

Editorial:

The Future of Islamic Religious Education: Expectations and Actions

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The field of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is experiencing dynamic changes, driven by the need to adapt to evolving societal, technological and cultural contexts. This special issue brings together a collection of papers that explore various aspects of these transformations, categorised into six major themes. Each theme offers valuable insights into the expectations and actions necessary to enhance the effectiveness, inclusivity and relevance of IRE in contemporary times.

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS

This first theme focuses on the evolution of educational curricula and innovative teaching methodologies within IRE. The paper on tahfiz education highlights the factors influencing parental preference, emphasising the need for improved facilities and curriculum to maintain the appeal of these institutions. Similarly, the study on Quranic education at higher institutions proposes a structured framework for teaching Quranic recitation skills, aiming to enhance the teaching capabilities of instructors.

Mastery of content knowledge among jawi education teachers is crucial for effective teaching, as explored in another paper. Continuous training and curriculum updates are necessary to ensure that teachers are well-equipped to deliver engaging and comprehensive lessons. Additionally, enhancing halal awareness from an early age through a more in-depth preschool curriculum is advocated to provide children with a solid foundation in halal practices.

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INCLUSIVITY AND INTER-RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Promoting inclusivity within IRE is a key focus of the second theme. Incorporating inter-religious education elements into the IRE curriculum is essential for fostering understanding and harmony among students of diverse religious backgrounds. The role of women in overcoming mosque restrictions to establish educational institutions in the United Kingdom is also highlighted, emphasising their significant contributions to the broader educational landscape.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND FUTURE TRENDS

The third theme addresses the balance between traditional methods and technological advancements in Islamic education. The article on traditionalising versus futuring in hadith studies explores the tension between preserving traditional practices and embracing technology for re-verifying hadith authenticity. The importance of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in developing higher-order thinking skills necessary for *ijtihad* is also discussed, underscoring the need for innovative pedagogical approaches.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental education and sustainability are crucial components of contemporary IRE, as explored in the fourth theme. Integrating Islamic values and experiential learning in environmental sustainability projects helps students appreciate the importance of protecting the environment. The study on teachers' instructional approaches within Malaysia's Sustainable Schools-Environmental Awards programme highlights the need for ongoing pedagogical training to effectively integrate environmental education with Islamic teachings.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The fifth theme focuses on the psychological well-being of students and the integration of crisis management models into IRE. The impact of university students' adversity quotient on the constructiveness of online IRE learning during the pandemic is examined, emphasising the role of humanist-religious lecturers in enhancing students' resilience. Additionally, the development of a culturally and spiritually relevant crisis intervention model provides a comprehensive framework for addressing psychological crises within the IRE context.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS AND INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

The final theme explores the socio-political contexts affecting IRE institutions. The political and educational implications of law on *pondok pesantren* in Indonesia are analysed, highlighting the uneven implementation of the law and the need for consistent state support and recognition of these traditional educational institutions.

This special issue presents a diverse range of studies and insights, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of IRE around the world. By addressing these themes, we aim to inspire further research and dialogue on the future of IRE, fostering a more informed, inclusive and dynamic educational environment for all learners.