

DIGITALIZATION AND MULTICULTURAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

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Abstract

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The adoption of advanced digital technology in Islamic education creates modernized approaches for the delivery of education between multicultural countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. The digital revolution enables different types of students to collaborate digitally by providing Islamic knowledge through virtual networks linked to mobile apps and educational technology platforms. This study explores the effect of digitalization on multicultural Islamic education by evaluating the benefits along with drawbacks of this educational approach. The research established its methodology through surveys administered to 100 people belonging to educator and policy-making roles alongside student roles to analyze digital learning strategies in Islamic education. The research data reveals that digital resources enhance accessibility to learning and increase student engagement since 75% of participants have positive views about their advantages. The combination of restricted internet access and inadequate digital literacy skills and widespread distribution of false content mainly affects educational delivery in rural settings. The research proves digital education promotes inclusive learning, so societal implementation methods need proper guidelines for ensuring educational quality standards. The researcher states that preserving authentic religious education requires a combination of technology with traditional Islamic teaching practices because modern digital advancements are beneficial. Modern Islamic educational institutions performing digital transformation between Malaysia and Indonesia need to develop strategic policies that maximize digital technology advantages. The research study presents essential knowledge regarding digital Islamic education practices and provides strategies for its successful application among diverse classrooms. Technological innovation produced by digitalization helps enhance Islamic education quality by creating global educational practices.



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Introduction

Through education based on Islamic principles the moral development continues to form as intellectual and social abilities grow across Malaysian and Indonesian Muslim communities. Each nation develops its distinct Islamic education system through mandatory religious schools jointly with mosque-based learning and Islamic universities. Educational methodologies underwent major changes through the integration of digital technology in education during recent years as this made religious lessons more interactive and available to students. (Boehme, 2024). Islamic Education that exists outside traditional classrooms has been enlarged by digitalization technology including, online learning platform, mobile application, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI). Digital platforms make it easy for learners of different ethnicities to gain the religious knowledge in class buildings that accept several cultures. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in Malaysia introduced e-learning components into their academic programs and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) in Indonesia conducted similar integration in their Islamic university education. The new technologies indicate that digitalization improves academic access and helps students from different cultures learn in harmony with Islamic teachings (Farrah Ilyani et al., 2025).

Research Questions

- i. What role has digitalization played in making Islamic education more accessible with higher effectiveness within multicultural communities of Malaysia and Indonesia?
- ii. What obstacles prevent digital tools from being integrated into Islamic education programs and which main obstacles most impede this integration?
- iii. What are the perspectives of students together with educators regarding digitalization as a tool to improve multicultural participation in Islamic studies?

Research Objectives

- i. Explore the effects that digitalization creates for Islamic education accessibility in multicultural settings and student involvement.
- ii. Examine which main problems along with barriers prevent educators and students from implementing digital Islamic education.
- iii. An examination should occur to understand both student perceptions and educator beliefs about digital formats which support multicultural Islamic learning.

Problem Statement

The adoption of digitalization advances through mainstream education lacks exploration when applied to Islamic education within multicultural settings. As multicultural countries Malaysia and Indonesia provide distinct openings and obstacles to implement digital learning tools in Islamic education. The existing digital resources lack sufficient knowledge about their effects on student engagement and inclusivity and knowledge acquisition (Gölgesiz, 2024).

Internet availability and technological equipment pose barriers to digital Islamic education for people in rural areas along with disadvantaged communities that have constrained access to modern infrastructure. The authenticity of digital Islamic content as well as the reliability of online sources becomes questionable because misinformation can easily spread in digital spaces. Students with limited access to technology experience additional educational opportunities gaps because they differ in their abilities to connect with Islamic educational content.

Significance of the Study

This investigation carries multiple key components. The study adds value to the research on educational digitalization because it concentrates on Islamic education within multicultural environments. The understanding of how digital tools influence learning experiences provides

policymakers along with educators with enough information for designing proper technology integration plans. Apart from assessing current practices in digital Islamic education the results will help resolve issues about making it accessible to everyone (R'boul, 2021). Through proper digital platform utilization Muslim students from various backgrounds can remove geographic and cultural limitations which enable interactive skype-like education. The study generates essential knowledge regarding maximizing digital resources to develop an inclusive and credible Islamic education system for Malaysia and Indonesia. The study enbergates digital tools in Islamic education by identifying chances for improvement and obstacles so new policies can create effective digital implementation without compromising cultural or religious standards (Hanif et al., 2024).

Literature Review

Digitalization in Islamic Education

The Evolution of Digital Learning in Islamic Education: Digitalization has significantly transformed Islamic education by extending traditional madrasah and pesantren based learning through online platforms, mobile applications and multimedia resources, thereby overcoming geographical and institutional limitations (Hasanah et al., 2022). In Malaysia and Indonesia, digital learning has improved accessibility and flexibility, supported diverse learners and promoted self-directed engagement with Islamic knowledge (Abdullah et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024). Furthermore, digital platforms facilitate multicultural Islamic education by exposing learners to diverse interpretations and cultural expressions of Islam, fostering intercultural understanding and inclusivity in plural societies (Yusuf & Sterkens, 2023). Initiatives such as online pesantren and virtual madrasah demonstrate how technology sustains and modernizes religious education, aligning Islamic pedagogy with national digital education agendas and inclusive development goals (Rahman et al., 2020; Kadir et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

Technological Tools in Islamic Education: Islamic knowledge distribution undergoes modern transformation through the use of different digital technologies. The integration of Moodle, Google Classroom and university-specific systems into Islamic studies curricula provides students with systematic opportunities to study Fiqh, Tafsir and Hadith as well as other topics (Khairi et al., 2024). Students can interact with Islamic teachings through mobile applications which include Muslim Pro alongside Bayyinah TV and Quran Explorer. The mobile applications present users with features which include daily prayers alongside translated Quran recitation alongside scholarly interpretations. There has been a growing popularity with Islamic educators of video-based learning through YouTube platforms. These platforms are being used by some very prominent scholars and institutions to deliver lectures, conduct discussions and virtual study sessions. Personalized learning experiences for Quranic recitation and interpretation based on an individual progress are also being worked on in fields associated with Artificial intelligence (AI) which involves AI driven tutors guide the students in the recitation and interpretation based on their progress (Mashuri et al., 2024).

Impact on Accessibility and Inclusion: Digitalization in Islamic education plays a major role in making learning more accessible to those students who are living in rural areas or in napped away from traditional institutions (Momen et al., 2024). Geographic barriers can be a problem in education in Malaysia and Indonesia, and so digital platforms help people access religious knowledge. This is very conducive to women, working professionals, people with disability or any other groups of people who may want to study Islamic studies without affecting their daily function. Digitalization establishes multicultural learning contexts because it brings students from multiple backgrounds into a unified environment (Parsimin et al., 2024). Through online discussion forums

and virtual study groups and interactive courses students from Malaysia and Indonesia and additional participants engage in Islamic discourse collectively. Digital Islamic education possesses various benefits but the complete realization of these potentialities demands the solution of internet accessibility, digital literacy and content authenticity issues.

Multiculturalism and Islamic Education

The Influence of Multiculturalism in Islamic Education: Islamic scholarship in Malaysia and Indonesia flourishes from various traditional backgrounds among Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Indian and indigenous minorities of these nation-states that operate as the most culturally diverse Muslim-populated nations. The multicultural environment shapes how Muslim education looks and operates for both teaching and interpretation practices (Rantung, 2024). A multicultural student demographic in these nations creates an adaptive educational space which provides multiple Islamic teachings and cultural customs to students. Through digitalization people gain access to multiple Islamic resources which belong to distinct cultural and theological backgrounds to develop deeper cultural acceptance and understanding.

The Role of Digitalization in Multicultural Islamic Education: Online platforms have greatly improved how multicultural Islamic education reaches students. Students gain new perspectives about Islamic teachings through online platforms which offer video lessons and virtual reality content connected to scholars all over the world. The International Islamic University Malaysia and Universitas Islam Negeri lead initiatives to use digital tools for creating study spaces that accept diverse cultures. Students can access worldwide Islamic talks through digital platforms without compromising their regional cultural and religious values (Rohmad et al., 2024).

Challenges of Multicultural Digital Islamic Education: The benefits of digitalization face challenges when it comes to maintaining correct content that relates to both culture and Islam. The differences in understanding force teachers to show students how to analyze online resources according to correct Islamic principles. Many parts of the country still lack enough digital knowledge and good internet access in their rural areas. Poor monitoring systems create risks that distorted content can hurt Islamic subject learning among multicultural students.

Challenges of Digital Integration in Multicultural Education

Digitalization in Islamic education brings multiple advantages but fails to achieve full implementation in multicultural environments because of various barriers. Students who reside in rural sections of Malaysia and Indonesia experience restricted participation in digital education because they lack dependable internet connectivity as well as necessary digital equipment (Sadiah et al., 2024). The adoption of digital literacy skills presents a critical issue because there are educators and students who do not possess adequate abilities to use digital resources properly for Islamic education. The cost limitations prevent certain students from purchasing smart phones or tablets and obtaining continuous internet service. Trustworthy content finds itself at risk when the authenticity of digital materials remains uncertain because such materials may result in incorrect interpretations of religious knowledge (Sahibudin et al., 2020). The correct implementation of online Islamic education depends on both regulatory oversight and institutional management to support theological correctness and cultural diversity. The successful deployment of digitalization in multicultural Islamic education depends on resolving the identified issues that have been presented.

Methodology

Research Design

The research used a quantitative method to study how digitalization affects multicultural Islamic education systems in Malaysia and Indonesia. To learn about digital Islamic education our research team made a formal survey that asked students teachers and governmental staff about their specific work experiences. The study examined important elements of digital tools including how well students and teachers can use them as well as how such tools can enhance multicultural learning (Samindjaya et al., 2024).

Sampling and Participants

To include various types of Islamic schools I used a random sampling method to pick 100 participants from Malaysia and Indonesia. The survey included 40% students while the remaining 60% were made up of educators and policymakers to gather information from different levels of the educational system. The study picked participants equally from both genders and multiple cultures to show the mixed backgrounds of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Survey Instrument

The survey campaign contained 10 multiple-choice questions to evaluate different digital parts of multicultural Islamic education teaching. Participants could select among four answer choices to show how well they know and use digital tools plus evaluate their results and problems in teaching Islam online (Succarie, 2024). The questions examined how commonly students use digital platforms for their studies and what barriers they face when using digital education. We tested the survey questions with test participants before starting the general distribution and adjusted them based on their results. The study used Google Forms to distribute its survey from an online platform to both Malaysian and Indonesian participants. Responses were gathered for two weeks and analyzed with basic statistical methods which presented the results as percentages. The method helped us study how digitalization affects Islamic education systems while considering national and school practices.

Data Analysis

The compared all survey data to find what schools were doing about digital technologies in Islamic education across multiple social groups. We transformed raw answer data into percentage numbers and made separate tables to display the results. Our examination included studying how much people know about digital tools and to what extent they use these tools for Islamic education as well as their effectiveness and present obstacles. Data from participants split into groups by their backgrounds showed us how students' education staff and government officials see digitalization tools (Toisuta et al., 2024). Our organized methodology generated complete results about digital learning prospects and limitations in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Findings

Table and figure 1 reveal that many respondents demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding digital tools in Islamic education, with 40% identifying as "Very Aware" and another 35% as "Somewhat Aware." This suggests a generally positive reception and familiarity with digital platforms among users. Meanwhile, 15% remain neutral, indicating ambivalence or limited engagement, and only 10% report being "Not Aware," highlighting a relatively small segment that may require targeted outreach or digital literacy initiatives to bridge the awareness gap.

Table 1. Awareness on digital tools in Islamic education

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|----------------|
| Very Aware | 40 |
| Somewhat Aware | 35 |
| Neutral | 15 |
| Not Aware | 10 |

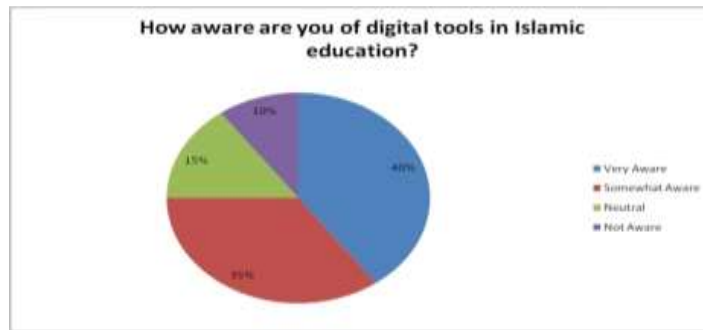


Figure 1. Awareness of digital tools

Table and figure 2 indicate that digital platforms are actively used for Islamic learning, with the highest engagement occurring on a weekly basis (40%), followed by daily usage at 30%. Monthly users account for 20%, while only 10% report rare engagement. This distribution suggests that digital tools have become a regular part of religious education routines, with a significant portion of learners accessing content consistently, either weekly or daily.

Table 2: Usage of Digital Platforms for Islamic Learning

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|----------|----------------|
| Daily | 30 |
| Weekly | 40 |
| Monthly | 20 |
| Rarely | 10 |

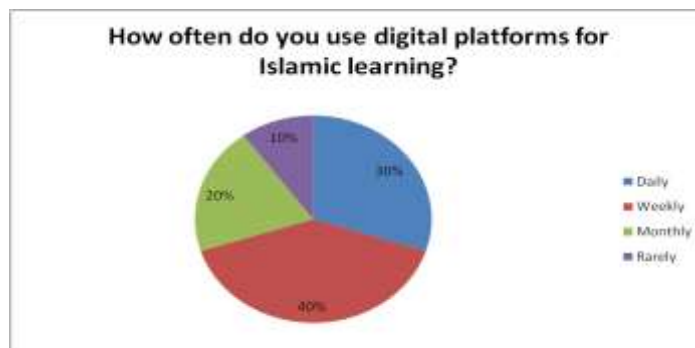


Figure 2. Usage of digital tools

Table and figure 3 highlights that online courses are the most preferred digital platform for Islamic education, favoured by 45% of respondents. Mobile applications follow with 30%, indicating a strong inclination toward flexible, on-the-go learning. Meanwhile, YouTube and video lectures attract 15%, suggesting moderate interest in visual and informal content delivery. Only 10% prefer Virtual Reality and AI tools, reflecting emerging but limited adoption of advanced technologies in this educational context.

Table 3. Preferable digital platform for Islamic education

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|----------|----------------|
|----------|----------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Online Courses | 45 |
| Mobile Applications | 30 |
| YouTube & Video Lectures | 15 |
| Virtual Reality & AI Tools | 10 |

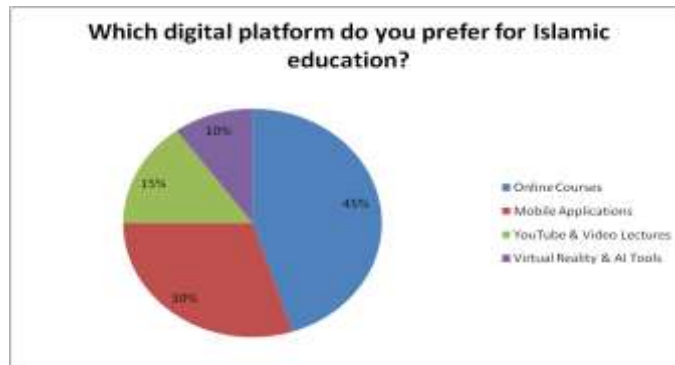


Figure 3. Preferable of digital tools

Table and figure 4 illustrate that digital learning has positively influenced the understanding of Islamic knowledge for most respondents, with 40% reporting slight improvement and 35% indicating strong improvement. Only 15% felt it had no impact, while a minimal 10% perceived a reduction in understanding. These findings suggest that digital platforms are generally effective in enhancing religious education, though a small segment may benefit from more tailored or interactive learning approaches.

Table 4. Digital Learning Impacted Understanding of Islamic Knowledge

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Strongly Improved | 35 |
| Slightly Improved | 40 |
| No Impact | 15 |
| Reduced Understanding | 10 |

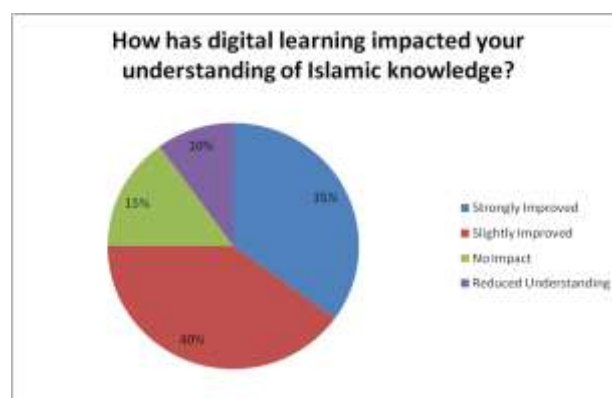


Figure 4. Digital Learning Impacted Understanding of Islamic Knowledge

Table and figure 5 identify key barriers to accessing digital Islamic education, with poor internet connection emerging as the most significant challenge, affecting 40% of respondents. The high cost of digital tools follows at 30%, indicating financial constraints as a major concern. Meanwhile, 20% cite lack of digital literacy, suggesting a need for targeted training and support. Only 10% report issues with content authenticity, highlighting a relatively lower but still important concern regarding the credibility of online religious resources.

Table 5. Challenges Accessing Digital Islamic Education

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Poor Internet Connection | 40 |
| High Cost of Digital Tools | 30 |
| Lack of Digital Literacy | 20 |
| Content Authenticity Issues | 10 |

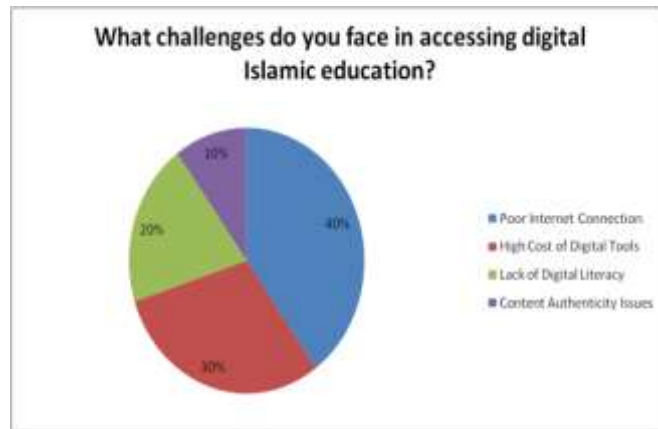


Figure 5. Digital Islamic Education

Table and figure 6 demonstrate that digital education is widely perceived as a valuable tool for facilitating multicultural Islamic learning, with 45% of respondents rating it as highly effective and another 35% as moderately effective. A smaller portion, 15%, view it as slightly effective, while only 5% consider it not effective. These findings suggest that digital platforms are playing a significant role in bridging cultural contexts and enhancing access to diverse Islamic knowledge across communities.

Table 6. Digital Education in Facilitating Multicultural Islamic Learning

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Highly Effective | 45 |
| Moderately Effective | 35 |
| Slightly Effective | 15 |
| Not Effective | 5 |

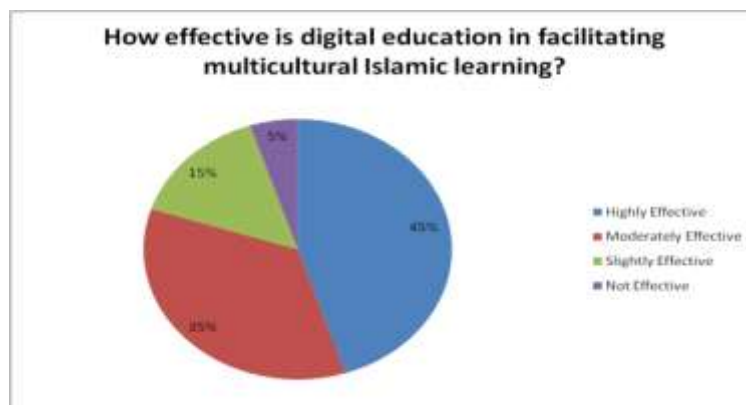


Figure 6. Digital Education in Multicultural Islamic Learning

Table and figure 7 reveal a strong inclination toward adopting digital Islamic learning methods, with half of the respondents (50%) expressing they are "Strongly Willing" and another 30% indicating they are "Somewhat Willing." Only 10% remain neutral, and an equal 10% are not willing to adopt such methods. This overall positive outlook suggests a growing acceptance and readiness among learners to embrace digital platforms for religious education.

Table 7. Adopt Digital Islamic Learning Methods

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Willing | 50 |
| Somewhat Willing | 30 |
| Neutral | 10 |
| Not Willing | 10 |



Figure 7. Digital Education in Multicultural Islamic Learning

Table and figure 8 show that Islamic institutions are increasingly integrating digital tools into their educational practices, with 40% of respondents indicating extensive use and 35% reporting moderate use. This suggests a strong institutional shift toward digital engagement. However, 15% note that such tools are rarely used, and 10% report no usage at all, highlighting areas where digital adoption remains limited and may benefit from strategic support or infrastructure development.

Table 8. Islamic Institutions Use Digital Tools for Education

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Extensively Used | 40 |
| Moderately Used | 35 |
| Rarely Used | 15 |
| Not Used | 10 |

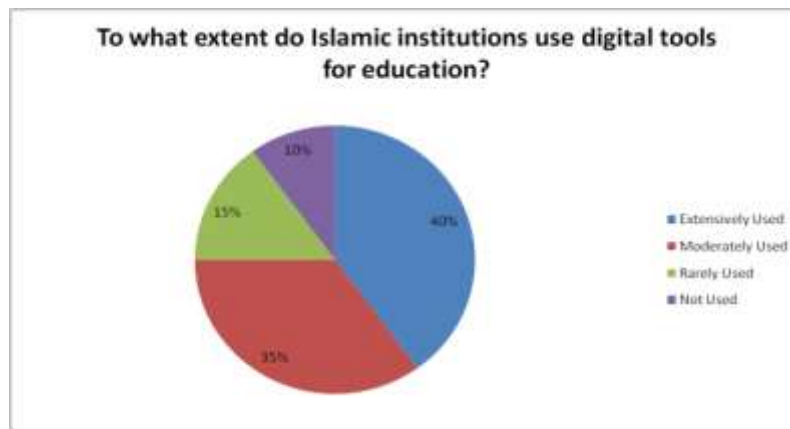


Figure 8. Islamic Institutions Use Digital Tools for Education

Table and figure 9 indicate that digital tools are fostering meaningful engagement in multicultural Islamic learning, with 40% of respondents feeling highly engaged and 35% moderately engaged. This suggests that digital platforms are effectively supporting cross-cultural understanding and participation. Meanwhile, 15% report slight engagement and only 10% feel not engaged, pointing to a minority who may benefit from more inclusive or interactive digital strategies to enhance their learning experience.

Table 9. Multicultural Learning Through Digital Tools

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Highly Engaged | 40 |
| Moderately Engaged | 35 |
| Slightly Engaged | 15 |
| Not Engaged | 10 |

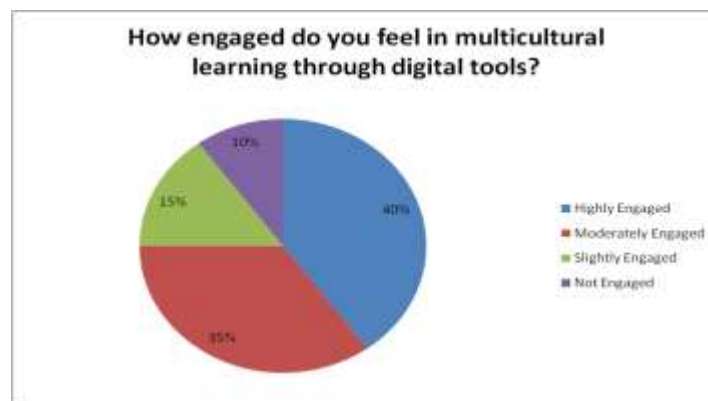


Figure 9. Multicultural Learning Through Digital Tools

Table and figure 10 reflect a highly optimistic outlook on the future of digital Islamic education, with half of the respondents (50%) viewing it as "Very Promising" and another 30% considering it "Somewhat Promising." Only 10% remain neutral, and an equal 10% perceive it as "Not Promising." These results suggest strong confidence in the potential of digital platforms to enhance and expand access to Islamic learning in the years ahead.

Table 10. Future Of Digital Islamic Education

| Response | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|----------------|
| Very Promising | 50 |

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Somewhat Promising | 30 |
| Neutral | 10 |
| Not Promising | 10 |

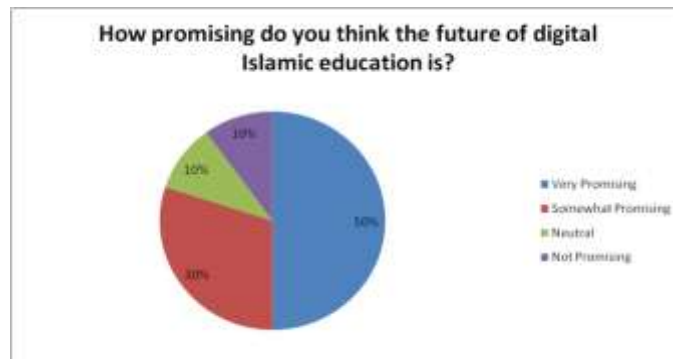


Figure 10. Future Of Digital Islamic Education

Discussion

The Role of Digital Tools in Islamic Education

The research shows that digital tools help more people learn and relate to Islamic education in both Malaysia and Indonesia. A total of 75% of people recognize digital platforms and online courses work best as their preferred learning tools. Technology gives students the freedom to study as they want while getting access to many different Islamic teachings. Digital tools let students learn through videos tests and artificial intelligence programs which create better interest from students of diverse backgrounds.

Challenges in Implementing Digital Islamic Education

Digital transformation in Islamic education creates many problems for the field. The results show that 40% of people face terrible internet connection issues which mainly occur in rural villages. Higher tool prices and limited digital skill make many people unable to embrace digitalization in Islamic education. The spread of incorrect Islamic knowledge on the internet poses risks to students due to content in authenticity. The results show we need better internet service at affordable rates plus guidelines to check the truth of Islamic educational materials posted online.

Multicultural Engagement through Digital Platforms

Research indicates that digital learning plays an important role in supporting cultural diversity within Islamic education by fostering more inclusive and flexible learning environments. Digital learning approaches allow students to access multiple teaching methods and knowledge sources originating from different cultural contexts, thereby enriching their overall learning experience (Zainuddin et al., 2020). In virtual classroom settings, interactions among students from diverse cultural backgrounds encourage collaborative learning and the exchange of perspectives, which contribute to intercultural understanding and mutual respect (Martin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, online learning environments promote inclusive education by providing more equitable opportunities for students to participate, express ideas, and co-construct knowledge without the social and physical constraints often present in traditional classrooms (Hodges et al., 2020). However, the credibility and effectiveness of digital Islamic education depend on the authenticity of learning content, the authority of sources, and the alignment of pedagogical strategies with diverse cultural learning styles (Selwyn, 2020). Recent research also emphasizes that inclusive digital education must be designed ethically and with cultural sensitivity to ensure that technological integration does not undermine religious values or local identities (OECD, 2021).

Future Potential and Recommendations

Our data shows that half of the respondents support digital Islamic education's potential so institutions must develop clear digital implementation plans. Digital Islamic education needs digital setups and trained teachers to develop new knowledge systems that work without breaking current systems. Digital technology needs improvement to make it serve as a better method of Islamic learning for diverse communities.

Conclusion

As pointed out in this paper, the notion of digitalization has positively impacted the Malaysian and Indonesian Islamic education system and paved a way for multicultural education. It also pointed out that many of the participants understood the value of technology in improving access and instructiveness during the teaching period. The outcome infers that digital platforms enhance student learning by providing the interaction of Islamic education with students in unique means. There are several issues like internet connection, cost, training for staff and contract issues towards information reliability which have posed a huge challenge to the uptake of online sales.

Majority of survey respondents indicated positive views about digital Islamic education, but infrastructure and digital readiness problems need immediate solutions. The full potential of digitalization within education requires students together with educators to obtain stable internet connectivity and cost-effective digital tools alongside valid educational material. Schools need to create verification procedures which check the validity of online Islamic teachings because they want to stop false information from spreading. Islamic education will adapt to digital demands through the establishment of digital infrastructure and trainer enhancement and multicultural educational content development. Digitalization will redefine the direction of multicultural Islamic education in Malaysia and Indonesia through successful resolution of current challenges.

Co-Author Contribution

Author 1 carried out the fieldwork, prepared the literature review and overlooked the whole article's write up. Authors 2, wrote the research methodology and did the data entry. Authors 3, 4 carried out the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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