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THE FUTURE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION: INNOVATIONS AND TRADITIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

The future of Islamic education faces a critical balance between preserving traditional teachings and integrating modern innovations. As global educational paradigms evolve, Islamic institutions are adopting new methodologies while striving to maintain their religious and cultural integrity. This study examines the challenges and opportunities within Islamic education, particularly in Indonesia, which houses the largest network of Islamic schools. Key areas of focus include digital learning, curriculum modernization, and the integration of technology in madrasahs. E-learning platforms, gamification, and interactive teaching methods are reshaping the learning experience, offering greater accessibility while maintaining core Islamic values. However, resistance to change, socio-economic disparities, and concerns over the dilution of religious teachings pose significant challenges. The study highlights the importance of a hybrid approach that merges classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary educational tools. By addressing these concerns, Islamic education can remain relevant and effective in fostering intellectual, ethical, and spiritual growth among students. Future strategies should emphasize inclusive, adaptable models that respect tradition while embracing progress.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Traditionalism, Innovation, E-Learning, Madrasah, Curriculum Modernization, Gamification, Digital Learning, Religious Scholarship, Education Reform.

Introduction

The Islamic education system is being challenged to maintain traditions and innovations; both have merits and demerits. This text aims to discuss the condition of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly, and schools all over the world, generally, facing a challenging educational sector and exploring their innovation. Indonesia is the focal point of this study. It has the largest number of religious schools and Islamic education in the world, representing varied streams and thoughts of Islam. (Latief et

al.2021) Differences in the processes and structures of education, in the ways of respecting and conducting religious life at school, are often highlighted by the mass media. Indonesian religious schools are in constant progress. Strengthening Islamic education is supported by various innovations in educational management, teacher selection, curriculum development, and stress relief. Indonesia's Islamic education process is shaped by political, legal, social, and educational conditions where communities live together in an evolving educational landscape. Therefore, the future of Islamic education in Indonesia and other parts of the world, with various themes and thoughts of Islam, depends on their capacity for sustainable improvement. (Muhammad & Nugraheni, 2022)

Islamic education has provided room for various innovations. However, Islamic education may not lose its essential substance in adding awareness to science and new information, lifestyle, and increased human values. Islamic education at school offers its ideas to present the characteristics of future Islamic education: unique poverty, religious findings, and Islamic conversion. (Suyadi, 2022) Finally, this text intends to illustrate how the characteristics of an Islamic school invite all education practitioners to prepare for innovation while still enhancing the potential for developments in the modern world. Yet, we raise the question of whether traditional school education, not only using advanced technology in all aspects of life, but also incorporating it into the fundamentals of one of the most accurate techniques, is of great importance from youth to adults, since it encompasses the majority of Islamic education, including adherents in Indonesia and all over the world. Throughout history and thought, since the birth of a prophet and the apostolic stage to the present day, what has been shown in Islamic education is relevant for progressive thinking. What they have shown us is presented in public, especially in formal education. We must learn it. Islam maintains the existence of traditional Islamic education, which can characterize the progress and movement of every young Muslim to guide the results of Islamic teachings.

Historical Overview of Islamic Education

Islamic education has gone through many changes since its inception over 1,400 years ago. Changes in the educational system currently underway in our communities are intended to revive the system that has been created throughout the history of the spread of Islam. At the same time, attempts are made to give it modern expressions. (Ismail & Khan, 2021) Among the fundamental changes, mainly in political conditions, economic and technological aspects, tradition and modernity, the latter entails a second one, i.e., our current commitment to liberal-democratic values. Considerations of the future help to evaluate the crisis, which in practice has affected the contemporary religious-educational model. History teaches not only about the

universal development of human intellectual culture but also that the solutions found by predecessors are often those that will save contemporary religions and societies. What follows is a concise summary of the historical trajectory that has articulated the broad principles of Islamic education throughout the ages. The development of education in the Islamic world can be divided into several periods. The first began in the early period of Islam as a result of the spread of revelation. Then, the subject of education was cosmopolitan. The spread of the Quran sparked the development of Islamic religious scholarship, its methodology, and fundamental sciences, which were then passed down by means of teaching throughout the world. (Kasdi et al.2022)It was in the first centuries of Islam that the Islamic religious-educational complex was first formulated; it has been preserved in the next generations in the current 20th and 21st centuries. It was in the first centuries that the madrasah became a stable educational institution. Most of the best traditions of education being revived and implemented today have originated during this period. Islam had not yet settled into a single system. Education was liberal. Education was universal; it included general visionaries, theologians, philosophers, religious legalists, and scientists. Moreover, there were different legalistic schools, opposite to the Quranic Law – they were created on the basis of Sunnah and on the basis of Qiyas. The Sunnah and Qiyas rejected even the Sunnah of the Prophet. Such a wide range of the shades of Islam made this religious-educational era diversified for the Islamic world. Medieval Islam was the first in theories of education and education sciences (Ismail & Khan, 2021). There were wellrecognized scientists, thinkers, and educationists of that time in the field of education and education methodology.

Challenges Facing Islamic Education

Challenges Disparities in socio-economic resources and income levels restrict the growth of Islamic education while also impeding changes brought about by new conceptions of Islamic education. Moreover, the availability and allocation of resources in educational systems are directed towards the topics, issues, or plans that are given importance by the administrators of the relevant educational system. (Fauzi et al.2023) Thus, efforts to introduce new orientations towards the teaching of natural and social sciences or subjects stressing a more skilled "personality" will encounter great difficulties unless the necessary material conditions are met. One of the major barriers to carrying out education, especially at the level of daily work in the schools. To introduce these reforms, the whole process from teacher as government official or messenger of the government to the forces of interest and concern in educational systems would have to be re-evaluated. Globalizing forces have set up an ongoing transformation of values and priorities and are impinging on traditional society and

culture. The marginal states, experiencing depression, along with the educational institutions, find it difficult to survive in the world of their own in the face of such impacts of globalization. The forces of modernity urge the educational institutions to modify their curricular framework, teaching, learning, assessment system, practical, etc. At the same time, the citizens belonging to the non-marginal countries find it hard to adjust to the elements of the modern world and with those from traditional society. Education, in such a context, has become a privileged vehicle to come out and confront the "otherness". The aim of the educational systems in the marginal and non-marginal societies is to seek a compromise or solutions with the tension between the past and the present so as to ensure continuity by selective adaptation to the change required to maintain that continuity. The role of Islamic education would be less endangered if the economic condition of such regions were to improve.

Innovations in Islamic Education

The future of Islamic education is already being shaped by various innovative approaches. The most obvious changes have been in the area of e-learning, with a large number of websites and platforms being established to provide Islamic courses, often to learners who are unable to access traditional studies in person. The e-learning industry is growing all the time and makes it easier for the numerous Muslim females and males who can study only part-time, or cannot study on campus, or cannot afford the burden of study fees. (Shofiyyah et al.2023) The principal selling point of such courses is their online availability, flexible learning environment, and the freedom that this offers. Besides acquiring in-depth knowledge, students can download e-books, participate in live and recorded lessons, attend downloadable video presentations, and access a variety of assessment techniques to prepare for assignments, mid-terms, and final exams.

There are also numerous online platforms available that utilize gamification techniques to help learners become more familiar with Islamic studies. Most of the providers mentioned in this chapter also have a strong internet presence and utilize search engine optimization and pay-per-click technology so that their online service listings appear first when you do an internet search. Other recent online platforms are offering paid teachers the chance to teach for them in return for a fixed monthly payment. (Ahmad et al.2024)There is a trend within madrasahs to utilize modern technology and an emphasis on using the internet and computers for the benefit of Muslim students. Online tuition is a flexible, innovative, and impressive methodology that has proved to be beneficial and enjoyable for students of all ages. However, there are challenges in utilizing the internet to aid teaching, mainly because the internet has so much negative information that is easily accessible. Teachers need to be skilled in using websites, but also in firewalls to protect from gambling, un-Islamic music, and sites promoting

atheism. Teachers also need to be aware of the possibility of students being lured away through chat room contacts. These new teaching methods can bring about inner ethical turmoil for some observant Muslims, as they violate the time-honored theological tradition of oral recitation of the Qur'an. There have been many fatwas against the internet, similar to those given by earlier religious leaders against television. Opposition to the use of technology in learning has been put forward by some ulama, and a full discussion of this subject would require a separate and comprehensive future research project. The overriding concept behind these new ideas is about providing students with a more interactive and engaging system by involving them more closely than the traditional systems. The future seems to be increasingly electronic and digital, and this ultimately negates the need to attend anywhere at all. It is possible that future generations will only visit the haramayn and academic institutions once and do the rest via the ether, as this phenomenon might be part of the signs of the Day of Judgment.

E-Learning and Online Platforms

A) Innovations in Learning and Pedagogy

E-Learning and Online Platforms. The idea of e-learning and online platforms seems to be a popular concept in modern Islamic religious studies, teacher training, leadership, and school management nowadays. Technology continues to make a difference in the way students, both adult and adolescent, access knowledge. With the existence of the internet and online posts, the acquisition of e-learning has been greatly expanded. (Yumnah, 2021)The package of standardized syllabus will make students and educators able to access equal information and sharpen their understanding. Moreover, it offers learning anywhere, anytime without time and location boundaries by using mobile phones. The online post can provide customized content to cater to different learning styles of the students for increasing their effectiveness. It also allows unlimited access to various content such as images, text, audio, video, and animation on a wide range of topics and educational subjects. A course or seminar can accommodate up to thousands of students — each potentially having separate machine and software settings. And throughout the working environment, an instructor can just replicate edited content or activities.

In addition, e-learning can be customized by the convergence of corrective feedback from online assessments, adaptive content based on the analysis of pre-assessment data, modifying the sequence of instructions based on learners' understanding of the experts' materials, and offering a variety of content most likely to appeal to various learning styles and preferences. Additionally, the architecture of a virtual classroom creates a very interactive learning environment. It can also preserve the community of learning and ongoing interaction among students that is essential to some Page No.702 collaborative teaching methodologies. (Sayed et al.2023) It also integrates the community dimension connected with learning online or through distance. A range of useful and productive tutors and learners' skills to be nurtured in a virtual classroom include cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, and physical skills. It opens the students up both to work opportunities offered by the new 'information society' and to the risks this society will certainly generate in terms of social exclusion. The ability to integrate with other students to work towards a common goal, to resolve conflicts of interest, and to integrate. As institutions begin to use more online resources, students will require services such as training in online learning. Institutions could use a dedicated online resource person who is available to work with students to develop their ICT abilities together with student academic support service staff. Integration between traditional face-to-face learning and e-learning depends on the development of policies and an educational strategy. The development of good e-learning leads to better access to and availability of quality resources regardless of where the learner is. And while there are challenges related to students' access to computers and the internet, the student who adapts well to e-learning extends not only his or her knowledge but, through global communities of inquiry and small groups, enriches the opportunity for learning for all. A lot of push needs to raise the quality of both learning and teaching in e-learning and create a training scheme that higher education involves, especially for early learners. (Alam et al. 2021)

B) Gamification and Interactive Learning

Games are not only for entertainment but also for learning experiences. Gamification is the use of game design principles in non-game contexts to improve users' motivation, education, and engagement. It can be seen that the elements of storytelling, challenge, competition, rewards, and fun in games could provide a pleasurable and enjoyable learning experience and motivation among students. (Luo, 2022)(Zadeja and Bushati2022) In Islam, personality development from a young age is the embodiment of Islamic character education. The approach to reading the Qur'an must be from the perspective of interactive learning approaches that can present hands-on experiences, education, and engagement. The study presented that using interactive multimedia applications in religious education influences students' cognitive and affective development as community and servant leaders. In the Malaysian context, there is a study on the integration of fun in Islamic teaching and another study on the application of multimedia in Islamic teaching, and one of the research projects is on the development of multimedia interactive applications. An experiment evaluated the effectiveness of an educational game application and demonstrated that the average students' performance results before and after using the educational game application showed significant differences. The use of Page No.703 educational games in learning is significantly more effective in increasing students' retention and performance as learners learn through multiple senses. Gamification can create a fun environment that plays an important role in students' engagement during the learning process. In previous studies, it was found that a collaborative relationship was significant with high overall engagement, including input, effort, absorption, and eustress. A study found that gamification elements increase meaningful learning experiences and perceived learning among students involved in the experiment. Some researchers have incorporated the use of technology in the teaching methodology of Islamic education, such as the application of mobile technology, multimedia, and virtual learning.

C) Integration of Technology in Madrasahs

In the backdrop of these portents, few crucial madrasahs are buckling up to the modern scenario while sustaining the oldest ones. One such competency is to integrate technology in madrasahs, as madrasahs are the backbone of the education system globally. Keeping in view the development of auxiliary schools in the shape of crescent schools and the English language madrasah, this action of borrowing from the West reveals a trend that has pervaded different aspects of education and even issues of identity. (Musa, 2022) This section will go through the level of adopting innovations in madrasah, the integration of ICT into the madrasahs, case studies for insights on ICT utilization at madrasahs, and its implications for the future of Islamic education.

The utilization of ICTs appeared mainly to illustrate that the madaris are not sacrosanct and immutable entities, but are adapting to the wave of change, within appropriate boundaries, in an attempt to meet the increased educational demand. However, those who bear in mind strategic technology training in skillful hands prefer to employ interactive software, which gives the teacher the privilege of accurate testing and remaining in contact with the parents. (Alam, 2023) Most entrance-level students are given a reading-readiness package that is entirely PowerPoint-based. The picture sets are well used to get the students to think and even vocalize the Urdu, English, Arabic, or Mandarin labels. The teachers find that such interactive activities get the pupils to think as they are interacting with a computer and are gaining words in a meaningful context.

Preservation of Traditional Islamic Education

In these preservations of tradition, certain aspects of Islamic education are considered to be essential and sacrosanct. First, great emphasis is placed on the necessary ongoing influence of classical texts in the curriculum and in boarding practices at schools. Secondly, the importance of living scholar visitation is given distinct attention, as it is understood to be an essential component in perpetuating authentic Islamic

teachings. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of memorization and oral tradition in the teaching process, as well as a general lack of attention towards formal examinations. This reflects an educational practice that exists historically, as both memorization in educational systems and the lack of emphasis on written examination are common features of traditional Muslim education.

The predominant concept underpinning these initiatives in Islamic education, often described as progressive traditionalism, begueaths initiatives for the restoration of the sacred framework of Islamic education as it was in the classical period and in postcolonial/non-colonized institutions; but at the same time, it is willing to embrace newer ideas. Most teachers in this category tend towards contradicting ideas about 'Western' versus 'Islamic' educational approaches, stating that they are the same at the core but differ in pedagogical methodology. (Amin, 2024) The progressive traditionalists often envisioned educational institutions that combined modern, Western-compatible secular and religious knowledge, excellence in which depends upon the educational quality of the school. While these schools exist primarily in the Muslim world, the principle is not unheard of in the West. For many Muslims with the financial means, these are the most attractive of the four types of schools, and among the most affordable and legally navigable types of schools for immigrants in countries that do not fund religious schools. These teachers and philosophers of Islamic education view traditional Islamic educational systems as much more rounded and effective, producing pupils with good character and sound knowledge of their faith and culture. **Role of Classical Texts and Scholars**

The classical texts of Islam are combined with the interpretations made by renowned scholars of Islam that are found in these texts. These texts are used at almost all Islamic educational institutions, especially madrasahs and Islamic State Universities. This means that the readings in those texts have become the basis of teaching and learning at the Islamic educational institution. In practice, reading together that is done almost every day is packed with greetings, Mawlid, and reading texts that have been agreed upon by Islamic leaders. (Abbas et al.2024)However, the kyai or ustadz present not only deliver the substance of the text but also the translation or paraphrase in Indonesian. When students have questions, especially related to the connection between the law where the text is disputed, or an explanation, ustadz invite discussions and together review the writings of the classical scholars of Islam about the texts that are read together.

These scholars also involve scholarly discussions, both those who agree and oppose these interpretations. This discussion brings a discourse that enriches the educational process with views from various directions. Thus, the entire Islamic education system studies and practices in an integrated way with the learning method of dialogue and

applies the environmental approach or humanities that are rational, empirical, and experienced in following the activities of society's life. In a rapidly globalizing and borderless world, traditional texts are equally used and read by private and community organizations, especially millennial Muslim youth who are part of Islamic modernism and religious rationalization. The interpretation of our ancestors who read the books of their age should represent the closest understanding of the essence of the "Islamic message." Incorporation of modern and dynamic interpretations of a classic text of Islam must be done carefully so that the eternal values that are still needed in humans are not eliminated while at the same time welcoming new ideas.

Importance of Memorization and Oral Tradition

Training students to memorize texts is an old practice in many cultures and religious traditions. In the Islamic context, the ability to memorize and orally transmit texts has historically been crucial for engaging with the revelation of sacred knowledge. This practice is very old, but still survives today to a greater or lesser degree in many Islamic educational institutions, especially those with a traditional curriculum (Qomar & Fitri, 2024). Oral transmission is a way of making the individual a participant in and guardian of that society's traditions and future. By repeating, learning, preserving, and passing on in a coherent form the "memorized" heritage, the custodians of this heritage can see themselves as participating in its construction. Memory binds social groups together and ensures their continuity and identity, not just from a practical point of view, but also in a spiritual sense, in that it fosters a consciousness of their social and human coherence. In Islamic religious learning today, memorization can be a spiritual process through which the learner is prepared and enabled to bear witness to the revelation. From a practical point of view, the aversion to or difficulty in memorizing has both led to the formation of specialized support structures in madrasas that address the specific needs of those coming from modern educational backgrounds and has heightened the perceived difficulties in professionalizing the call to integrate critical academic pedagogical approaches into the madrasa curriculum. The memorization of texts, stanzas, lineages, and stories has played a significant role in the transmission and preservation of Islamic teachings throughout history. From the local to the global, the concept of oral culture has been seen as the guarantor of the culture's continuity and authenticity in financial, legal, philosophical, spiritual, and other matters.

The Role of Islamic Schools in Contemporary Society

The only concrete source of explicitly moral teaching in Western society is the religious school's work with religious belief and moral conduct. Visitors are amazed by the strong moral sense of the children who pass through our schools. Teachers point out that the motivation for this work comes from the children themselves. Adherence to

high moral standards and belief in God, in a small town, means better business. They play it for all it is worth. Visiting teachers find that lessons in moral behavior and in the religious background of these codes are difficult to teach and are separated from school disciplines. The lessons sometimes include academic studies of ethical, religious, and aesthetic theory. This describes how our school system works. Students enter kindergarten programs where they learn skills they have to have in order to prosper in first grade, but they also learn songs, prayers, or toasts as the case may be. They learn respect for the religious customs of the other children. They are identified with their own religious/cultural group, more or less according to the wealth and status of their class.

This sophisticated approach to freedom of religion or belief within the school is the culmination of a long tradition of educational practice in Islam. Today's education for children who count and also know themselves to be Muslim takes children into the major economic and social system from an early age. The secular side of this education is to equip students with the skills to earn a living as productive members of society. (Abbas et al., 2021) The mastery of the market is the desire of most students. While our students compete in the present economic and social system, Islamic schools concentrate on preparing youth to live in a complex arrangement of markets. This system is not composed of one government-controlled national structure but of structurally connected world markets in which men and women carry on a variety of interactions in the quest for profit and/or for living standards; people are enjoined to do a complex set of things for the sake of other people, as a moral obligation. The close connection of market behavior and moral obligation in the Islamic view of the system is an important feature not to be overlooked in discussions of a national clear border system.

Conclusion

The need for a balanced approach has become clear from the preceding discussions. The contemporary world of education in Islam is not necessarily facing a binary choice between tradition and innovation. The most effective Islamic educational systems will rely on a blend of sometimes contradicting elements. In terms of pedagogies, this implies a hybrid approach, adapting methods based on context, faculty, and students, while focusing on holistic educational goals. These goals need not necessarily deviate fundamentally from those in previous times, which suggests that preserving a sense of tradition may ultimately guide the construction of models adaptable to the unique needs of the modern world.

This review essay has demonstrated some of the challenges of educational resilience in contemporary Islam. In keeping with the arguments discussed, there is value in the further study of these and similar themes. Continuing research will be required in order

to shed further light on these challenges and appropriate, sustainable solutions. It would also be very valuable for more detailed case studies to be carried out on a range of institutions—classical and contemporary, religious and secular—in non-Western, Western, and Muslim-majority settings. Such work could, for example, throw light on how institutions are modeling their curricula and methods with reference to the purest of Islamic ideals, or to a blend of social and technical goals as seen in earlier Islamic empires, or indeed with reference to different cultural horizons. Over and above innovations and new academic paradigms of interest to Islamic educators and the communities they serve, the role of technological change in driving new pedagogies and doctrines must also be analyzed systematically. As the end of belief now evident in the West is also trans local, this review essay urges stakeholders to openly steer Islamic educational systems towards change that is simultaneously inclusive and adaptive. By adopting a realistic, reflexive stance, policy discourse, educators, publics, and principles could all play a role in reimagining the prospective objects and goals of non-ideological faith education. Through such dialogue, it is possible that inclusive, global values, processes, and opportunities can indeed once more serve as the bedrock of truly progressive Islamic schooling.

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