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Islamic Education Curriculum: Conventional, Modern, Digital

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Abstract:
The curriculum is a crucial component of the education system as it serves as a guideline for determining the objectives, content, learning process, and evaluation of education. From an Islamic educational perspective, the curriculum is not only oriented toward mastery of knowledge but also aims to shape individuals with a balance between spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social aspects. Over time, the Islamic education curriculum has undergone a transformation from conventional, modern, and digital models. This article aims to analyze the development and comparison of conventional, modern, and digital Islamic education curricula. This research employed a library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The review examined various relevant written sources, such as books, scientific journal articles, and literature discussing the concept of the Islamic education curriculum, the development of the conventional curriculum, the transformation of the modern curriculum, and the digitalization of Islamic education. The study's findings indicate that the conventional Islamic education curriculum plays a crucial role in maintaining the tradition of Islamic scholarship and fostering moral character through a close relationship between educators and students. The modern curriculum develops through the integration of religious and general knowledge and the use of a more active learning approach. Meanwhile, the digital curriculum utilizes technology to expand access to learning, increase flexibility, and develop a more diverse range of learning resources. The article contributes a comparative framework and implications for balancing technological advancement with Islamic values. These developments demonstrate that the Islamic education curriculum is not a process of replacing one model with another, but rather a form of adaptation to changing times while maintaining fundamental Islamic values.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Education is an important aspect of building human quality, because through education a person develops intellectual, moral, and social abilities. In an education system, the curriculum holds a very important position because it guides the direction, objectives, content, learning process, and evaluation of education (Masysurah et al., 2021: 8). The curriculum is understood

not merely as a collection of subjects to be given to students, but also as a systematically designed set of learning experiences intended to achieve particular educational goals.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the curriculum has a broader scope than the general concept of curriculum. The Islamic education curriculum is oriented not only toward developing academic ability, but also toward shaping human beings who balance the spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social aspects. The learning process aims not only to transfer knowledge, but also to instill Islamic values so that students can understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings in daily life (Armizi et al., 2026: 6). Therefore, the Islamic education curriculum plays an important role in shaping people who are faithful, of noble character, and able to fulfill their role as servants of Allah and vicegerents on earth.

Along with social development and changing times, the Islamic education curriculum has undergone various transformations. In its early stage, the Islamic education curriculum was oriented toward transmitting Islamic sciences through traditional institutions such as the mosque, the kuttab, and the pesantren. Advances in science and the needs of society then encouraged curriculum reform through the integration of religious and general knowledge, which developed into a modern curriculum emphasizing student competence and more active learning methods. Subsequently, the development of information and communication technology brought an era of curriculum digitalization that opens opportunities for wider access, more diverse learning resources, and greater learning flexibility.

Theoretically, this discussion rests on the view of the curriculum as a systematic set of guidelines and learning experiences that determines the objectives, content, methods, and evaluation of education (Masysurah et al., 2021: 8). In Islamic education, this view is anchored in the concepts of tarbiyah, ta'lim, and ta'dib and in the aim of shaping human beings as 'abdullah and khalifatullah fil ardh (Armizi et al., 2026: 6–7). Within this framework, a curriculum model can be assessed on two levels: how it organizes orientation, learning resources, methods, and the roles of educators and students, and how far it keeps Islamic values as its foundation. Comparing the conventional, modern, and digital models is important for three reasons. First, each model emerged as a response to a different historical context and carries different strengths and limitations (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2; Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 150). Second, Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia rarely use one model in pure form, so a comparison helps them decide which elements to retain, integrate, or adapt. Third, the acceleration of digitalization raises the question of how technological advancement can be balanced with Islamic values (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 48; Daulay et al., 2026: 98).

The shift from the conventional to the modern and then the digital curriculum shows that Islamic education is not a static system, but one that continues to develop according to the needs of society without abandoning its foundation of Islamic values. However, previous studies tend to examine these models separately or in pairs, such as the development of the curriculum from classical to modern forms (Azhar, 2020), the integration of conventional and modern learning methods (Anjan et al., 2025), and the integration of digital technology into the Islamic education curriculum (Mafaizah et al., 2026; Amelia & Mufid, 2025). Among the literature reviewed in this study, works that place all three models side by side within one analytical framework, and that discuss what each model means for contemporary Islamic education, remain relatively few.

Therefore, the novelty of this article lies in three respects: (1) it compares the conventional, modern, and digital Islamic education curricula using the same five aspects, namely orientation, learning resources, learning methods, the role of educators, and the role of students; (2) it identifies the strengths and limitations of each model; and (3) it critically discusses the implications of each model for contemporary Islamic education, particularly in maintaining the balance between technological advancement and Islamic values. Accordingly, this article aims to

(1) explain the concept and objectives of the Islamic education curriculum, (2) describe the characteristics of the conventional, modern, and digital curricula, (3) compare the three models, and (4) analyze their implications for contemporary Islamic education and curriculum development.

Method (منهج)

This study uses a library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Library research is a research method carried out by collecting and reviewing various written sources relevant to the research topic (Siregar & Fahmi, 2023: 29), such as books, scientific journal articles, legislation, and literature related to the Islamic education curriculum.

The review focuses on literature discussing the concept and objectives of the Islamic education curriculum, the development of the conventional curriculum, the transformation toward the modern curriculum, and the development of the digital curriculum. Data were analyzed descriptively and analytically, namely by identifying, describing, and analyzing the concepts and characteristics of the Islamic education curriculum at each stage of its development. The results of the analysis are presented in the Results section and then interpreted in the Discussion section in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic education adapts to social change, scientific development, and advances in digital technology.

The data sources consist of books on curriculum development and Islamic education, scientific journal articles on the conventional, modern, and digital curricula, and legislation, namely Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. In total, 16 sources published between 2010 and 2026 were used. The sources were searched using keywords such as Islamic education curriculum, conventional curriculum, modern curriculum, digital curriculum, and the digitalization of Islamic education.

Sources were selected using four criteria. First, relevance: the source discusses at least one of the study's focuses, namely the concept and objectives of the Islamic education curriculum or the conventional, modern, or digital curriculum. Second, credibility: the source is a book from an academic publisher or an article from a scientific journal, or an official legal document, with an identifiable author, year, and publisher or journal. Third, currency: recent sources (2021–2026) were prioritized for the modern and digital developments, while earlier foundational works (Hasibuan, 2010; Dhofier, 2011) were retained to explain the concept of the curriculum and the traditional pesantren. Fourth, accessibility: the full text could be read so that arguments and page references could be verified. Sources that were popular opinion pieces, lacked bibliographic information, or did not discuss the curriculum in an Islamic education context were excluded.

The analysis proceeded in four steps. First, each source was read and noted according to its concept, objectives, characteristics, strengths, and limitations. Second, the notes were categorized into four themes: the concept and objectives of the curriculum and the conventional, modern, and digital curricula. Third, the three models were compared across five aspects, namely orientation, learning resources, learning methods, the role of educators, and the role of students, and their strengths and limitations were compared as well; the results are summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. Fourth, the comparison was interpreted in the Discussion section by relating it to the objectives of Islamic education. To maintain reliability, important claims were checked against more than one source wherever possible (for example, the limitations of the conventional model in Table 2), and every claim is traced to its source and page in the citations.

Concept and Objectives of the Islamic Education Curriculum

Result (نتائج)

The curriculum is understood as a main component of the education system that serves as a guide for determining the direction, objectives, content, learning process, and evaluation (Masysurah et al., 2021: 8). According to Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities (Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 1 paragraph 13). In modern educational thought, the curriculum is understood as all educational experiences designed systematically, including objectives, methods, learning environment, student experiences, and evaluation (Azhar, 2020: 107).

In Islamic education, the concept of curriculum is related to the term *manhaj*, namely a clear path taken by educators together with students in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve educational goals (Hasibuan, 2010: 42). Abdul Majid explains that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is a formulation of the objectives, subject matter, and evaluation of education that originates from Islamic teachings (Sari et al., 2024: 210). The Islamic education curriculum is also understood as all Islamic educational materials in the form of activities, knowledge, and experiences given deliberately and systematically to students (Masysurah et al., 2021: 10). Thus, the Islamic education curriculum is a system of learning guidelines based on Islamic values that aims to develop all human potential as a servant of Allah (*'abdullah*) and a vicegerent on earth.

The existence of the curriculum is an important part of education because through it an institution can determine the learning experiences given to students to achieve the established educational goals. The concept of *manhaj* shows that the curriculum in Islamic education is viewed not only as a learning planning document, but also as a direction for the educational journey that governs the comprehensive formation of human beings (Hasibuan, 2010: 42). The Islamic education curriculum contains not only religious knowledge, but also values, attitudes, and educational experiences directed at shaping students' behavior in accordance with Islamic principles. Therefore, this curriculum aims not only to produce academically competent students, but also individuals who are faithful, of noble character, and socially responsible.

The objectives of the Islamic education curriculum are developed from the main goal of Islamic education, namely shaping human beings who are balanced in the spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions so that they can understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in daily life (Armizi et al., 2026: 6). These objectives relate to the concept of the human being as *'abdullah* and *khalifatullah fil ardh* (Armizi et al., 2026: 6), as well as to the concepts of *tarbiyah* (gradual development of potential), *ta'lim* (development of knowledge), and *ta'dib* (formation of manners and ethical awareness) (Armizi et al., 2026: 7). Al-Attas, as cited by Syafei (2025: 66), explains that the main goal of Islamic education is to shape people who are faithful, devout, and of noble character so that they can make a positive contribution to society. This goal is in line with the national education goal that emphasizes shaping people who are both intelligent and of good character (Syafei, 2025: 66).

As a servant of Allah, a human being is directed to have faith, piety, and spiritual awareness in life, while as a vicegerent, a human being is required to have knowledge, skills, and the ability to benefit society and the surrounding environment. The three concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib* show that the goals of Islamic education are oriented not only toward mastering knowledge, but also toward forming values, character, and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings (Armizi et al., 2026: 7). Therefore, the success of the curriculum is measured not only by students' academic ability, but also by the extent to which Islamic values shape their behavior

and personality, including in instilling Islamic moral and ethical values so that students can live their personal and social lives on the basis of religious values (Syafei, 2025: 66).

Thus, the objectives of the Islamic education curriculum encompass two complementary dimensions. First, shaping pious individuals, namely people with faith, piety, and noble character. Second, shaping individuals who can benefit society by applying Islamic values in social life. The Islamic education curriculum is ultimately directed at producing a generation that is religious, of good character, knowledgeable, and able to adapt and contribute positively in a changing society.

The Conventional Islamic Education Curriculum

The conventional Islamic education curriculum is a traditional model of curriculum development oriented toward transmitting Islamic sciences and shaping students' personalities on the basis of religious values. Its development took place through traditional Islamic educational institutions such as the mosque, the *kuttab*, and the *pesantren*, which served as centers of learning and of the transmission of Islamic knowledge (Dhofier, 2011: 44). In this system, the curriculum is understood not only as a collection of learning materials, but also as a process of guiding human beings through interaction between educators and students in an environment grounded in Islamic values.

In its early stage, the conventional curriculum placed the religious sciences at the core of learning. The materials taught included the Qur'an, hadith, tafsir, fiqh, creed, ethics, Islamic history, and Arabic as a tool for understanding the sources of Islamic teachings, alongside *kalam*, Sufism, and other branches of knowledge in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Its main orientation was not only to provide theoretical religious understanding, but also to shape students' attitudes, morals, and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 148).

In practice, learning emphasized the direct relationship between teacher and student through the methods of *halaqah*, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and memorization. The teacher or *ulama* held a central position as the main source of knowledge, while students acted as recipients and developers of the knowledge given. This pattern has the advantage of maintaining depth of understanding of religious knowledge and building a spiritual relationship and role modeling between educators and students (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2).

In Indonesia, the development of this curriculum is largely seen in traditional (*salaf*) *pesantren*, which preserve the Islamic scholarly tradition through the teaching of classical texts (*kitab kuning*) on various religious disciplines. Over time, some *pesantren* and *madrasah* began to include several general subjects in their curricula, while still maintaining the basic values of Islamic education oriented toward character formation and religious understanding.

On the other hand, teacher-centered learning, methods that tend to be one-way, and the dominance of religious studies make this curriculum limited in responding to scientific developments, the needs of modern society, and technological progress (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 150). Nevertheless, the conventional curriculum retains an important position as the early foundation of Islamic education development, because it maintains the Islamic intellectual tradition, builds students' character, and preserves religious values. These limitations, together with social dynamics and scientific development, encouraged the transformation toward the modern curriculum.

The Modern Islamic Education Curriculum

Social change, scientific development, and the growing complexity of society encouraged reform of the Islamic education curriculum. The conventional curriculum, which emphasizes transmitting Islamic sciences and forming morals through a traditional approach, plays an

important role in maintaining the scholarly tradition, but changing times demand adjustments so that Islamic education can also answer the needs of modern society. Therefore, reform efforts emerged that led to the integration of religious knowledge, general knowledge, and skills relevant to the times.

The modern curriculum does not mean abandoning the basic values of Islam; rather, it develops the content, methods, and learning approaches to better suit students' needs. In this paradigm, religious knowledge and general knowledge are seen as two complementary fields (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 41). Learning resources have also become more diverse: learning no longer relies on religious literature alone, but also draws on scientific sources that support students' insight and competence, thereby forming students who are strong in religious understanding while also having academic ability and social skills.

The main shift is seen in the learning approach. Whereas the conventional model is educator-centered, the modern approach places students as active subjects, while educators act as facilitators who guide and develop their potential. Learning emphasizes not only memorization and comprehension, but also critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and the ability to connect Islamic values with the realities of life through discussion, research, problem-based learning, and contextual approaches (Anjan et al., 2025: 660).

In Indonesia, this transformation is seen in *madrasah* that, besides teaching the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, and creed, also include science, mathematics, technology, languages, and social studies. Modern *pesantren* have also developed more structured education systems through classes, formal curricula, and skills development for students (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 40). Beyond materials and methods, the orientation of educational goals has also changed: Islamic education is directed at shaping people with professional competence, adaptability, and concern for social issues, so that they balance spirituality, intellectuality, and social contribution (Anjan et al., 2025: 662).

Nevertheless, the development of the modern curriculum faces challenges, especially maintaining a balance between the needs of modernization and the basic values of Islam. The integration of general and religious knowledge must be done proportionally so that modernization does not reduce Islamic identity, while globalization requires Islamic educational institutions to keep innovating in order to produce competent graduates without losing Islamic character and moral values (Yusuf et al., 2025: 261). This transformation became the basis for the next stage, namely the digitalization of the Islamic education curriculum.

The Digital Islamic Education Curriculum

The development of information and communication technology has brought major changes in many areas of life, including Islamic education. Digital transformation encourages Islamic educational institutions to adjust their curricula to respond to changes in how people obtain, process, and disseminate information. Digitalization does not mean replacing Islamic basic values with technology, but using technology to widen access, improve the quality of learning, and strengthen the educational process in line with the needs of the times.

The digital Islamic education curriculum integrates digital technology in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. Technology is used not merely as a tool, but as part of an educational strategy to create learning experiences that are more flexible, interactive, and contextual (Mafaizah et al., 2026: 552). Learning resources that previously came largely from printed books and educators' explanations have grown to include online learning platforms, digital literature, and interactive learning media.

The roles of educators and students also change. Whereas in the conventional model the teacher is the main source of knowledge, in the digital environment the teacher acts as a facilitator

who guides students in seeking, understanding, and evaluating various sources of information. Students do not merely receive material, but are required to have digital literacy, think critically, and be responsible in using technology (Daulay et al., 2026: 98). In the context of Islamic education, these abilities must be accompanied by manners, ethics, and moral responsibility so that the use of technology accords with Islamic principles.

Its implementation in Indonesia is beginning to appear through the use of online learning (*e-learning*), Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive learning media, and digital learning resources as a form of adaptation by Islamic educational institutions. Digitalization also opens opportunities for the wider dissemination of Islamic sciences because students can access learning resources without being limited by space and time (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 45).

Besides these opportunities, there are several challenges. The main challenge is the readiness of human resources, especially educators' ability to use technology effectively. Easy access to digital information also creates the challenge of ensuring the validity of religious sources and preventing the spread of inaccurate religious information (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 48). Therefore, digitalization requires mastery of technology as well as the strengthening of digital literacy and Islamic ethical values.

Comparison of the Three Curriculum Models

The differences among the three curriculum models can be seen in terms of educational orientation, learning resources and methods, and the roles of educators and students, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of the Characteristics of the Conventional, Modern, and Digital Islamic Education Curricula

Aspect	Conventional	Modern	Digital
Orientation	Transmission of Islamic sciences and moral formation	Integration of religious and general knowledge and development of student competence	Integration of digital technology in learning while maintaining Islamic values
Learning resources	Teachers, classical texts, and traditional religious sources	Books, scientific literature, and more diverse learning resources	Digital platforms, *e-learning*, interactive media, and online learning resources
Learning methods	*Halaqah*, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and memorization	Discussion, contextual learning, problem solving, and active approaches	Online learning, interactive media, and use of digital technology
Role of educators	Main source of knowledge and moral guide	Facilitator and developer of the learning process	Digital facilitator who guides the wise use of technology
Role of students	Mostly receive and understand knowledge from educators	More active in developing knowledge and skills	Independent learners who can seek, evaluate, and use digital information

Table 1 shows a consistent shift in every aspect. Orientation moves from the transmission of Islamic sciences, to the integration of religious and general knowledge, and then to the integration of digital technology. Learning resources develop from teachers and classical texts into more diverse sources, and then digital platforms. The role of the educator shifts from main

source of knowledge to facilitator and digital facilitator, while students move from recipients of knowledge to active and independent learners.

In addition to characteristics, the literature review shows that each model has different strengths and limitations or challenges, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Strengths and Limitations or Challenges of Each Curriculum Model

Model	Strengths	Limitations / Challenges	References
Conventional	Maintains depth of religious understanding, the tradition of Islamic scholarship, and the spiritual relationship and role modeling between educators and students	Teacher-centered, methods tend to be one-way, and religious studies dominate, limiting responsiveness to science and technology	Tirtayasa, 2026: 2; Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 150
Modern	Integrates religious and general knowledge, places students as active subjects, and develops critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving	Balancing modernization with core Islamic values, keeping the integration of knowledge proportional, and innovating in the face of globalization	Anjan et al., 2025: 660; Yusuf et al., 2025: 261
Digital	Expands access beyond space and time, offers flexible and interactive learning, and provides more diverse learning resources	Readiness of human resources, validity of religious sources, risk of inaccurate religious information, and the need for digital literacy and ethics	Mafaizah et al., 2026: 552; Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 45, 48

Table 2 shows that the limitations of one model drive the emergence of the next, while the challenges of the modern and digital models relate to efforts to maintain the basic values of Islam amid changes in approach and technology.

Discussion (مناقشة)

Continuity of Values amid Changing Curriculum Models

The findings in Table 1 show that the differences among the three curriculum models lie mainly in approaches, methods, learning resources, and the roles of educators and students, not in their basic objectives. The goal of shaping people who are faithful, of good character, and who fulfill their role as servants of Allah and vicegerents (Armizi et al., 2026: 6) remains the foundation at every stage. Thus, the development of the Islamic education curriculum is better understood as a process of development and adaptation to changing times than as a total replacement of one model by another. The values of faith, character, and the formation of responsible human beings remain the axis, while changes occur mostly in learning strategies and media.

This continuity accords with the picture of the Islamic education curriculum as a system of learning guidelines based on Islamic values that aims to develop all human potential (Masysurah et al., 2021: 10). As long as these objectives are maintained, changes in content, methods, and media do not mean the loss of Islamic education's identity. Each model has its own strengths and challenges (Table 2), so each should be understood as a response to a different historical context, not as an absolutely superior model.

From Conventional to Modern: Preserving Depth, Expanding Competence

The limitations of the conventional curriculum in responding to science and the needs of society (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 150) became the main driver of reform. The modern curriculum answers them through the integration of religious and general knowledge and through the shift of the educator's role from main source of knowledge to facilitator (Anjan et al., 2025: 660). However, as seen in Table 2, the strengths of the conventional model, namely depth of religious understanding, spiritual relationships, and role modeling (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2), are aspects that need to be preserved in reform. Therefore, the challenge of modernization is not merely adding general subjects, but ensuring that integration is carried out proportionally so that Islamic identity is not diminished (Yusuf et al., 2025: 261). Pesantren and madrasah that combine formal curricula with religious education (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 40) show that reform can proceed alongside the preservation of tradition.

The change in the educator's role from main source of knowledge to facilitator also needs to be read carefully. In the conventional model, the teacher's central position concerns not only the transmission of knowledge, but also moral guidance and role modeling (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2). Reform that shifts the educator's role to facilitator should keep this moral guidance function, so that active learning does not weaken the character formation that is at the core of Islamic education's goals.

Digitalization as Expansion, Not Replacement

The digital curriculum continues the shift in roles that began in the modern model: the educator as facilitator and the student as an active learner. Technology expands access and learning flexibility (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 45), but does not change the main goal of Islamic education; what changes is the way the goal is achieved. At the same time, easy access to information demands educator readiness and the ability to ensure the validity of religious sources (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 48). Therefore, digitalization requires more than mastery of technology; it must be accompanied by strengthened digital literacy and Islamic values of manners and ethics in its use (Daulay et al., 2026: 98).

Thus, the digital curriculum can be seen as a further development of the modern curriculum that uses technology to strengthen the educational process. Digitalization does not change the goal of Islamic education to shape people who are faithful, knowledgeable, and of good character, but widens the ways of achieving that goal through learning that is more innovative, flexible, and suited to the characteristics of society in the digital era.

Critical Comparison of the Three Models

A critical reading of Table 1 and Table 2 shows that the three models differ not only in what they do but also in where they locate educational authority and what each risks losing. In the conventional model, authority lies in the educator and the classical text, which secures depth of understanding and role modeling (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2) but also makes learning one-way and slow to respond to science and technology (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 150). The modern model shifts authority toward the learner's active engagement and the integration of knowledge (Anjan et al., 2025: 660), yet integration can remain superficial if it only adds general subjects without a coherent value framework (Yusuf et al., 2025: 261). The digital model extends access beyond space and time (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 45), but it disperses authority across platforms and sources whose validity cannot be assumed (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 48).

Seen in this way, the strength of each model answers the weakness of another. The depth and moral guidance of the conventional model counterbalance the dispersion of authority in the digital model; the active learning and integration of the modern model address the passivity of conventional learning; and the access and flexibility of the digital model address the limited reach

of the earlier models. At the same time, the comparison shows that none of the three is sufficient on its own. The literature reviewed describes the models largely as stages, but in institutional practice they overlap (Dhofier, 2011: 44; Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 40). The more productive question is therefore not which model is best, but which combination of elements best serves the objectives, learners, and readiness of a given institution. This also qualifies the stage-like sequence used in this article: the movement from conventional to digital is a widening of options, not a linear progress in which earlier models become obsolete.

Implications of Each Model for Contemporary Islamic Education

For the conventional model, the implication is that moral guidance, the close relationship between educators and students, and depth in studying classical texts remain valuable assets for contemporary Islamic education, especially when character formation is easily overshadowed by the abundance of information. What needs to be reconsidered is the way of delivery: one-way methods should be complemented by dialogue and contextual application so that depth of understanding can also respond to contemporary issues (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 150).

For the modern model, the implication is that integration must be conceptual and not merely administrative. Religious and general knowledge should be connected through shared values and objectives so that competence, critical thinking, and creativity strengthen rather than dilute Islamic identity (Yusuf et al., 2025: 261). This requires educators who are able to facilitate active learning while keeping their function as moral guides (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2).

For the digital model, the implication is that access and flexibility are meaningful only when supported by educator readiness, mechanisms for verifying religious sources, and digital literacy grounded in Islamic ethics (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 48; Daulay et al., 2026: 98). Without these, wider access may also widen exposure to inaccurate religious information.

Maintaining the balance between technological advancement and Islamic values can therefore be understood through three principles drawn from this discussion. First, technology is a means, not an objective: the objective remains the formation of people who are faithful, knowledgeable, and of good character (Armizi et al., 2026: 6), and technology is chosen and evaluated by how well it serves that objective. Second, the educator remains the moral reference: digital facilitation should not replace role modeling and moral guidance (Tirtayasa, 2026: 2). Third, learners need critical digital literacy anchored in Islamic ethics so that they can assess the validity of the religious information they encounter (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 48; Daulay et al., 2026: 98). When these principles are applied, technological advancement can strengthen, rather than weaken, the values that give the Islamic education curriculum its identity.

Relevance for Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia

The three curriculum models do not appear separately in the practice of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Salaf pesantren teaching kitab kuning represent the strength of the conventional tradition (Dhofier, 2011: 44), while madrasah and modern pesantren that use classes and formal curricula show the integration of religious and general knowledge (Erawati & Lestari, 2024: 40). At the same time, the use of e-learning and LMS shows that Islamic educational institutions are also beginning to adapt to digital technology (Amelia & Mufid, 2025: 45). This condition shows that a single institution can combine elements of all three models according to its needs and readiness.

For Islamic educational institutions, this means that the choice of curriculum is not a choice between tradition and reform. Institutions can maintain the strengths of tradition in moral guidance and depth of knowledge, develop active learning and the integration of knowledge, and use technology to widen access. The challenges faced, namely maintaining Islamic identity, educator readiness, and the validity of religious sources (Yusuf et al., 2025: 261; Amelia & Mufid,

2025: 48), need to be considered at every step of development so that adaptation does not sacrifice the basic values of Islamic education.

Implications for Islamic Education Curriculum Development

Based on this discussion, the Islamic education curriculum ideally combines three elements: the values and scholarly tradition of the conventional model (depth of understanding, manners, and role modeling), the modern approach (integration of knowledge and active learning), and digital technology (access and flexibility), with strengthened digital literacy and Islamic ethics. The three models are not opposed to one another, but are complementary stages. Its development should also consider the fit among the objectives of Islamic education, students' characteristics, level of psychological development, and abilities so that the educational process runs effectively.

Conclusion (خاتمة)

The Islamic education curriculum functions not only as a guide for learning, but also as a means of comprehensively shaping human beings on the basis of Islamic values, namely students who are faithful, of noble character, knowledgeable, and socially responsible as servants of Allah and vicegerents on earth.

In brief, the three models differ in approach but share the same foundation of Islamic values. The conventional curriculum preserves the scholarly tradition, character formation, and the educator–student relationship, but is limited in responsiveness. The modern curriculum integrates religious and general knowledge and encourages active learning, but must keep the integration proportional. The digital curriculum widens access and flexibility, but requires educator readiness, the validity of religious sources, and digital literacy and ethics.

Thus, the conventional, modern, and digital Islamic education curricula are not forms that replace one another, but complementary stages of development. The Islamic education curriculum of the future needs to maintain the fundamental values of Islam while remaining open to educational innovation and technology so that it stays adaptive, relevant, and able to meet the educational needs of the present and the future.

Theoretically, this article contributes a comparative framework that examines the three models through the same five aspects and through their strengths and limitations, and it argues that the models are overlapping and complementary rather than sequential replacements, with continuity of values as their axis. Practically, it offers Islamic educational institutions a basis for deciding which elements to retain, integrate, or adapt, and three principles for balancing technology with Islamic values: technology as a means, the educator as moral reference, and digital literacy grounded in Islamic ethics.

For future curriculum development, it is recommended that (1) curriculum developers and policymakers take the objectives of Islamic education as the reference and design the integration of religious and general knowledge conceptually, not merely by adding subjects; (2) institutions strengthen educator readiness through training in digital pedagogy and moral mentoring, and embed digital literacy, Islamic ethics, and guidelines for verifying religious sources in the curriculum; and (3) institutions adopt the three models selectively according to their objectives, learners, and resources, instead of replacing one model entirely with another.

As a library study, the findings of this article depend on the literature reviewed. Therefore, further empirical research in pesantren, madrasah, and other Islamic educational institutions is needed to see how the three curriculum models are combined and applied in practice, and how they affect learning outcomes and character formation.

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