

# Pengertian: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia (PJPI)

E-ISSN: 2986-9528 | P-ISSN: 2986-9439

Website <https://ejournal.lapad.id/index.php/pjpi>

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Vol. 4, No. 1, 2026, 343-372  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61930/pjpi.v4i1>

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## Islamic Education and Social Transformation: A Sociological Analysis of Faith-Based Education in Indonesia

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### Abstract:

*Islamic education in Indonesia operates within a highly plural society and continues to adapt to rapid social change. Despite its traditional roots, pesantren and madrasah remain central to shaping moral formation, communal resilience, and inclusive religious identity. This study examines how Islamic education contributes to social transformation and what socio-theological values emerge from faith-based practice. Using qualitative library research and thematic analysis of recent peer-reviewed literature, the study integrates sociological perspectives with theological insights to interpret how institutions embed Qur'anic-Hadith principles in educational life. Findings show that pesantren safeguard tradition while cultivating moderation, solidarity, and moral literacy, whereas madrasah combine Islamic studies with modern sciences to strengthen critical thinking and civic responsibility. The study's originality lies in its interdisciplinary socio-theological approach, revealing that spiritual values such as 'adl, rahmah, ukhūwah, and ta'āwun shape not only personal ethics but also social behavior, interfaith engagement, and ecological consciousness. These insights highlight Islamic education's capacity to negotiate globalization, technology, and secular pressures without diminishing theological depth. The research implies the need for value-based curricula, leadership development, enhanced digital literacy, and expanded interfaith initiatives to sustain a moderate and future-oriented model of Islamic education.*

**Keywords:** Moral Literacy; Religious Identity; Interfaith Dialogue; Educational; Transformation

### Abstrak:

Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia beroperasi dalam masyarakat yang sangat plural dan terus beradaptasi dengan perubahan sosial yang cepat. Terlepas dari akar tradisionalnya, pesantren dan madrasah tetap menjadi pusat pembentukan moral, ketahanan komunitas, dan identitas keagamaan yang inklusif. Studi ini meneliti bagaimana pendidikan Islam berkontribusi pada transformasi sosial dan nilai-nilai sosio-teologis apa yang muncul dari praktik berbasis iman. Dengan menggunakan penelitian pustaka kualitatif dan analisis tematik literatur terkini yang ditinjau oleh rekan sejawat, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan perspektif sosiologis dengan wawasan teologis untuk menafsirkan bagaimana lembaga-lembaga tersebut menanamkan

prinsip-prinsip Al-Qur'an dan Hadits dalam kehidupan pendidikan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pesantren menjaga tradisi sambil menumbuhkan moderasi, solidaritas, dan literasi moral, sedangkan madrasah menggabungkan studi Islam dengan ilmu pengetahuan modern untuk memperkuat pemikiran kritis dan tanggung jawab kewarganegaraan. Keunikan kajian ini terletak pada pendekatan sosio-teologis interdisipliner, yang mengungkapkan bahwa nilai-nilai spiritual seperti 'adl, rahmah, ukhūwah, dan ta'āwun tidak hanya membentuk etika pribadi tetapi juga perilaku sosial, keterlibatan antaragama, dan kesadaran. Wawasan ini menyoroti kapasitas pendidikan Islam untuk menghadapi globalisasi, teknologi, dan tekanan sekuler tanpa mengurangi kedalaman teologis. Penelitian ini menyiratkan perlunya kurikulum berbasis nilai, pengembangan kepemimpinan, peningkatan literasi digital, dan perluasan inisiatif antaragama untuk mempertahankan model pendidikan Islam yang moderat dan berorientasi masa depan.

**Kata kunci:** *Literasi Moral; Identitas Keagamaan; Dialog Antaragama; Pendidikan; Transformasi*

## INTRODUCTION

Faith-based education occupies a central role in Indonesia's plural society, where diverse ethnic and religious groups coexist. Islamic education, particularly through pesantren, not only transmits religious knowledge but also functions as a mechanism for social harmony and cultural integration. Research indicates that multicultural practices in Salafi pesantren foster inclusiveness among students, shaping open and tolerant attitudes toward different sects and beliefs (Marzuki et al., 2020). Such practices nurture mutual respect and interfaith understanding, which are essential for reducing tensions and preventing conflicts in a context marked by religious diversity (Muzayanah et al., 2025). The strategic position of Islamic education is further reinforced by its historical and cultural embeddedness in Indonesian society. Pesantren have long been pivotal in shaping moral character and strengthening community resilience by cultivating values of compassion, respect, and solidarity (Sulistiyowati et al., 2024). Moreover, they mediate between Islamic and national values, providing an environment for young Muslims to engage critically with societal challenges while preserving their religious identity (Mariyono, 2024). In this way, Islamic education supports personal spiritual development while contributing to the broader project of social cohesion in Indonesia.

The evolution of Islamic education from traditional settings to modern institutions reflects its adaptability to Indonesia's changing socio-political landscape. This transformation enables pesantren and madrasah to address pressing challenges such as radicalism and intolerance by promoting moderate religious values and fostering peaceful coexistence across communities (Abidin, 2020). At the same time, Islamic education continues to shape social structures, moral values, and religious identities that sustain the

fabric of Indonesian society. Character education rooted in Islamic teachings equips students with ethical principles such as moderation, respect, and solidarity, which are essential for living harmoniously in a plural nation (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). In this sense, pesantren act not only as transmitters of religious knowledge but also as agents of social integration, enabling students to uphold their faith while engaging actively with broader societal issues (Sulistiyowati et al., 2024; Mariyono, 2024).

The intersection of globalization, modernization, and pluralism presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education. On one hand, educational institutions are required to enhance their competitiveness by adopting modern curricula and teaching methods, aligning with contemporary standards while remaining rooted in Islamic values (Zakariyah, 2024). On the other hand, pressures to conform to secular trends and global benchmarks risk diluting traditional religious teachings, creating tension between innovation and the preservation of Islamic identity. Indonesia's pluralistic context further necessitates the cultivation of tolerance and active engagement with diverse perspectives. The integration of higher-order thinking skills into curricula allows students to navigate complex social realities and interact constructively with individuals from different backgrounds (Kosasih et al., 2022). However, differing interpretations of Islam and the rise of ultra-conservative movements that resist inclusivity can challenge these efforts (Islamic et al., 2024). Thus, modernization requires a careful balance to ensure that educational reform contributes to both social cohesion and moral integrity.

Previous research underscores the transformative role of Islamic education in shaping both social structures and societal values. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum within pesantren demonstrates how Islamic institutions adapt to contemporary educational demands while preserving their religious foundations (Wasehudin et al., 2023). Similarly, the increasing emphasis on inquiry-based learning and higher-order thinking skills reflects the recognition that Islamic pedagogy must prepare students to navigate complex realities (Kosasih et al., 2022). Transformational leadership in pesantren also facilitates the integration of general education alongside religious identity, producing scholars equipped to engage with both local and global challenges (Yusuf et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings highlight that Islamic education not only imparts religious knowledge but also cultivates character, social responsibility, and resilience in responding to modernization.

Despite these contributions, a notable gap remains in the literature: few studies integrate theological and sociological perspectives on Islamic education. Most research focuses either on the transmission of religious teachings or on the sociocultural functions of institutions, leaving unexplored the intersection between these two dimensions. For example, studies on ecological awareness emphasize links between religious values and environmental responsibility but rarely analyze implications for social identity and community life (Nazar et al., 2024). Likewise, reforms promoting higher-order thinking are often discussed in pedagogical terms without attention to their theological significance for students' religious identity (Kosasih et al., 2022). This study addresses that gap by adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines theological insights with sociological analysis.

Accordingly, the present study examines how Islamic education contributes to social transformation in Indonesia and what theological and sociological values emerge from faith-based educational practices. The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary framework, connecting theological and sociological perspectives to explore the role of pesantren, madrasah, and other institutions in cultivating solidarity, religious identity, and moral resilience amidst globalization and pluralism. The significance of this study is both academic—by enriching international literature on religion, education, and social transformation—and practical, by offering insights for policies that support moderate, inclusive, and transformative Islamic education to strengthen national identity in the global era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach based on library research with a socio-theological design. The choice of this method is grounded in the view that literature-based analysis enables a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic education contributes to social transformation. Unlike purely sociological or purely theological approaches, a socio-theological design allows both dimensions to be integrated, ensuring that the discussion moves beyond description toward analytical interpretation of values, identity, and social structures.

The study drew on publicly available scholarly literature in Islamic education, the sociology of religion and theology. We prioritised recent peer-reviewed research while including foundational works where theoretically indispensable; all sources were drawn

from Scopus-indexed journals or internationally recognised scholarly books and were directly related to the study's theme. This selection strategy aligns with the notion that systematic literature reviews can serve as an independent research method for constructing robust theoretical frameworks (Snyder, 2019). Data collection was conducted through searches in reputable academic databases such as Scopus, Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, and ScienceDirect, using carefully formulated keywords including Islamic education, faith-based education, social transformation, pluralism, moderation in Islam, and theological-sociological analysis.

The data analysis followed thematic analysis, which identifies, categorizes, and interprets recurring themes within the literature. This method was chosen for its flexibility in uncovering conceptual patterns across texts (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Three central themes emerged: (1) Islamic education as an agent of social transformation—covering moral literacy, social cohesion, and religious identity; (2) theological dimensions of faith-based education—highlighting values of faith, worship, ethics, Qur'anic and Hadith principles; and (3) challenges and opportunities in the modern era—concerning globalization, modernization, pluralism, and technological advancement. By combining Islamic theological perspectives with sociological theories of education, the analysis offers a holistic account of how Islamic education functions both as a means of social cohesion and as a process of constructing social reality.

As a literature-based study, this research has limitations in the absence of empirical field data. To address this, the scope of references was expanded across multiple disciplines, and literature triangulation was applied by comparing findings from diverse sources. This strategy aimed to minimize interpretive bias and enhance the validity of the analysis. By adopting a systematic, transparent, and reflective approach, the study aspires to produce a knowledge synthesis that advances the academic discourse on Islamic education and social transformation in the contemporary era.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Islamic Education as an Agent of Social Transformation

#### 1. *The Role of Islamic Education in Enhancing Religious and Moral Literacy*

Islamic education functions as a vital agent of social transformation by strengthening both religious and moral literacy, thereby fostering a contextual and moderate

understanding of Islam. The integration of Islamic values into curricula cultivates ethical behavior, nurtures community cohesion, and links faith to the realities of contemporary life. Madrasahs, for example, are not only designed to transmit religious knowledge but also to shape students' moral character and social responsibility, enabling them to contribute positively to society (Haddade et al., 2024; Islamic et al., 2024).

Beyond formal instruction, pesantren play a key role in promoting moderation and tolerance as foundations for building cohesive communities. Research shows that their hidden curriculum instills solidarity and respectful coexistence among students of diverse backgrounds, reinforcing empathy and inclusivity (Salim et al., 2024). Reflective practices in madrasahs further support this formation, helping students interpret their faith in ways that remain relevant to modern contexts (Hidayati et al., 2022). Consequently, Islamic education develops individuals who are not only religiously literate but also socially adaptable and tolerant – qualities essential for sustaining pluralistic harmony.

Pesantren Tebuireng in East Java illustrates this transformative potential. Under the leadership of KH. Yusuf Hasyim, the institution integrated traditional Islamic learning with modern pedagogical strategies. Its curriculum blended religious instruction, ethical formation, and civic responsibility, equipping *santri* to engage critically with their faith while fostering social consciousness (Yusuf et al., 2024). This model demonstrates how moral literacy, when embedded in educational practice, can simultaneously advance religious identity and civic responsibility.

The outcomes of such moral literacy are evident in students' social behavior. Activities such as community service, interfaith dialogue, entrepreneurship, and leadership programs foster inclusive perspectives and prepare learners to balance personal growth with community responsibility (Anam et al., 2019; Yusuf et al., 2024). These initiatives show that Islamic education not only strengthens religious identity but also develops active citizens capable of addressing societal challenges.

Comparative perspectives further underscore Indonesia's distinct approach. In Malaysia, a more centralized and formalized system often limits pedagogical flexibility, while in Turkey, theological studies within a secular framework emphasize doctrinal rigor over moral development (Sadiyah, 2022; Zholmukhan et al., 2024). In contrast, Indonesia's pesantren integrate character education through both formal and informal mechanisms, promoting critical thinking and moderate interpretations of Islam. This comparative lens

highlights Indonesia's holistic model, which intertwines moral literacy, character formation, and social responsibility in direct engagement with pluralistic realities.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Islamic education in Indonesia transcends the transmission of doctrinal knowledge by cultivating students who are spiritually grounded and socially responsive. The integration of moral values with religious teachings equips learners to navigate contemporary challenges while contributing to the resilience of their communities. This aligns with sociological theories of education – such as Durkheim's concept of moral education and Putnam's notion of social capital – which emphasize the role of education in producing cohesive, value-driven societies. By balancing tradition with innovation, pesantren and madrasahs exemplify how Islamic education operates as a transformative force in building tolerant, responsible, and cohesive communities (Yusuf et al., 2024).

## 2. *Contributions of Pesantren and Madrasah in Shaping Social Identity*

Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, serve not only as centers for classical scholarship but also as cultural hubs that preserve Islamic identity and strengthen community solidarity. Their curriculum emphasizes the *Kitab Kuning* (classical texts), ensuring the intergenerational transmission of religious knowledge (Samsu et al., 2021). At the same time, pesantren reinforce social cohesion by fostering a sense of belonging and continuity, thereby sustaining the relevance of Islamic traditions amid rapid social changes (Islamic et al., 2024). Through this dual role, pesantren contribute simultaneously to individual education and the construction of collective Muslim identity.

Charismatic leadership plays a decisive role in shaping this identity. The influence of *kiai* and *nyai* extends beyond religious authority to encompass moderation and community resilience. The presence of female leaders (*nyai*), in particular, demonstrates how pesantren maintain traditional authenticity while promoting inclusivity and adaptability to modern needs (Misdah et al., 2025). Leadership competence at the institutional level is equally vital to ensure that pesantren remain adaptive to modern challenges while retaining religious authenticity (Jaelani et al., 2019). Recent findings also emphasize that the religious leadership and personal branding of *kyai* contribute significantly to promoting moderation and preventing radicalism within Islamic education (Soemantri et al., 2025). Issues of discipline and sanctions in Islamic schools further illustrate how identity formation is

shaped by educational practices that often integrate elements of Islamic law into school governance (Herman et al., 2024). By combining traditional authority with modern strategies of leadership and discipline, pesantren cultivate a resilient Muslim identity that resists radicalism while engaging constructively with social change.

Pesantren and madrasah play complementary roles in shaping Muslim social identity in Indonesia. Pesantren emphasize tradition, classical religious scholarship, and charismatic leadership, while madrasah focus on integrating modern curricula with Islamic values. These differences should not be seen as contradictions but as a dual strength that allows Islamic education to meet both local and global demands. See table 1:

Table 1. The Roles of Pesantren and Madrasah in Shaping Social Identity

Aspect	Pesantren	Madrasah
Curriculum	Kitab Kuning (classical texts), traditional learning	Dual curriculum (religious and general sciences)
Leadership	Kiai/nyai with charismatic authority	Teachers and principals within national system
Social Function	Community solidarity, cultural hub	Social mobility, bridge to national education system
Identity Orientation	Traditional Islam, moderation, continuity	Modernity, global competence, innovation

This table highlights the fundamental differences as well as the complementary relationship between pesantren and madrasah. While pesantren safeguard tradition and religious continuity, madrasah open pathways to modernity and global competencies. Together, they contribute to strengthening a flexible Muslim identity capable of navigating contemporary challenges. Viewing their roles comparatively underscores the integrative nature of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Madrasahs complement pesantren by offering a structured and formal approach within the national education system. Their dual curriculum integrates Islamic studies with science, mathematics, and technology, producing graduates who are both religiously devout and equipped with critical, innovative, and practical skills (Haddade et al., 2024; Darwanto et al., 2024). In this sense, madrasahs prepare a generation of Muslims who can

balance faith with global competencies, contributing to both religious preservation and national development.

Recent studies show that effective school leadership is central to enhancing the quality of madrasah education, particularly in navigating digital disruption and global pressures (Mahmud & Malik, 2024). Reform initiatives often involve balancing tradition and modernity in pesantren governance, requiring institutional innovation without undermining religious authenticity (Malisi et al., 2024). Teacher professional development programs, such as *PPG* in Islamic education, have also proven essential in improving pedagogical quality and sustaining institutional competitiveness (Mardhiah et al., 2023). These reforms illustrate that the modernization of Islamic education is not merely about curriculum change but about strengthening institutional capacity to harmonize faith and innovation.

International comparisons highlight the distinctive character of Indonesia's madrasahs. Unlike Egypt, where madrasahs remain heavily focused on conservative religious studies and rote memorization, Indonesian madrasahs emphasize pedagogical innovation and curricular integration (Arif et al., 2024; Zholmukhan et al., 2024). These reforms reflect a deliberate effort to counter radicalism while enhancing competitiveness in a globalized world (Mujiburrahman et al., 2024). Consequently, Indonesia's model is more adaptive, combining religious authenticity with responsiveness to modern challenges.

Taken together, pesantren and madrasahs demonstrate the complementary roles of traditional and formal institutions in shaping Muslim social identity. Pesantren preserve continuity with classical traditions while embodying moderation through community leadership, whereas madrasahs integrate modern sciences with Islamic knowledge to produce globally competent yet religiously grounded graduates. This synergy illustrates how Islamic education in Indonesia contributes not only to sustaining religious identity but also to cultivating citizens who are socially responsible, inclusive, and adaptive to change. The Indonesian model, therefore, exemplifies how educational institutions can function as agents of both cultural preservation and social transformation.

### 3. *The Relationship Between Islamic Teachings, Social Solidarity, and Changing Social Values*

Islamic teachings emphasize *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), and justice (*adl*) as foundational values that guide both personal conduct and communal life. Within Islamic education, these principles are operationalized through pedagogical practices that foster collaboration, empathy, and ethical engagement. Programs such as group-based learning, community service, and congregational activities cultivate students' sense of belonging, responsibility, and interdependence, thereby reinforcing social cohesion (Prameswari & Suryani, 2023; Zholmukhan et al., 2024).

The embedding of these values into educational processes ensures that moral development is inseparable from social responsibility. Classroom strategies, cooperative learning, and extracurricular activities encourage students to support one another, develop confidence, and internalize fairness as a guiding principle for social interaction (Akmaliah et al., 2021; Nufus et al., 2023). Such practices not only shape interpersonal harmony but also instill broader commitments to tolerance, inclusivity, and collective responsibility in multicultural settings. In this sense, Islamic education aligns with global discourses on education for sustainable development, which emphasize ethical literacy as an integral part of preparing students for civic engagement in increasingly diverse societies (UNESCO, 2021).

Teachers play a crucial role in transmitting and modeling these principles. As moral exemplars, educators integrate integrity, empathy, and fairness into their teaching practices, demonstrating how ethical values should be lived out in daily life. When teachers embody these principles, students are more likely to internalize them, thereby extending the impact of Islamic education beyond theoretical knowledge to practical behavior and community life (Tambak & Sukenti, 2020). This role resonates with the concept of "hidden curriculum," in which the daily conduct of teachers, rather than formal syllabi alone, becomes decisive in shaping students' moral and social orientations (Jackson, 2019).

Comparative perspectives highlight the distinctiveness of Indonesia's integrative model. In Indonesia, *pesantren* and *madrasahs* combine religious and secular curricula to produce graduates who are both spiritually grounded and socially engaged, emphasizing civic responsibility and inclusivity (Walidin et al., 2023). By contrast, Islamic schools in South Africa often reflect societal divisions in a post-apartheid context, limiting their ability

to promote integration across communities. Similarly, in parts of the Middle East, religious education often prioritizes doctrinal orthodoxy over civic responsibility, resulting in less emphasis on pluralistic engagement (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2022). These contrasts show that Indonesia's approach is particularly effective in embedding solidarity, tolerance, and cooperation within a pluralistic framework.

The integration of *ukhuwah*, *ta'awun*, and *adl* also responds to changing social values in an era of globalization and digital transformation. Contemporary societies face fragmentation due to individualism, consumerism, and the spread of online misinformation, all of which challenge traditional bonds of solidarity (Hefner, 2022). Islamic education offers a corrective framework by rooting students' identities in enduring theological values while equipping them with critical thinking to engage with modern complexities. This dual orientation ensures that Islamic education does not remain static but evolves dynamically in conversation with shifting cultural norms and global trends (Kosasih et al., 2022).

Taken together, the integration of *ukhuwah*, *ta'awun*, and justice within Islamic education demonstrates how theological principles directly inform social solidarity and adaptability to changing social values. By linking scriptural teachings with practical experiences, students are equipped to confront social challenges such as inequality and fragmentation. From a sociological perspective, this reflects the capacity of education to function as an agent of social integration (Durkheim, 1961) and moral community building. Thus, Islamic education in Indonesia operates not only as a transmitter of values but also as a transformative institution that cultivates inclusive and resilient societies.

## Theological Dimensions in Faith-Based Education

### 1. *Emphasis of Islamic Education on Faith, Worship, and Morality*

Faith forms the cornerstone of Islamic education, as it integrates belief, worship, and moral development into a unified framework of learning. Within madrasahs and pesantren, curricula are intentionally designed to harmonize Islamic teachings with modern sciences, enabling students to view knowledge through both rational and spiritual perspectives (Zakariyah, 2024; Sarwi et al., 2024). This approach reflects the conviction that education is not limited to intellectual achievement but also aims to produce morally upright individuals. Consequently, faith provides the foundation for academic pursuits while

ensuring that they remain anchored in ethical and religious values.

Worship occupies a central role within this framework, functioning not only as a spiritual obligation but also as a formative practice that shapes discipline and collective responsibility. Congregational prayers, religious gatherings, and structured rituals instill habits of punctuality, respect, and solidarity among students (Zholmukhan et al., 2024; Salim et al., 2024). These practices strengthen the link between spiritual devotion and social behavior, ensuring that worship extends its influence beyond ritual into everyday life.

In addition to its ritual dimension, worship also serves as a pedagogical tool that supports broader educational objectives. The emphasis on scheduled prayers and organized religious activities fosters accountability and order, qualities that directly influence students' academic discipline and social interactions (Ismail et al., 2024). By embedding worship into the rhythm of school life, Islamic education cultivates a culture of responsibility that prepares students to become socially engaged and morally grounded citizens.

Morality (*akhlaq*) is regarded as the pinnacle of Islamic education, positioning ethical conduct as the ultimate expression of both personal development and social transformation. Through character education rooted in Islamic teachings, students are encouraged to cultivate integrity, compassion, and accountability to both God and society (Susanto et al., 2023; Widdah, 2022). Institutions such as madrasahs and pesantren embed these moral values into curricula, enabling learners to evaluate their actions continually and to strive for improvement (Zholmukhan et al., 2024). By producing individuals with strong moral character, Islamic education contributes not only to personal virtue but also to wider social harmony, as ethically responsible citizens play a crucial role in fostering resilient and cohesive communities (Mawardi & Ruhayah, 2022).

Ultimately, the integration of faith, worship, and morality ensures that academic achievement is complemented by ethical responsibility. This holistic approach emphasizes that true educational success lies not merely in intellectual accomplishment but in the ability to embody justice, solidarity, and compassion in social life (Wibowo et al., 2023). In this way, Islamic education serves as a transformative force that nurtures individuals capable of contributing to both spiritual fulfillment and societal well-being.

## 2. *Integration of Qur'anic and Hadith Values into the Islamic Education Curriculum*

The integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values in Islamic education is crucial because these sources provide the theological foundation for pedagogy and character formation. The Qur'an functions as divine guidance encompassing moral, ethical, and social principles, while Hadith contextualizes these ideals through the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad. Embedding both sources within curricula ensures that Islamic education is not only oriented toward knowledge transmission but also toward moral formation that links faith with everyday practice (Zholmukhan et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2023).

The role of the Qur'an in curriculum development is evident in how its values are translated into lessons that emphasize justice, compassion, and integrity. Traditional methods such as *talaqqī* and *halaqah* continue to play an important role in fostering emotional and moral development among students. These practices not only complement formal curricula but also nurture affective dimensions of learning, reinforcing integrity, empathy, and spirituality as lived experiences (Ismail et al., 2024). Principles such as fairness (*adl*) and mercy (*rahma*) are integrated into discussions on ethics and social responsibility, equipping students with a moral compass to navigate diverse contexts. In this way, the Qur'an is not presented merely as a text for recitation but as a source of ethical guidance that shapes learners' conduct and community engagement (Sulistiyowati et al., 2024; Ma'arif et al., 2024). This approach demonstrates how scriptural teachings can remain relevant in addressing modern challenges, from social inequality to interfaith relations (Aryati & Suradi, 2022).

The values of the Qur'an and Hadith constitute the theological foundation of Islamic education, shaping ethics, worship, and social awareness. Integrating these sources into curricula ensures that education is not only about knowledge transmission but also about moral formation and communal solidarity. In this way, Islamic educational institutions combine normative religious teachings with lived social realities. See table 2:

Table 2. Integration of Qur'anic and Hadith Values in Islamic Education

Qur'anic/Hadith Value	Educational Implementation	Social & Moral Impact
Justice ('adl)	Ethics discussions, practice of fairness in school	Builds social responsibility
Compassion (rahmah)	Social service programs, character building	Fosters empathy and solidarity

Qur'anic/Hadith Value	Educational Implementation	Social & Moral Impact
Trustworthiness ( <i>amanah</i> )	Structured tasks, student leadership roles	Develops integrity and accountability
Brotherhood & Mutual Aid ( <i>ukhuwah &amp; ta'awun</i> )	Group work, community engagement	Strengthens social cohesion and tolerance

This table demonstrates how Qur'anic and Hadith values are translated into concrete educational practices. Through such integration, Islamic education avoids reducing religion to mere theory. These values are internalized in students' behavior, producing individuals who are both devout and socially responsible. This reinforces the claim that Islamic education bridges spirituality with communal life.

Complementing the Qur'an, Hadith provides practical illustrations of how Islamic values can be lived out in social and educational settings. By drawing on the Prophet Muhammad's teachings and practices, curricula can highlight virtues such as honesty, accountability, and empathy, thereby translating abstract principles into concrete models of behavior. Hadith-based lessons encourage students to embody responsibility and solidarity, reinforcing the Qur'anic vision of justice and compassion (Zakariyah 2024). This combination ensures that Islamic education remains holistic: rooted in revelation yet adaptable to the realities of contemporary society (Pakpahan et al., 2025).

The application of Qur'anic values in Islamic education highlights the centrality of justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and trustworthiness (*amanah*) as guiding principles for both personal conduct and collective life. These values are systematically embedded into lessons and activities, such as discussions on fairness, engagement in community service, and exercises in responsibility. By translating Qur'anic ethics into practical experiences, educators provide students with the tools to internalize moral commitments that extend beyond the classroom (Susanto et al., 2023). This process ensures that scriptural teachings shape not only intellectual knowledge but also the development of virtuous character.

Hadith complements the Qur'an by contextualizing these values in concrete examples of the Prophet Muhammad's actions and sayings. Teachings that emphasize integrity, honesty, and accountability remain particularly relevant in addressing ethical dilemmas of modern life. For instance, Hadith stressing compassion and mutual respect can

serve as guidelines for navigating increasingly diverse and plural societies (Zakariyah, 2024). By presenting lived models of ethical behavior, Hadith enables students to see the applicability of Islamic values to everyday challenges.

The social dimension of Hadith also underscores its role in shaping civic engagement and community solidarity. Prophetic traditions related to conflict resolution, fairness in transactions, and care for marginalized groups illustrate how moral principles can inform responses to issues such as inequality and social injustice (Pakpahan et al., 2025). When integrated into curricula, these teachings cultivate students' ability to address real-world problems through Islamic ethical frameworks. As a result, Hadith-based education not only strengthens individual piety but also promotes collective responsibility and social harmony (Mursid & Wu, 2021; Shahida, 2023).

International comparisons reveal significant variations in how Qur'anic and Hadith values are integrated into curricula across different contexts. In Indonesia, pesantren and madrasahs adapt scriptural teachings to local cultures, emphasizing inclusivity, social responsibility, and interfaith cooperation (Mahanani et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2023). By contrast, Brunei adopts a state-prescribed curriculum that tightly links religious education to national identity, prioritizing conformity over adaptability (Kosasih et al., 2022). Saudi Arabia implements a highly centralized model with a strong focus on authoritative texts, reinforcing a unified Islamic identity but limiting curricular flexibility (Mardhiah et al., 2023). These differences highlight Indonesia's unique contribution: an integrative and adaptive framework that situates Qur'anic and Hadith values within pluralistic and dynamic social realities (Muhammad et al., 2024).

### 3. *Theological Reflection: How Islamic Education Fosters Transcendental Awareness in Social Life*

Faith-based education, particularly in the Islamic context, serves as a crucial medium for fostering transcendental awareness that extends beyond material pursuits. Within institutions such as pesantren, spirituality is deliberately interwoven with academic learning, encouraging students to reflect on life's deeper meanings and their ultimate purpose. Qur'anic and Hadith-based teachings on compassion, justice, and service guide learners to balance individual aspirations with communal responsibilities (Zholmukhan et al., 2024; Sulistyowati et al., 2024). This integration ensures that intellectual growth is always

accompanied by spiritual and ethical development.

Spiritual practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God) further cultivate this awareness by strengthening students' psychological resilience and emotional well-being. Regular engagement with such practices helps learners experience inner peace while nurturing a sense of purpose rooted in faith (Anwar et al., 2024). Through these experiences, students are encouraged to view their education as a journey of both personal fulfillment and communal service. This approach highlights the capacity of Islamic education to harmonize spiritual devotion with modern intellectual challenges (Mashuri et al., 2024). Beyond ritual devotion, *pesantren* have consistently embedded moral and ethical education as a central part of their humanistic vision, as evidenced by systematic literature reviews on their pedagogical orientation (Puspitarini et al., 2023).

Theological reflection also influences how students engage with broader societal issues. Teachings that emphasize tolerance, justice, and solidarity encourage constructive dialogue and reduce the potential for interreligious conflict (Hastasari et al., 2022). Educational programs that incorporate community service, interfaith encounters, and outreach to marginalized groups translate transcendental values into social practice. As a result, students learn to engage with difference respectfully while embodying Islamic principles of coexistence and peace (Pakpahan et al., 2025).

Ultimately, the transcendental awareness fostered through Islamic education creates individuals who see themselves not only as learners but as agents of positive change. By combining faith with civic responsibility, students are motivated to participate actively in initiatives that promote justice, inclusivity, and social harmony (Jaelani et al., 2019). This holistic vision underscores the transformative role of Islamic education: it shapes citizens who are intellectually competent, spiritually fulfilled, and socially responsible, thereby contributing to the creation of cohesive and resilient communities.

## **Challenges and Opportunities of Islamic Education in the Modern Era**

### ***1. The Impact of Globalization, Technology, and Secularization on Islamic Educational Practices***

Globalization introduces both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education, reshaping how institutions negotiate their religious foundations within rapidly changing social contexts. On the one hand, increased cross-cultural interaction has encouraged

pesantren and madrasahs to modernize their curricula by incorporating contemporary educational methods and global knowledge systems. For instance, pesantren in East Java have begun adapting their teaching strategies to align with broader educational standards while retaining their religious identity (Kawakip, 2020). This demonstrates how globalization can foster innovation and responsiveness within Islamic educational frameworks.

On the other hand, globalization also brings secular ideologies such as individualism and consumerism, which often stand in tension with the community-oriented values of Islam. The growing commercialization of education risks reducing learning to a market commodity rather than a moral and spiritual endeavor (Allès & Seeth, 2021). Such pressures challenge Islamic institutions to preserve their distinctive religious ethos while engaging productively with global cultural paradigms. As a result, educators must carefully balance the integration of modern perspectives with the safeguarding of Islamic ethical principles.

Digital technology further transforms the dynamics of Islamic education, creating new possibilities for pedagogy and access to knowledge. Online platforms and digital resources provide students with opportunities for interactive learning, flexible study schedules, and exposure to diverse perspectives. Research shows that asynchronous Arabic language learning through digital media can be more effective and engaging compared to traditional methods (Riwanda et al., 2024). These innovations demonstrate how technology can enhance inclusivity and promote personalized learning experiences.

The forces of globalization, digital technology, and secularization have significantly influenced Islamic education. These dynamics pose serious challenges while also opening opportunities to strengthen the global relevance of Islamic institutions. The role of pesantren and madrasah is to balance reform and preservation in order to maintain both identity and competitiveness. See table 3:

Table 3. Challenges and Opportunities of Islamic Education in the Modern Era

Factor	Opportunities	Challenges	Strategic Response
Globalization	Access to global knowledge, international networks	Risk of losing local identity	Adaptive curricula rooted in Islamic values
Digital	Innovative learning,	Ethical disruption,	Islamic digital

Factor	Opportunities	Challenges	Strategic Response
Technology	wide access, interactivity	unfiltered online content	literacy, teacher supervision
Secularization	Academic competitiveness, openness to dialogue	Marginalization of religion in public life	Integration of Islamic values into sciences

This table illustrates the dual position of Islamic education between opportunities and threats. Globalization enables collaboration but also risks eroding local identity. Technology expands learning access yet raises moral challenges. With appropriate strategies, Islamic education can harness opportunities while mitigating risks.

Nevertheless, the rapid adoption of digital tools also presents risks, particularly regarding ethics, distraction, and dependency. The abundance of unfiltered online content can undermine students' moral grounding and critical judgment, requiring educators to provide strong frameworks for digital literacy (Hefner, 2022). Moreover, excessive reliance on technology may weaken traditional pedagogical relationships and diminish the communal aspects of Islamic education (Kosasih et al., 2022). These challenges underscore the necessity of integrating technological advancement with the preservation of core religious and ethical values.

Secularization reshapes the educational landscape by redefining the role of religion in public life, compelling Islamic institutions to reconsider their strategies for maintaining relevance. In Indonesia, this challenge has prompted madrasahs to enhance their competitiveness by adopting educational strategies that emphasize both excellence and adaptability (Zakariyah, 2024). Educators increasingly recognize the importance of cultivating higher-order thinking skills and employing inquiry-based pedagogies that allow students to critically engage with secular knowledge while maintaining fidelity to Islamic principles (Kosasih et al., 2022). Such initiatives reflect an attempt to harmonize religious identity with modern educational demands, producing graduates who embody both intellectual rigor and moral integrity.

The dynamics of secularization take on different forms in Western and Southeast Asian contexts. In Europe and North America, Muslim communities have responded to

secular pressures by establishing Islamic schools that emphasize character education alongside academic learning, often as a means of fostering integration and combating marginalization (Hekmatpour & Burns, 2019). These schools design curricula that bridge Islamic identity with civic responsibility, promoting dialogue and cultural understanding. By contrast, Islamic education in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, has proactively adopted innovations such as the Merdeka Curriculum to remain competitive and relevant while preserving religious values (Wasehudin et al., 2023). This comparison illustrates that while Western models often react to secularization, Indonesian institutions take a more proactive approach in aligning modern educational trends with Islamic aspirations.

In Western Europe and North America, secularization exerts significant pressure on Muslim communities, influencing both the perception and practice of Islamic education. In countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada, Islamic schools have emerged as spaces for balancing faith with integration into secular societies. These schools often prioritize character education, civic responsibility, and higher-order thinking skills to ensure that students can engage constructively with wider society while maintaining their religious identity (Hekmatpour & Burns, 2019; Kosasih et al., 2022). Such strategies reflect an adaptive response to governmental scrutiny and social expectations in secular contexts, highlighting the dual need for cultural preservation and civic inclusion.

By contrast, in Southeast Asia—particularly Indonesia—Islamic education has demonstrated a more proactive approach in reconciling religious traditions with modern educational demands. Initiatives such as the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum illustrate how pesantren and madrasahs align themselves with global standards while preserving Islamic values (Wasehudin et al., 2023). This strategy underscores a vision of education that is not only defensive against secular pressures but also forward-looking, integrating modern pedagogies to foster inclusivity, critical engagement, and social responsibility. Consequently, the Indonesian model stands out as an example of how Islamic education can harmonize modernity with tradition, offering insights for other contexts grappling with similar challenges.

The challenge of secularization is also intertwined with the spread of transnational Islamic ideologies, which exert pressure on local institutions to negotiate between moderation and exclusivism (Aderus et al., 2024). These dynamics often create tensions within educational settings, where the need for openness to global knowledge must be

balanced with the preservation of religious authenticity. In such circumstances, Islamic education faces the dual task of resisting ideological rigidity while avoiding the dilution of its spiritual and moral foundations. In this context, Indonesia stands out for its ability to preserve its theological foundation while simultaneously engaging in constructive sociocultural transformation.

## 2. *Opportunities for Interfaith Dialogue through Faith-Based Education*

Islamic education has the potential to become a vital medium for fostering interfaith dialogue, particularly in diverse and multicultural contexts. By embedding values such as empathy, respect, and inclusivity, educational institutions create spaces where students are encouraged to engage constructively with people of other faiths. This orientation not only nurtures tolerance but also strengthens communal harmony, as learners are exposed to shared ethical principles that transcend religious boundaries (Achruh & Sukirman, 2024). In this way, faith-based education serves as a bridge between religious traditions and social cohesion.

At the institutional level, pesantren and Islamic universities in Indonesia have increasingly incorporated interfaith dialogue into their curricula and educational practices. Initiatives such as curriculum innovation and pedagogical reforms encourage students to explore religious diversity while maintaining their Islamic identity. For example, pesantren that adopt transformative education models provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions about ethical challenges within a global and pluralistic society (Wasehudin et al., 2023). These efforts reflect an intentional strategy to cultivate religious moderation as a key competency for future generations.

A concrete example of this practice can be found in pesantren that integrate multicultural education frameworks, such as Salafi pesantren. Research shows that these institutions foster inclusive attitudes among *santri*, preventing radicalism and encouraging mutual respect among students from diverse backgrounds (Marzuki et al., 2020). Innovative management approaches also play a significant role in shaping environments conducive to interfaith interaction, as seen in the dynamic strategies implemented in API Pesantren (Basori et al., 2023). Together, these examples highlight how Islamic educational institutions can become active agents of social integration, balancing the preservation of faith with the promotion of interreligious harmony.

In the Philippines, initiatives such as the Madrasah Education Program demonstrate the role of faith-based education in promoting interreligious understanding within public schools. These programs integrate multicultural perspectives and encourage cooperation between Muslim and Christian students through shared learning experiences. The ALIVE (Advocacy for Life and Values Education) program is particularly notable for embedding interfaith dialogue into the curriculum, fostering empathy and cultural sensitivity among students from diverse religious traditions (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). Such approaches illustrate how education can be mobilized to reduce tensions and build bridges in pluralistic societies.

Similarly, Indonesia has developed distinctive practices within pesantren that view interfaith encounters as an educational resource. Institutions such as Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor have implemented transformative curricula that engage students in dialogue with individuals from other faiths, cultivating tolerance and inclusivity (Ju'subaidi et al., 2024). Compared with the Philippines, where structured programs are embedded into the national school system, Indonesia's approach emphasizes the pesantren's autonomy in designing pluralistic curricula. Both contexts, however, demonstrate that interfaith dialogue within education is an effective strategy for fostering peaceful coexistence, with Indonesia showcasing the adaptability of Islamic pedagogy and the Philippines highlighting state-driven curricular innovation.

### 3. *The Relevance of the Indonesian Model of Islamic Education in International Discourse on Value-Based Education*

Indonesia's model of Islamic education, which combines traditional institutions such as pesantren with modern frameworks like madrasahs and Islamic universities, offers valuable insights for global discourse on value-based education. This hybrid approach enables students to engage with contemporary challenges while remaining grounded in cultural and religious heritage. Pesantren emphasize character-building and spiritual development, while madrasahs and universities incorporate modern sciences, critical thinking, and professional skills (Kasmah et al., 2023). Together, these institutions cultivate holistic graduates who are both spiritually devout and socially competent.

The adaptive capacity of Indonesia's Islamic education system is reflected in its response to globalization. Scholars have noted that higher education institutions

strategically adopt selected aspects of global educational practices while preserving cultural and religious integrity (Achruh & Sukirman, 2024). This balancing act strengthens tolerance, inclusivity, and social responsibility as central values, ensuring that students are prepared to face global realities without losing their Islamic identity (Muhith et al., 2023). Such adaptability highlights the Indonesian model as an example of how traditional religious education can coexist with modern demands.

Another distinctive feature is the integration of sustainability and environmental ethics within Islamic pedagogy. For example, pesantren have begun incorporating ecological awareness as part of character education, linking Qur'anic values with stewardship of the environment (Nazar et al., 2024). By embedding ecological consciousness into curricula, Indonesia demonstrates how faith-based education can contribute to comprehensive human development that addresses not only spiritual and social needs but also global sustainability challenges. This innovation positions Indonesia as a reference point for countries seeking to combine religious teachings with broader developmental goals.

The significance of Indonesia's model also lies in its role in fostering moderation and interfaith understanding on a global scale. Value-based education programs within pesantren and madrasahs emphasize self-discipline, responsibility, and openness to dialogue, enabling students to become agents of peace in diverse societies (Prameswari & Suryani, 2023). At the same time, national reform programs such as the Madrasah Reform initiative enhance teacher training and pedagogical quality, ensuring that the cultivation of moral values is supported by professional educational standards (Haddade et al., 2024). These reforms strengthen the credibility of Islamic education as a progressive force for peace and tolerance.

In conclusion, Indonesia's hybrid model of Islamic education illustrates how faith-based institutions can harmonize tradition with modernity while contributing to international discussions on value-based education. By prioritizing moral values alongside academic achievement, this model nurtures students who are intellectually capable, ethically responsible, and socially engaged. Furthermore, its emphasis on inclusivity, ecological awareness, and interfaith dialogue underscores the global relevance of Indonesia's experience. As Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia continue to champion moderation and social cohesion, they offer a compelling framework for other

nations seeking to align religious identity with the goals of peace, tolerance, and sustainable development (Burga & Damopolii, 2022).

The Indonesian model of Islamic education is often regarded as distinctive for its successful integration of pesantren traditions with the modernized curricula of madrasah. Compared with other countries, Indonesia demonstrates greater flexibility in adapting education to global needs without abandoning Islamic foundations. This has made Indonesia an important contributor to global discourse on value-based education. See table 4:

Table 4. Comparison of the Indonesian Model of Islamic Education with Other Countries

Country	Characteristics of Islamic Education	Strengths	Limitations
Indonesia	Integration of pesantren, madrasah, Islamic universities	Adaptive, inclusive, moderation, interfaith dialogue	Unequal quality standards across institutions
Egypt	Centered on Al-Azhar, conservative	Strong scholarly tradition, global authority	Overly doctrinal, less curricular innovation
Brunei	State-prescribed curriculum	Strong national identity	Limited flexibility, low adaptability
Saudi Arabia	Centralized classical texts, Wahhabi orientation	Consistency in doctrine	Low openness, limited interdisciplinarity

This table affirms that Indonesia offers a more integrative and adaptive model of Islamic education compared to other countries. Its emphasis on moderation and inclusivity makes it particularly relevant in pluralistic societies. By combining local values with global standards, Indonesia positions itself as a reference point in value-based education. Consequently, the Indonesian experience provides lessons for other nations seeking to align religious education with modern demands.

## CONCLUSION

This article set out to explain how Islamic education contributes to social transformation in Indonesia and which socio-theological values emerge from faith-based practice. The analysis shows that pesantren and madrasahs function as complementary institutions: pesantren safeguard tradition, communal resilience and moral formation, while madrasahs integrate Islamic knowledge with modern sciences and pedagogy. Together they strengthen moral literacy, inclusive religious identity and civic responsibility in plural settings by embedding Qur'ānic-Hadith values into everyday educational practice. The study further demonstrates that Indonesia's model can negotiate pressures from globalisation, technology and secularisation without eroding theological depth. By linking scriptural teaching to group learning, community service and school governance, Islamic education operates not merely as doctrinal instruction but as a transformative public good that builds solidarity, tolerance and ethical citizenship. In relation to the study objectives, these findings clarify the mechanisms through which faith-based education sustains religious continuity while enabling constructive social change. Implications follow for policy and practice: prioritising leadership development and teacher professional learning; integrating value-based curricula with digital literacy; and strengthening interfaith engagement and ecological stewardship across institutions. Collectively, these directions can consolidate a moderate, inclusive and future-oriented Islamic education capable of sustaining social cohesion in diverse societies.

The principles of 'adl (justice), raḥmah (compassion), ukhūwah (brotherhood) and ta'āwun (mutual assistance) frame education as more than knowledge transfer: they orient schools towards cultivating virtue and public responsibility. When these values inform pedagogy and communal life, faith is not privatised but embodied in service to others. This integration of belief and practice illuminates how Islamic education can witness to God's justice and mercy in the midst of pluralism, thereby nurturing communities that are ethically grounded and socially resilient.

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