



ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: CURRENT ISSUES AND THE RELEVANCE OF ISLAMIC VALUES TO 21ST-CENTURY COMPETENCIES

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Abstract

Globalization presents complex challenges for Islamic education, including moral degradation, identity crises, digital radicalism, intolerance, and a gap in 21st-century competencies resulting from the dichotomy between academic knowledge and low digital literacy among teachers. This study aims to analyze current issues in Islamic education in the era of globalization, examine the relevance of Islamic values to the 4C competencies (critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration), and formulate strategies for the adaptive development of Islamic education through the integration of Islamic values and 21st-century competencies. Using a literature review method specifically, documentation and content analysis of journal articles, academic books, and policy documents this study yielded three main findings. First, central issues in Islamic education include the fragmentation of religious authority, the culture of “digital riya,” and the gap between the demands of 21st-century skills and the reality of conventional learning. Second, Islamic values such as *tabayyun*, *muhasabah*, *qaulan ma’rufan*, and *ta’awun* have proven to be relevant and can be operationalized within the 4C competencies to produce a generation that is both technically competent and of noble character. Third, adaptive strategies for the development of Islamic education include: (1) strengthening religious digital literacy grounded in Islamic values, (2) fostering religious moderation through dialogic and reflective learning, and (3) implementing project-based learning (PjBL) as a systematic vehicle for developing Islamized 4C competencies. The transformation of Islamic education in the era of globalization requires a paradigm shift from a normative-textual approach toward an integrative, contextual, and adaptive approach that harmonizes spiritual and moral excellence with the demands of 21st-century competencies.

Keywords *Islamic Education, Current Issues, Globalization, 21st-Century Competencies*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, including Islamic education (Muhammad Fajar Hidayat et al., 2026). On the one hand, globalization promotes open access to diverse sources of knowledge and expands opportunities for international collaboration. On the other hand, however, globalization also introduces values that do not always align with the principles and character of Islamic education; thus, efforts are needed to strengthen the identity, relevance, and quality of Islamic education so that it remains capable of meeting the needs of the times (Herawati et al., 2025). At the practical level, the dynamics of globalization have given rise to a number of current issues that directly impact the classroom and the lives of students. Changes in communication patterns, the dominance of digital media, and the nearly limitless flow of information have transformed the way the younger generation accesses, interprets, and practices religious teachings (Julio Eleazer Nendissa, 2025). This phenomenon opens opportunities for expanding religious literacy, but at the same time has the potential to trigger an identity crisis, weaken religious commitment, and reinforce

consumerist and individualistic behaviors that are inconsistent with Islamic values (Murni & Usman, 2026). In this context of “,” Islamic education is called upon to function not only as a means of transmitting religious knowledge but also as an adaptive and transformative educational system capable of producing a generation that excels in spiritual and moral aspects while also being competent in science and technology (M. Iqbal et al., 2026). Therefore, Islamic education needs to reorient its paradigm, shifting from a normative-textual approach toward an integrative, contextual, and adaptive approach to global dynamics. This includes curriculum renewal, enhancing teachers’ pedagogical competencies, the ethical use of digital technology, and strengthening character based on Islamic values that align with 21st-century competency requirements.

However, reality shows that Islamic education still faces a number of structural and cultural challenges that hinder this transformation. In many Islamic educational institutions, the curriculum remains fragmented between religious studies and general studies, so that graduates are often ill-prepared to face the demands of an increasingly competitive job market (Zuairiyah et al., 2025). Many Islamic Education (PAI) teachers also lack adequate digital literacy and 21st-century pedagogical skills, resulting in teaching methods that tend to be conventional and fail to foster critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Furthermore, the pressures of globalization have given rise to an identity crisis among students, where Islamic values are increasingly marginalized by popular culture and a consumerist lifestyle. (Rahmadani Akbar & Nur Saidah 2025) On the other hand, the 21st century demands mastery of competencies that cannot be ignored, particularly critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (the 4Cs) (Farhan Maulana et al., 2026). Without these competencies, graduates of Islamic education risk falling behind in global competition and being less able to contribute productively to an increasingly complex society. However, strengthening technical competencies without a strong foundation of values has the potential to exacerbate moral and spiritual crises, as skills can be used for unethical or destructive purposes. Therefore, the relevance of Islamic values to 21st-century competencies is a central question that must be addressed both conceptually and operationally. This question becomes increasingly crucial given that Islamic education aims not only to produce a competent generation but also one with noble character and global competitiveness (Andi Tahir et al., 2026).

Although various studies have addressed Islamic education in the era of globalization and digitalization, research that specifically links current issues in the digital space with the integration of Islamic values and 21st-century competencies (4Cs) remains scarce. Previous studies, such as the article by Muhammad Zein titled “The Transformation of Islamic Education in the Digital Age: Challenges and Solutions in Improving the Quality of Learning” (Zein, 2024) and Musbaing’s study on “Islamic Education Teachers’ Competencies in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities in Technology-Based Education” (Musbaing, 2024). Both of these studies tend to focus on the application of technological media in learning without delving deeper into the mapping of micro-issues in the digital space (such as digital riya, the fragmentation of religious authority, digital radicalism, and intolerance) as well as the operationalization of Islamic values within each dimension of the 4Cs. This, of course, creates a theoretical gap that needs to be filled with more comprehensive studies, particularly in structurally integrating Islamic “ ” values with the competencies of critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

This article aims to fill that gap by highlighting the importance of integrating Islamic values and the 4C competencies not only as normative concepts but also as an operational framework for addressing current issues in Islamic education in the era of

globalization. Furthermore, this article proposes an integrative approach, such as strengthening religious digital literacy based on tabayyun, religious moderation through dialogic learning, and Project-Based Learning (PJBL), which not only enhance the relevance of learning but also strengthen students' moral and spiritual foundations. Thus, this study is expected to make a positive contribution to strengthening the adaptive reconstruction of Islamic education while addressing the challenges facing Islamic education in the 21st century.

METHODS

This study employs a literature review (*library research*) by utilizing various relevant sources of literature focused on the research topic. The primary sources consist of scientific journal articles and previous research findings that discuss Islamic education in the era of globalization, contemporary issues, the relevance of Islamic values, and 21st-century competencies. Other sources include academic books, educational policy documents, and scholarly literature related to the research theme. Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by identifying, reviewing, and recording information from various relevant sources. Data processing was carried out in four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation (*display*), and data verification. The data obtained were then analyzed to identify current issues in Islamic education in the era of globalization and to examine the relationship between Islamic values and the 4C competencies: *critical thinking*, *creativity*, *collaboration*, and *communication*. The results of the analysis were subsequently synthesized to formulate the integration of Islamic values and 21st-century competencies as the foundation for the reconstruction of Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current Issues in Islamic Education in the Era of Globalization

Moral Decline & Identity in the Digital Space

The moral crisis and the crisis of Islamic identity are central, interrelated issues in the lives of the younger generation in the digital age. Social media has transformed into the primary space for interaction, religious expression, and self-formation, often supplanting the traditional roles of family and school. Consequently, moral development is no longer entirely under the control of educators but is influenced by the rapid, open, and difficult-to-filter flow of digital information (Fenindra Jailani et al., 2026).

First, the moral crisis manifests in the weakening of communication ethics and the culture of “digital riya.” The intensity of social media use drives addictive behavior in which popularity (the number of likes and followers) becomes a measure of personal success. This phenomenon triggers anxiety, image competition, and a shift in values from the sincerity of worship to symbolic self-promotion (“flexing”). Expressions of Islamic faith are often judged based on user responses rather than the depth of understanding or consistency of behavior— which creates tension between the need for social recognition and the principle of sincerity. (Octalia Heri Sulistyowati & Dzulkifli Hadi Imawan, 2026).

Second, the fragmentation of religious authority. Students can now access sermons and fatwas from various sources without clear scholarly filters. Social media algorithms tend to prioritize sensational and popular content over content grounded in scholarly depth, thereby giving rise to “instant religious authorities.” This situation leads to the oversimplification of Islamic teachings, misunderstandings of religious texts, and the

emergence of exclusive and reactive religious attitudes due to a lack of critical digital literacy (Antik Gunawan et al., 2026).

Third, an identity crisis among Muslim adolescents. The strong influence of digital culture causes confusion regarding the preservation of Islamic identity. Students often prioritize their online presence and viral trends on social media over Islamic values, as evidenced by changes in lifestyle, speech patterns, and a decline in discipline regarding religious practices (Wirda Yalainiet al., 2026).

Digital Radicalism, Intolerance

Digital radicalism and intolerance are critical issues in Islamic education in the era of globalization, as social media has become a space for the dissemination of ideologies, the formation of identities, and the reinforcement of religious attitudes. Digital radicalism takes the form not only of incitement to violence but also manifests through exclusive religious narratives, rejection of differences, claims of sole truth, and the negative labeling of other groups. Such content spreads rapidly through videos, posts, forums, and messaging apps, and is often packaged with religious symbols or quotations to give the appearance of Islamic legitimacy (Iqra Pandu Wijaya et al., 2023).

Intolerance in the digital space manifests as hate speech, insults against religious beliefs or symbols, cyberbullying, discrimination, and the dissemination of provocative information. Social media algorithms and echo chambers can reinforce similar viewpoints, reduce openness to differences, and deepen polarization between groups. These conditions also lead to a shift in religious literacy—from learning through teachers and authoritative sources toward the consumption of brief content that may not be accurate (M. Nanda Fanindy et al., 2021).

The 21st-Century Skills Gap and the Science Dichotomy

Islamic education currently faces serious challenges regarding the gap between the demands of 21st-century skills and the reality of learning in the field. Many Islamic educational institutions remain stuck in conventional methods focused on rote memorization (transfer of knowledge), thereby failing to adequately develop essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (the 4Cs). As a result, graduates of Islamic education often possess a solid theoretical understanding of religion but struggle to address practical challenges in the digital age, which demands adaptability and technological literacy (Muhammad Rayfansyah & Sri Murhayati 2025). This problem is exacerbated by the persistence of the dichotomous paradigm of knowledge—that is, the separation between religious studies (-syar'iyah) and general studies/science (ilmu kauniyyah). Furthermore, the low digital competence of PAI teachers is a major obstacle, as many educators struggle to integrate technology into their teaching due to limited training and infrastructure (Nita Yuli Astuti 2025).

The Relevance of Islamic Values to 21st-Century Competencies

The 21st century has transformed the world of education into a dynamic field, shaped by technological advancements, global connectivity, and ever-evolving social demands. In this era, students are expected to master higher-order thinking skills known as the 4C competencies: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. These skills are not merely academic abilities but also essential life competencies needed to solve complex problems, adapt to change, and actively participate in society (Jamil & Murniati, 2024).

Critical thinking

Critical thinking in Islamic Education is not merely cognitive analysis; rather, it transforms into the ability to filter spiritual information based on *tabayyun* (clarification) and *muhasabah* (introspection). In educational practice, critical thinking is framed as a respectful debate to seek the truth; in practice, students are required to include textual evidence (the Qur'an and Hadith) in every logical argument. *Tabayyun* serves as a mechanism for verifying religious information—for example, filtering viral content on social media—while *muhasabah* emerges through self-reflection that triggers metacognitive awareness. This transformation yields two dimensions unique to Islam: *tabayyun* (clarification) and *muhasabah* (introspection). *Tabayyun* serves to verify religious information—for example, by filtering viral content on social media—so that students are able to discern valid information in accordance with Islamic principles (Syifa Fatihatul Mubarakah et al., 2026). Theoretically, this approach aligns with the arguments of (Fikri, 2023) and (Sholihah and Idris, 2021), who state that the principle of *tabayyun* in the Qur'an parallels the verification mechanisms of logical positivism but possesses a transcendental dimension to distinguish between what is *haq* (true) and *bathil* (false). The process of *muhasabah* also confirms the findings of (Meilina and Roziman 2025) and (Nurpriatna et al., 2025), which emphasize that self-reflection is the foundation of metacognitive awareness in critical thinking.

Creativity

The dimension of creativity in PAI learning demands a transformation from technical innovation toward Islamized creativity—that is, creativity as a form of creative *ijtihad* rooted in *tawhid*, oriented toward *maslahah*, and framed by *akhlak*. Within this framework, creativity is not merely about generating original ideas but is a manifestation of gratitude for one's intellect and a trust to innovate within the bounds of goodness. PAI teachers can Islamize creativity through conceptual reframing (creativity as worship), spiritual project-based learning (e.g., digital *da'wah* content, campaigns for religious moderation), and the integration of ethical technology for creative outreach. In practice, students can produce “1 Minute, 1 Verse” videos that connect Quranic verses with current issues, design “Digital Ethics According to the Prophet” posters, or utilize AI to create illustrations of the prophets' stories and “Gen-Z Muslim” podcasts (Mubarakah et al., 2026). These findings reinforce the literature stating that generative AI facilitates creative *da'wah* content and the personalization of religious messages for the younger generation (Widyawati et al., 2024), while the CTL approach emphasizes that creativity requires a connection to social reality (Soleha et al., 2021). This synergy between technology and real-world context yields creativity that is both technically innovative and spiritually meaningful: students create using technology while internalizing Islamic values through social interaction. Thus, adaptive Islamic Education (PAI) does not merely adopt technology but “Islamizes” its use so that innovation remains aligned with religious essence.

Communication

Communication competencies in PAI learning are understood as efforts to frame 21st-century communication skills within the principles of Islamic ethics, particularly *Qaulan Ma'rufan*, so that students' communication is not only effective but also civilized and considered an act of worship. PAI teachers implement this by making “*Qaulan Ma'rufan*” the standard for classroom interaction, integrating ethical digital literacy, and

fostering moral reflection after every speaking or writing activity. For example, during discussions on religious hoaxes, students are trained to conduct *tabayyun* and then present the results of their verification using clear, polite, and non-judgmental language—as a manifestation of *Qaulan Ma'rufan* in the digital space. In the digital outreach project, students create short *da'wah* content (infographics, short videos, or mini-podcasts) that emphasize moral messages using inclusive language, without being patronizing, and avoiding exaggerated claims. Meanwhile, in values-based presentations, assessment focuses not only on the logical soundness of arguments but also on the politeness of language, respect for differing opinions, and the use of non-demeaning terminology. Through this approach, 4C communication fosters individuals who are both skillfully adaptable and ethically religious (Mubarokah et al., 2026). These findings align with the propositions by (Afifi et al., 2022) and (Abror, 2025) that the principles of Islamic communication must be explicitly integrated into digital literacy, so that 21st-century communication competencies are not only skill-based but also grounded in ethics. The emphasis on “Etiquette before Knowledge” underscores that students’ social intelligence is measured by the courtesy of their communication, making Islamic Education (PAI) a framework that humanizes individuals amid the digital tide.

Collaboration

The concept of collaboration has undergone a significant transformation in meaning. Collaboration is no longer understood merely as a technical skill of working in groups to complete academic tasks, but has been reconceptualized as a manifestation of the values of *ta'awun* (mutual aid) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in the context of Islamic education. Operationally, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers implement collaboration through an intensive peer-tutoring, a strategy designed to address disparities in Qur'an reading proficiency between students who are already fluent and those who are not yet fluent (Wawan Setiawan 2021). This approach fosters supportive interactions that enhance academic achievement while instilling social solidarity among students. Furthermore, collaborative management is reinforced through seat rotations and the assignment of specific roles in religious practice simulations (such as funeral prayers), which aim to break down the exclusivity of student groups or “cliques” and foster social inclusivity (Mubarokah et al., 2026). These findings indicate that group collaboration in Islamic Education goes beyond merely being a strategy for completing academic tasks; it functions as a social laboratory for practicing *ta'awun* and *ukhuwah*. Peer Tutoring Method Theoretically, this approach aligns with the findings of (Avramidis et al., 2019) and (Salani & Sekgoma, 2024), which argue that supportive peer interactions significantly enhance academic achievement. However, its added value lies in the spiritual dimension, where students feel a sense of obligation to help their peers as a form of social worship, not merely an academic duty. The strategy of breaking down group exclusivity aligns with (Pratiwi & Muthi, 2024), who state that collaborative learning effectively promotes social inclusivity. In the context of Islamic Education (PAI), collaboration serves as the antithesis of individualism, teaching students that social harmony and collective success take precedence over individual achievement alone.

Strategies for Adaptive Islamic Education Development Through the Integration of Islamic Values and 21st-Century Competencies in Addressing the Challenges of Globalization.

Strengthening Religious Digital Literacy

Digital literacy in Islamic Education is not merely a technical skill but a cognitive-ethical capacity to access, evaluate, and responsibly produce religious information in the digital space. Digital literacy is used to internalize the value of *tabayyun* as the foundation for critical thinking in filtering religious information. The integration of Islamic digital literacy (*tabayyun*, communication ethics, and value-based content analysis) enhances critical thinking, ethical awareness, and responsible use of social media among students, thereby building critical thinking competencies grounded in Islamic values. Digital literacy is also used to instill digital communication ethics based on Islamic values (*adab*, *amanah*, *qaulan ma'rufan*) (Yulastri et al. 2025). Good digital ethics (content verification, polite communication, discussion moderation) can transform social media into an alternative space for conveying Islamic values, in line with communication competencies. Furthermore, digital literacy is used to foster collaboration among schools, families, and communities in building a coherent religious literacy ecosystem that reflects collaboration competencies. Digital literacy is also used to facilitate students' creativity in producing innovative religious content. (Herawati et al., 2026). Islamic digital literacy helps students access reliable learning resources, improve information verification, and encourage responsible media use, which supports independence and creativity in Islamic Education (PAI) learning, in line with the creativity competency (Sabrina 2026).

Instilling Religious Moderation through Dialogic Learning

Religious moderation in Islamic education requires a dialogic, participatory, and reflective learning approach, rather than merely a one-way transfer of norms. Dialogic learning creates space for students to question, discuss, and reflect on religious values in relation to complex social realities (Juliadi et al., 2025). This strategy can be implemented through: (1) learning based on contemporary issues and cases (religious hoaxes, intolerance, conflict, discrimination) analyzed by referring to Islamic sources and social data, thereby fostering critical religious literacy; (2) the use of guided discussion, structured debate, case studies, and problem-based learning, followed by written reflections to internalize the value of moderation; (3) positioning teachers as role models and facilitators of dialogue who are moderate, fair, and open to critical questions; and (4) utilizing digital technology to expand the space for dialogue and engage students in producing moderate content (blogs, videos, podcasts) while simultaneously building ethical digital literacy. (Rohani et al. 2025).

Through this approach, religious moderation is understood as a balanced, tolerant, and diversity-respecting religious orientation, formed through a process of critical and reflective dialogue. This strategy also makes Islamic education more adaptable to globalization and digital disruption, as students are equipped with the ability to think critically, communicate respectfully, collaborate, be creative, and embody a moderate character as global citizens (Juliadi et al., 2025).

The Application of Project-Based Learning to Develop 4C Competencies

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a learning model that positions students as active participants who design, carry out, and present real-world projects as a means of

demonstrating their competencies. This model is structurally designed to develop 21st-century skills, specifically the 4Cs: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. (Septi Umalia Firda & Titin Sunarti, 2022). In its implementation, each phase of PjBL contributes to strengthening the 4Cs. During the stage of formulating the trigger question or main problem, students are trained to identify significant issues, analyze conditions, and formulate problems, thereby honing their critical and creative thinking skills. Furthermore, during the project planning and scheduling stage, they discuss how to divide tasks, determine strategies, and manage time—activities that directly foster communication and collaboration. (Neuwidia Nuzul Putri et al., 2023).

Empirical studies across various contexts (Islamic Education, science, vocational education, elementary education, and higher education) show that PjBL significantly improves students' 4C scores compared to conventional models. Improvements are evident in critical thinking skills for problem-solving, creativity in generating ideas and project outputs, effective communication during discussions and presentations, and the quality of collaboration in group work. A meta-analysis of various studies reports that PjBL has a substantial effect on improving critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and collaboration at the junior high school, senior high school, and college levels. Other studies in the contexts of biology and vocational education also note a sharp increase in all four 4C dimensions following the implementation of PjBL over several cycles of classroom action. (Nurul Azmi & Festiyed 2023). PjBL is not only a product-oriented learning strategy but also a systematic vehicle for fostering the 4C competencies that are essential for students in facing the challenges of globalization and digital disruption.

CONCLUSION

Globalization presents a dual challenge for Islamic education: on one hand, it opens access to global knowledge and collaboration; on the other, it triggers moral degradation, an identity crisis, digital radicalism, and a 21st-century competency gap resulting from the dichotomy between science and the low digital literacy of teachers. However, Islamic values such as *tabayyun*, *muhasabah*, *ta'awun*, and *qaulan ma'rufan* have proven to be relevant and can be operationally integrated into the 4C competencies (critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration) to produce a generation that is not only technically competent but also possesses noble character and is globally competitive. Adaptive strategies for the development of Islamic education include: (1) strengthening religious digital literacy based on Islamic values, (2) instilling religious moderation through dialogic and reflective learning, and (3) implementing project-based learning (PjBL) as a systematic vehicle for developing Islamized 4C competencies. Thus, the transformation of Islamic education in the era of globalization requires a paradigm shift from a normative-textual approach toward an integrative, contextual, and adaptive approach that harmonizes spiritual and moral excellence with the demands of 21st-century competencies.

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