primary obstacles to the adoption of Islamic education, investigate the different innovations that have surfaced

during its evolution, and look at the adaptation tactics used by Islamic educational establishments to stay competitive and relevant in the face of shifting global dynamics.

Materials and Methods

This study employs the library research method, or literature review, with a qualitative approach. Book study is a research approach that involves seeking, evaluating, and analyzing diverse books and documents related to the research topic, rather than doing direct observations in the field. The qualitative approach is used to deeply understand the context, meaning, and dynamics related to the challenges, innovations, and adjustments of the Islamic education system in the face of the times and technological developments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The data sources in this study consist of secondary data, namely official government documents (such as the Indonesian Education Report Card, the Indonesian Education Roadmap), scientific journals, academic books, and other relevant publications. The types of data collected are descriptive and narrative, in the form of expert opinions, statistical data, and previous findings related to Islamic education. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which involves identifying, organizing, and interpreting the main themes of the sources that have been studied. The analysis process is carried out through several stages: reading and studying the entire document thoroughly, grouping information into thematic categories such as challenges, innovations, and adjustments, then compiling scientific interpretations and narratives that support the research objectives and questions (Saldana, 2013).

Results and Discussion

Results

This section contains the findings of an in-depth analysis of numerous important literature and papers on the implementation of the Islamic education system in Indonesia, which include the following three key points:

Challenges in the Implementation of the Islamic Education System

The research found that the challenges facing the Islamic education system are multidimensional and include: 1) Global Challenges, such as the Industrial Revolution 4.0, climate change, and technological developments; 2) National/Government Policy, including national policies such as the National Education System Law, the Islamic Boarding School Law, and the Independent Learning program, 3) Approach and Method, namely the need for an interdisciplinary paradigm in teaching (Interconnected Entities), 4) Learning Outcomes, which is the demand for graduates to have 21st century skills (4C: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication), 5) The capacity of Islamic boarding schools is still limited, 6) low recognition of religious education graduates, 7) There is no optimal quality assurance, and low accreditation rates of Islamic educational institutions.

Innovation in the Development of the Islamic Education System

The results of the study show that Islamic education has made various innovations to respond to challenges, namely: 1) Student-based interactive teaching methods, such as project-based learning and halaqah, 2) Adaptive curriculum design, which integrates Islamic values with other disciplines through an interdisciplinary approach, 3) The use of technology, such as AI, e-learning, and the use of VR/AR in the learning process.

Adapting to Technological Developments and the Demands of the Times

The research also reveals that the Islamic education system is adapting to the changing times through: 1) Adjustments to 21st-century learning, namely learning based on basic knowledge, humanistic, and meta, 2) A change in educational orientation, from the focus of individual worship to education that also encourages social contribution and religious moderation, 3) Integration of conventional and modern learning methods to develop critical and

collaborative thinking skills, 4) Intra, co-, and extra-curricular integration as an integrated learning approach that shapes students' academic and social skills.

Discussion

Challenges in the Implementation of the Islamic Education System

The challenges in implementing the Islamic Education System are Global Challenges, National/Government Policy, Approach and Method, and Learning Outcomes. These challenges arise as a result of global trends that continue to evolve and affect the way Islamic education is organized. The first challenge is Global Challenges, which includes the Industrial Revolution 4.0, climate change, and technological developments that are significantly changing the educational landscape (World Economic Forum, 2022). In addition, global urbanization and demographic changes have also affected access and learning methods in Islamic education. The shift towards global citizenship also demands that Islamic education be more inclusive and relevant to the challenges of the modern world (UNESCO, 2023).

The second difficulty is national/government policy, which for Indonesia comprises legislation such as the National Education System Law, Higher Education Law, and Islamic Boarding School Law, all of which have an impact on Islamic education policy in Indonesia. The government's Independent Learning initiative necessitates curricular revisions to make it more flexible and adaptable to changing times (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Furthermore, the government's aim to include the notion of Deep Learning in the national curriculum presents a unique challenge in terms of boosting the quality of Islamic education.

The third challenge is Approach and Method, in which the Islamic education paradigm must adopt the concept of Interconnected Entities, which is a multi, trans, and interdisciplinary approach that seeks to integrate various disciplines in order to create a more holistic and relevant education system to the needs of the time. This necessitates the merger of Islamic sciences (Ulumuluddin), natural sciences (Natural Sciences), social sciences (Social Sciences), and humanities (Humanities) to develop a more complete education system.

The fourth obstacle is learning outcomes, where Islamic education must be able to generate graduates with the "4Cs"—creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (problem-solving-oriented). The use of the 4Cs in school is particularly important for developing students' social skills and global perspective. Students need to be taught all of these abilities during the learning process (Nurhayati et al, 2024). Mastering these skills is essential so that Islamic education graduates can adapt to faster social, economic, and technological changes. For this reason, Islamic education needs to continue to innovate in teaching and evaluation methods to be able to produce graduates who not only understand religious values but also have the skills needed in the modern era.

The four challenges above are challenges in general in the implementation of the Islamic Education System. Meanwhile, the current national challenge in the Islamic Education System, particularly in the implementation of Islamic boarding schools and religious education in Indonesia, according to a study conducted by the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, and the Ministry of Religion (2024). This is due to several major issues with the implementation of Islamic education, such as educational institution capability, graduate recognition, and educational service quality assurance.

Capacity of Educational Institutions

Most Islamic boarding schools and religious educational institutions still face limitations in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and institutional management. This is because the majority of these institutions are established and managed by the community independently, with a family-based system that is not fully professional and accountable. As a result, the standards of education management in Islamic boarding schools and religious institutions have not been optimal in providing quality educational services.

Recognition of Education Graduates

It is still difficult for graduates of Islamic boarding schools and religious education programs to pursue higher education and enter the official workforce. Despite having a far larger student body than other official educational institutions, Islamic schools have not been given the same respect for their graduates. This hinders their chances to compete in the labor market and contribute more broadly to national development. For this reason, a more inclusive policy and recognition system are needed that strengthen the legality and competence of Islamic boarding school graduates so that they can be competitive at the national and global levels.

Quality Assurance of Education Services

Students at Islamic boarding schools and religious instruction continue to fall short of meeting the basic competency standards when compared to general education courses. Furthermore, there are still a limited number of approved Islamic educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools, ma'had al-y, and Islamic universities. Accreditation is a significant indicator of educational quality; hence, raising quality standards and accreditation of Islamic educational institutions is one of the top goals for Indonesia's Islamic education system growth. To overcome these challenges, the three primary agendas that need to be taken into consideration are: strengthening the quality and recognition of Islamic boarding school education and religious education graduates; improving the quality assurance of Islamic boarding school and religious education services; and improving the quality of Islamic boarding school education and religious education services.

To improve the quality of pesantren education services, the steps taken include providing affirmation assistance for students in 3T areas (disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost), educational operational assistance, revitalization of infrastructure, and improving the competence of educators in both formal and non-formal education. In addition, a recognition scheme for past learning for pesantren educators was also developed to increase the capacity of educators to strengthen the recognition of pesantren graduates and religious education so that they have the same opportunities as general education graduates. The steps include the development of a scheme for the transfer of students between educational paths, the equalization of graduate qualifications, and the implementation of competency standards and curriculum for Islamic boarding schools and religious education that are more in line with general education. The quality assurance of pesantren education is also strengthened through the development of a contextual and adaptive curriculum, strengthening the accreditation system, and integrating a better educational information system. With this strategy, it is hoped that Islamic boarding schools and religious education can develop as a more inclusive, quality, and highly competitive education system. Efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education must be carried out comprehensively and involve various stakeholders, both the government, the community, and the educational institutions themselves.

Innovation in the Development of the Islamic Education System

At the 9th International Conference on Islamic Education (ICIED) (2024), Prof. Dr. Bilal Aybakan, an education specialist from the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Ibn Haldun University in Turkey, clarified that "Innovation in education, both in terms of teaching methods, curriculum design, and the use of technology, is often born from responses to emerging challenges." The aforementioned demonstrates that Islamic education needs to be flexible and ready to incorporate contemporary methods without disregarding Islamic principles.

The student-centered interactive teaching approach is the primary innovative element in the evolution of the Islamic educational system. To improve student engagement, learning methods like inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and problem-based learning are used. In addition, blended learning allows for the integration of online and offline learning in Islamic education. Interactive and collaborative approaches are also reinforced by methods such as halaqah discussions, which are relevant in contemporary Islamic education. In addition to teaching methods, adaptive curriculum design is an important factor in Islamic educational

innovation. The curriculum developed integrates Islamic values in every aspect, including the integration of religious science with other disciplines through the Interconnected Entities paradigm, with a multi, trans, and interdisciplinary approach. The curriculum can also be designed based on Islamic competencies and characters, as well as oriented to the needs of the times, so that graduates have a balance between religious understanding and worldly skills.

Technology is the main element in supporting Islamic educational innovation. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used to personalize the learning of the Qur'an and Hadith. E-learning and educational platforms such as Muslim Pro, Bayyinah TV, and Quran.com facilitate self-paced learning. Additionally, the utilization of Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) allows for a more interactive and immersive learning experience. With this innovation, Islamic education is expected to be more relevant and competitive in the digital era.

Adapting to Technological Developments and the Demands of the Times

Prof. Dr. H. Imam Suprayogo in the article "Adapting Education to the Demands of the Times" (2016) stated that "Education that is not adapted to the changing times, the results will be lagging behind. Its graduates will not be able to adapt to the ever-changing times". The above statement places an important emphasis on the relevance of education to the development of the times. In a world that continues to evolve rapidly, especially with technological advances and globalization, education that does not keep up with these changes risks producing graduates who are not ready to face the challenges of the times. Adjustments to technological developments and the demands of the times that can be carried out by the Islamic education system include Adjustments to the Way of Learning in the XXI Century, Adjustments to the New Orientation of the Islamic Education System, Adjustments to Various Learning Methods, and Intra-, Co-, and Extra-Curricular Integration.

Adjustments to the XXI Century Learning Method

Mishra and Mehta (2016) have photographed teachers' views in their research on 21st-century learning.

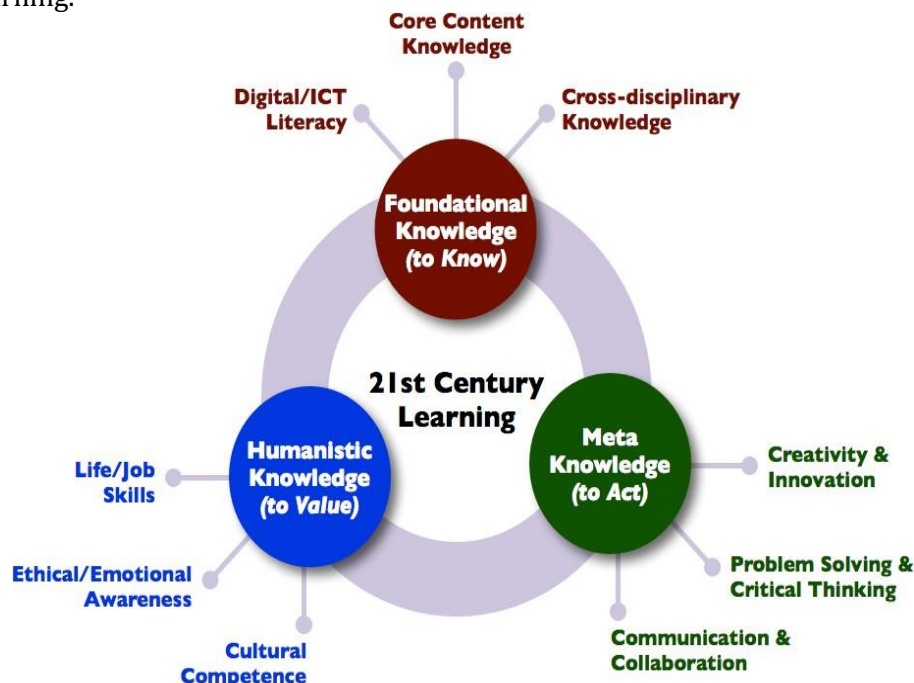


Figure 1.
How to Learn in the 21st Century

The concept of 21st-century learning is as listed in Figure 3. It consists of three main elements: Foundational Knowledge (basic knowledge), Humanistic Knowledge (humanistic knowledge), and Meta Knowledge (meta knowledge). Foundational Knowledge includes core knowledge such as digital literacy/ICT, cross-disciplinary knowledge, and a basic understanding of various academic fields. Humanistic Knowledge focuses on life values and skills, including cultural competence, ethical and emotional awareness, and job skills. Meanwhile, Meta Knowledge emphasizes the application of knowledge through creativity and innovation, problem-solving and critical thinking, as well as communication and collaboration. These three elements are interconnected and form the basis of holistic learning needed to meet the challenges of the modern era. The concept of knowing, valuing, and acting must be part of the adjustment in the development of the Islamic education system.

Adjustment of the New Orientation of the Islamic Education System

The Islamic Education System has responded to the demands of the times. Islamic education is not only oriented towards the development of individual-vertical piety (*habl min Allah*), but also strengthens social-horizontal piety (*habl min an-nas*), so that students not only worship personally but also contribute to society. This approach aims to form individuals who have piety to Allah as well as high social responsibility in social life. In addition, amid the existing diversity, Islamic education instills the principle of religious moderation that balances respect for self and respect for others. In other words, students are taught to understand and practice Islamic teachings correctly without losing respect for the diversity that exists around them. This is especially important in the context of an increasingly plural and dynamic world, where intercultural and interreligious interactions are part of daily life.

Furthermore, the Islamic education system strives to remain sensitive to social realities and global needs while prioritizing the inclusive, tolerant, and multicultural dimension of Islamic teachings. By prioritizing these principles, Islamic education is not only relevant in the local context but also able to respond to global challenges. This emphasizes that Islam, as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, must be reflected in an education system that is open, adaptive, and oriented towards the welfare of mankind.

Adjustments to various learning methods

Along with the development of technology and the demands of the times, the Islamic education system needs to adjust various teaching methods to be more relevant to the needs of students. The conventional teacher-centered approach still has an important role in learning, especially in providing systematic scientific foundations. Several methods, such as the lecture method, drill and practice, question and answer method, demonstration method, recitation method, and expository method, are still used to ensure that students understand basic concepts clearly. However, this method has limitations in developing critical, collaborative, and problem-solving skills that are increasingly needed in the modern era. For this reason, the integration of conventional methods with the latest methods is a strategic step in increasing learning effectiveness.

Because they can motivate students to take an active role in their education, new student-centered teaching techniques are being used more and more. A more contextual and applicable learning experience is offered by a number of methods, including Small Group Discussion (SGD), Role-Play & Simulation (RPS), Case Study (CS), Discovery Learning (DL), Self-Directed Learning (SDL), Collaborative Learning (CbL), Contextual Instruction (CI), Project Based Learning (PjBL), Problem Based Learning and Inquiry (PBL), and Deep Learning (DL). These methods allow learners to develop communication skills, analytical thinking, as well as innovation in problem solving. By combining conventional approaches and the latest methods, Islamic education can be more adaptive in facing global challenges, while maintaining Islamic values that are the main foundation of learning.

Intra-, Co-, and Extra-Curricular Integration



Figure.
Yusuf Hanafi Learning Outcome Model (2021).

Intra, Co-, and Extra-Curricular Integration is an approach that shows that effective education does not only depend on classroom learning (intra-curricular), but also requires additional activities (co-curricular and extra-curricular) to enhance the learning experience and develop self-skills. This model is oriented towards holistic learning outcomes. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Hanafi (2021) has formulated this integration in the following model:

The concept of learning integrates three main aspects, namely intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular. Intra-curricular focuses on acquiring knowledge in the classroom with structured methods, such as reading, listening, discussion, and case analysis. In this context, the learning process is controlled with interaction between teachers and students so that it can expand, refine, and deepen students' understanding of academic materials. Meanwhile, co-curricular and extracurricular activities play a role in enriching the learning experience with a more flexible and applicable approach. Co-curricular activities, such as social projects or mini-projects, emphasize independent learning, collaboration, and real-life experiences through problem-solving, research, investigation, and presentation. Meanwhile, extra-curricular activities focus more on self-development, interests, and talents, which involve simulation-based activities, gamification, and value-based games. By combining these three aspects, learners can develop the academic, social, and critical thinking skills needed to face real-world challenges.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Islamic education system faces various challenges, both at the global and national levels. Global challenges include issues such as government policies, learning approaches and methods, and learning outcomes, while contemporary challenges in Indonesia focus on the fulfillment of quality Islamic boarding schools and religious institutions' educational services. In facing these challenges, innovation is essential, including through the application of interactive teaching methods, the development of adaptive curriculum design, and the effective use of technology in the learning process. In addition, the Islamic education system is also required to be able to adapt to technological developments and dynamics in the 21st century, including through adjustments to learning methods, changes in educational orientation, and integration between intra-, co-, and extra-curricular activities as part of a strategy to increase the relevance and competitiveness of Islamic education in the modern era.

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