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Challenges and Adaptation Strategies of Madrasah, Islamic Schools, and Pesantren in Facing Global Competition

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the global challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions (madrasah, Islamic schools and pesantren) in Indonesia and to analyse effective strategies for enhancing their competitiveness. The study employed a qualitative literature review method, analysing various academic journals, books, and official reports from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Central Statistics Agency over the past five years. The findings indicate that the main challenges include socio-cultural changes that threaten local Islamic values, fierce competition with state and international schools, and managerial and funding constraints. The study also found that successful adaptation strategies include the implementation of quality management, curriculum innovation integrating religious and general studies, the utilisation of digital technology, institutional collaboration, teacher competency development, international partnership programmes, and outcome-based evaluation. In conclusion, Islamic educational institutions must undergo holistic transformation without losing their essential identity in order to remain relevant and competitive on the global stage. This research provides a strategic framework for Islamic education leaders in facing global competition.

Keyword: Global Competition, Educational Strategies, Islamic Schools.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tantangan global yang dihadapi oleh lembaga pendidikan Islam (madrasah, sekolah Islam, dan pesantren) di Indonesia serta menganalisis strategi yang efektif untuk meningkatkan daya saing mereka. Penelitian menggunakan metode kajian literatur kualitatif dengan menganalisis berbagai jurnal ilmiah, buku dan laporan resmi kementerian Agama serta Badan Pusat Statistik dalam lima tahun terakhir. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tantangan utama meliputi perubahan sosial budaya yang mengancam

nilai-nilai keislaman lokal, persaingan ketat dengan sekolah umum dan internasional, serta keterbatasan manajerial dan pendanaan. Penelitian juga menemukan bahwa strategi adaptasi yang berhasil antara lain penerapan manajemen mutu, inovasi kurikulum yang mengintegrasikan ilmu agama dan umum, pemanfaatan teknologi digital, kolaborasi kelembagaan, pengembangan kompetensi guru, program kemitraan internasional, serta evaluasi berbasis hasil. Kesimpulannya, lembaga pendidikan Islam harus bertransformasi secara holistic tanpa kehilangan identitas esensialnya agar tetap relevan dan kompetitif di kancah global. Penelitian ini memberikan kerangka strategis bagi pemimpin pendidikan Islam dalam menghadapi persaingan global.

Kata Kunci: Persaingan Global, strategi Pendidikan, Sekolah Islam

A. Introduction

Islamic education plays a crucial role in the increasingly complex context of globalization. In an era of rapid information and technology development, Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are required to adapt and innovate. According to Sunaiah, Islamic education aims not only to prepare students to face increasingly competitive global challenges.¹With the demand to produce graduates who not only understand religious knowledge but also have competence in other fields, these institutions must be able to adapt their curriculum and learning methods.

Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia shows that the number of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia continues to increase, with more than 30,000 madrasahs spread throughout the archipelago.²Despite their large numbers, the challenges these institutions face are no less significant. Competition from public schools and international educational institutions is a major challenge. Research by Hasanah et al. revealed that international schools in major Indonesian cities experience an average annual increase in student numbers of 8-10%, the majority of whom are Muslim students who previously sent their children to madrasahs or Islamic boarding schools.³Therefore, it is important for madrasahs, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools to develop effective strategies to remain relevant and competitive in the global arena.

The research problem formulation in this study is: (1) What are the challenges faced by madrasahs, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools in the global era? (2) What strategies can be implemented to increase the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions? The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of these challenges and analyze effective strategies to increase competitiveness. This study is expected to provide insight for managers of Islamic educational institutions in formulating appropriate policies. In addition, the results of this study can also serve as a reference for further researchers in the field of Islamic education and become evaluation material for policy makers at the Ministry of Religion.⁴

Globalization has become an inevitable phenomenon in the development of the modern world, including in the field of Islamic education. The currents of globalization have brought significant changes to various aspects of life, such as economic, social, cultural, and technological, which directly impact education systems in various countries. In this context, madrasahs, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can no longer operate

¹Siti Sunaiah et al., "Globalization and Curriculum Adaptation in Madrasahs", *Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, Vol.11 No.1 (2024), h. 25

²Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Madrasah and Islamic Boarding School Statistics Data for 2023*, (Jakarta: Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024), p. 12

³Umi Hasanah et al., "Muslim Students' Migration to International Schools: A Phenomenological Study", *Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol.8 No.2 (2024), h. 115

⁴Dina Mardiana and Firdaus Firdaus, "Continuous Evaluation in Improving the Quality of Islamic Education", *Journal of Educational Evaluation*, Vol.6 No.1 (2024), h. 50

exclusively within traditional paradigms but are required to adapt to the ever-evolving global dynamics. Globalization presents not only opportunities but also serious challenges that can threaten the very existence of Islamic educational institutions if not responded to with appropriate strategies. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how Islamic educational institutions systematically and strategically address these global pressures.

In the context of Islamic education, globalization is often associated with rapid advances in science and technology. This progress demands that educational institutions integrate information technology into the learning process. However, the reality on the ground shows that many madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools still face limitations in terms of technological infrastructure and human resource competency. This is a major obstacle to improving the quality of education and enabling it to compete globally. Furthermore, globalization also brings new values that are not always aligned with Islamic principles, necessitating selective adoption of these changes.

The challenges of globalization to Islamic education are not only technical but also ideological. Islamic educational institutions are faced with the penetration of global culture, which could shift Islamic values. This phenomenon raises concerns about an identity crisis among the younger generation of Muslims. Therefore, madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools must be able to maintain a balance between modernization and the preservation of Islamic values. This is crucial for Islamic education to remain relevant without losing its identity as an institution for developing Islamic character.

Furthermore, global competition in education is intensifying with the emergence of various modern educational institutions offering superior quality. Madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) must improve their competitiveness to stay ahead of the competition. This competition encompasses aspects of curriculum, teaching methods, teaching staff quality, and graduate output. Graduates of Islamic educational institutions are required not only to possess a strong religious understanding but also global competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy.

To address these challenges, curriculum reform is a necessary strategic step. The Islamic education curriculum must integrate Islamic values with relevant global competencies. This aims to produce graduates who are not only religious but also globally competitive. This integration also includes strengthening character education based on Islamic values.

Furthermore, the role of teachers as key actors in the educational process is crucial. Teachers are not only required to master subject matter but also to possess adequate pedagogical and technological competencies. Improving teacher quality is key to enhancing the quality of Islamic education. Without competent teachers, educational reform efforts will not be optimal.

On the other hand, institutional management is also a crucial factor in determining the success of Islamic educational institutions. Many madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools still face challenges due to unprofessional management. This impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of educational management. Therefore, management reform based on modern principles without abandoning Islamic values is necessary.

Globalization also brings challenges in the form of rapid social and cultural change. Islamic educational institutions must be able to respond to these changes with an adaptive approach. This includes the ability to understand community needs and adapt educational programs to current demands. Beyond challenges, globalization also opens up opportunities for Islamic education to develop. Access to information technology enables educational institutions to improve the quality of learning. Furthermore, globalization opens up opportunities for international collaboration that can enhance the quality of Islamic education. By capitalizing on these opportunities, madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools can increase their competitiveness globally. However, seizing these opportunities requires thorough

preparation. Without adequate preparation, globalization can actually threaten the sustainability of Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, a comprehensive and sustainable adaptation strategy is needed to face these global challenges.

B. Literature Review

Globalization is a phenomenon involving integration and interdependence among countries worldwide, characterized by increasingly rapid exchanges of information, culture, and economics. In the context of Islamic education, globalization has significant impacts, both positive and negative. On the one hand, globalization provides broader access to information and educational technology, enabling Islamic educational institutions to adopt more modern and effective teaching methods. However, on the other hand, globalization also poses challenges such as cultural homogenization, which can threaten local and traditional values in Islamic education.⁵ Wahab et al. added that the current of globalization has given birth to the previous generation, so that traditional teaching approaches become less effective if not adapted.⁶

Madrasahs and Islamic schools have a long history, dating back to the early days of Islam's spread in Indonesia. According to Mutohar, modern madrasahs now teach not only religious knowledge but also general knowledge, enabling them to compete with other public schools.⁷ The role of madrasahs in society is crucial, particularly in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows that the number of students studying in madrasahs continues to increase, with over 40 million students enrolled by 2023.⁸ However, Fauziah et al. criticized that the increase in the number of students is not always followed by an increase in quality, because the teacher-student ratio in madrasahs is still far from the ideal standard set by UNESCO.⁹

Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have also undergone significant transformation. Suresman et al. note that many Islamic boarding schools now utilize digital technology in their teaching and learning processes, such as online learning and educational apps.¹⁰ This transformation extends beyond teaching methods to a curriculum that integrates general knowledge with religious education, as implemented at the Gontor Modern Islamic boarding school. In their research, Maulana and Karim found that Islamic boarding schools that successfully transformed exhibit the following characteristics: visionary leadership, openness to innovation, and extensive collaborative networks with external institutions.¹¹ The theory used in this research is the organizational adaptation theory from Hrebiniak and Joyce, which states that an organization's ability to adapt to the external environment is determined by proactive strategies and the internal resources it has.¹²

⁵Endang Setyowati et al., "Islamic Education and the Challenges of Cultural Homogenization", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol.14 No.2 (2024), h. 118

⁶Abdul Wahabet et al., "Digital Native Generation and Changes in Learning Styles in Madrasahs", *Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology*, Vol.7 No.2 (2024), h. 102

⁷Agus Mutohar, "Madrasah Quality Management in Increasing Competitiveness in the Competitive Era", *Journal of Islamic Education*, Vol.12 No.1 (2023), h. 48

⁸Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Madrasah Statistics Data...*, h. 34

⁹Only Fauziah et al., "Ideal Teacher-Student Ratio in Madrasahs: Challenges and Solutions", *Journal of Islamic Education Management*, Vol.10 No.2 (2023), h. 50

¹⁰Give it to Suresman et al., "Digitalization of Learning in Islamic Boarding Schools", *Journal of Islamic Educational Technology*, Vol.8 No.1 (2025), h. 70

¹¹Yusuf Maulana and Abdul Karim, "Characteristics of Islamic Boarding Schools that Have Successfully Transformed", *Journal of Islamic Educational Leadership*, Vol.9 No.2 (2024), h. 72

¹²Lawrence G. Hrebiniak and William F. Joyce, *Implementing Strategy*, (New York: Macmillan, 1985), h.

Studies on Islamic education in the context of globalization show that global change has had significant implications for the education systems of madrasas, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools. Mawardi's research confirms that globalization presents three main challenges: advances in science and technology, the process of democratization, and the phenomenon of moral decadence among the younger generation. In this context, Islamic educational institutions can no longer survive with conventional, static approaches but must undergo systemic transformation. The research also emphasizes that curriculum reform is an urgent need to produce globally competitive human resources. Furthermore, the integration of religious and general knowledge is one strategic solution to address these challenges. Thus, Islamic education is required to maintain a balance between normative values and practical global needs.

Another study by Lisdaleni and colleagues showed that the challenges facing Islamic education in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools are multidimensional, encompassing both internal and external aspects. Internally, the challenges faced include suboptimal human resource quality, limited infrastructure, and weak institutional management. Meanwhile, externally, challenges arise in the form of global competition and rapid social change. This study used a literature review approach and emphasized the importance of problem identification as the first step in formulating solutions for Islamic education. Furthermore, this study highlighted the need for innovation in learning methods to be more adaptive to current developments. Therefore, Islamic education needs to develop holistic and sustainable strategies.

A study conducted by Ariski Nuril Indah and her team explains that madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) must be able to respond to global technological developments by reforming their educational systems. This research emphasizes that Islamic educational institutions have a responsibility to create a generation that is not only religious but also skilled in science and technology. Furthermore, this study shows that integrating religious knowledge and modern science is a crucial step in improving graduate competitiveness. However, the implementation of this integration still faces various obstacles, particularly in terms of the preparedness of educators. Therefore, improving teacher capacity is a top priority in Islamic education reform. This research also underscores the importance of innovation in the management of educational institutions.

Research conducted by Misbahul Arifin and Ramzatul Widad Rizqiyani highlights the importance of curriculum innovation in Islamic education as a response to globalization. The results show that curriculum innovation is carried out through the integration of Islamic values with 21st-century competencies, such as digital literacy, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method and found that curriculum reform encompasses structural, pedagogical, and ideological aspects. However, the implementation of this innovation still faces challenges in the form of resistance to change and limited human resources. This study also emphasizes the importance of a participatory approach in curriculum development. Thus, the Islamic education curriculum must be flexible and contextual.

A study by Widya Aulia Zahra shows that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), madrasahs (Islamic schools), and Islamic schools (Islamic schools) play a strategic role in developing superior human resources in the era of globalization. However, this research also reveals a stigma that Islamic educational institutions tend to be traditional and less responsive to change. This presents a challenge in improving the image and competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions globally. This study emphasizes the importance of innovation and adaptation in the education system to address global dynamics. Furthermore, collaboration with various parties is also a crucial factor in improving educational quality. Thus, institutional transformation is an unavoidable necessity.

Research by Hawwin Huda Yana and Lilik Susanti highlights the challenges of Islamic education policy in the face of globalization. The study found that Islamic education faces various problems, such as a moral crisis, low quality teaching staff, and suboptimal madrasah management. Furthermore, negative public perceptions of madrasahs are also a challenge that must be overcome. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method and emphasizes the importance of education policy reform. Furthermore, improving teacher welfare is also a crucial factor in improving education quality. Therefore, Islamic education policy must be responsive and adaptive to global change.

A study by Syamsul Aripin confirms that globalization has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including education. This research shows that advances in information technology enable broader and faster access to knowledge. However, this also requires educational institutions to improve the quality of learning to keep up with the times. The study emphasizes the importance of developing modern schools, creative teachers, and high-achieving students in response to globalization. Furthermore, Islamic education must maintain its characteristics while adapting to change. Therefore, a balance between tradition and modernity is key to the success of Islamic education.

Research by Cep Habib Mansur shows that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) play a crucial role in anticipating the negative impacts of globalization. This study found that Islamic education must be dynamic and flexible in the face of changing times. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools must be able to integrate religious values with developments in science and technology. This study also emphasizes the importance of character formation as the primary goal of Islamic education. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools have great potential in developing a generation with noble character and competitiveness. However, this requires an appropriate strategy in educational management.

A recent study by Aida Nurul Hikmah and her team shows that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) face complex challenges due to social and cultural changes triggered by globalization. This research highlights that the flow of digital information and the influx of foreign values can influence the mindset and behavior of students (*santri*). Furthermore, lifestyle changes also pose challenges to maintaining traditional Islamic boarding school values. This research emphasizes the importance of reorienting Islamic boarding school education to remain relevant to current developments. Furthermore, strengthening moral education is a crucial aspect in facing global challenges. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools must be able to adapt without losing their identity.

Research by Ach Syaiful shows that globalization has changed people's lifestyles, including in the world of education. This study highlights that the orientation of education tends to shift toward pragmatism and materialism due to the influence of globalization. This has resulted in the commercialization of education, which can diminish the ideal values of Islamic education. This study also emphasizes the importance of maintaining educational goals that are oriented towards character development and spiritual values. Therefore, Islamic education must be able to balance global demands while maintaining the basic principles of Islam. Thus, Islamic education plays a crucial role in maintaining a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of human life.

C. Method

This study employed a literature review method (library research) with a qualitative approach. The problem analysis began by identifying the gap between global demands for Islamic education and the actual conditions of madrasahs, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia. Primary data sources came from accredited national scientific journals and international proceedings (minimum 80% of the total references), while secondary sources came from textbooks and official reports (maximum 20%).

The data analysis design follows the following flowchart: (1) Collection of literature from databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and SINTA with keywords "madrasah", "pesantren", "global competitiveness", "Islamic education"; (2) Selection of documents based on the criteria of publication year maximum of the last 5 years (2020-2025) except for classical literature; (3) Data extraction includes challenges, strategies, and reported results; (4) Thematic synthesis of findings; (5) Drawing conclusions. The analysis was carried out using a descriptive-analytical method to compare and integrate various previous research findings. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses the source triangulation technique, namely comparing information from at least three different sources for each main finding.¹³

The data sources in this study consist of various primary and secondary literature relevant to the research topic. Primary literature includes classic and contemporary books discussing Islamic education, globalization, and the transformation of educational institutions. Meanwhile, secondary literature includes scientific journals, academic articles, conference proceedings, and research reports published by experts in the field of Islamic education. Sources were selected selectively, considering the credibility, relevance, and novelty of the information. Furthermore, the researcher also paid attention to diverse perspectives to ensure an unbiased analysis. The data collection process was conducted through documentation techniques by searching journal databases, digital libraries, and academic repositories. Thus, the data obtained has scientifically verifiable validity.

The data analysis technique in this study uses a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach. The collected data is then analyzed through a data reduction process to select the information most relevant to the research focus. The data is then presented in a systematic narrative form to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The analysis process also involves in-depth interpretation of concepts found in the literature. The researcher not only describes the findings but also synthesizes them to generate new, more comprehensive understandings. Furthermore, the analysis is conducted critically by comparing various perspectives in the literature. Thus, the results of the analysis are not merely descriptive, but also argumentative and reflective.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation techniques. Triangulation was conducted by comparing various literature sources covering the same topic to ensure consistency of information. Furthermore, the researcher cross-checked the obtained data with other academically authoritative references. This process is crucial to avoid bias and misinterpretation in data analysis. The researcher also considered the context in which each source was written to avoid misunderstanding the author's intent. Thus, the research results have a high level of validity and reliability. This approach also allows the researcher to produce more objective and accountable conclusions.

D. Result and Discussion

This research identified three main categories of challenges facing Islamic educational institutions. First, socio-cultural challenges: globalization has changed the way societies interact and communicate, directly impacting the mindsets and values of the younger generation. With widespread access to information, students are exposed to a variety of ideas and cultures that may conflict with Islamic teachings.¹⁴ Lestari's research results show that 67% of urban madrasa students access social media content that is not educationally filtered, and 42% of them admit to experiencing value confusion between Islamic teachings and global

¹³Hamdanah Hamdanahet *al.*, "Human Resource Development in Islamic Educational Institutions", *Scientific Journal of Education*, Vol.13 No.1 (2024), h. 40

¹⁴Sunaiah *al.*, "Globalization and Curriculum Adaptation...", p. 30

popular culture.¹⁵Second, the competitive challenge: public schools often offer more modern facilities and a more diverse curriculum, thus attracting the interest of students and parents.¹⁶Data from the Central Statistics Agency shows that the average operational costs of international schools are three times that of top madrasahs, but the perception of graduate quality is still higher at international schools.¹⁷Third, managerial challenges: Many Islamic boarding schools still rely on donations, making it difficult to develop adequate facilities and programs. Rahmawati's research found that only 23% of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have modern financial management systems and diversified funding sources.¹⁸

In terms of competitiveness enhancement strategies, this study identified several successful practices. Nur Iva's research found that SMP Al Maahira Internasional Islamic Boarding School implemented a corporate strategy with a strict quality management system, regular evaluations, and international collaboration.¹⁹As a result, this institution has been able to increase its enrollment annually, even attracting students from abroad. Furthermore, its innovative curriculum, which integrates science, technology, and the arts with Islamic values, has been proven to improve graduates' readiness for the global job market. Research by Nugroho and Sari shows that graduates of Islamic boarding schools with integrated curricula have a 35% higher acceptance rate into state universities than graduates of traditional Islamic boarding schools.²⁰Teacher competency development is also a key factor. The ongoing certification and training program conducted by the Education Quality Assurance Institute (LPMP) for madrasah teachers has been shown to increase average teacher competency test scores by 15 points over the past two years.²¹

The above findings indicate that Islamic educational institutions face a dilemma: on the one hand, they must maintain an authentic Islamic identity, while on the other, they must adapt to global demands. This aligns with Setyowati et al.'s observation that many Islamic educational institutions struggle to maintain their identity amidst the strong currents of globalization.²²However, this study also found that adaptation does not necessarily mean a loss of identity. Integrative approaches like those employed by Al Maahira and Gontor actually strengthen Islamic values through widely recognized academic achievements. In their qualitative research, Hidayat and Zainuddin identified five successful strategies for Islamic boarding schools in maintaining their identity while adapting: strengthening the yellow book curriculum, fostering daily worship, using technology as a tool rather than an end in itself, developing student entrepreneurship, and establishing a global alumni network.²³

Sustainable quality management is a key factor. Institutions that conduct regular evaluations of the learning process and academic outcomes are able to ensure educational

¹⁵Dewi Lestari, "Social Media Exposure and Value Confusion in Urban Madrasah Students", *Journal of Islamic Communication and Education*, Vol.6 No.2 (2024), h. 92

¹⁶Ahmad Fatoni, "Internationalization of Islamic Educational Institutions through Information Technology", *Journal of Educational Management*, Vol.10 No.2 (2024), h. 102

¹⁷ Central Bureau of Statistics, *National Education Statistics 2024*, (Jakarta: BPS, 2025), p. 58

¹⁸Siti Rahmawati, "Modern Financial Management System in Islamic Boarding Schools", *Journal of Islamic Economics and Business*, Vol.5 No.2 (2024), h. 82

¹⁹Only Ivaet al., "Corporate Strategy of Al Maahira Middle School", *Journal of Islamic Education Management*, Vol.9 No.2 (2024), h. 85

²⁰Bambang Nugroho and Wulan Sari, "Integrated Curriculum and Competitiveness of Islamic Boarding School Graduates at State Universities", *Journal of Islamic Education Research*, Vol.11 No.1 (2024), h. 38

²¹Educational Quality Assurance Institute, *2024 Madrasah Teacher Competency Test Results Report*, (Jakarta: LPMP, 2025), p. 23

²²Setyowati et al., "Islamic Education and the Challenges of Cultural Homogenization", p. 125

²³Taufik Hidayat and Zainuddin Zainuddin, "Strategies for Maintaining Islamic Boarding School Identity in the Global Era", *Journal of Nusantara Islamic Studies*, Vol.7 No.1 (2024), h. 62

standards are met. This encourages continuous improvement. Furthermore, collaboration with industry and the community opens up opportunities for internships, training, and extracurricular activities that enrich the student experience. Cooperation with international institutions also enables student exchange programs and the adoption of global best practices without abandoning local values. Research by Firman et al. shows that Islamic boarding schools that have student exchange programs with other Muslim countries (such as Egypt, Turkey, and Malaysia) experience an increase in the global perspective of their students while strengthening their Islamic identity.²⁴

The use of digital technology in learning has been proven to increase accessibility and effectiveness. Islamic boarding schools that integrate online learning not only reach students in remote areas but also modernize teaching methods without eliminating the distinctive sorogan and bandongan systems. Thus, digital transformation is not a threat but an opportunity to revitalize Islamic boarding school traditions. Recent research by Kurniawan and Lestari found that blended learning, which combines face-to-face bandongan with online modules, delivers superior learning outcomes, with students' understanding increasing by 28% compared to conventional methods.²⁵ This emphasizes that innovation and tradition do not need to be at odds, but can be productively compromised.

The research also shows that Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasas, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), face quite complex structural challenges in the era of globalization. These challenges stem not only from external factors such as technological developments and global competition, but also from internal factors related to the quality of human resources and institutional management. Many Islamic educational institutions remain in a transitional position between maintaining tradition and embracing modernity. This situation creates tension between normative values and pragmatic global demands. In this context, Islamic educational institutions are required to have a high level of adaptability. Without this capability, Islamic educational institutions risk stagnation and even marginalization.

One of the main findings of this study is the low quality of human resources as a major inhibiting factor in improving the quality of education. Many educators in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools lack adequate competency in modern pedagogy and educational technology. This results in low-quality learning processes that tend to be monotonous and lack innovation. Furthermore, limited access to training and professional development is also a serious obstacle. In the global era, teachers are required not only to teach but also to act as facilitators and innovators. Therefore, improving teacher quality is a top priority in the adaptation strategy for Islamic education.

Further findings indicate that the Islamic education curriculum still tends to be traditional and not fully responsive to global needs. The curriculum, which focuses too much on normative aspects without integration with modern science, results in graduates lacking competitiveness. This is evident in the low digital literacy, communication, and problem-solving skills among graduates. Furthermore, the lack of curriculum flexibility also hinders adaptation to changing times. Therefore, integrative and contextual curriculum reform is needed. This reform must be able to combine Islamic values with 21st-century global competencies.

In terms of infrastructure, this study found that many Islamic educational institutions still face limitations in supporting learning facilities. These limitations include a lack of access

²⁴Arif Firman et al., "Student Exchange Program and Strengthening Islamic Identity in Islamic Boarding Schools", *International Journal of Islamic Education*, Vol.5 No.1 (2024), h. 45

²⁵Dedi Kurniawan and Sri Lestari, "Blended Learning Based on Bandongan", *Journal of Islamic Boarding School Educational Technology*, Vol.4 No.1 (2025), h. 35

to information technology, such as computers and the internet. This hampers the implementation of digital-based learning, a requirement in the era of globalization. Furthermore, the disparity in access between educational institutions in urban and rural areas is also a serious problem. This situation contributes to a gap in educational quality. Therefore, strengthening infrastructure is a strategic step that must be implemented systematically. Support from the government and the community is essential in this regard.

From an institutional management perspective, research shows that many madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools still use traditional management systems. These systems are often ineffective in dealing with rapid changes. A lack of strategic planning and performance evaluation is one of the causes of low management effectiveness. Furthermore, a lack of transparency and accountability is also a problem that requires attention. In a global context, educational management must be based on the principles of professionalism and good governance. Therefore, management reform is an urgent need.

This research also identified ideological challenges related to the influx of global values that are not always aligned with Islamic principles. Globalization brings with it a variety of new cultures that can influence students' mindsets and behaviors. This raises concerns about an identity crisis among the younger generation of Muslims. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions must be able to act as a bulwark in upholding Islamic values. Character education based on Islamic values is crucial in this context. Therefore, adaptation to globalization must be carried out selectively and critically.

On the other hand, this study also found that globalization presents significant opportunities for the development of Islamic education. Access to information technology enables educational institutions to improve the quality of learning. Furthermore, globalization also opens up opportunities for international collaboration, which can enhance institutional capacity. Many Islamic educational institutions are beginning to utilize digital platforms to expand their educational reach. This demonstrates that globalization is not always a threat but can also be an opportunity. Therefore, appropriate strategies are needed to capitalize on these opportunities.

Adaptation strategies identified in this study include improving the quality of human resources through training and continuing education. Professional development programs for teachers are one effective way to improve the quality of learning. Furthermore, the use of technology in education is also a crucial strategy. Digital-based learning can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, technology integration in education is an unavoidable necessity. Islamic educational institutions must be able to transform into institutions that adapt to technological developments.

Curriculum reform is also a key strategy in addressing global challenges. Curriculum design must be flexible and adaptive to changing times. Integrating religious studies with general sciences is key to increasing educational relevance. Furthermore, strengthening 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration is also crucial. An integrative curriculum will produce graduates who are not only religious but also competitive. Therefore, curriculum development must involve various parties, including academics and education practitioners.

In terms of management, adaptation strategies include the application of modern management principles based on professionalism and accountability. Strategic planning and performance evaluation are crucial for improving management effectiveness. Furthermore, transparency in institutional management must also be improved. This aims to increase public trust in Islamic educational institutions. With good management, educational institutions will be able to compete globally. Therefore, comprehensive management reform must be implemented.

Strengthening character education is a crucial strategy in facing the ideological challenges of globalization. Character education must be based on strong Islamic values. This aims to shape students with moral and spiritual integrity. Furthermore, character education must foster tolerance and openness. In a global context, character is a crucial factor in determining individual success. Therefore, character education must be an integral part of the Islamic education system.

Collaboration with various parties is also an important strategy for improving the quality of education. Cooperation with the government, private institutions, and international institutions can increase institutional capacity. Furthermore, collaboration can also open access to broader resources. This will help educational institutions face various challenges. Therefore, collaborative networks must be continuously developed. With effective collaboration, Islamic educational institutions will be able to increase their competitiveness. A discussion table summarizing the research findings can be seen below.

No	Main Challenges	Impact	Adaptation Strategy
1	Low quality of human resources	Ineffective learning	Continuous teacher training
2	Traditional curriculum	Graduates are less competitive	Curriculum integration
3	Limited infrastructure	Technological limitations	Digitalization of education
4	Weak management	Institutional inefficiency	Management reform
5	The influence of globalization	Identity crisis	Strengthening character education

Based on the table, it can be understood that each challenge has a significant impact on the quality of education. Therefore, adaptation strategies must be specifically designed according to the characteristics of the challenges faced. For example, to address the low quality of human resources, teacher training is the most relevant solution. Meanwhile, to address an inadaptive curriculum, integration between religious studies and general sciences is necessary. This demonstrates that the approach used must be contextual and not generic.

Furthermore, implementing adaptation strategies requires a strong commitment from all parties involved. Without this commitment, the designed strategies will not be implemented optimally. Regular evaluations are also necessary to ensure their effectiveness. This evaluation process must be conducted systematically and continuously. This way, Islamic educational institutions can continuously improve and innovate.

This is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of education in the face of global challenges. Overall, the results of this study indicate that the challenges of globalization on Islamic education are complex and multidimensional. However, with the right adaptation strategies, Islamic educational institutions have a significant opportunity to thrive. The key to facing these challenges is the ability to adapt without losing identity. Therefore, a balance between tradition and modernity is crucial. With the right approach, Islamic educational institutions can become important actors in global education.

The table shows that human resource quality is the most crucial factor influencing the success of Islamic education in facing global competition. Low teacher competency not only impacts the learning process but also has implications for the overall low quality of graduates. In many cases, teachers still use conventional, lecture-centered learning methods with minimal interaction. This condition results in students underdeveloped critical and creative thinking. Therefore, ongoing teacher training is a non-negotiable strategy. Teacher capacity building

programs must encompass pedagogical, professional, social, and technological aspects in an integrated manner.

Furthermore, the traditional curriculum still dominant in many madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) poses a barrier to improving graduate competitiveness. Curricula that focus too much on memorization and normative aspects without integration with modern science create competency gaps. Graduates tend to possess sound religious knowledge but are ill-prepared to face the challenges of the global workplace. Therefore, curriculum integration is an urgent need. This integration must connect Islamic values with 21st-century competencies such as digital literacy, communication, and collaboration. Therefore, the curriculum must be not only theoretical but also applicable and contextual.

In terms of infrastructure, limited facilities pose a serious obstacle to the implementation of technology-based education. Many Islamic educational institutions, particularly in rural areas, still lack adequate access to technological devices and internet connections. This creates a gap in learning quality between advanced and underdeveloped institutions. Digitalization of education as an adaptation strategy is crucial in this context. The use of technology can increase learning effectiveness and open access to a wider range of learning resources. However, digitalization must be accompanied by human resource readiness to ensure optimal utilization.

Weak institutional management is also a major challenge facing madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. Traditional management systems are often unable to respond quickly and appropriately to change. A lack of strategic planning and performance evaluation leads to ineffective institutional management. Therefore, management reform is crucial. The implementation of modern management principles such as transparency, accountability, and professionalism must be a priority. With good management, Islamic educational institutions can improve the efficiency and quality of educational services.

The influence of globalization, which brings foreign values, also poses a serious challenge to maintaining the identity of Islamic education. The unstoppable flow of information can influence students' mindsets and behavior. Without strong filters, these values can displace the Islamic principles that underlie education. Therefore, strengthening character education is a crucial strategy. Character education must be based on solid Islamic values, such as honesty, responsibility, and integrity. Furthermore, character education must foster a critical attitude in responding to the influence of globalization.

The interconnectedness of the various challenges faced demonstrates that the approach used in adaptation strategies must be holistic. Improving one aspect alone is not sufficient without addressing others. For example, digitalization of education will not be effective without the support of adequate teacher quality. Similarly, curriculum reform will be unsuccessful without sound management. Therefore, synergy between various elements within the education system is necessary. This integrative approach will enable Islamic educational institutions to address challenges more comprehensively.

Furthermore, implementing adaptation strategies requires a strong commitment from all stakeholders. The government, educational institutions, teachers, and the community must work together to improve the quality of Islamic education. Without strong support, the various strategies designed will remain mere talk without concrete implementation. Furthermore, regular evaluation and monitoring are also crucial in ensuring the success of adaptation strategies. This evaluation process allows for continuous improvement in line with the dynamics of global change. Thus, Islamic educational institutions can continue to develop and increase their competitiveness globally.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that madrasas, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia face complex global challenges, including socio-cultural changes due to technology, homogenization of values, intense competition with non-Islamic institutions, and limited management and funding. Nevertheless, these institutions have significant opportunities to increase their competitiveness through the implementation of quality management, integrative curriculum innovation, the use of digital technology, strategic collaboration with various parties, continuous teacher competency development, international partnership programs, and results-based evaluation. The success of SMP Al Maahira International Islamic Boarding School and Pesantren Modern Gontor demonstrates that adapting to globalization does not require sacrificing Islamic identity, but can instead strengthen it through widely recognized academic and non-academic achievements. A weakness of this study lies in the limited scope of the literature review; mixed-method fieldwork is needed to test the generalizability of these findings. Further research is recommended to explore the specific impact of international student exchange programs on the formation of students' Islamic character and conduct comparative studies between Islamic boarding schools that implement digital learning and those that do not.

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