

## GLOBAL CHALLENGES, INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION, DIGITAL LEARNING

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the interrelation between global challenges, the internationalization of Islamic education, and the strengthening of digital learning within Islamic educational institutions in the era of technological transformation. Globalization has generated social, economic, and cultural dynamics that require Islamic educational institutions to reformulate their curricula, institutional orientations, and pedagogical strategies in order to remain relevant within the global educational landscape. The research employs a critical literature review approach by examining scholarly articles, international policy reports, and strategic documents on Islamic education from various countries undergoing internationalization processes. The findings reveal that the internationalization of Islamic education is not solely associated with student and faculty mobility, but also includes curriculum harmonization, collaborative research, and the integration of Islamic values into the global digital ecosystem. Digital learning plays a crucial role as an accelerating instrument of internationalization through virtual learning, open educational resources, and cross-border scholarly networks. Nevertheless, several challenges persist, including digital infrastructure inequality, limited digital competence among educators, and the need for an ethical framework grounded in maqāṣid al-sharī'ah to ensure that technology use remains aligned with Islamic moral principles. This study concludes that building a globally competitive Islamic education ecosystem requires an integrative strategy that strengthens internationalization objectives, fosters digital innovation, and reconstructs Islamic educational paradigms that are responsive to global challenges. The findings provide a theoretical foundation for the formulation of policies and the development of digital learning models that are characterized by ethical values, inclusivity, and international competitiveness.*

**Keywords:** *Global challenges; Internationalization of Islamic education; Digital learning; Educational transformation; Global Islamic education.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has triggered a profound transformation in nearly every sphere of human civilization, including education. As global societies move further into the Fourth Industrial Revolution and intensify preparations for the Fifth Industrial Wave, educational institutions are increasingly confronted with complex challenges shaped by technological disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, digital inequality, and ongoing shifts in cultural identity at both local and transnational levels (Malizal,

2025). These emerging conditions indicate that educational reform is no longer optional but an urgent epistemic mandate. Islamic education, as part of the global knowledge ecosystem, is similarly required to reposition its philosophical foundations and instructional strategies so that it can remain relevant, competitive, and able to contribute to the future of global civilization.

Within this context, the internationalization of Islamic education has become one of the most substantial strategic agendas in the twenty-first century. Internationalization is no longer solely interpreted as academic mobility programs, student exchanges, or reputation-building through university rankings; instead, it encompasses broader efforts to expand transnational intellectual networks, harmonize curricula across diverse cultural settings, promote collaborative research, and strengthen academic diplomacy inspired by Islamic ethical values (Rochmah & Inayati, 2025). Consequently, internationalization is both an institutional endeavor and a cultural-intellectual project that seeks to position Islamic education not at the periphery of global discourse, but as an essential contributor to constructing a more just, peaceful, and value-driven global order.

Parallel to these developments, disruptive progress in digital learning has accelerated the shift from traditional instructional models to more dynamic, personalized, collaborative, and borderless learning ecosystems. Digital integration in education supports a wide range of innovative modalities such as virtual mobility programs, joint online courses offered by multi-campus international consortia, open educational resources (OER), virtual laboratories, and synchronous or asynchronous research collaborations facilitated by digital platforms (Hajar & Bone, 2024). Through these mechanisms, digital learning does not merely enhance instructional efficiency, but also functions as a strategic catalyst that enables Islamic educational institutions to participate more actively in global knowledge circulation.

Despite these promising developments, the implementation of digital learning within Islamic educational institutions remains uneven. The gap between theoretical paradigms and on-the-ground practice remains significant. Many institutions continue to face interconnected challenges, which include: limited digital infrastructure, insufficient technological literacy among teachers, varying levels of global language proficiency, and an absence of clearly articulated ethical frameworks derived from *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to guide responsible and value-conscious technology use (Romandoni & Efendi, 2024). Therefore, rather than assuming digitalization to be a purely technical transition, it must

instead be regarded as a comprehensive transformation demanding philosophical, pedagogical, institutional, and ethical recalibration.

Literature mapping demonstrates that previous scholarship on the internationalization of Islamic education has largely focused on structural and administrative domains, including governance reform, international campus partnerships, accreditation standards, and scholarship programs. Meanwhile, studies on digital learning have predominantly examined technology adoption models, platform integration, and digital pedagogy (Rahmah, Syam, Maulani, & Azis, 2025). Despite their contributions, both strands of research tend to evolve in parallel, resulting in a limited body of inquiry that conceptually integrates internationalization and digital transformation within a unified theoretical model rooted in Islamic epistemology.

This gap is significant because digital learning when aligned with Islamic educational values has the potential to strengthen da'wah in the intellectual sense, reshape global Islamic knowledge production, and create more inclusive channels for disseminating the principles of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*. The absence of such integrative studies limits the development of policy frameworks and pedagogical designs that would enable Islamic education to assert greater influence in global educational arenas.

Islamic education embodies a civilizational responsibility that transcends technical skill acquisition. It is grounded in an epistemology that aims to cultivate morally conscious, spiritually mature, and socially responsible human beings capable of contributing to global well-being. To achieve this mission within digital ecosystems, Islamically informed educational internationalization must ensure that the diffusion of Islamic knowledge does not become detached from its core ethical values, nor merged uncritically into interest-driven global competition.

Thus, the transition toward a globally competitive Islamic education must be guided by:

1. A renewed vision of Islamic knowledge production,
2. Innovation in digital instructional models, and
3. Ethical design principles rooted in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.

Without these foundations, global participation risks remaining symbolic rather than transformative.

This study seeks to construct a conceptual analysis that explains how global challenges, internationalization of Islamic education, and digital learning intersect and reinforce one another. More specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine the nature of global educational challenges affecting Islamic educational transformation in the digital era.
2. Analyze how internationalization of Islamic education can be re-conceptualized beyond mobility-based programs toward a value-driven civilizational mission.
3. Explore the strategic role of digital learning as an accelerating instrument for Islamic educational internationalization.
4. Provide a theoretical foundation for developing globally competitive and ethically grounded models of digital Islamic education.

By achieving these objectives, the study offers a theoretical contribution to global Islamic education discourse and provides a reference framework for policymakers, scholars, and educational leaders who seek to strengthen the international role of Islamic education through digital innovation.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative library research design, which is conducted by critically reviewing and interpreting written academic sources relevant to the research topic. This method is deemed appropriate because the relationship between global challenges, the internationalization of Islamic education, and digital learning is primarily conceptual and theoretical in nature, thus requiring an in-depth examination of existing scholarly ideas, theories, and empirical findings rather than field data collection (Rahmah et al., 2025). Accordingly, this research does not involve interviews or direct observation, but instead focuses on conceptual understanding supported by credible scientific literature.

The data for this study were obtained from international journal articles, recently published academic books, policy reports issued by UNESCO and ICESCO, publications from global education organizations, and official documents that address the development of Islamic education across various countries (Malizal, 2025). A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that only literature with strong relevance to the research objectives was selected. The majority of sources used were published between 2019 and 2025 to maintain analytical relevance to recent developments in global and digital education (Basyar, 2018).

The literature search was conducted through major scientific databases including Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, and Google Scholar. Several keyword combinations were used such as *global challenges*, *internationalization of Islamic education*, and *digital learning* to ensure that the literature captured the full scope of conceptual and empirical discussions surrounding the topic (Dzakiah et al., 2025). Each document retrieved was read comprehensively, summarized, and categorized into thematic clusters to facilitate subsequent analytical stages.

The data were analyzed using a content analysis approach in which the researcher examined the literature critically to identify core arguments, conceptual patterns, and emerging themes. A comparative analytical technique was then applied to identify similarities and differences in how the internationalization of Islamic education is conceptualized across different cultural and national contexts. The final stage involved synthesizing these insights into a more integrative conceptual framework (MacDonald, 2014). To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was used by comparing literature from diverse academic disciplines and geographical settings. All steps of data collection and analysis were conducted systematically to ensure analytical rigor.

The use of this qualitative library research approach enables the study to generate a comprehensive understanding of how global challenges, Islamic education internationalization, and digital learning are interconnected and function as an integrated conceptual construct (Djamdjuri & Furqan, 2023). Thus, the methodology serves not only to compile existing knowledge but also to formulate a refined theoretical perspective that may inform future policy and research development.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Result

The findings of this study indicate a strong and mutually reinforcing relationship between global challenges, the internationalization of Islamic education, and the rapid expansion of digital learning (Malizal, 2025). Overall, the research outcomes can be summarized into three major points.

No	Result research	Analisis
1	Global challenges have generated substantial shifts in the orientation and strategic	Accelerated technological change, growing global academic competition, evolving learner

	direction of Islamic education	characteristics, and the increasing demand from societies for value-based spiritual education signify that Islamic educational institutions can no longer remain confined to local contexts. Instead, they are required to participate in global educational ecosystems while preserving Islamic intellectual identity and values
2	The internationalization of Islamic education is no longer limited to student and faculty mobility or inter-university partnerships	It has expanded toward virtual knowledge exchange, cross-border research collaboration, the adoption of globally-oriented curricula, and the active involvement of Islamic higher education institutions in international academic forums. This transformation necessitates strengthening academic quality standards, global language competence, and institutional academic diplomacy capacity
3	Digital learning has become a key driver accelerating the internationalization process	Digital technologies facilitate borderless teaching and learning through online learning, virtual exchanges, joint online courses, and open educational resources. Digital transformation also enables Islamic education institutions to contribute more visibly to global academic discourses, disseminate

		<p>Islamic scholarship, and promote a more inclusive and modern form of intellectual da‘wah. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including disparities in digital infrastructure, limited teacher digital competency, and the need to formulate ethical frameworks anchored in Islamic values for digital engagement. Taken together, these findings confirm that integrating the internationalization of Islamic education with digital learning constitutes a strategic pathway for addressing global challenges while strengthening the contribution of Islamic education toward a dignified, value-based, and globally competitive civilization.</p>
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## 2. Discussion

The research findings demonstrate that global challenges, the internationalization of Islamic education, and digital learning constitute an interconnected and mutually reinforcing framework. This section elaborates on that relationship and explains its theoretical and practical implications for the future of Islamic education in a globalized context.

First, global challenges require Islamic educational institutions to reposition their identity and strategic roles to avoid marginalization within international academic competition (Malizal, 2025; Susilawati et al., 2025). This dynamic confirms broader theories of educational globalization, which argue that educational institutions have shifted from merely transmitting localized knowledge to functioning as global actors in the transnational production and dissemination of knowledge (Jauza & Albina, 2025; Susilawati et al., 2025). Within this context, Islamic education holds significant potential

in contributing alternative intellectual perspectives derived from the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāsid al-sharī'ah*), especially regarding technology ethics, social justice, and spiritual character formation (Aryani, Silpi, & Sari, 2025)

Educational organization theory, particularly the perspective of institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), asserts that educational institutions tend to experience isomorphism when operating in a competitive global environment. This means that Islamic educational institutions face the need to standardize academic practices, curricula, and governance to align with global expectations without losing their Islamic identity

Second, the internationalization of Islamic education is inseparable from efforts to strengthen global academic networks (Amelia et al., 2024). The early model of internationalization dominated by physical mobility has evolved into digitally collaborative models, including joint international courses, virtual academic conferences, online faculty exchanges, and open-access scholarly publishing (Wardhani et al., 2024). This shift marks a paradigm change: internationalization is not merely institutional achievement, but rather a scholarly strategy enabling a more inclusive integration of Islamic intellectual contributions into global academic debates (Muhdi et al., 2024).

the finding that the internationalization of Islamic education is no longer limited to student and faculty mobility or inter-university partnerships marks a shift from traditional internationalization to comprehensive internationalization (de Wit, 2011). This concept emphasizes the integration of globalization into all aspects of education, including curriculum development, research, academic capacity building, and engagement in international academic forums. Thus, Islamic educational institutions are required to develop a holistic internationalization capacity, not merely through physical mobility, but also through scientific collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the adoption of relevant global best practices

Third, the integration of digital learning has become the primary infrastructure enabling such internationalization. Digitalization, however, must not be reduced to technological adoption; instead, it represents a pedagogical transformation requiring digital literacy among educators, digital curriculum design, and an ethical framework governing technological use grounded in Islamic values (Rosidin, 2016; Sitompul, 2025). Islamic education thus holds a moral mandate to ensure that digital spaces do not become value-neutral environments but instead operate as arenas of ethical and civilizational *da'wah* (Alidra, 2023).

The role of digital learning as a key driver in this internationalization process can be analyzed through the framework of Diffusion of Innovation theory (Rogers, 2003). Digital learning accelerates the diffusion of academic innovations by enabling knowledge dissemination without geographical boundaries through online platforms, open educational resources, virtual exchanges, and cross-border research collaborations. From this perspective, digital technology is not merely a supporting tool but a strategic mechanism for expanding the global reach of Islamic education.

Fourth, the relationship among these three elements implies the need for a conceptual model of Islamic education development that places digital technology as an instrument of value-oriented internationalization (Basyar, 2018). Such a model requires strengthening institutional capacity in three domains:

1. a global vision grounded in Islamic values,
2. academic management and diplomacy strategies, and
3. innovation in digital pedagogy (Mulyadi, 2023).

In summary, the discussion confirms that internationalization and digital learning should not be approached as two separate agendas. Instead, they constitute an integrated strategic framework for responding to global educational challenges while expanding the role of Islamic education in shaping a morally grounded, globally engaged intellectual civilization.

From a psychological and pedagogical standpoint, digital learning also relates to connectivism theory (Siemens, 2005), which highlights the importance of globally connected knowledge networks through digital media. Islamic educational institutions that integrate digital learning can strengthen academic competencies, digital literacy, and global awareness among students and educators, while simultaneously embedding Islamic values.

In conclusion, these findings underscore that the globalization of Islamic education and digitalization are mutually reinforcing factors. Globalization generates both strategic pressures and opportunities, while digital learning provides the means and mechanisms for implementation. The integration of both allows Islamic education to remain relevant, competitive, and impactful in fostering a globally ethical, value-based civilization

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that there is a strong interrelation among global challenges, the internationalization of Islamic education, and digital learning. Global challenges in the era

of technological disruption require Islamic educational institutions to assume a strategic role in the landscape of global education. Internationalization is no longer limited to physical academic mobility, but has evolved to include the expansion of digital collaborations in research, knowledge exchange, curriculum development, and cross-country scientific publications.

Digital learning serves as a crucial instrument in accelerating this internationalization process. Digitalization provides wider access to global learning resources, strengthens the participation of Islamic educational institutions in international scientific discourses, and offers a scholarly da'wah space grounded in Islamic values. However, digitalization requires a robust ethical foundation to ensure that the use of technology remains aligned with the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and the moral framework of Islamic civilization. Therefore, the development of future Islamic education models demands a strategic integration of global vision, innovation in digital pedagogy, and the reinforcement of Islamic character.

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