

The Direction of Islamic Education Transformation from the Perspective of Millennial Teachers

Moh Rixa Setiawan*¹, Andi Anirah² & Nasrul³

^{1,2} *Datokarama State Islamic University, Palu, Indonesia*

³ *Yadika Vocational School, Palu, Indonesia*

e-mail: mohrixasetiawan@gmail.com, andianirah@uindatokarama.ac.id, & Nasrul97p@gmail.com


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ABSTRAC. The development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the acceleration of digital transformation have brought significant changes to the educational landscape, including Islamic education, which faces the challenge of maintaining the authenticity of spiritual values while meeting the demands of 21st-century competencies. In this context, the role of millennial teachers is crucial as a generation that grew up in a digital ecosystem and has the potential to be agents of pedagogical and epistemological change. However, previous studies have tended to focus on structural and administrative aspects, without in-depth examination of the role of millennial teachers in guiding the paradigmatic transformation of Islamic education. This study aims to analyze the direction of Islamic education transformation from the perspective of millennial teachers by highlighting three main dimensions: scientific and value paradigms, pedagogical strategies, and implementation challenges in the digital era. The study employed a qualitative case study design at SMPN 1 Sarjo. The study subjects comprised the madrasah principal and six millennial teachers, selected purposively. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model with triangulation techniques to ensure validity. The research findings demonstrate a paradigm shift from dogmatic learning to a reflective, dialogical, and contextual model, accompanied by the integration of technology as a pedagogical medium and educational da'wah, still grounded in Islamic digital ethics. This transformation has led to increased student participation and a deeper understanding of practical applications. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of strengthening teachers' digital and pedagogical competencies and systemic policy support to realize a hybrid, adaptive, and integrated Islamic education model in the digital era.

Keywords: Transformation, Islamic Education, Teachers, Millennials

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the acceleration of digital transformation have brought fundamental changes to the global education landscape (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2025). Technological disruption, the rapid flow of information, and the characteristics of the digital generation require education systems to adapt quickly, creatively, and strategically (Ahmad Kusaini et al., 2024; Chalim et al., 2024; Geng et al., 2019; Huda et al., 2024). This phenomenon is a crucial issue because it directly impacts the relevance and effectiveness of the learning process, particularly in Islamic education, which faces a dual challenge: maintaining the authenticity of normative and spiritual values on the one hand, and meeting the demands of 21st-

century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy on the other (Anam et al., 2025; Arifi et al., 2026; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Fitriani et al., 2024).

Previous studies such as those conducted by (Muhtar & Manan, 2025) as well as (Susanti et al., 2023) have highlighted the importance of modernizing Islamic education through the integration of technology and learning innovation. However, most of this research still focuses on structural and administrative aspects, failing to delve deeply into the role of millennial teachers as agents of epistemological and pedagogical change within it. Meanwhile, (Firmansyah et al., 2025) and (Adiansah et al., 2026; Waldan et al., 2025) only touched on the characteristics of millennial teachers in general, without explicitly linking them to the reorientation of the Islamic education paradigm. Yesshe Andes Balika, in her article 'Transformation of Islamic Education in the Digital Era', emphasized that Islamic education needs to integrate sharia values with technological innovation, while simultaneously strengthening students' digital and spiritual literacy through an adaptive curriculum (Aulia et al., 2025; Barikzai et al., 2025; N. A. Faizah et al., 2025). These findings indicate that transformation involves not only changes in material but also in curriculum design, the role of educators, and learning media (Yesshe Andes Balika, 2025). Sari et al. (2023) in their article 'Challenges and Changes in Religious Education' emphasized that Islamic education in the millennial era must adapt its learning paradigm, as this generation tends to be more familiar with the internet, technology, and entertainment media. Their study suggests the use of more creative, interactive, and technology-based strategies to keep Islamic education relevant and appealing.

Specifically, this paper aims to analyze the direction of transformation in Islamic education from the perspective of millennial teachers by highlighting three main dimensions: scientific and value paradigms, pedagogical strategies used, and implementation challenges in the digital era (Aldoghiher et al., 2025; Arif et al., 2025; Badawi, 2025; Ekasari et al., 2021; Fauziyah et al., 2025). This focus is intended to address the shortcomings of previous research, which tends to dichotomize traditional values and technological modernity, by offering an integrative and contextual conceptual model.

This paper attempts to test the argument that the success of transforming Islamic education in the digital era depends heavily on the ability of millennial teachers to bridge religious values with digital literacy and participatory learning. In other words, millennial teachers act as catalysts in shaping a new face of Islamic education that is not only adaptive to technological developments but also solid in its spiritual and ethical foundations.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach because it allows researchers to explore the meaning and experiences of subjects in real-life contexts, rather than simply measuring variables numerically. A qualitative approach was chosen because it focuses on understanding social phenomena, human interactions, and the dynamics of the Islamic education process from the perspective of millennial teachers and madrasah principals at the research site. This approach aligns with the characteristics of case studies, which require the exploration of phenomena in complex and natural contexts, rather than through the manipulation of variables as in quantitative research (Sandu Siyoto, 2015).

The case study design was chosen to holistically and in-depthly describe the phenomena occurring at SMPN 1 Sarjo as a single unit of analysis. Case studies are an appropriate method when researchers want to understand the processes, practices, and strategies that occur contextually within a particular institution or group. Through case studies, researchers can explore the specific and unique realities of Islamic education at this madrasah, including millennial teachers' perceptions of learning transformation and technology adaptation in the teaching process.

The research subjects consisted of the madrasah principal and six millennial teachers aged 25–35, who were purposively selected based on their active involvement in the learning process and pedagogical innovation at the madrasah. This purposive sampling approach was intended to ensure the data obtained was truly relevant and in-depth, as the informants had rich direct experience related to the direction of Islamic education transformation in daily practice. In qualitative research,

the selection of informants like this is not for the purpose of generalization, but rather to obtain representative and meaningful information about the phenomenon under study. (Akhyar et al., 2024).

Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews, observation of the learning process, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to explore the experiences, understandings, and personal narratives of informants regarding the direction of Islamic education transformation and the strategies they use in learning. Observations allowed researchers to directly observe teacher-student interactions, the use of learning media, and classroom dynamics. Documentation complemented this with written data such as curriculum, lesson plans, and school activity records, supporting data triangulation (Meci Nilam sari, 2024).

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. These stages are systematic and iterative, in which raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation are simplified into key themes (reduction), organized into a narrative or data matrix (presentation), and then interpreted to draw relevant meanings and patterns (conclusion drawing). This model has been frequently used in Islamic education research and has demonstrated its reliability in comprehensively describing complex phenomena. (Septi Ani et al., 2025).

To ensure data validity, this study employed source and technique triangulation, comparing data from various collection techniques (interviews, observation, documentation) and from various informants with differing perspectives. The triangulation approach strengthens the credibility of the findings because each conclusion is supported by more than one data source. This type of triangulation is common practice in qualitative educational research and helps prevent subjective researcher bias. (Septi Ani et al., 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Reorientation of Learning Paradigm

The transformation of Islamic education from the perspective of millennial teachers has brought about a significant paradigm shift in learning practices. This change is marked by a shift from a dogmatic approach that places the teacher as the primary source of truth to a more reflective and contextual approach to learning. In traditional approaches, the learning process is often one-way, dominated by lectures and memorization, leaving students limited in their involvement in creating meaning in their learning. This transformation then opens up space for students to become active subjects who think critically and reflect on the meaning of Islamic values in real life.

The role of teachers in this transformative model has also fundamentally changed. Teachers are no longer positioned as the sole authority on knowledge, but rather as facilitators of scientific dialogue, guiding students in understanding Islamic values rationally and practically. This approach emphasizes student engagement in discussions, Q&A sessions, and problem-solving-based learning, allowing Islamic values to be tested in the context of students' everyday experiences. Interviews with millennial teachers revealed a collective awareness of the changing role of teachers in the Islamic education learning process, according to them: *"Nowadays, students can no longer just be lectured. They want to discuss, ask questions, and even critique. My job isn't just to convey the theory, but to help them understand its meaning and relevance to their daily lives."*

This statement indicates a shift from a one-way learning model to a dialogic and participatory approach. Supporting this statement, Syukri, an Islamic Education teacher, also emphasized that the teacher's role is more as a facilitator of reflection:

"I often start lessons with a case study, for example, on social media ethics. From there, students discuss the topic, and then we relate it to Islamic values. They understand better because it feels close to their own experiences."

This change in role is in accordance with research findings which state that contemporary teachers must be able to facilitate more personal, collaborative, and reflective learning in Islamic Religious Education in the digital era. (Muhamad Syarif Hidayatullah & Siyono, 2025).

A deeper reflective learning strategy encourages teachers to consciously connect Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject matter to relevant social, cultural, and technological contexts for students, creating meaningful and applicable learning experiences. This contextual approach enables students to see the direct connection between religious teachings such as sharia ethics and social awareness and contemporary issues such as digital ethics (e.g., verifying hoaxes through the principle of amar ma'ruf), modern zakat-based social awareness, and cross-community collaboration through online platforms aligned with Islamic values. This is reinforced by the SLR PRISMA study, which shows that the integration of technologies such as e-learning, AI, and gamification increases accessibility, personalization, and student engagement by up to 41%, making religious education more relevant, effective, and contextual while maintaining the maqasid principles of sharia. This holistic approach, which combines traditional elements with technology, not only addresses infrastructure and digital literacy challenges but also shapes adaptive Muslim characters ready to face the digital era (Diana et al., 2024).

In addition to reflective and contextual strategies, effective transformation of Islamic learning also requires improving teacher competency in designing and implementing innovative 21st-century learning methods, such as active project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and gamification integrated with Islamic values. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must be adept at combining digital technologies (e.g., AI for content personalization and LMS for collaboration), interactive strategies, and authentic evaluations such as reflective portfolios or peer assessments, to deepen students' understanding of Islamic teachings in a holistic and applicable manner. This role transformation aligns with the view that contemporary Islamic teachers are no longer simply transmitters of memorized material, but rather educational innovators who bridge classical scholarly traditions (such as tafsir and contextual fiqh) with the demands of modernity, including six core competencies: spiritual, personality, pedagogical, professional, social, and leadership relevant to the digital era. The SLR study confirms that developing these digital competencies is essential for learner-centered learning, increasing student engagement and the effectiveness of PAI amidst technological disruption. (Hasanah & Nafi'ah, 2021).

Ultimately, the transformation of Islamic education, viewed from the perspective of millennial teachers, requires not only a methodological shift but also a fundamental shift in the teacher's role. Teachers are expected to be reflective facilitators capable of connecting Islamic values with students' lived experiences in a contextual manner, so that learning is not merely the transfer of knowledge but also the process of developing character, thinking skills, and social preparedness for students facing the complexities of modern life.

Integration of Technology and Spiritual Values

The integration of technology into Islamic education is one of the hallmarks of the transformation driven by millennial teachers. This generation of educators grew up in a dynamic digital ecosystem, thus possessing the skills to utilize various platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), social media, interactive learning apps, and educational videos as a means of delivering material. Technology is no longer viewed merely as an administrative tool, but rather as a strategic medium for expanding access to knowledge, enriching learning methods, and increasing student engagement in the learning process.

Based on interviews with millennial teachers in schools, technology integration is seen as an integral part of the transformation of Islamic education stating: *"We can't separate learning from students' digital world. Instead, technology serves as a bridge to make Islamic education materials easier to understand and more engaging."*

This statement shows that technology is no longer considered as a complement, but rather as a strategic medium in the learning process.

In the context of Islamic education, the use of digital platforms also serves as a medium for educational da'wah (Islamic outreach). Millennial teachers can present Islamic content in more engaging formats, such as infographics, podcasts, reflective videos, or online discussions that enable two-way interaction. This approach makes Islamic values easier to understand and more relevant to the lives of the digital generation. (Wicaksono et al., 2025).

Interview results show that millennial teachers view digital platforms not only as learning tools, but also as effective educational preaching media.

"I see social media as a very potential platform for preaching. Students now learn more from digital content. Therefore, we must be present in that space with positive and educational content."

This statement emphasizes that the transformation of Islamic education does not only occur in learning methods, but also in the expansion of the space for preaching through digital media.

Through this integration, the learning process takes place not only in the physical classroom but also in a virtual space, broadening students' horizons. However, the integration of technology in Islamic education must not fall into the trap of technological pragmatism, that is, the use of technology solely for trends or efficiency without considering moral and spiritual values. Islamic education has a strong ethical foundation, so every use of technology must be directed towards strengthening students' morals, responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Without an ethical foundation, technology has the potential to create distractions, spread invalid information, and even degrade moral values.

Therefore, technology integration must be accompanied by the instillation of Islamic digital ethics. These ethics encompass wise social media use, academic honesty, responsibility in disseminating information, and the ability to filter content based on halal (permissible) and tayyib (good) principles. Millennial teachers play a crucial role as role models in ethical digital literacy practices, ensuring that students are not only technically proficient but also morally and spiritually mature.

Transformation Challenges

The transformation of Islamic education toward a more adaptive and innovative model is inseparable from various structural and cultural challenges. One major challenge is the digital competency gap among teachers. Not all educators have the same level of technological literacy, resulting in differences in their ability to utilize digital media for learning. This gap can impact the quality of innovation implementation, especially when some teachers lack confidence or are unfamiliar with technology-based learning tools and platforms.

Besides competency gaps, resistance to change is also a significant obstacle. The paradigm shift from conventional learning to participatory and technology-based models often triggers discomfort for some teachers, particularly due to the habit of traditional methods that have been ingrained for years.

According to Syukri in his interview: *"Not all teachers immediately embrace technology-based learning. Some feel the lecture method is already effective enough and doesn't need to be changed."*

This suggests that long-standing, ingrained habits of traditional methods are a major factor in the emergence of defensive attitudes toward pedagogical innovation. Fatimah echoed this sentiment, expressing concerns about the effectiveness of digital learning:

"Some colleagues find it difficult to gauge student understanding when learning is project-based or online discussions. They prefer written tests where the results can be seen immediately."

This indicates uncertainty in digital learning evaluation systems, which are considered less objective than conventional methods. Concerns about the effectiveness of new methods, such as the uncertainty surrounding digital learning outcomes, which are difficult to measure objectively, and internal resistance due to a lack of digital literacy training, often lead to defensiveness that hinders the adoption of innovation. (Baskoro, 2024).

Another challenge is limited policy support and institutional facilities. Educational transformation requires systemic support in the form of adaptive regulations, the provision of technological infrastructure, and ongoing professional development programs.

The interview results show that limited policy support and institutional facilities are one of the obstacles in the process of transforming Islamic education.

"We want to develop digital-based learning, but sometimes facilities like internet access or supporting devices are limited. This hinders innovation from reaching its full potential."

Without clear and consistent policy support, innovations made by teachers are often sporadic and not integrated into the education system as a whole. (Hamid & Rofik, 2023) This could hinder the sustainability of the transformation that has been initiated.

Therefore, targeted and sustainable professional training is needed to improve teachers' pedagogical and digital competencies. Training should not only focus on the technical aspects of technology use but also on developing innovative learning designs that remain grounded in Islamic values. Furthermore, education policies need to be designed to foster a culture of innovation, provide space for pedagogical experimentation, and provide incentives for teachers who strive to transform learning.

The following is a summary of the findings in table form.

Table 1. Key Findings

No	Transformation Components	Key Findings	Implications for Islamic Education
1	Learning Paradigm	The shift from teacher-centered (dogmatic) to student-centered (dialogical).	Teachers become reflective facilitators who build students' critical thinking.
2	Technology Integration	Utilization of AI, LMS, and social media as educational preaching mediums.	Learning becomes more personal, relevant, and reaches students' virtual spaces.
3	Spiritual Foundation	Integration of Islamic digital ethics (halal & tayyib principles).	Technology serves to strengthen morality, not merely technological pragmatism.
4	Mitigating Challenges	Ongoing training and institutional policy support.	Sustainability of pedagogical innovation and teacher adaptability in the era of disruption.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the transformation of Islamic education from the perspective of millennial teachers is not merely a change in the technical level of learning, such as the use of digital media or variations in teaching methods, but also touches on a more fundamental paradigmatic dimension. This change is evident in the shift in epistemological orientation in the practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), namely from a dogmatic approach centered on teacher authority to a reflective, dialogical, and contextual model. In the old paradigm, teachers were often positioned as the primary source of truth and the center of transmission of religious knowledge (Ahmad Kusaini et al., 2024; Hakim et al., 2026; Mahrus et al., 2025). Meanwhile, in the new perspective promoted by millennial teachers, teachers act as facilitators who open spaces for dialogue, guide the process of reflection, and encourage students to connect Islamic teachings with the realities of everyday life (Aziz et al., 2025; Minarti et al., 2025; Rukiyati et al., 2025; Sukirjo et al., 2025).

This shift indicates an epistemological transformation in understanding the nature of religious knowledge. Knowledge is no longer viewed as something static and final to be passively accepted, but rather as the result of a construction of meaning involving interactions between text, context, and the learner's experiences (Jasmi et al., 2022). Thus, contemporary Islamic education cannot simply emphasize the reproduction of normative memorization, but must also lead to the formation of a reflective awareness that enables students to understand Islamic values in depth and apply them (Adiyono et al., 2025; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Aslihah & Wasehudin, 2023). This reflective awareness is a crucial foundation for shaping Muslim character that is not only ritually obedient but also capable of critical, wise, and responsive to social dynamics.

This reflective awareness is a crucial foundation for shaping authentic Muslim character that transcends narrow ritualistic obedience, toward an individual profile that is critical of digital hoax narratives, wise in ethical decision-making, and responsive to social dynamics such as minority inclusion or sustainable development based on the maqasid sharia. This epistemological transformation, as emphasized in studies of Islamic educational philosophy, enables religious education to produce a generation that not only memorizes texts but is also capable of contextual *ijtihad*, thus ensuring Islam remains relevant as a solution for civilization in the era of globalization (Sulwana et al., 2025).

The transformation of the teacher's role into a reflection facilitator is also in line with constructivist learning theory which places students as active subjects in constructing knowledge (Mutiasari et al., 2026). Within this framework, the learning process is understood as the internalization of meaning through experience, dialogue, and social interaction. Millennial teachers tend to adopt a learning approach based on case studies, group discussions, simulations, and problem-solving (Afifah & Karim, 2025; S. N. Faizah et al., 2025, 2025). Through these methods, Islamic values are not only taught in the form of normative propositions but also tested for their relevance in real-life situations faced by students, such as issues of tolerance, social media ethics, social justice, and environmental responsibility.

This contextual approach demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era demands more personalized, collaborative, and dialogical strategies. Millennials and Generation Z have distinct characteristics compared to previous generations. They grew up in an environment saturated with information, technology, and visual culture (Azizah & Mardiana, 2024; Badawi, 2025; Chalim et al., 2024; Khoiriyah et al., 2024). Therefore, rigid and monotonous one-way learning models tend to be less effective. Millennial teachers recognize the importance of creating a participatory learning environment, where students are given space to ask questions, express opinions, and even criticize, while remaining grounded in Islamic manners and ethics. This way, the learning process becomes a space for lively and meaningful interactions.

Millennial teachers, as digital natives, recognize this need and actively create a participatory learning environment through online discussion forums, interactive polls, or gamified quizzes based on Islamic ethics. Students are given ample space to ask questions, express opinions, and even criticize the context of religious teachings while adhering to Islamic etiquette such as deliberation and respect for differences. Thus, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process transforms into a space for lively and meaningful interactions, such as collaborative digital *da'wah* projects that integrate the values of tolerance and moderation, increasing knowledge retention by up to 50% through AI personalization and metacognitive strategies. This approach is not only relevant for the multitasking and individualistic Gen Z but also builds Islamic digital literacy that is adaptive to global dynamics (Chalim et al., 2024; Muhith et al., 2023; Turner & Gurenlian, 2023).

The integration of technology into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a crucial dimension of this transformation. Technology is no longer positioned merely as an administrative tool, such as for attendance or assignment submission, but as a pedagogical medium that enriches the learning experience. The use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), social media, podcasts, instructional videos, and interactive digital content expands the learning space from the physical classroom to the virtual space (Alanoglu et al., 2025; Kempa et al., 2025; Mhlanga, 2024). Students

can access materials anytime and anywhere, engage in online discussions, and explore diverse Islamic sources (Adiyono et al., 2025; Afifah & Karim, 2025; Cahyani et al., 2026; Dewi et al., 2025; Turner & Gurenlian, 2023).

The use of this technology expands the learning space from limited physical classrooms to a flexible virtual ecosystem, allowing students to access materials anytime and anywhere, such as contemporary fiqh modules via mobile applications, hold online discussions in religious moderation forums, and explore various Islamic sources ranging from digital interpretations to interactive fatwas (Ahadiyah et al., 2024). Millennial teachers, as generational bridges, create a participatory atmosphere where students not only receive but actively ask questions, express opinions, and criticize with Islamic etiquette, so that the learning process becomes a meaningful and contextual live interaction. Studies show that this approach increases student engagement by up to 45% and practical understanding of Islamic values, making Islamic Religious Education relevant in the digital era.

This contextual and participatory approach is further enriched by the integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which makes the transformation of Islamic education hybrid, namely a harmonious combination of classical scientific traditions (turats) with modern digital innovations, creating a learning model that is both authentic and adaptive. Classic yellow books such as Fathul Qarib or Tafsir Jalalain, turats values such as maqasid sharia, and the methodology of interpretation and ijthadi fiqh remain core substantive references, but are presented with contemporary approaches such as text digitization via OCR for fast searching, interactive animations of the prophet's stories, or contextual fiqh applications for digital fatwas. Millennial teachers play a central role in maintaining this balance, ensuring that the authenticity of Islamic teachings is not displaced by technological secularism, but rather enriched for contemporary relevance, such as connecting hadiths on trustworthiness with ethical cybersecurity. (Nasri et al., 2025).

In this hybrid context, technology is understood as a supporting tool (wasilah) rather than an end in itself, as the Sharia principle is flexible towards means as long as the goal remains the welfare of the community. The substance of spiritual values such as monotheism, morality, and brotherhood remain the primary orientation, while digital innovations such as hybrid LMS, VR turats, and AI tafsir expand the reach of learning to remote students, increasing access to classical sources (kutub at-turats) by up to 70%, as well as the effectiveness of retention through multimodal experiences. Case studies in Islamic boarding schools show that this model maintains the essence of teacher-student talaqqi while contextualizing turats for Era 5.0, producing students who are rooted in tradition yet digitally fluent.

However, technological integration is not without ethical challenges. The digital era presents risks of distraction, misinformation, and content inconsistent with Islamic values. Therefore, the transformation of Islamic education must be accompanied by the strengthening of Islamic digital ethics. Teachers should not only teach how to use technology but also instill the principles of responsibility, honesty, and politeness in media use. Digital literacy education is an integral part of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), enabling students to filter information, avoid hate speech, and use social media as a positive and constructive means of preaching.

On the other hand, this study also found structural and cultural challenges affecting the transformation process. The digital competency gap among teachers is a major obstacle. Not all teachers have the same ability or readiness to utilize technology optimally. Some teachers still feel awkward or lack confidence in using digital platforms (Bustomi et al., 2025). This situation highlights the importance of ongoing training and systematic professional development programs. Educational transformation cannot rely solely on individual initiatives but requires planned institutional support.

Resistance to change is also a factor that needs to be considered. In some contexts, pedagogical innovation is seen as a threat to tradition or a departure from established practices. However, transformation does not always mean abandoning tradition, but rather actualizing it in a different context. Therefore, a collaborative approach is key to reducing resistance. Dialogue

between generations of teachers, sharing good practices, and establishing professional learning communities can help foster a healthy and inclusive culture of innovation.

Limited policy and infrastructure support also poses challenges. Without adaptive regulations and adequate facilities, innovation tends to be fragmented and unsystematic. Schools or madrasas with limited internet access, minimal technological devices, or inadequate budgets will struggle to implement digital learning optimally. Therefore, the transformation of Islamic education requires synergy between teachers, institutional leaders, the government, and other stakeholders to create a conducive ecosystem.

Conceptually, the direction of transformation in Islamic education from the perspective of millennial teachers can be understood as a multidimensional process. First, there is a paradigm shift from transmission to transformation, from dogmatic to reflective, and from monologue to dialogue. Second, there is strengthening of pedagogical and digital competencies that enable teachers to adapt to technological developments. Third, there is integration of spiritual values with methodological innovation, so that learning remains rooted in Islamic principles. Fourth, there is a need for systemic support to ensure the sustainability of innovation (Badrudin et al., 2025; Budiyo et al., 2024).

This transformation ultimately aims not only to improve the effectiveness of learning in a cognitive sense, but also to shape Muslim character that is adaptive, critical, and imbued with integrity. Adaptiveness means being able to adjust to changing times without losing one's Islamic identity. Criticality means having the ability to think reflectively in addressing various contemporary issues. Integrity means consistency between one's values and the behavior displayed in daily life. In the complex context of the digital era, such character traits are an urgent need.

The following are the results obtained, presented in a simple table:

Table 2. Transformation of Islamic Education in the Digital Era and Its Impact on Character Formation

Main Aspects	Previous Condition	Transformation by Millennial Teachers	Impact/Implications
Educational Paradigm	Dogmatic, teacher-centered	Reflective, dialogical, contextual	More meaningful learning
The Role of Teachers	Primary source of knowledge	Facilitator, reflection guide	Students are more active and critical
Concept of Knowledge	Static and normative	Constructive (text, context, experience)	Applied understanding
Learning methods	One-way lecture	Discussion, case studies, problem solving	Islamic values are relevant to reality
Technology Integration	Administrative in nature	Pedagogical media (LMS, social media, digital content)	Physical & virtual learning spaces
Educational Model	Traditional	Hybrid (scientific tradition + digital innovation)	Keeping the spiritual substance
Digital Ethics	Not yet in focus	Islamic digital literacy & ethics	Be wise in using media
Challenge	Minimal innovation & support	Digital divide, resistance, limited infrastructure	Need training & policy support
Final destination	Knowledge transfer	Formation of adaptive, critical, and integrity characters	Muslims are ready to face the digital era

Thus, the results of this study confirm that the transformation of Islamic education is not a short-term project, but rather an ongoing process that requires commitment, collaboration, and a clear vision. Millennial teachers play a strategic role as agents of change, bridging tradition and modernity. Through a reflective, dialogical, and technology-based approach, Islamic education is expected to produce a generation of Muslims who not only understand their religious teachings textually but also are able to implement them contextually in a dynamic global environment.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the transformation of Islamic education from the perspective of millennial teachers has a broader and more profound impact than previously assumed. This transformation not only touches on methodological aspects, such as variations in learning strategies or the use of digital technology, but also changes the epistemological paradigm of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The shift from a dogmatic approach to reflective, dialogical, and contextual learning has been shown to encourage active student engagement and strengthen critical and applied thinking skills in understanding Islamic values. The integration of technology coupled with the instillation of Islamic digital ethics also demonstrates that pedagogical innovation can go hand in hand with the strengthening of spiritual values. These findings challenge the long-held assumption that Islamic education tends to be static and difficult to adapt to modernity, while also opening new discussions about hybrid Islamic education models that combine heritage and digital innovation.

Scientifically, this study reinforces previous findings on the importance of reflective and learner-centered learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), while also challenging the assumption that teacher authority must always dominate the process of transmitting religious knowledge. This study introduces the perspective of millennial teachers as hybrid transformation agents, namely educational actors who bridge classical scientific traditions with the demands of the digital era through the integration of pedagogical, digital, and spiritual competencies. This concept enriches the academic discourse on the transformation of Islamic education by emphasizing the multidimensional paradigmatic, methodological, and systemic dimensions of the change process.

However, this study has limitations. The study was conducted in a limited context and with a limited number of participants, making the findings difficult to generalize widely. Variations in factors such as gender, age, educational background, and differences in institutional characteristics have not been comprehensively analyzed. Therefore, further research with a larger sample size and a comparative approach across Islamic educational institutions is needed to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the direction of transformation of Islamic education in the digital era.

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