

## A REVIEW OF TEACHING ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN A NEW DIGITAL AGE

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### Abstract

The purpose of this article is to discuss the role of digital technology or ICT in Islamic education of teaching and learning in the classroom. The aim of Islamic education is to cultivate the three key domains of a human: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In implementing the digital approach in Islamic education, the teachers need to consider the critical aspects of the teaching and learning processes in a classroom such as creativity, reflectivity, cooperation, and responsibility. The research found out that the focus of the digital approach was to change the old paradigm of traditional teaching to a new paradigm of teaching and learning process in the classroom. Undeniable, the digital technology becomes an important element in Islam, as the main source of information for Muslims all over the globe. Teaching approach using technology facilitated Islamic education in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The implication of using digital technology enables teachers in Islamic education to have the courage to adopt modern technologies for their teaching in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Teaching and learning, Islamic education, digital technology, old paradigm, modern technology

## **ULASAN PENGAJARAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI ERA BARU ZAMAN DIGITAL**

### **Abstrak**

Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk membicarakan tentang peranan teknologi digital dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran pendidikan Islam di bilik darjah. Tujuan pengajaran pendidikan Islam adalah untuk memupuk tiga bidang utama manusia: kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotor. Dalam melaksanakan pendekatan digital dalam pendidikan Islam, guru perlu mempertimbangkan aspek kritikal dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran di dalam kelas seperti kreativiti, pemantulan, kerjasama, dan tanggungjawab. Kajian mendapati bahawa-tumpuan pendekatan digital adalah untuk mengubah paradigma lama pengajaran tradisional kepada paradigma baru dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran di dalam bilik darjah. Tidak dapat disangkal lagi, kepentingan teknologi digital terhadap Islam, sebagai sumber utama umat Islam di seluruh dunia. Pendekatan pengajaran menggunakan teknologi memudahkan pendidikan Islam dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran di dalam bilik darjah. Implikasi menggunakan teknologi digital membolehkan guru pendidikan Islam memberanikan diri untuk mengadaptasi teknologi moden dalam pengajaran mereka dalam bilik darjah.

**Kata kunci:** Pengajaran dan pembelajaran; Pendidikan Islam; teknologi digital, paradigma lama, teknologi moden

### **Introduction**

Digital transformation is underway. People working for start-ups are not the only ones who need digital skills increasingly, industrial workers in plants, staff in administrative positions and managers of banks need to be adept in the digital realm as well. Our educational system and, in particular, the way we learn and teach must therefore be adapted for this era of digitalization. This is true for all educational levels from primary school to vocational schools and universities to continuing education. A digital education will allow people to continue to participate in social life in a self-determined manner in the future. In addition, digital education will ensure that companies remain competitive. Simply put: Industry 4.0 needs education 4.0. With the digital transformation, we must radically alter both how we learn and what we learn. This is because digital skills have become a fourth key competency alongside reading, writing and arithmetic(Beckmann, 2018).

Apart from its availability in various software packages, the text of the Qur'ān, for instance, the global audience on the internet in different formats, with diverse search options, alternative graphic designs, renditions in Arabic and numerous world languages with various audio and audio visual facilities thereby reconfirming the certainty of its preservation (Qur'ān 15:9).

Islamic education comprises a set of concepts and tenets pertaining to human nature, creed, intellect, and attitude, along with spiritual and physical values, all intertwined in the unified Tawhidic framework based on the Holy Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah. Through Islamic education, individuals are educated and cultured to produce a well-rounded person (Dar Al-Ifta Al-Misriyyah, 2018).

### Teaching and Learning from Islamic Perspective

In Islamic education as a revealed knowledge, the term of education constitutes the underpinning philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, technology, assessment, and systems. The term “Islamic” involves different schools of thoughts — belief, identity, way of life, and laws. Hence, Islamic education is a type of education that is aimed to strengthen belief and to implement Islam based on the Quran and Hadith (Shaaban, 2012) see Figure 1:

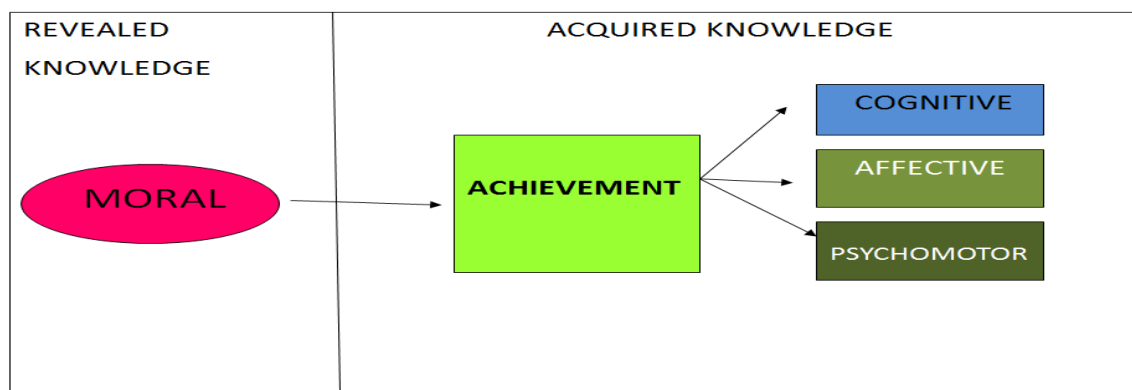


Figure 1: Technology facilitates Islamic education in teaching and learning in the classroom

Figures 1 illustrates technology facilitates Islamic education in teaching and learning in the classroom. Islamic education also considered as a holistic in the sense that it covers religious sciences (revealed knowledge) derived from divine revelation and acquired sciences which gained through human intellectual faculties. Both types of knowledge should be integrated with the principle of divine unity or tawhidic paradigm. Islamic education is also known as an education in the Islamic spirit which is universal and relevant to all mankind which has no segregation between “religious” and “secular” knowledge.

Moral dimension is the fundamental of revealed knowledge in Islam. In general, the aim of Islamic education is to develop moral characters and the mind. This includes to cultivate the three key domains of a human: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In cognitive domain, knowledge is emphasized and constituted as one of the factors that influence the human’s intellectual capabilities. Affective domain is also critical in the sense that it shapes a person’s values and attitudes. And finally, the psychomotor domain which deals with behaviors and actions. Hence, Islamic education is more than transmission of knowledge. In a nutshell, Islamic education permeates all aspects of life - spiritual, material and intellectual with one ultimate goal that is to improve life (Brett, 1973). According to Al-Attas (1980), Islamic education is a process of instilling values into human beings, as stated in the Quran Surah Al-Zumar verse 9.

Al-Attas (1979) viewed Islamic education as knowledge, the concept of knowledge naturally combined with human being’s knowledge and Islamic revealed knowledge. All knowledge comes from God but it is acceptable to classify knowledge generally into its essential elements so that the classification is useful to human being. Al-Attas (1979) also

stated that there are essential key concepts in the Islamic system of education. These key concepts are interrelated and interdependent, which is consistent with the Islamic nature and purpose of knowledge.

### Digital Approach

According to Hamidah (2005) in her discussion on the influence of Islamic Education and modern-day environment on character building, stresses that in facing modern-day challenges and changes, it is vital to provide sound religious knowledge. This is appropriate as Islam itself is complete and universal. This holistic application of learning will help to produce an individual responsible and trustworthy towards himself as well as make him eschew various bad elements. This conforms with the education bestowed by Allah swt on the Prophet (pbuh) as in the hadith: “My Lord who educates me, He provides me with the best of education” (in al-Sam‘ani, 1981). In implementing digital approach in Islamic education, the teachers need to consider some aspects of effective pedagogy such as creativity, reflectivity, cooperation and responsibility in digital approach. The digital approach can be seen such as the following (Maimun Aqsha, 2008):

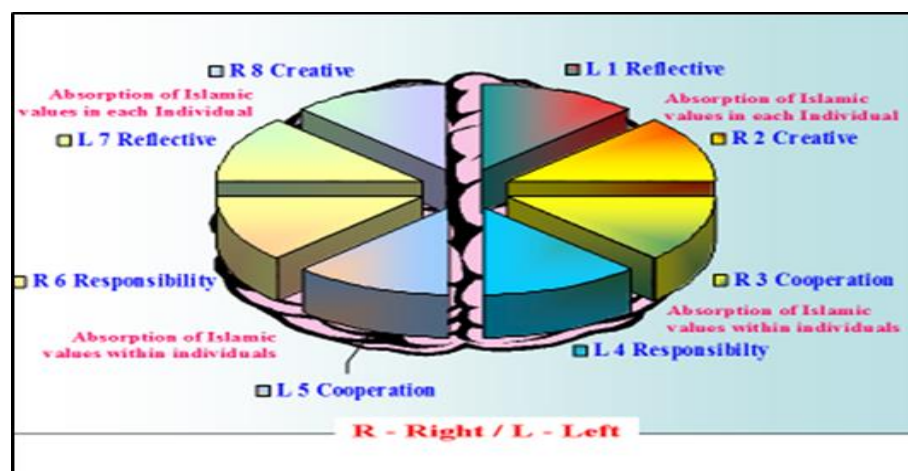


Figure 2: Digital approach of the teaching and learning processes in a classroom

Figure 2 shows the digital approach of the teaching and learning processes in a classroom to achieve a quality education. What is the digital approach in the context of education? The digital approach exist based on the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). By implementing the main steps in teaching and learning, the teachers could actually improve the quality of Islamic education in the digital age. This model encourages active learning, knowledge construction, inquiry, and exploration on the part of the learners, and which allow for effective communication as well as data sharing between teachers or learners. This is an expanded notion of technologies that recognizes their development from

mere information delivery systems to their wider use across schools and learning centres (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015).

The potential benefits of digital technology for teaching and learning in schools have been extensively characterized in the literature. However, little is known about the factors that affect teachers' perceptions of these benefits. This state of affairs is problematic since we know that teachers' perceptions have an impact on their teaching practices (Antoni Badiia, Julio Meneses, Carles Sigalésa, Sergi Fàbreguesa, 2013). In Islamic education, teaching is indeed a very challenging profession. Even those who have been instructors for many years need to keep abreast of the changing times and adapt their teaching styles according to classroom and students (Faryadi, 2013). It is importance for Islamic educators to choose the practices that suit students' interest. Therefore, the teachers who use digital approach in the classroom should consider these four factors: (1) creativity, (2) cooperation, (3) reflectivity, and (4) responsibility. Figure 3 shows the four factors.

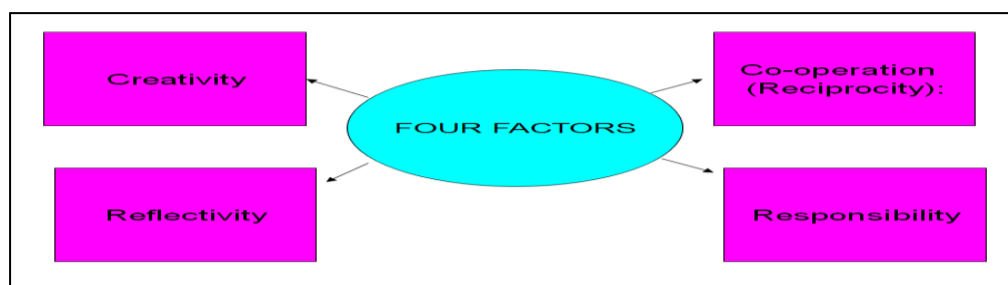


Figure 3: Four factors that need to be considered in digital approach

The four factors include — creativity, reflectivity, cooperation and responsibility that are considered critical in implementing digital approach in classroom. A well-designed classroom has a positive impact on the learning process. On the other hand, a poorly designed classroom distracts students from learning. As such, implementing appropriate digital technology in a thoughtfully designed classroom enables learners to focus on increasing their knowledge. By incorporating digital technology, Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) also noted that the digital elements in teaching helped students to discover, examine, and structure of their knowledge. Digital approach is found to be useful in assisting students to discover new knowledge.

In addition, according to Foley (2013), digital approach was found to assist students to become motivated and see themselves as a true learner. The focus of the digital approach is to change the old paradigm of traditional teaching to a new paradigm of learning. Students need to incorporate visual, auditory, and sensory components to enhance their learning. These multimodal features help to motivate struggling learners in various ways. Students began to realize that they could express their ideas not just through words, but also through visual, text, and animations. This teaching approach could enhance the students' learning in Islamic education as well.

### Digital Technologies in the Classroom

In many schools, digital technologies have been implemented. But the effectiveness of those technologies as compared to more traditional classroom resources is yet to be seen. Teachers

and schools need to think carefully about when, why and how to use technologies as well as to evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015). There are two main digital platforms that need to be considered when implementing digital technologies in the classroom such as (1) Personal Learning Network [PLN] and (2) Virtual Learning Environment [VLE]. Table 1 illustrates the benefits and risks of those platforms.

Table 1: Digital technologies in the classroom

Term	Definition	Example	Benefit(s)	Risk(s)
<b>Personal Learning Network (PLN)</b>	a PLN is an individual's loose collection of links with other people or resources. The aim of such a network is to facilitate an exchange of ideas that supports learning	links can be through, for example: online interest groups for example on Twitter and/or online and face-to-face courses	access to a wide range of perspectives and expertise beyond the confines of the physical institution	data security and confidentiality accuracy of information access to the network lack of teacher understanding/ training
<b>Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)</b>	a VLE is an e-learning education system that is web-based, but modelled on conventional face-to-face education. It provides access to courses, course content, assessments, homework, links to external resources etc	Moodle Blackboard	easy way to collate and organise courses and information flexibility of access	software can limit course structure high level of maintenance

(Source: Cambridge International Examinations, 2015)

However, Al-Kahtani and Al-Haider (2010) delineated numerous extrinsic obstacles to implement digital educational resources in classroom such as:

- Lack of on-site technical and administrative support;
- Lack of assistance in supervising students while using technology;
- Lack of specialists available to assist students in developing the necessary computer skills;
- Lack of computer availability;
- Lack of time required to successfully integrate technology into the curriculum;
- High cost of equipment and rapid changes in technology

In addition to these barriers, lack of training opportunity for teachers to use digital teaching tools is cited by numerous researchers as an on-going problem (Balanskat, Blamire, & Kefala, 2006; Bingimlas, 2009; Özden, 2007; Toprakçı, 2006). Du Plessis and Webb (2012) further argue that lack of infrastructure in developing countries often creates a barrier to access of even basic computing tools in the public schools. As a result, there is few opportunity for teachers to incorporate digital resources in their teaching, regardless of their ability to apply these tools and their attitudes toward digital teaching resources. In fact, Salavati (2013) stated there are six challenges to enhance technology in learning. The identified challenges directly or indirectly influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The technology-enhanced learning challenges are in the forms of (1) learning styles, (2) organizational curriculum, (3) design and interaction, (4) technology, (5) politics, and (6) supportive resources.

The effectiveness of the technology-enhanced learning in a classroom is not only based on the different parts (challenges) but also the interaction between them and their impact on each other. In terms of achieving the goals of the school, challenges are directly being influenced by the school as well as by the members within the school. Figure 4 shows the six main challenges in learning via technology (Salavati, 2013).

In fact, to achieve learning objectives, the school needs to have effective cooperation, and continuous and supportive relationship among all parties i.e., teachers, administrators and students in ensuring the success of digital implementation in teaching and learning. Klopfer et al. (2009) asserted that usage of advanced technology is necessary because it could shape the students' thinking. Students could obtain useful ideas through "cyber chatting" with other learners in digital forum and to obtain creative solutions beyond the classroom walls.

### **The Digital Technology Enhances Learning and Teaching**

By implementing digital technology in an Islamic subject, students may be interested to learn Islamic education. There are some digital applications that can be used in Islamic studies, Arabic language, science and mathematics that the teachers could use for teaching and learning purposes. Students may enjoy learning using digital apps because they involve animations and simulations. In brief, using digital technology in Islamic education could enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

The classroom environment is the physical space where formal learning and teaching take place. The prime aim of an effective classroom is to deliver information in the best way possible. Hence, it is very important that the design of the technology-integrated classroom should allow a wide variety of educational activities to be carried out, such as active learning, cooperative learning, technology integrated learning, relevant assessment and evaluation (Faryadi, 2012). In addition, the development and usage of teaching and learning tools such as digital applications should be encouraged. This will enable teachers in Islamic education to have the courage to adopt modern technologies in their teaching. Based on the relevant review of literature, the main challenges in implementing digital technology in Islamic schools include lack adequate facilities and equipment, few qualified teachers and lack of conducive learning environment to achieve the desired quality education.

### **Conclusion**

The practice of using ICT in Islamic Education cannot be underestimated by the Muslim society because this modern approach serves the purpose of a quick and easy form of teaching and learning in line with globalization. The practice of using ICT in Islamic education is necessary to teach students in the classroom and as well as to maintain the interaction of the presented concepts with real-life issues, in fostering the development of the students' thinking skills. The thinking skills is also based on "a practical vision of Islam that nurtures a human being who is an active individual and who makes positive contributions to deep concern of Islamic contribution for Islamic values and purposes, divine revelation and Islamic knowledge.

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