

Exploring the Direction of Islamic Education Amidst Curriculum Changes and the Onslaught of AI

Badrun¹, Samsudin², Junaidin³

¹²³ STIT Sunan Giri Bima – Indonesia

Corresponding Author: badrunmuhammad21@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the methods and processes for exploring the direction of Islamic education goals amidst curriculum changes and the onslaught of AI. This study uses a library research approach. Library research is a study used to collect information and data using various materials available in libraries, such as documents, books, magazines, and historical stories. The results of the study indicate that Islamic education is able to adapt to current developments and technological advances. The presence of AI and curriculum changes does not cause Islamic education to lose its essence and remains steadfast in upholding its Islamic values. Curriculum changes aim to find the right reference as a foundation for all education, and Islamic education remains able to adapt to all existing changes. The existence of AI can help make it easier for teachers and students to complete school assignments quickly and efficiently, without requiring high costs, providing new innovations, providing 24-hour service, and providing consistent answers. However, it does not rule out the possibility that AI also has disadvantages such as unemployment, privacy violations, data security, and technological dependence.

Keywords: Islamic education, curriculum, *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) onslaught.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, so Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping a generation of faith, knowledge, and noble character¹. To achieve these goals, a curriculum is needed to guide the learning process. Currently, the national curriculum is *the 2013 Curriculum*, designed to strengthen students' character education². However, the reality on the ground shows various worrying character problems among the younger generation. Low learning discipline, increasing rates of school truancy, rampant cheating, brawls between students, the formation of motorcycle gangs that disturb the community, and cases of violence (bullying) in schools are evidence that character education still needs serious strengthening³.

From an Islamic educational perspective, the curriculum is known as *manhaj*, meaning "a clear path" for educators and students to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes⁴. Previous

¹ Abdul Rasyid, "Education in Modern Muslim Countries," *Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal* 2, no. 2 (2024): 70–80, <http://ejournal.lumbungpare.org/index.php/jim/article/view/195>.

² Ririn Agustina and Dea Mustika, "Teachers' Perceptions of the Change from the 2013 Curriculum to the Independent Curriculum," *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood* 6, no. 3 (2023): 359–64, <https://aulad.org/aulad/article/view/540>.

³ Otang Kurniaman, Eddy Noviana, and Elementary School, "Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum in Improving Skills, Attitudes, and Knowledge," *Primary: Journal of Elementary School Teacher Education* 6, no. 2 (2017): 389–96.

⁴ Omar Mohammad Al-Toumy A-Syaibany, "Philosophy of Islamic Education, (Trans. Hassan Langgulang)," *Jakarta: Bulan Bintang* 478 (1984): 90.

research has shown that Islamic education has the ability to adapt to curriculum changes as long as Islamic values remain its primary foundation. However, technological developments, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), are beginning to have a significant impact on the world of education ⁵.

A recent statement from Julian Kelly, Director of Hardware at Google Quantum AI, asserted that in the next five years, the world will experience major changes due to advances in AI and quantum computers, which are capable of performing complex calculations and generating new types of data ⁶. Similarly, Bill Gates stated that advances in AI have the potential to replace humans in most jobs, including the role of manual teachers. Virtual tutors, personalized learning analytics, and broad access to knowledge are predicted to become an integral part of the education system ⁷.

In other words, the world is entering a new era that Gates called “free intelligence” in an interview last month with Harvard University professor and happiness expert Arthur Brooks. The result is rapid advances in AI-powered technologies that are easily accessible and touching nearly every aspect of our lives, Gates said, from better medicines and diagnostics to widely available AI tutors and virtual assistants. “It’s profound and even a little scary because it’s happening so fast, and there’s no upper limit,” Gates told Brooks ⁸.

However, research specifically examining the relationship between changes in Islamic education curricula and the onslaught of AI, particularly in the context of strengthening character and spirituality, remains very limited. This represents a gap in this research. The key question is how can Islamic education maintain the essence of its values amidst rapid curriculum changes and the development of AI? What is the appropriate integration strategy so that AI can support, rather than replace, the Islamic education process?

To answer these questions, this study employed a library research approach, reviewing relevant literature from books, scientific articles, official documents, and research reports. The analysis focused on finding adaptation strategies for Islamic education that remain grounded in Islamic values while wisely utilizing developments in AI. The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between changes in the Islamic education curriculum and developments in AI, identify challenges and opportunities for its implementation, and formulate adaptation strategies to ensure Islamic education remains relevant and competitive in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a library research approach *with* a qualitative descriptive design. The research was conducted during the period January–July 2025, utilizing various relevant literature sources accessible through physical libraries, digital libraries, and accredited online databases. The selection of literature studies was based on the research objectives, which

⁵ Purwadhi Purwadhi, “Curriculum Development in 21st Century Learning,” *Mimbar Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2019): 103–12, <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/mimbardik/article/view/22201>.

⁶ Intan Rakhmayanti Dewi, “The World Will Change Totally in 5 Years, Google Boss Reveals His Leaks,” CNBC Indonesia, March 27, 2025, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/tech/20250327160429-37-622334/dunia-berubah-total-5-tahun-lagi-bos-google-ungkap-bocorannya>.

⁷ Tom Huddleston Jr, “Bill Gates: Within 10 Years, AI Will Replace Many Doctors and Teachers—Humans Won’t Be Needed for Most Things,” CNBC, March 26, 2025, <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/03/26/bill-gates-on-ai-humans-wont-be-needed-for-most-things.html>.

⁸ Mustafa Suleyman, *The Coming Wave: Technology, Power, and the Twenty-First Century's Greatest Dilemma* (Crown, 2023).

emphasize conceptual analysis and synthesis of knowledge from various scientific sources to answer the research questions.⁹

The research was conducted virtually in academic repositories and databases, including Google Scholar, DOAJ, and university repositories, as well as credible technology news sources such as CNBC Indonesia and CNBC International. Primary data sources included textbooks, indexed journal articles, proceedings, education policy documents, and official news related to the development of *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) and Islamic education. The main instrument in this study was a *spreadsheet- based data recording sheet designed to record literature identity, content summaries, keywords, relevant citations, and initial interpretations*. *Reference manager* software (Zotero) was also used to ensure citation consistency and facilitate bibliography management.

The research stages began with: (1) Identification of keywords such as *Islamic education*, *2013 curriculum*, *independent curriculum*, *character education*, and *artificial intelligence*; (2) Literature search in academic databases and trusted sources; (3) Literature selection based on inclusion criteria (relevant, recent, and has academic credibility) and exclusion (irrelevant or unverified); and (4) Systematic data recording. Data analysis was carried out in four stages. First, data reduction to filter information that is in accordance with the research focus. Second, grouping data into thematic categories such as curriculum changes, challenges in Islamic education, opportunities for utilizing AI, and its ethical implications. Third, data synthesis by connecting findings from various sources to find patterns and relationships between concepts. Fourth, inductive conclusions were drawn that combine theoretical data with the context of the development of Islamic education in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Education

The global community knows education as "*education*" in English, which when translated into Indonesian means "putting something in"¹⁰. In the Western world, *education* is also known as "*instruction*" and "*training*." In the Eastern world, particularly in Arabic, education has various other names, such as: *At-tarbiyah*, *at- ta'dib*, *at-ta'lim*, *at-tazkiyyah*, and others. Although it has many other names, education is recognized as having three terms as a result of the first international conference on education held in Jeddah in 1977, namely: "*ta'dib*, *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*"¹¹.

Literally, it means peace, submission, safety, and cleanliness. Etymologically, it means submission. Sayyid Qutb defines the term as submission, obedience, compliance, and following orders¹². Terminologically, as expressed by Sayyid Qutb, it has a meaning not only limited to the two sentences of the shahada, but also its meaning and essence must be deepened as well, and not just a justification in the heart regarding God, the unseen, and so on, but also must be accompanied by real practice.

⁹ Wahyudin Darmalaksana, "Qualitative Research Methods of Literature Study and Field Study," *Pre-Print Digital Library UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung*, Library Center UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2020, 45, <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/32855>.

¹⁰ Hasan Langgulung, *Principles of Islamic Education* (Language and Library Council, 1991).

¹¹ Dedi Wahyudi and Khotijah Khotijah, "Islamic Education 4.0: A Revolution in Islamic Education," *Idea Press* Yogyakarta, 2021, 33–35, http://repository.metrouniv.ac.id/id/eprint/7813/1/Islamic_Education_4_0_sebuah_Revolusi_Pe.pdf.

¹² Mulyadi Mulyadi, "The Concept of Islam in the Qur'an: Textual and Contextual Perspectives," *Islamuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 11 (2018): 35.

Understanding the Education Curriculum

The curriculum is all the plans included in the educational process, and it can also be defined as all the efforts of an educational institution to achieve agreed-upon goals. It is an educational plan that summarizes all the learning experiences offered to students. Curriculums are developed by curriculum trainers/experts, science experts, educators, educational institutions, business owners, and other members of the community ¹³.

Based on the above explanation, the curriculum is part of religious education and serves as a means to achieve its goals. This means that to achieve the goals of religious education (education), a curriculum is needed that is appropriate to the educational objectives, age level, child psychological development, and student skills .

Manzur said that in Arabic, the curriculum is called *al-manhaj*, which according to the *Arabic dictionary* means *al-thariq al-wadhih* or the bright path. Hamdani explained that the word *manhaj* (curriculum) refers to a set of learning materials studied by students, which will be tested at the end of the academic year ¹⁴.

Understanding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI), as the acronym AI stands for , is a technology designed to enable computer systems to mimic human intellectual abilities. The AI used in this study is... The excessive use of AI in education has led educators and students to rely entirely on AI without due diligence.

For example, the advent of *robot vacuum cleaners* has become a modern, practical cleaning tool. These *robot vacuums* can clean dusty and dirty areas by automatically sucking up dust and dirt, and they can reach corners of rooms without human intervention.¹⁵

One type of AI that is widely used by the younger generation in their daily lives is the existence of *intelligent tutoring systems* (ITS), *personalized learning* , *virtual mentors*, *smart content* , virtual assistants such as ChatGPT, *Google Assistant*, *Siri*, *Alexa*, *Bixby*, *Aligenie*, *Cortana* and other *online assistance platforms* .

Advantages of using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

With the rapid development of *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) in recent years, this technology has become an integral part of business and everyday life. AI is now used to simplify human activities, from interacting with virtual assistants to processing complex data. Its main advantages include the ability to reduce work time, save costs, maintain consistent results, and provide non-stop 24/7 service ¹⁶. AI is also able to increase efficiency and productivity, automate various tasks such as data entry and analysis, and offer personalized services based on user preferences and behavior ¹⁷. Moreover, AI is a driving force for innovation in various

¹³ Ananta Pramayshela, Erma Yanti Tanjung, and Laila Qadaria, "The Nature of the Curriculum in the Perspective of Islamic Educational Philosophy," *Jurnal Medika Nusantara* 1, no. 3 (2023): 17–30, <https://jurnal.stikeskesdam4dip.ac.id/index.php/Medika/article/view/357>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Firdaus Ansori, "Teachers' Pedagogical Competence in Arabic Language Learning Innovation," *Al-Miskawaih: Journal of Science Education* 1, no. 2 (2022): 273–96, <https://journal.centrism.or.id/index.php/mijose/article/view/174>.

¹⁵ Dewa Gede Keramas Pradnyana, "The Sophisticated AI, Between Benefits and Threats, Maintaining a Space for Reasoning with Young Scholars of SMP Negeri 1 Bangli," *Metta: Jurnal Ilmu Multidisiplin* 4, no. 1 (2024): 24.

¹⁶ Kompas Cyber Media, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Artificial Intelligence You Need to Know," KOMPAS.com, November 26, 2023, <https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2023/11/26/15310017/kelebihan-dan-kekurangan-artificial-intelligence-yang-perlu-diketahui->.

¹⁷ Evelyn Sugianto, Efata Euaggelia, and Laksmi Kusuma Wardani, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Helping the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Interior Design Process," *International Conference on Art,*

fields, including helping with early disease detection in the medical world. In the customer service sector, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants are able to provide fast, accurate, and tailored responses to user needs in real-time ¹⁸.

The Threat of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Humans

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology not only bring benefits but also pose various threats to human life. One worrying impact is rising unemployment due to the replacement of many human roles by machines and robots, which has the potential to trigger significant social change. Furthermore, AI can pose a serious threat to privacy and data security due to its ability to track, collect, and analyze information on a large scale from various sources, from social media to sensor devices ¹⁹.

Another risk is bias in AI systems resulting from incomplete or inaccurate data, which could affect the objectivity and fairness of the output ²⁰. Excessive use of AI also has the potential to lead to technological dependency, which can weaken critical thinking skills, creativity, and self-motivation. Furthermore, the use of AI for military, political, or economic purposes could threaten national security in various countries.

An Analysis of the Goals of Islamic Education Amidst Curriculum Changes and the Onslaught of AI

Education in the 21st century must adapt to changing times, namely by mastering the development of information and communication technology that has brought about major changes due to globalization, as well as the demands and expectations of society regarding education. More specifically, in Islamic education, so that it is able to face a series of challenges that require creativity, innovation, and careful and precise adaptation. As stated by Rotterdam & Willingham in Baroya, noting that a student's success depends on 21st-century skills, so students must learn to possess them ²¹.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, abbreviated as P21, is an organization focused on advocating for 21st-century readiness for students worldwide. P21 aims to ensure that learners have the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to succeed in an increasingly global and digitally connected world. ²².

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills identifies 21st-century skills as: 1) Learning and Innovation Skills. These include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (often referred to as the "4Cs"). 2) Technology, Media, and Information Skills. These include digital literacy, the ability to use technology, and the ability to critically evaluate information. 3) Life and Career Skills. These include flexibility, initiative, productivity, leadership, and

Design, Education and Cultural Studies (ICADECS) 6, no. 1 (2024), <http://conference.um.ac.id/index.php/icadecs/article/view/9471>.

¹⁸ Ratna Dwi Natasya, "Implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Modern Technology," *KOMTEKS* 2, no. 1 (2023), <https://ejournal.unipas.ac.id/index.php/Komteks/article/view/1563>.

¹⁹ Misnawati Misnawati, "ChatGPT: Benefits, Risks, and Wise Use in the Era of Artificial Intelligence," *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Education, Language, Literature, Arts, and Culture* 2, no. 1 (2023): 54–67.

²⁰ Siti Masrichah, "Threats and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI)," *Khatulistiwa: Journal of Education and Social Humanities* 3, no. 3 (2023): 84–101.

²¹ Epi Hifmi Baroya, "21st Century Learning Strategies," *As-Salam: Scientific Journal of Islamic Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2018): 101–15, <http://journal.stai-yamisa.ac.id/index.php/assalam/article/download/28/19>.

²² Mutadi Widayaiswara, "21st Century Learning," *Higher Order Thinking Skills*, 2021, <https://www.geocities.ws/mrteddy/pembabad21.html>.

social awareness. 4) Content Knowledge. This includes foundational knowledge in a variety of subjects and fields of study ²³.

Education in Indonesia has been designed to adapt to the era of globalization. Therefore, education in this era of globalization, as we know it today, is called the digital age and *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) education. Technology-based education first emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, which occurred several years ago. At that time, education began to shift toward *online learning*, which became the basis for an essential curriculum focused on core material relevant to students. After social conditions began to stabilize and recover, the education system was designed to serve as the foundation for the development of the Merdeka curriculum ²⁴.

Curriculum design is crucial because it serves as a guide for implementing the teaching and learning process. Government policy, as outlined in the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 56 of 2022, regulates guidelines for curriculum implementation, including the Independent Curriculum, in the context of post-pandemic learning recovery ²⁵.

Adapting Islamic education to curriculum changes and the onslaught of AI to remain relevant in the digital era.

The current global context demands speed, accuracy, and rapid change in all aspects, including education. If we are slow to adapt to digital transformation, we risk being left behind academically and technically, threatening the connection and appeal of Islamic educational institutions to a younger generation who has come to live and breathe technology ²⁶.

Islamic education in the digital era, AI offers various benefits, such as creating applications that help students in the process of memorizing the Al-Qur'an, this application provides an understanding of recitation, makhraj letters, and reading fluency ²⁷. The rapid flow of information, new generation learning styles, and demands for global efficiency create both challenges and great opportunities. But it will not affect the Islamic education system, with the noble mission of forming human beings who believe in knowledge and have noble morals.

The goal of designing *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) is to implement computer systems that assist humans in simplifying their work, enabling them to process data quickly and complexly. Therefore, *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) can adapt to Islamic education and curriculum changes to accommodate various technologies in the process, thus creating *soft skills-based*, creative, and innovative learning, while maintaining the values and essence of Islamic teachings.

Challenges faced in integrating AI technology into the Islamic Education curriculum

²³ Ida Bagus Putu Arnyana, "Learning to Improve 4c Competencies (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking) to Welcome the 21st Century Era," *Proceedings: National Conference on Mathematics and Science, Universitas PGRI Banyuwangi* 1, no. 1 (2019): i–xiii, <https://ejournal.unibabwi.ac.id/index.php/knmipa/article/view/829>.

²⁴ Muhammad Wildan Firmansyah Putra, Risky Budi Putra Mahardika, and Maulana Syahputra, "Digitalization of Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Social Sciences (SNIIS)* 1 (2022): 715–23, <https://proceeding.unesa.ac.id/index.php/sniis/article/download/127/112>.

²⁵ Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Decree No. 56 Concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation, 2022.

²⁶ Firmansah Kobandaha et al., "Artificial Intelligence-Based Islamic Education Management in the Digital Era: A Literature Review," *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business* 4, no. 1 (2025): 576–82, <http://journal.ilmudata.co.id/index.php/RIGGS/article/view/822>.

²⁷ Siti Nurjanah, "AI in Islamic Education: Strengthening or Replacing the Role of Teachers?," *IAINU Tuban*, January 16, 2025, <https://iainutuban.ac.id/2025/01/16/ai-dalam-pendidikan-islam-memperkuat-atau-menggantikan-peran-guru/>.

Maintaining the essence and values of Islam amidst the onslaught of global culture and free digital content is a significant challenge. AI can be a strategic tool for adapting and disseminating Islamic understanding in a broader, more engaging, and contemporary way²⁸. Therefore, the Islamic education system benefits from AI, which connects students with study materials on the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, or Islamic history that align with their interests and level of understanding. This creates a more meaningful and rewarding learning experience²⁹.

Technology can facilitate access, accelerate information acquisition, and broaden learning horizons. However, these are tools, not replacements. Children need more than just data; they need direction. This is where the teacher's role is central, providing warmth, understanding context, and guiding the learning process with heart. Education isn't just about what's learned, but how and for whom³⁰.

No app or artificial intelligence gadget can replace the human touch that recognizes potential, embraces failure, and fosters character. A teacher knows when to encourage, listen, and create a safe space for children to ask questions, even make mistakes, without fear of judgment. Technology can only answer, but teachers can guide them appropriately³¹.

Amidst technological change, AI is also striving to provide solutions as a shield for character education and noble morals, the core of Islamic education. Therefore, teachers in educational institutions can provide learning facilities such as computers, projectors, *classrooms*, and other facilities within the educational unit. This allows teachers to adapt and implement digital technology and *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) in teaching and learning activities³².

For those without internet access, teachers need to implement simple and clear learning media. Therefore, general and religious educational institutions must provide computer equipment and conduct training to improve their skills in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Therefore, AI-based Islamic education in the digital age is a necessity, not just an option. This is a proactive response to ensure Islamic education remains relevant.

CONCLUSION

Islamic education literally means peace, submission, safety, and purity. Etymologically, it means submission. Sayyid Qutb defined the term as submission, obedience, compliance, and following orders. The existence of AI and curriculum changes does not make Islamic education lose its essence and remains steadfast in its Islamic values. The curriculum is an educational plan that summarizes all learning experiences offered to school students. The curriculum is

²⁸ Kobandaha et al., "Artificial Intelligence-Based Islamic Education Management in the Digital Era: A Literature Review."

²⁹ Muhammad Fatkhul Hajri, "Islamic Education in the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century," *Al-Mikraj Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* (E-ISSN 2745-4584) 4, no. 1 (2023): 33–41, <https://ejournal.insuriponorogo.ac.id/index.php/almikraj/article/view/3006>.

³⁰ Baharuddin Baharuddin and Hatta Hatta, "Transformation of Educational Management: Integration of Technology and Innovation in Improving Learning Effectiveness," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajar (JRPP)* 7, no. 3 (2024): 7355–544.

³¹ Nia Nurmadina, "With AI, Teachers Will Still Be Heroes in the World of Education - Kompasiana.Com," Kompasiana, June 18, 2025, <https://www.kompasiana.com/nianurmadina9546/68501284c925c47b973c6585/adanya-ai-guru-tetap-akan-menjadi-pahlawan-di-dunia-pendidikan>.

³² Has, "TEACHER AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE AI ERA: INSTRUMENTING CHARACTER AMIDST TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT," Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, East Lampung Regency, 2024, <https://kemenaglampungtimur.id/berita/detail/1146/guru-dan-tantangan-era-ai-menanamkan-karakter-di-tengah-kemajuan-teknologi>.

developed by trainers/curriculum experts, scientific experts, educators, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, and other members of the community . *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) is artificial intelligence, as the abbreviation AI stands for *Artificial Intelligence* . AI is a technology designed to create computer systems capable of mimicking human intellectual abilities. AI helps human work quickly and efficiently, is inexpensive, provides new innovations, provides 24-hour service, and provides consistent answers. However, it does not rule out the possibility of AI also having disadvantages such as unemployment, privacy violations, data security, and technological dependence. Every problem must have a solution, and so does Islamic education, which is between curriculum changes and the onslaught of AI technology.

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