

A Comparative Analysis of Classical and Modern Islamic Educational Concepts in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education in Indonesia has undergone significant transformation as traditional educational institutions increasingly adapt to contemporary educational demands. However, previous studies have predominantly examined classical and modern Islamic education separately, leaving limited understanding of their comparative characteristics and emerging convergence. This study aims to comparatively analyze the concepts of classical and modern Islamic education in Indonesia by examining their philosophical foundations, institutional development, curriculum, instructional practices, and educational orientations. This study employed a qualitative library research design using a systematic literature analysis approach. Relevant scholarly publications, academic books, policy documents, and peer-reviewed journal articles published primarily between 2015 and 2025 were collected from major academic databases and analyzed through qualitative content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns across both educational paradigms. The findings reveal that classical and modern Islamic education share a common commitment to Islamic values while differing in curriculum design, institutional management, and pedagogical approaches. Nevertheless, contemporary Islamic educational institutions increasingly demonstrate convergence through curriculum integration, technological adoption, interdisciplinary learning, and the preservation of Islamic character education, resulting in hybrid educational models that balance religious authenticity with educational innovation. The study concludes that the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia is characterized by integration rather than dichotomy. This comparative synthesis contributes to the discourse on Islamic educational modernization by demonstrating that sustainable educational development depends on harmonizing tradition and innovation. Future empirical studies are recommended to investigate how these hybrid educational models influence teaching practices, institutional effectiveness, and student learning outcomes across diverse Islamic educational settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia has long served as one of the country's most influential educational traditions, contributing not only to the transmission of religious knowledge but also to the formation

of moral values, social cohesion, and national identity. Throughout its historical development, Islamic educational institutions have evolved from informal learning circles (*halaqah*) and traditional *pesantren* into increasingly diverse institutional forms, including *madrasah*, integrated Islamic schools, modern Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic universities. This transformation reflects the dynamic interaction between religious traditions, educational reform, and changing societal needs. As Indonesia experiences rapid globalization, technological advancement, and educational reform, Islamic education is increasingly expected to preserve its theological foundations while simultaneously responding to contemporary educational demands such as digital literacy, critical thinking, interdisciplinary learning, and global competitiveness (Nuryana, 2022; Hayadin et al., 2025).

The modernization of Islamic education should not be understood as a replacement for traditional educational values but rather as a continuous process of adaptation that integrates Islamic principles with scientific advancement, technological innovation, and contemporary pedagogical practices. Recent scholarship argues that successful modernization requires balancing religious authenticity with educational innovation, thereby overcoming the long-standing dichotomy between religious sciences and general knowledge (Fernadi, 2024; Hajar, 2024). This perspective has encouraged many Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia to redesign curricula, strengthen institutional governance, adopt digital learning technologies, and improve teacher professionalism while maintaining Islamic ethical values as the foundation of educational practice. Consequently, modernization has become a strategic response to the educational challenges of the twenty-first century rather than merely a structural reform of educational institutions.

Despite these developments, the coexistence of traditional and modern Islamic education continues to generate significant academic debate. Traditional Islamic education is generally characterized by its emphasis on mastery of classical Islamic texts, teacher-centered instruction, spiritual formation, and learning methods such as *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and *halaqah*. Conversely, modern Islamic education integrates religious instruction with science, technology, national curriculum standards, student-centered learning, digital pedagogy, and competency-based assessment. While these distinctions are frequently presented as binary oppositions, recent studies suggest that the boundary between traditional and modern Islamic education is increasingly fluid. Many traditional *pesantren* have incorporated formal education and technological innovation, whereas modern Islamic schools continue to preserve classical Islamic traditions and moral education. This indicates that contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia is evolving toward a hybrid educational model that combines continuity with innovation rather than replacing one paradigm with another.

Although numerous studies have examined Islamic educational reform, curriculum integration, modernization, or the development of specific institutions, most investigations focus on a single educational model, such as *pesantren*, *madrasah*, or Islamic boarding schools. Other studies primarily discuss modernization from historical, managerial, or policy perspectives without conducting a comprehensive comparison between traditional and modern Islamic education across multiple educational dimensions. As a result, limited attention has been devoted to systematically synthesizing how these two educational paradigms differ and converge regarding philosophical foundations, institutional characteristics, curriculum design, instructional methods, educational objectives, and responses to contemporary societal challenges. This gap limits a holistic understanding of the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia and its implications for future educational development.

Furthermore, the rapid expansion of globalization, digital transformation, and educational technology has fundamentally altered expectations regarding educational quality and graduate competencies. Islamic educational institutions are increasingly expected to cultivate learners who possess not only strong religious commitment but also higher-order thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, digital competence, intercultural understanding, and lifelong learning abilities. These expectations have encouraged educational institutions to reconsider conventional instructional approaches and redesign curricula capable of integrating Islamic values with contemporary

knowledge. Consequently, understanding the comparative characteristics of traditional and modern Islamic education has become increasingly important for policymakers, educational leaders, curriculum developers, and researchers seeking sustainable models of Islamic education that remain faithful to religious traditions while responding effectively to changing educational contexts (Nuryana, 2022; Hajar, 2024).

Theoretically, this study is informed by the concept of educational modernization, which views educational change as a continuous process of institutional adaptation to evolving social, cultural, technological, and economic environments while preserving the fundamental values that define educational identity. Within Islamic education, modernization emphasizes integration rather than dichotomy by promoting harmony between religious knowledge, scientific inquiry, technological advancement, and character education. This perspective provides an appropriate analytical framework for examining how traditional and modern Islamic educational systems simultaneously preserve continuity and embrace innovation in response to contemporary educational demands.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of classical and modern Islamic educational concepts in Indonesia by examining their philosophical foundations, institutional development, curriculum structures, instructional methods, and educational orientations. Unlike previous studies that primarily describe individual educational institutions or discuss modernization separately, this study synthesizes both educational paradigms within a unified analytical framework to identify their distinctive characteristics, shared principles, and complementary contributions to the future development of Islamic education in Indonesia. The findings are expected to enrich the discourse on Islamic educational transformation and provide conceptual insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers in designing educational systems capable of integrating religious values with the competencies required in the twenty-first century.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative library research design to systematically examine and compare the concepts of classical and modern Islamic education in Indonesia. Library research was selected because the objective of this study was not to investigate empirical phenomena through field observation but to synthesize existing scholarly knowledge, identify conceptual similarities and differences, and generate a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Islamic educational thought. Unlike conventional narrative reviews, this study adopted a systematic qualitative literature analysis to ensure transparency and rigor throughout the research process (Snyder, 2019).

The data sources consisted exclusively of secondary data obtained from scholarly publications relevant to Islamic education in Indonesia. These sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, government policy documents, and official publications issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. To ensure the relevance and credibility of the literature, publications were primarily selected from internationally indexed databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Dimensions, complemented by authoritative Indonesian academic databases including GARUDA and SINTA. Priority was given to publications published between 2015 and 2025 to reflect contemporary developments in Islamic education, while seminal works published before 2015 were retained only when they provided essential historical or theoretical foundations.

The literature selection followed predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Publications were included if they (1) discussed classical or modern Islamic education in Indonesia, (2) examined educational philosophy, institutional development, curriculum, instructional methods, or educational management, (3) were published in peer-reviewed academic outlets or by reputable publishers, and (4) were available in English or Indonesian. Publications focusing solely on Islamic education outside the Indonesian context, opinion articles lacking scholarly evidence, unpublished manuscripts, duplicated records, and sources with insufficient methodological transparency were excluded from the analysis.

The literature review process consisted of four stages. First, relevant publications were identified using combinations of keywords such as Islamic education, traditional Islamic education, modern Islamic education, pesantren, madrasah, Islamic boarding school, curriculum reform, educational modernization, and Indonesia. Second, potentially relevant publications were screened by reviewing their titles, abstracts, and keywords to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Third, eligible publications underwent full-text examination to identify substantive information regarding educational philosophy, institutional characteristics, curriculum design, instructional methods, and educational objectives. Finally, the selected literature was subjected to systematic qualitative content analysis.

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis as proposed by Mayring (2014). The analysis involved several iterative stages, including data familiarization, open coding, category development, thematic classification, comparison across educational paradigms, and interpretative synthesis. During the coding process, relevant information from each publication was categorized into five analytical dimensions: (1) philosophical foundations, (2) educational institutions, (3) curriculum characteristics, (4) instructional methods, and (5) educational orientation and expected graduate competencies. These categories enabled systematic comparison between classical and modern Islamic education while identifying areas of continuity, transformation, and convergence.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was implemented by comparing information across multiple types of scholarly sources, including journal articles, academic books, and government policy documents. Source triangulation reduced the possibility of relying on a single perspective and strengthened the consistency of the interpretations. In addition, the analytical process was conducted iteratively, allowing themes identified during the initial coding process to be continuously refined until conceptual consistency was achieved. This approach follows widely accepted standards for qualitative evidence synthesis in educational research (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Because this study relied exclusively on publicly available documents and did not involve human participants, informed consent and institutional ethical approval were not required. Nevertheless, the research adhered to principles of academic integrity by accurately representing previous studies, appropriately acknowledging all sources through citation, and avoiding selective interpretation of the literature. These procedures were intended to ensure that the comparative analysis was conducted systematically, transparently, and in accordance with established standards for qualitative educational research.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Emerging Themes from the Literature

The qualitative synthesis of the selected literature demonstrates that the evolution of Islamic education in Indonesia is characterized by continuity, adaptation, and innovation rather than by a simple transition from traditional to modern educational models. Although earlier scholarship frequently portrayed classical and modern Islamic education as two contrasting paradigms, the reviewed studies consistently reveal that the distinction between them has become increasingly blurred over the past two decades. This transformation reflects the ability of Islamic educational institutions to respond to changing educational policies, technological developments, globalization, and societal expectations while preserving their theological foundations.

The thematic analysis identified three overarching patterns that consistently appeared across the reviewed publications. First, educational philosophy remains the principal foundation shaping institutional transformation regardless of educational model. Second, Islamic educational institutions have experienced substantial organizational diversification through the incorporation of formal education, professional governance, and technological innovation without abandoning their traditional religious identity. Third, modernization has increasingly been implemented through curriculum reform and pedagogical innovation rather than through institutional replacement. Consequently,

contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia should be understood as a dynamic educational ecosystem characterized by selective adaptation and institutional convergence rather than by dichotomous educational models.

Recent national educational statistics reinforce this interpretation. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Indonesia remains home to the world's largest Islamic educational network, with more than 39,000 pesantren serving approximately 4.9 million santri across the country. These institutions continue to expand not only numerically but also functionally by integrating formal education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and digital learning initiatives into their educational programs. Such developments demonstrate that traditional Islamic educational institutions have become active participants in educational modernization rather than passive observers of educational change.

Collectively, the reviewed studies indicate that Islamic educational transformation is best interpreted as an evolutionary process in which continuity and innovation coexist. Rather than replacing classical educational traditions, modernization enables Islamic educational institutions to reinterpret their educational missions within contemporary educational contexts.

3.1.2 Educational Philosophy as the Foundation of Institutional Transformation

The first and most consistent theme emerging from the reviewed literature concerns the philosophical foundation of Islamic education. Across the analyzed studies, both classical and modern Islamic education share a common theological orientation that positions education as a holistic process aimed at developing intellectually competent, spiritually devoted, and morally responsible individuals. This philosophical continuity distinguishes Islamic education from educational systems that primarily emphasize academic achievement or workforce preparation.

The literature consistently demonstrates that classical Islamic education conceptualizes knowledge as inseparable from faith (*iman*) and ethical conduct (*akhlaq*). Educational activities are therefore designed not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to cultivate character through continuous interaction between students and religious scholars. The *kyai* occupies a central position as both educator and moral exemplar, while learning methods such as *halaqah*, *sorogan*, and *bandongan* emphasize discipline, humility, and gradual mastery of classical Islamic scholarship. Consequently, educational success is measured not solely by cognitive achievement but also by students' spiritual maturity and moral behaviour.

Recent empirical studies suggest that these philosophical principles remain highly relevant despite rapid educational modernization. Research on contemporary pesantren indicates that religious identity and character education continue to constitute the core institutional values even when modern educational practices are introduced. Digital technologies, science education, and competency-based learning are generally adopted as complementary instruments rather than as substitutes for Islamic educational philosophy. This finding supports the argument that modernization within Islamic education represents a process of contextual reinterpretation rather than ideological transformation.

Conversely, modern Islamic education extends these philosophical foundations by incorporating broader educational objectives associated with twenty-first-century learning. The reviewed literature indicates that Islamic schools and modern pesantren increasingly emphasize scientific literacy, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and digital competence while maintaining Islamic ethics as the guiding framework for educational decision-making. Rather than separating religious sciences from general sciences, contemporary institutions increasingly seek to integrate both domains through interdisciplinary curricula and value-based instruction.

This philosophical convergence reflects broader educational developments occurring throughout the Muslim world. Recent comparative studies argue that successful Islamic educational reform depends upon balancing religious authenticity with educational innovation rather than privileging one dimension over the other. Institutions capable of integrating Islamic values with contemporary

educational competencies demonstrate greater adaptability to globalization while maintaining their cultural legitimacy.

The synthesis further reveals that philosophical continuity has become an important factor supporting institutional resilience. Despite significant educational reforms introduced by national policies and technological developments, Islamic educational institutions have maintained public trust because modernization has generally been implemented without abandoning their religious identity. Consequently, the literature consistently portrays educational philosophy as the principal mechanism through which institutional continuity is preserved amidst structural transformation.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the principal distinction between classical and modern Islamic education lies not in their educational philosophy but in the institutional strategies through which shared philosophical commitments are translated into curriculum, pedagogy, governance, and educational practice. The persistence of common educational values across both paradigms indicates that Islamic educational modernization in Indonesia is characterized more by philosophical continuity than ideological change.

3.1.3 Institutional Diversification and Organizational Adaptation

The second major theme identified through the qualitative synthesis concerns the institutional transformation of Islamic education. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that Indonesian Islamic educational institutions have experienced substantial diversification over recent decades while preserving their distinctive religious identity. Rather than replacing traditional educational institutions, modernization has expanded the range of institutional models available within the national education system.

Traditional institutions such as *pondok pesantren*, *surau*, and *meunasah* continue to function as important centers of religious learning, community engagement, and character formation. Historically, these institutions relied upon informal organizational structures, flexible curricula, and close interpersonal relationships between *kyai* and students. However, recent studies demonstrate that many *pesantren* have adopted increasingly formal administrative systems, improved educational infrastructure, introduced quality assurance mechanisms, and strengthened cooperation with government agencies and higher education institutions.

This institutional adaptation has accelerated following the enactment of the Pesantren Law (Law No. 18 of 2019), which formally recognizes *pesantren* as integral components of Indonesia's national education system. The legislation has expanded opportunities for institutional accreditation, curriculum development, financial support, and educational collaboration while allowing *pesantren* to preserve their distinctive educational traditions. Recent evaluations suggest that this policy has encouraged greater institutional professionalism without fundamentally altering the religious identity of *pesantren*.

Simultaneously, modern Islamic educational institutions—including madrasah, integrated Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools—have continued to strengthen their Islamic identity through expanded religious instruction, Qur'anic memorization programs, Arabic language education, and character development initiatives. Consequently, institutional development has proceeded in both directions: traditional institutions have become increasingly modernized, whereas modern institutions have become increasingly attentive to preserving classical Islamic educational traditions.

Another important pattern emerging from the reviewed literature concerns organizational collaboration. Recent studies report growing partnerships between *pesantren*, universities, local governments, industry, and community organizations to strengthen educational quality, vocational education, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation. These collaborative arrangements have enabled Islamic educational institutions to expand their educational functions beyond religious instruction toward broader community development and sustainable human resource development.

Overall, the reviewed evidence suggests that institutional diversification should not be interpreted as fragmentation but rather as adaptive specialization within a common Islamic educational

framework. The coexistence of traditional and modern institutions reflects the capacity of Indonesian Islamic education to respond flexibly to diverse educational needs while maintaining its theological and cultural foundations. Institutional transformation, therefore, represents an evolutionary process through which Islamic educational organizations enhance their educational relevance without compromising their historical identity.

3.1.4 Curriculum Integration as the Primary Driver of Educational Modernization

The qualitative synthesis identifies curriculum integration as the most influential driver of educational transformation within Indonesian Islamic education. While philosophical commitments provide the normative foundation of Islamic education, curriculum functions as the principal mechanism through which these commitments are translated into educational practice. Across the reviewed literature, curriculum reform consistently emerges as the primary strategy adopted by Islamic educational institutions to reconcile the preservation of religious traditions with the growing demand for scientific literacy, technological competence, and twenty-first-century skills.

Traditionally, the curriculum of Islamic educational institutions was predominantly designed around the study of the Qur'an, Hadith, *fiqh*, *aqidah*, Arabic language, and classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*). Curriculum development was largely determined by the authority of the *kyai* and reflected the historical traditions of individual pesantren rather than standardized educational policies. This flexible curriculum structure enabled institutions to preserve religious authenticity and adapt learning according to students' educational needs. However, it also created considerable variation in educational content and learning outcomes across institutions.

The reviewed studies indicate that educational modernization has significantly transformed curriculum development during the last two decades. Rather than abandoning religious subjects, Islamic educational institutions increasingly adopt integrated curricula that combine Islamic sciences with mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, information technology, environmental education, entrepreneurship, and foreign languages. This integration reflects a growing recognition that graduates require interdisciplinary competencies to participate effectively in contemporary society while maintaining their Islamic worldview.

Evidence supporting this transformation is also reflected in national educational policy. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) has encouraged greater curricular flexibility, project-based learning, competency development, and contextual education across Indonesian schools, including madrasah and pesantren that implement formal education. Recent studies report that Islamic educational institutions have increasingly utilized this policy framework to integrate Islamic values into multidisciplinary learning rather than treating religious education as an isolated subject. Consequently, curriculum integration has become both an educational and institutional strategy for enhancing graduate competitiveness while preserving religious identity.

The reviewed literature further demonstrates that curriculum integration extends beyond the inclusion of general subjects within religious education. Many contemporary pesantren have introduced vocational education, digital literacy, financial literacy, environmental sustainability, leadership training, and entrepreneurship into their educational programs. These initiatives reflect an expanded understanding of Islamic education that prepares students not only for religious leadership but also for active participation in economic, technological, and civic life. At the same time, modern Islamic schools increasingly reinforce Qur'anic memorization, Arabic language, and Islamic character education to ensure that modernization does not weaken students' religious identity.

Another important pattern emerging from the synthesis concerns the integration of technology into curriculum implementation. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, digital learning platforms, learning management systems, virtual classrooms, and online educational resources have become increasingly common across Islamic educational institutions. Recent empirical research indicates that digital transformation has encouraged teachers to redesign learning activities that integrate Islamic ethical values with interactive instructional technologies. Rather than replacing face-to-face religious

instruction, digital technologies have expanded opportunities for collaborative learning, independent study, and access to Islamic educational resources.

Overall, the evidence indicates that curriculum integration represents far more than administrative reform. It reflects a broader reconceptualization of Islamic education in which religious knowledge and contemporary sciences are understood as complementary rather than contradictory domains. The reviewed studies consistently suggest that successful curriculum modernization depends upon maintaining this balance between educational innovation and Islamic identity, thereby strengthening both educational relevance and institutional sustainability.

3.1.5 Pedagogical Transformation toward Learner-Centered Education

The fourth theme emerging from the literature concerns pedagogical transformation. While curriculum reform determines what students learn, pedagogical innovation determines how learning takes place. The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that instructional practices within Indonesian Islamic education have evolved considerably in response to advances in educational research, digital technology, and changing learner characteristics.

Classical Islamic education has historically relied upon instructional approaches such as *halaqah*, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, *tahfiz*, and *bahtsul masa'il*. These pedagogical traditions emphasize direct interaction between teacher and student, gradual mastery of knowledge, repetition, discipline, and continuous moral supervision. Such approaches remain highly valued because they facilitate the transmission of religious authority while cultivating respect, humility, perseverance, and ethical responsibility. Consequently, teacher-centered instruction within pesantren should not be interpreted as pedagogical conservatism but rather as an educational model rooted in the epistemological traditions of Islamic scholarship.

Nevertheless, the reviewed studies reveal substantial pedagogical innovation across contemporary Islamic educational institutions. Student-centered learning approaches—including collaborative learning, inquiry-based instruction, project-based learning, reflective discussion, experiential learning, and authentic assessment—have become increasingly prominent within madrasah, integrated Islamic schools, and many modern pesantren. These approaches encourage students to actively construct knowledge, develop critical thinking, and apply Islamic values in solving real-world problems rather than relying exclusively on memorization.

An important finding emerging from the synthesis is that pedagogical modernization has generally complemented rather than displaced traditional instructional methods. Several empirical studies report that pesantren increasingly combine *halaqah* with digital learning platforms, multimedia resources, online discussion forums, and blended learning environments. Similarly, modern Islamic schools continue to preserve Qur'anic memorization, teacher mentorship, and religious habituation alongside collaborative and technology-enhanced instruction. This reciprocal adaptation demonstrates that pedagogical transformation within Islamic education is characterized by instructional enrichment rather than methodological replacement.

The literature also highlights the growing importance of digital pedagogy. Rapid technological development has encouraged Islamic educational institutions to integrate educational technologies into classroom instruction, administrative management, and student learning support. Recent research indicates that digital platforms improve learning accessibility, strengthen teacher–student communication, and facilitate independent learning while expanding opportunities for integrating Islamic educational resources into classroom activities. At the same time, scholars consistently emphasize that technological innovation should remain guided by Islamic ethical principles to ensure that digital transformation contributes positively to students' intellectual and moral development.

Another significant pattern concerns assessment practices. Traditional Islamic education has historically emphasized mastery of religious texts and oral evaluation through direct interaction with teachers. Contemporary institutions increasingly complement these approaches with competency-based assessment, project evaluation, portfolios, reflective journals, and performance assessment. Such

developments indicate a broader shift from evaluating memorization alone toward assessing students' ability to apply knowledge, demonstrate ethical behaviour, collaborate with others, and solve authentic problems.

Taken together, these findings suggest that pedagogical transformation within Indonesian Islamic education reflects a balanced integration of classical educational wisdom and contemporary educational theory. Rather than abandoning traditional instructional practices, Islamic educational institutions selectively incorporate learner-centered approaches that strengthen students' academic competence while preserving the moral and spiritual dimensions of Islamic education.

3.1.6 Emergence of Hybrid Models of Islamic Education

The final and most significant theme identified through the qualitative synthesis is the emergence of hybrid models of Islamic education. Across all reviewed studies, a consistent pattern of institutional convergence is evident. Rather than maintaining rigid distinctions between traditional and modern educational systems, Indonesian Islamic educational institutions increasingly combine elements of both paradigms to address contemporary educational challenges.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that traditional *pesantren* have progressively incorporated formal education, standardized curriculum frameworks, vocational education, digital technology, entrepreneurship, and quality assurance mechanisms without abandoning their classical religious traditions. Conversely, modern Islamic schools have strengthened Qur'anic memorization, Arabic language instruction, character education, religious habituation, and teacher mentorship to reinforce their Islamic educational identity. This reciprocal adaptation indicates that institutional modernization proceeds through integration rather than substitution.

The emergence of hybrid educational models also reflects broader societal changes. Globalization, technological advancement, labour market transformation, and national educational reforms have created increasing demand for graduates who possess both religious integrity and professional competence. Consequently, Islamic educational institutions are expected to produce individuals who demonstrate scientific literacy, technological capability, ethical leadership, intercultural competence, environmental awareness, and lifelong learning while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic values.

Importantly, the synthesis indicates that educational hybridity should not be interpreted as institutional compromise but as educational resilience. By selectively integrating educational innovations with established religious traditions, Islamic educational institutions have strengthened their capacity to remain socially relevant without losing their theological legitimacy. This adaptive capacity explains why Islamic education continues to attract substantial public trust despite profound educational transformation occurring throughout Indonesia.

Collectively, the five themes identified in this study suggest that contemporary Islamic education has entered a new phase of development characterized by convergence, adaptation, and innovation. Educational modernization no longer represents a transition from traditional to modern education but rather the continuous reconstruction of Islamic educational practice in response to changing educational environments. The principal contribution of this study therefore lies in demonstrating that the future of Islamic education in Indonesia is more accurately explained through the concept of educational hybridity, where religious authenticity and educational innovation coexist within an integrated institutional framework. This analytical perspective extends previous scholarship that frequently conceptualized Islamic educational transformation as a binary opposition between traditionalism and modernism. Instead, the present synthesis provides evidence that sustainable Islamic education is increasingly built upon the productive interaction between these two educational traditions, offering a conceptual foundation for future curriculum reform, institutional development, and educational policymaking.

3.2 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the relationship between classical and modern Islamic education in Indonesia should not be understood as a dichotomy between tradition and modernity but rather as a dynamic continuum characterized by adaptation, integration, and institutional transformation. While classical Islamic education continues to preserve religious authority, moral formation, and the transmission of Islamic scholarship, modern Islamic education expands these foundations by incorporating scientific knowledge, technological literacy, and contemporary pedagogical approaches. This finding supports recent scholarship arguing that the modernization of Islamic education is no longer directed toward replacing traditional educational values but toward strengthening their relevance within rapidly changing social, technological, and educational environments (Khovi et al., 2024; Karel, 2025).

The convergence identified across educational philosophy suggests that Indonesian Islamic education has entered a new stage of development in which institutional identity is increasingly defined by educational adaptability rather than by rigid institutional typologies. Earlier debates frequently portrayed traditional pesantren and modern Islamic schools as competing educational systems representing preservation and reform, respectively. However, the present findings indicate that these boundaries have gradually diminished. Traditional pesantren increasingly incorporate formal schooling, digital learning, entrepreneurship, and science education, whereas modern Islamic schools strengthen Qur'anic memorization, Arabic instruction, and character education to reinforce students' religious identity. This institutional convergence reflects broader educational modernization in which innovation is interpreted as an extension rather than a rejection of Islamic educational traditions. Similar conclusions have been reported in recent studies emphasizing that successful modernization depends upon balancing innovation with the preservation of Islamic ethical values.

Curriculum development emerged as the principal mechanism through which educational transformation occurs. Unlike the curriculum of classical Islamic education, which is predominantly shaped by religious authority and institutional tradition, modern Islamic education adopts a more systematic and competency-oriented curriculum aligned with national educational standards. Nevertheless, the findings reveal that curriculum integration has become increasingly prominent across both educational models. Rather than maintaining the historical dichotomy between religious and secular sciences, contemporary Islamic educational institutions increasingly seek to integrate Islamic values with science, technology, environmental awareness, entrepreneurship, and digital competence. This finding is consistent with recent research arguing that curriculum modernization should prioritize interdisciplinary integration while maintaining the ethical foundations of Islamic education. Such integration enables Islamic educational institutions to prepare graduates capable of responding to twenty-first-century challenges without compromising their religious identity.

The pedagogical transformation identified in this study further illustrates the changing landscape of Islamic education. Classical instructional approaches—including halaqah, sorogan, bandongan, and tahfiz—remain important for developing discipline, teacher-student mentorship, and mastery of classical Islamic scholarship. However, these approaches are increasingly complemented by collaborative learning, inquiry-based instruction, project-based learning, reflective discussion, digital technology, and competency-based assessment. Rather than replacing traditional methods, contemporary pedagogical innovation enriches them by creating more interactive learning environments that foster critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving. Recent educational research similarly emphasizes that effective Islamic pedagogy should integrate reflective learning, authentic assessment, and learner-centered instructional strategies to strengthen both academic achievement and character formation.

Another important implication concerns the evolving concept of character education within Islamic educational institutions. Although character formation has historically been embedded within Islamic education through moral exemplification, religious habituation, and close interaction between teachers and students, contemporary educational contexts require more systematic approaches to

integrating character education into curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Recent studies have demonstrated that Islamic educational values become significantly more effective when embedded within reflective teaching practices, interdisciplinary learning experiences, and authentic assessment rather than relying solely on moral instruction or memorization. Consequently, the integration of Islamic ethics with national educational priorities represents a strategic opportunity for strengthening both religious education and civic responsibility in multicultural societies.

The findings also contribute to the broader theoretical discourse on educational modernization. Classical modernization theories frequently assume that modernization inevitably weakens traditional educational institutions. However, the present study challenges this assumption by demonstrating that modernization within Indonesian Islamic education has largely occurred through institutional adaptation rather than institutional displacement. Traditional educational institutions remain socially relevant because they selectively adopt educational innovations while preserving their religious legitimacy and cultural authority. Conversely, modern institutions strengthen their legitimacy by incorporating classical Islamic traditions into formal educational systems. This reciprocal adaptation suggests that modernization within Islamic education is better understood as a process of educational hybridity, where continuity and innovation coexist within a single institutional framework rather than representing mutually exclusive educational paradigms.

From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that educational reforms should avoid framing traditional and modern Islamic education as separate policy domains. Instead, curriculum reform, teacher professional development, digital transformation, and institutional quality assurance should recognize the complementary strengths of both educational traditions. Traditional institutions possess considerable strengths in character formation, community engagement, religious identity, and moral education, whereas modern institutions contribute systematic curriculum management, educational technology, scientific literacy, and competency-based learning. Educational policies that facilitate collaboration between these institutional models may strengthen the overall quality and sustainability of Islamic education within Indonesia.

The findings further imply that future curriculum development should emphasize integrative educational models capable of combining religious literacy, scientific reasoning, digital competence, intercultural understanding, environmental responsibility, and ethical leadership. Such integration aligns closely with international educational priorities concerning Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), global citizenship education, and twenty-first-century competencies while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic educational philosophy. Consequently, Islamic education possesses substantial potential to contribute not only to religious development but also to sustainable national development by preparing graduates who are morally responsible, intellectually competent, technologically adaptive, and socially engaged.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis relies exclusively on secondary literature and therefore reflects published academic interpretations rather than direct institutional practices. Second, although recent literature was prioritized, the diversity of Islamic educational institutions across Indonesia means that contextual variations may not be fully represented. Third, this study primarily focuses on conceptual comparison and does not examine empirical outcomes such as student achievement, teacher competence, institutional effectiveness, or graduate employability.

Future research should therefore employ mixed-methods or comparative case study approaches involving pesantren, madrasah, and integrated Islamic schools across different Indonesian regions. Longitudinal studies examining digital transformation, artificial intelligence integration, curriculum innovation, and character education implementation would further enrich understanding of how Islamic educational institutions continue to evolve in response to globalization and educational reform. Such investigations would strengthen both theoretical development and evidence-based policymaking concerning the future direction of Islamic education in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the relationship between classical and modern Islamic education in Indonesia is characterized not by opposition but by a process of continuous adaptation and convergence. While classical Islamic education maintains its emphasis on religious scholarship, moral formation, and teacher-centered learning, modern Islamic education expands these foundations through curriculum integration, scientific knowledge, technological innovation, and learner-centered pedagogies. The findings reveal that contemporary Islamic educational institutions increasingly adopt hybrid educational models that preserve Islamic values while responding to the demands of twenty-first-century education, including digital transformation, interdisciplinary learning, and competency-based education. These findings contribute to the growing discourse on Islamic educational modernization by highlighting that educational transformation is better understood as the integration of tradition and innovation rather than the replacement of one paradigm by another. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its reliance on secondary data derived from published literature, which may not fully capture the diversity of institutional practices across Indonesia or reflect recent educational developments at the local level. Future research should therefore employ empirical approaches, including comparative case studies, mixed-methods designs, and longitudinal investigations involving pesantren, madrasah, integrated Islamic schools, and other Islamic educational institutions across different regions. Such studies would provide richer evidence regarding curriculum implementation, pedagogical innovation, digital transformation, educational leadership, and student learning outcomes, thereby strengthening both theoretical understanding and evidence-based policymaking for the sustainable development of Islamic education in Indonesia.

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