

Merdeka Belajar Innovation Through Strengthening Competition of Islamic Higher Education in Society Era 5.0

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ABSTRACT

The disruption era creates a social arrangement of life that adapts to the conditions and goals set. Indonesia, a Muslim majority, must be adjusted by educational innovations, namely independent learning. Adaptation and adoption are a necessity. Islamic higher education must be reformulated, characterised by a balance of human behaviour and the role of technology in education. The study explores how Islamic higher education can compete in society era 5.0. The results show that Merdeka Belajar innovation is carried out by developing in harmony with Merdeka Belajar curricula and multilevel learning innovations. Strengthening Islamic higher education is based on *aqidah* *sohahah*, philosophy, five senses, intuition, character, rationality, and authority as a source of knowledge, all of which must be used as an inspirational approach. The competitive advantage of Islamic higher education needs leadership skills and human resources, teamwork differentiation, cooperation network, service quality differentiation, financial innovation, religious culture, and quality culture. The research implies that the better the independent learning innovation, the more vital Islamic higher education through multifunctional, adaptive, and flexible learning with the highest level of competitive quality creates Islamic education that can be applied in society era 5.0.

ABSTRAK


Era disrupti menciptakan penataan sosial kehidupan yang menyesuaikan dengan kondisi dan tujuan yang ditetapkan. Indonesia negara dengan muslim mayoritas harus mampu menyesuaikan inovasi pendidikan yaitu Merdeka Belajar. Adaptasi dan adopsi yang dilakukan oleh sebagian besar bangsa merupakan keniscayaan. Kelemahan pendidikan tinggi Islam di Indonesia harus direformulasi agar berdaya saing dalam menghadapi tantangan era society 5.0 yang ditandai dengan


Pendidikan Islam;
Era Society 5.0;

keseimbangan perilaku manusia dan peran teknologi dalam dunia pendidikan. Kajian bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi manajemen pendidikan Islam agar bersaing pada era society 5.0. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gagasan inovasi Merdeka Belajar dilakukan dengan pengembangan Merdeka Belajar menyelaraskan dengan era society 5.0 berupa pengembangan kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dan inovasi pembelajaran bertingkat. Sedangkan penguatan pendidikan tinggi Islam belandaskan pada *aqidah sobibah*, falsafah, panca indera, intuisi, watak, rasionalitas, dan otoritas sebagai sumber ilmu, semuanya harus dijadikan pendekatan inspiratif. Keunggulan bersaing pendidikan tinggi Islam perlu dilakukan dengan keterampilan kepemimpinan dan sumber daya manusia, diferensiasi kerja sama tim, jaringan kerja sama, diferensiasi kualitas pelayanan, inovasi keuangan, budaya religi dan budaya kualitas. Implikasi penelitian semakin baik inovasi Merdeka Belajar maka semakin kuat pendidikan tinggi Islam melalui pembelajaran multifungsi, adaptif dan fleksibel dengan tingkat kualitas bersaing tertinggi mewujudkan pendidikan Islam yang mampu diterapkan dalam era society 5.0.

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INTRODUCTION

Building an Islamic education system, especially in Indonesia, is very complex, namely facing challenges, including reminders about science and technology, democratisation, and moral decline.¹ Then, focus on academic and educational staff and competitiveness or competitive advantage.² Another challenge is the orientation of cognitive learning and people's perceptions.³

¹ Mawardi Pewangi, "Tantangan Pendidikan Islam Di Era Globalisasi," *Tarbawi* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1–11, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26618/jtw.v1i1.347>.

² Danial Rahman and Abu Rizal Akbar, "Problematika Yang Dihadapi Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Sebagai Tantangan Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan," *Nazḥama: Journal of Management Education* 1, no. 1 (2021): 76–89, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jme.v1i1.25242>.

³ Ade Imelda Frimayanti, "Strategi Pendidikan Islam Menghadapi Problematika Globalisasi," *Al Hikmah: Jurnal Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 12, no. 1 (2015): 46–60, [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25299/jaip.2015.vol12\(1\).1447](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25299/jaip.2015.vol12(1).1447).

Furthermore, it pays attention to innovation and scientific integration aspects.⁴ These challenges should be stakeholders committed to Islamic education who have a sharp view of addressing how to deal with them with existing capabilities and limitations.

To understand the Islamic education system, it is necessary to know that the purpose of Islamic education is to transform knowledge, develop values and culture, and focus on students so that they have a character to achieve living in the world and the hereafter through Islamic teachings.⁵ Then, it targets students to have optimal ability and maturity in faith and holiness to practise the Islamic education they have obtained.⁶

To build quality Islamic education, innovation in education must be carried out by every human being concerned with education development as a form of improvement towards better Indonesian education.⁷ Then, the goals of Islamic education must be aligned with unlimited development and continuous improvements to achieve success.⁸

However, unfortunately, the development of Islamic educational institutions still shows weaknesses in management, one of which is determining the vision, mission, and objectives of Islamic education according to capabilities, needs, and future strategic plans.⁹ In addition, in determining the goals of Islamic education, it does not prioritise medium and long-term aspects.¹⁰

How is there a relationship between innovation and competition? So, it explains that the formation of innovation will produce a competitive advantage to achieve capabilities over other competitors.¹¹ To realise a

⁴ Mustaqim, "Inovasi Pendidikan Islam: Pengintegrasian Agama Dan Sains," *Al Mabsut: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial* 1, no. 1 (2014): 1–13.

⁵ Imam (s) Syafe'i, "Tujuan Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. November (2015): 1–16.

⁶ Abdul Wahid, "Konsep Dan Tujuan Pendidikan Islam (Concept and Objectives of Islamic Education)," *Istiqra'* 3, no. 1 (2015): 18–23.

⁷ Titi Kadi and Robiatul Awwaliyah, "Inovasi Pendidikan : Upaya Penyelesaian Problematika Pendidikan Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Islam Nusantara* 1, no. 2 (2017): 144–55, <https://doi.org/10.33852/jurnal.v1i2.32>.

⁸ Aris Munandar, "Manajemen Strategik Dan Mutu Pendidikan Islam," *Nur El-Islam : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 6, no. 2 (2019): 73–97, <https://doi.org/10.51311/nuris.v6i2.132>.

⁹ Mulyono Mulyono and Ismail Suardi Wekke, "Academic and Culture Development Strategy Management for Islamic Higher Education in Indonesian," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 175, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/175/1/012163>.

¹⁰ Muhamad Nuryasin and Margono Mitrohardjono, "Strategi Perencanaan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Tabdzibi : Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2019): 77–84, <https://doi.org/10.24853/tahdzibi.4.2.77-84>.

¹¹ Mardiyono (2015)

competitive advantage in Islamic education, it is necessary to achieve, among others, knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes, and habits.¹² Both innovation and competitive advantage must be able to form continuous institutional renewal and modernisation so that they have a dominant influence in the world of education.¹³

The problem of Islamic education is one of the parts that must be solved through philosophy so that Islamic education shows the existing problems accompanied by the results of in-depth thinking to understand them, which in the end offers alternative solutions to the issues faced based on Islamic sciences including kalam, fiqh, tasawuf, and philosophy.¹⁴ Then, it was analysed that the conventional educational paradigm is no longer applied to the modern paradigm, so it combines all future interests and challenges through sustainable education, which is formulated in the long term.¹⁵ It considers that education has values that aim for the long term, are just sustainable, and need to be implemented or applied.¹⁶ In another sense, Islamic education is theoretically not necessarily suitable for use in Indonesia, which has a heterogeneous population, diverse communities, geography, language, and so on, so that has different characteristics.

Empirically, how does education have significance for a country so that it can assess and achieve specific targets? Below is Figure 1, which illustrates a comparison of the human development index explaining that Indonesia, with a Muslim majority in the world, even ASEAN countries, ranks 5th, 26th in Asia, and 107th globally. This explores that one of the educational instruments is human resources, namely educators, academic staff, and students, as it is known that greater attention is needed to be an essential assessment of the input-output of the national education system.

The importance of the educational approach is assessed from the human development index so that educational goals have a breakthrough or renewal in solving problems in Human Resources. Islamic education aims to

¹² Rahmadani and Siti Qomariah, "Menciptakan Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan Dengan Strategi Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia Dalam Dunia Pendidikan," *Tarbiyah Wa Ta'lim: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 9, no. 2 (2022): 35–44.

¹³ Hendra, "Strategi Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam" (UIN Jakarta, 2020).

¹⁴ Suudin Aziz, Mundzar Fahman, and Muhammad Amruddin Latif, "Pendekatan Pragmatis Dalam Pendidikan Islam (Kajian Terhadap Teori Al-Dzara'i' Dalam Filsafat Pendidikan Islam)," *Al-Auqa: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kajian Keislaman* 3, no. 1 (2021): 58–79.

¹⁵ Susilawati, MA Nawawi, and AN Muid, "Rekonstruksi Sistem Melalui Pendekatan Pendidikan Untuk Pembangunan Yang Berkelanjutan," *Andragogi Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2019): 218–40.

¹⁶ Mohamad Topan, "Pragmatisme Dalam Pendidikan Di Indonesia: Kritik Dan Relevansinya," *Al-Idrak: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2021): 16–26.

build competitive human resources in the context of developing a human development index.¹⁷



Figure 1. Human Development Index (HDI) in ASEAN.¹⁸

Furthermore, how are education goals in Indonesia compared to other countries in Asia with the highest innovation index? Figure 2 below explains that Indonesia, with a Muslim majority, is in 8th place after Vietnam and the Philippines. Compared to Figure 1, although Indonesia has a higher HDI/HDI than Vietnam and the Philippines, the data below shows a contradiction: Indonesia's innovation index is still below the two countries. This implies that there is indeed a problem with the philosophy of Islamic education in Indonesia regarding educational innovation, so this problem needs to be studied, and its solution includes competitiveness or competitive advantage in educational resources.

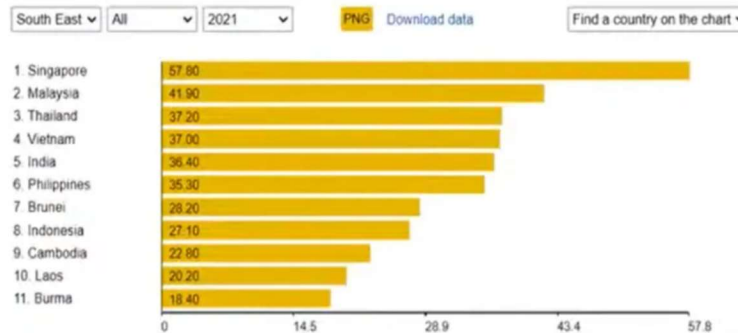


Figure 2. Innovation Index in Asia ¹⁹

¹⁷ MB Muvid and Miftahuuddin, "Pendidikan Islam Dan Indeks Pembangunan Manusia (Telaah Atas Kontribusi Dan Peran Pendidikan Islam Dalam Pengembangan IPM)," *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 20, no. 1 (2022): 31–46, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35905/alishlah.v20i1.2604>.

¹⁸ UNDP, "Human Development Index" (London, 2020).

¹⁹ theglobeconomy, "Innovation Index" (United Kingdom, 2021).

What is more apparent is seen in Figure 3 below, where Indonesia's innovation index has decreased since 2014-2016 and 2017-2021, so it is only natural that this phenomenon will affect the national education system. Maelani believes that the quantity of Indonesian human resources cannot yet solve problems and educational goals.²⁰

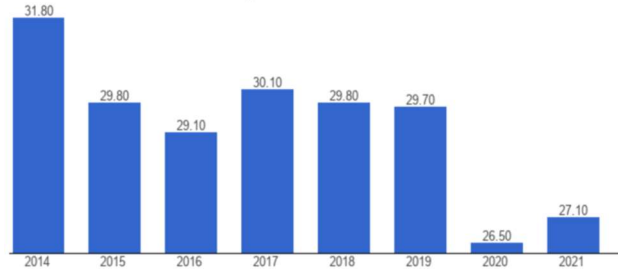


Figure 3. Development of Indonesia's Innovation Index 2014-2021 ²¹

This problematic transition indicates that development and adaptation make the learning process easier and more flexible; the independent learning program is one of the essential orientations for realising a learning system that is carried out whenever, wherever, and whoever. However, technological instruments, motivation, and infrastructure are prerequisites for the realisation of independent learning so that the world of education has full awareness to adjust to being competitive gradually. In other words, Islamic education must be able to create new adaptations in culture and more comprehensive learning innovation, where one approach is integrating independent campuses with digital humanities so that curriculum content in tertiary institutions provides scientific quality and interest in studying Islamic education learning. For this reason, it explains that technological developments offer enormous benefits to humanity, requiring the digital era to demand digitisation in various aspects of life.²² One of them, digitisation in education, has become more effective and efficient in carrying out its roles and functions in educating the nation's life.

In the era of disruption, the life sector underwent a fundamental transformation. In society era 5.0, all aspects of life are closely intertwined with technology. As a result, humans must be able to think critically and

²⁰ R Maelani, H Mustapa, and I Saifullah, "Progressivisme Manusia Indonesia: Kuantitas Sumberdaya Manusia Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan," *Jurnal Pendidikan UNIGA* 13, no. 1 (2019): 195–214, <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.52434/jp.v13i1.830>.

²¹ theglobaleconomy, "Innovation Index."

²² Kastolani Kastolani, "Digital Reorientation of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (2019): 151, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v24i1.1618>.

innovate. With the emergence of this new era, it is hoped that humanity will be able to continue its rapid development. Of course, education must also be transformed in the society era 5.0. The independent curriculum includes the talent and interest method as one of the learning strategies in Indonesia. Students can select the disciplines they wish to study based on their interests. In general, various extracurricular learning curricula are separate curricula.

In this case, the world of education plays an important role; it is anticipated that in remote areas or villages, services in the world of education and technology must be provided to the broader community to close the gap. Society 5.0, which is formed through data, is expected to be a means of bridging the education gap. This paper explores Merdeka belajar innovations in harmony with the society era 5.0 with the competitive advantages of Islamic higher education in Indonesia.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach, using secondary data from books, journal articles, and relevant government reports.²³ To improve this research using data sources collected between 2004 and 2022. After obtaining the expected data, descriptive analysis was used to categorise the data. It seeks to get more precise data by carefully describing opinions and presenting them using a deductive method.

The procedure for library research (library research) based on the opinion consists of four steps: (1) preparing equipment, The tools needed in this research note paper and a laptop to process the data; (2) compiling a bibliography; the bibliography is a list of sources to be used for research purposes; and (4) conducting research. The sources include library books, personal books, and research journals on independent learning innovation, competitiveness, management of Islamic education, and issues of the 5.0 society era; (3) managing time, this library research takes two weeks to find sources, study, and analyse theories about innovation and the competitiveness of learning innovations; and (4) reading and making research notes, researchers reading and studying from various sources in innovation literacy and competitiveness.²⁴

²³ Mary W George, *The Elements of Library Research* (New Jersey: Princeton UNIVERSITY Press, 2008).

²⁴ Zed Mestika, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaaan*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Merdeka Belajar Innovation in Society Era 5.0

To be able to respond to these fast, varied, and disruptive dynamics and changes, it is hoped that in organising education and learning as one of the three pillars of higher education, it is expected that they will be able to develop innovative, creative, collaborative, and adaptive learning patterns and models as vehicles that can encourage and shape students' abilities. This rapid change also requires educational institutions to innovate to avoid being left behind.²⁵ Relating to thinking skills (critical thinking, creative, professional thinking, and flexible knowledge), acting productively (innovative, creative, and professional review), and adapting to changing circumstances. Therefore, education in Indonesia needs to continue to develop curricula and learning patterns or models that can realise the relevance and optimal graduate learning outcomes in terms of attitudes and values, knowledge, and skills in an integrated and comprehensive manner in line with the dynamics and challenges of—the 21st century.

The Freedom to Learn Policy is one of the strategic answers that can be implemented by Islamic education in organising and managing educational institutions. This policy encourages tertiary institutions to be more autonomous, innovative, productive, adaptive, and relevant to the dynamics of social progress, science and technology, industry, and work. Seeing the opportunities, challenges, and demands faced by tertiary institutions, including higher education, the Merdeka Belajar policy is one of the strategic answers that can be implemented. The Merdeka Belajar Policy includes four central policies related to the administration of education and the management of tertiary institutions: facilitating the opening of new study programs and changes to the university accreditation system.²⁶

By Minister of Religion Regulation Number 42 of 2016, the Ministry of Religion, through the Directorate of Islamic Religious Higher Education, explained that one of the Directorate's responsibilities is to facilitate quality assurance of higher education services. Therefore, the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education must be able to ensure that the educational services provided by Islamic religious tertiary institutions to students and society, in general, are genuinely oriented and based on quality standards. Therefore, Islamic Higher Education must also respond to and monitor various policies designed to enhance the integrity of higher education. To carry out the three-

²⁵ Alfina Mauliya and Suci Wulandari, "Empathy Dan Design Thinking Dalam Inovasi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Di Era Disruptif," *Jurnal Paedagogia* 10, no. 1 (2021): 13–32.

²⁶ Kemenag, *Panduan Implementasi Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Dalam Kurikulum Program Studi Pada Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Direktorat, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia*, vol. 1, 2020.

semester study rights program outside the study program as one of the Freedom to Learn approaches, more technical implementation guidelines are needed that can be used as a reference in every implementation of Islamic Higher Education.

Learning activities in the study program curriculum refer to Merdeka Belajar as emphasised in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education, which requires university lecturers, including Islamic Religious Colleges, to design and implement creative, innovative, and effective learning so that students achieve learning outcomes which include aspects of attitude, knowledge, general skills, and exceptional skill. Article 15 of the National Higher Education Standards Number 3 of 2020 states that the learning process in tertiary institutions must facilitate student learning rights through (a) learning in other study programs at the same tertiary institution, (b) learning in the same study program at different tertiary institutions; (c) learning in other study programs at different tertiary institutions; and (d) learning in non-university institutions. This adjustment implies that educators and educational institutions must adapt and provide alternative learning opportunities supporting student rights.

Learning programs in the Merdeka Learning curriculum provide challenges and opportunities for students to develop their capacities through activities that encourage the growth of innovation, creativity, capacity, personality, and activities tailored to students' needs. In addition, learning programs must foster student independence in seeking and acquiring knowledge through the realities and dynamics of the natural world, such as ability requirements, real-world problems, social interaction, cooperation, self-management, performance demands, goals, and achievements. Through learning programs in the curriculum of study programs that refer to independent learning that is well designed and implemented, student competencies will be formed in the form of robust, integrated, and meaningful hard skills and soft skills in the identity of tertiary graduates. After completing their studies, they will become capital for tertiary graduates' readiness to enter the real world.



Figure 4. Merdeka Belajar Learning Process.²⁷

There are a variety of learning initiatives in the curriculum of study programs that refer to Freedom of Learning as required by Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 Article 15 paragraph 1, which can be implemented both inside and outside the study program. Student/Student Exchange Program; 2. Apprenticeship/Practice Program; 3. Teaching Assistance Program in Education Units; 4. Research/Research Program; 5. Humanitarian Project Program; 6. Entrepreneurship Program; 7. Independent Study/Project; 8. Village Development Program / Thematic Real Work Lectures. While enrolled in the study program, students are only allowed to choose two of the eight available learning forms, as explained in the following table:

Table 1. Merdeka Belajar Learning Development Program

Program	Purposes
Student Exchange	Appreciate the diversity of cultures, views, religions, beliefs, and other people's original opinions or findings; cooperate with social sensitivity and concern for society and the environment.
Apprenticeship	Prepare students/students to enter the workforce and provide the industry with the necessary skills. The Ministry of Education and Culture-Kemenristek actively supports this apprenticeship program by issuing independent campus policies and certified internships.
Teaching Assistance	They provide opportunities for students interested in education to participate in teaching and deepen their knowledge by becoming teachers in schools, thus helping to equalise the quality of education, the relevance of primary and secondary education to higher education, and the era of teaching.
Research	Developing the ability to think critically, logically, systematically, analytically, and scientifically about a subject is necessary for many scientific circles in tertiary institutions.
Humanity	This course aims to hone and increase students' social sensitivity towards the surrounding environment by increasing their participation in humanitarian activities. This humanitarian activity seeks to solve various problems related to disasters.

²⁷ Kemenag.

Entrepreneurship	Humanitarian projects are humanitarian activities carried out by students to sharpen and increase their social sensitivity toward the surrounding environment. This humanitarian activity seeks to solve various problems related to disasters.
Independent Project	It is developing a mode of education that facilitates the activities of students with a penchant for producing innovative works or works that are the subject of national and international competitions.
Community empowerment	Sharpen the form of learning by giving students a direct learning experience to live and enter community life outside the campus and direct experience working with rural communities where actual work lectures are carried out to develop various village development and empowerment programs.

Thus, the adaptation of the development of education in Indonesia through government policies has been able to provide guidelines for the transformation of progressive education, so it is hoped that Islamic education learning and curricula in tertiary institutions can improve quality so that they are competitive in producing adaptable, transformative, critical graduates, accepted in various fields and with integrity—High religion.

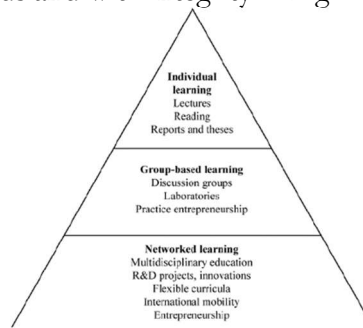


Figure 5. Learning Innovation Stages.²⁸

From the figure above, educational innovation can be developed through three levels of learning innovation; namely, the smallest scope is in individual learning, characterised by teaching, reading, compiling reports, and final assignments. Then, the intermediate stage is based on study group discussions characterised by discussion groups, practicum in the laboratory, and entrepreneurial practice. At the same time, the broadest and largest level is in the learning network with signs of multidisciplinary education, research, and development of innovation, flexible curriculum, international networks, and entrepreneurship.

In realising Islamic education that is adaptive and flexible to the development of the society 5.0 era, the role of Islamic education management

²⁸ Juha Kettunen, Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen, and Taru Penttilä, "Innovation Pedagogy and Desired Learning Outcomes in Higher Education," *On the Horizon* 21, no. 4 (2013): 333–42, <https://doi.org/10.1108/OTH-08-2011-0024>.

must prioritise elements of quality as the responsibility of educational innovation itself as follows:²⁹ 1) The level of need for the quality of education management that can be in harmony with the progress of the society era 5.0; 2) Islamic educational institutions must prepare the best education system to face the developments and competition in society era 5.0; 3) Increasing highly competitive human resources as a contribution to managing Islamic education with other general education levels.

Islamic Education Innovation Approach

Most pragmatists believe that innovation is a human tool for capturing new opportunities in educational contexts. In another view, innovation is important because it is transactional and continues to grow because it has interests and needs in human relations. Regarding the function of the educator, pragmatism holds the view that the ideal educator can assist in the growth of students by equipping them with the knowledge, abilities, and character traits necessary to make sound choices throughout their lives.³⁰

In terminology, educational innovation is a concept considered new, either in the form of an image or product that is felt by one or more people, individuals, or groups or in the form of discoveries made to achieve goals and overcome educational problems.³¹

Products and systems can be examples of innovation in education, while the enthusiasm and self-esteem of people or organisations are tied to quality. Therefore, innovation in Islamic education attempts to change Islamic education, which is seen as orthodox towards renewal, problematic towards truth, and underdeveloped towards progress.

The success of educational innovation is influenced by various elements, not just one or two. The essential ingredients are teachers, students, curriculum, facilities, community context, and measurable goals.^{32,33} In this context, educational instruments are crucial in their respective roles according to their potential.

²⁹ A Zulkarnaen and H Permana, "Manajemen Lembaga Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menghadapi Era Society 5.0," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6, no. 2 (2022): 9127–32.

³⁰ Lukman S Thahir, "The Philosophy of Contemporary Education and Its Implications for the Development of Islamic Education," *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan* 11, no. 1 (2022): 130–46, <https://doi.org/10.24239/pdg.vol11.iss1.274>.

³¹ H.A. Rusdiana, *Konsep Inovasi Pendidikan, Pustaka Setia*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2014).

³² Syafaruddin, Asrul, and Mesiono, *Inovasi Pendidikan: Suatu Analisis Terhadap Kebijakan Baru Pendidikan*, ed. Chandra Wijaya, *Perdana Publishing* (Medan: Perdana Publishing, 2012).

³³ Fakhurrozi, H., Minabari, M., Saguni, F., & Marfiyanto, T. (2023). Enhancing the Social and Religious Character of Students at Qurratu A'yun High School Through Extracurricular Activities. *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 12(1), 101-118. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24239/pdg.Vol12.Iss1.391>

The production of educational innovation theories is guided by philosophy, especially the philosophy of innovation and creativity in Islamic education in the current digital era (industry 4.0). Specific methods in education that adhere to certain ideologies will also produce certain forms and symptoms of education. In other words, the theory of innovation and creativity in Islamic education carries out directions, while the philosophy of innovation and creativity in Islamic education is a guide.³⁴

Humanism and academics are included in the philosophy of educational innovation. Although conventional education is still needed as evidence of various sources obtained virtually or online, the sophistication of information technology makes it easier for educators to deliver learning resources that can be accessed 24 hours a day without restrictions. Besides that, it also maximises the individual potential to be independent in learning with the availability of many learning resources.

Education is critical to have a network, position, or influence on the success of Islamic education. Then, have space to uphold the Islamic faith. At the same time, imagination is two of the three essential components of the creation and the purpose of education itself. The existence of innovation and the ability to think of new ideas are both facilitated by creativity so that things are better than they already are, creating new things and taking advantage of change.³⁵

Muslims must acquire a theoretical understanding of the modern world to analyse and act methodically and objectively, including efforts to innovate Islamic education. We must constantly deal with changes and innovations to engage in innovation processes in response to substantial changes. Therefore, we need an essential basic foundation so that the actions taken are genuinely accountable and can be adequately accounted for.

The quality of education is a collection of ongoing processes achieved by humans based on practical experience gained through historical and experimental efforts, which must be recognised by pragmatism and Islamic education. Therefore, a thorough epistemology of thought is needed to guarantee the truth of the hypotheses that arise in human minds so that they can give birth to new premises that become the basis for action based on excellence, such as initiatives to modernise Islamic education.³⁶

³⁴ Lailatul Maskhuroh and Abdul Haris, "Filsafat Inovasi Dan Kreativitas Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital," *Urvatul Wutqo, Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2022): 26–36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54437/juw>.

³⁵ Sukardi, *Implementasi Inovasi Pendidikan Islam*, ed. Erwin Padli, 1st ed. (Mataram: Sanabil, 2021).

³⁶ Abudin Nata, "Bangunan Epistimologi Pendidikan Islam," In *Pendidikan Islam: Isu Dan Inovasi*, ed. J Musfah and Yanti Herlanti, 1st ed. (Jakarta: FITK Press, 2017), 333.

Dewey's pragmatism view provides the most comprehensive explanation of the philosophy of education. Moreover, he argues that a democratic atmosphere where people are free to research and educate is the most successful.³⁷ After that, it focused on finding solutions to present problems, making problem-solving and experiential learning the recommended learning strategies. Education is a never-ending process that generates experience through applying problem-solving techniques and learning through action. Likewise, it aligns that Dewey, who likes experimental intelligence, broadens his concept to cover all aspects of human experience or culture where we can utilise intelligence to meet needs, solve problems, and adapt to the environment.³⁸

Building a philosophy of pragmatism in improving the quality of Islamic education with educational innovations requires structured and gradual efforts involving vital and fundamental instruments and roles. For this reason, one approach is used as an endeavour, as shown in the image below:

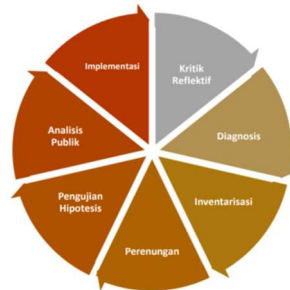


Figure 6. Pragmatism-Religious Perspective Innovation Process.³⁹

According to pragmatism, the creative process begins with thoughtful criticism, as shown in the picture above. At this point, people must turn their doubts into beliefs. A series of instrumentalisation processes, such as developing a logical and exact theory of ideas, thoughts, and conclusions, constitutes reflexive criticism. At the diagnosis stage, one must intellectually use the scientific method, and all scientific tools must be used together with the scientific method and means of knowledge. Discussions and other forms of communication with individuals and groups should be used to strengthen this process. The diagnosis process in Islamic education must proceed

³⁷ Siti Sarah, "Implikasinya Dalam Pendidikan Fisika," In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Fisika FITK UNSIQ*, vol. 1 (Wonosobo: Universitas Sains Al-Quran, 2018), 67–76.

³⁸ Fera Andriani, "Pragmatisme: Menepis Keraguan, Memantapkan Keyakinan," *Syaikhuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pranata Islam* 8, no. 2 (2017): 240–49.

³⁹ RRS Wiranata, Maragustam, and MS Abrori, "Filsafat Pragmatisme : Meninjau Ulang Inovasi Pendidikan Islam," *Ta'allum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2021): 110–33, <https://doi.org/10.21274/taalum.2021.9.1.110-133>.

through the stages of religious discourse, especially involving God's holy book.

Various hypotheses must be collected, and ideas must be generated during inventorying solutions based on the diagnostic and intellectualisation of the rationale process. This procedure shows how truth can never be accepted unequivocally. As a result, it is essential to test the correctness using various experimental techniques. A method of reflection is provided by pragmatism. This stage must methodically look at the mixed results resulting from different assumptions. At this point, action is only possible through logical reasoning and if-then presuppositions. This approach will be able to conclude using language supporting the logic of proof. The innovation reformulation efforts must be beneficial in advancing student learning so that they can face social challenges in the future.

Public opinion will eventually react to this process. The hypothesis is approved if the experiments can be applied and valuable and do not conflict with the *aqidah sobihab*, which is believed to be an essential guide to religious attitudes. It should then restart at the previous stage if it is not successful or valuable, preferably at the inventory stage, followed by reflection, hypothesis testing, and public feedback. This procedure must be repeated as a method or step of innovation in Islamic education until a workable and helpful answer is found.

Thus, the pragmatism approach can be used as a substitute for an epistemological framework for the innovation process in Islamic education. Pragmatism argues that reality is more of a temporary and ever-changing experience than something abstract. In bringing about educational reform, pragmatism offers a systematic approach that starts with thoughtful criticism, diagnosis, inventory, reflection, hypothesis testing, and public analysis. Meanwhile, in understanding the foundation of Islamic education, among others, *aqidah sobihab*, philosophy, five senses, intuition, character, rationality, and authority as a source of knowledge must be used as an inspirational approach.

Islamic Education Competitive Advantage Approach

If educational institutions are to survive, have a competitive advantage, and succeed in an increasingly complex market, they must be looked at carefully. The benefits of each institution are pretty specialised, allowing for sound development. They will not be able to compete and will not demand the prospect of leaving the business if they cannot keep up and compete in the rigorous development of educational institutions. In addition, because the community runs most educational institutions, innovation is needed to interpret the community's needs amid the aims and objectives of

Islamic education⁴⁰ through the need for imagination and sensitivity. The growth of educational institutions in recent years shows a dynamic sector development. One of the factors driving the growth and development of various educational institutions is the increased awareness of education. However, the primary assessment in building educational institutions that are mushrooming in our environment is the quality of teaching.

Educational institutions that are successful in growing are those that can create competitive strategies by looking at existing prospects, in addition to consistently pursuing sustainable development. Many different approaches are needed to meet all of these objectives⁴¹. One of the skills necessary to create a strategy to take advantage of the possibilities and interests of customers through maximising profits from investment is a competitive advantage, so the competitiveness of educational institutions preparing a competitive strategy must be one of the leading solutions.⁴²

Then, the importance of strategy in a competitive advantage to develop school branding requires a study of the elements that lead to school branding, preparing procedures for doing so and testing the effects or benefits of school branding on competitiveness.⁴³ In carrying out these branding efforts, it is necessary to increase student academic achievement by using three models of high-quality coaching, including teaching coaching, extracurricular activities, and activities in the educational environment to strengthen further the integration of vision between institutions.⁴⁴ Competition will inevitably grow in the field of education. Due to competition, educational institutions must face various opportunities and threats that will create dynamism and improve the quality of education.

To achieve the success of Islamic education goals, a sustainable competitive advantage is sought to obtain higher yields than usually anticipated by competitors with similar risks. This proves that results are higher than usual when an institution outperforms other businesses in the

⁴⁰ Fakhrurrozi, et.al., Integration of Islamic Education Curriculum to Enhance the Social Character of Vocational High School Students, *Ta'dib Vol 26, No 1 (2023)*, 171-182. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31958/jt.v26i1.7237>

⁴¹ Fakhrurrozi, H., Minabari, M., Saguni, F., & Marfiyanto, T. (2023). Enhancing the Social and Religious Character of Students at Qurratu A'yun High School Through Extracurricular Activities. *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 12(1), 101-118. <https://doi.org/10.24239/pdg.Vol12.Iss1.391>

⁴² Bashori, "Strategi Kompetitif Dalam Lembaga Pendidikan," *Tadris* 12, no. 2 (2017): 162–80.

⁴³ Riza Rizkiyah, Istikomah, and Nurdyansyah, "Strategies to Build a Branding School in Efforts to Improve the Competitiveness of Islamic Education Institutions," in *Conference of Islamic Educational Payment Management in Industrial Revolution 4.0*, vol. 7 (Sidoarjo: Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, 2020), 12–13.

⁴⁴ Rizkiyah, Istikomah, and Nurdyansyah.

same sector.⁴⁵ The spirit of competitive advantage in Islamic education has been implied in the Al-Quran letter (Al-Baqarah: 148) as follows: “*And for every nation, there is a Qiblah (it is own) that it faces towards it. To compete (in making) goodness. Wherever you are, surely Allah will gather you all (on the Day of Resurrection). Verily Allah is Powerful over all things.*”

Al-Quran is a very acceptable tactic by educational institutions that want to gain a competitive advantage in the competition of educational services. To provide further context for modern religious studies in Indonesia, the theme of the technical research of competitive advantage in educational institutions will initiate a discussion on religious thinking related to the technical significance of this competitive advantage.

The concept of competitive advantage, adapted from the business concept to the not-for-profit service concept, refers to an educational institution's advantage over competing organisations, which is achieved by providing consumers with more value at a lower price or by doing so while keeping costs down. Another way to think of competitive advantage strategies is as an organisation's attempt to integrate generic processes (cost advantage, differentiation, and focus) into education service planning. According to the Qur'an, competitive advantage is defined as quality and distinctiveness by the needs of society both now and in the future, reasonable prices, and prayer.⁴⁶

Differentiating advantages in education can be created through curriculum development, encouraging innovation and creativity in teaching methods inside and outside the classroom, offering specific skill training for their fields, fostering and guiding students, and developing teaching, education, and training programs and systems to follow the development of the future labour industry.⁴⁷ For this reason, efforts and strategies are needed whereby Islamic education with a long-term goal approach requires an attitude of pragmatism in creating and developing competitive advantage as shown below:

⁴⁵ M.H Mubarak, *Strategi Korporat & Persaingan Bisnis Dalam Meraib Keunggulan Kompetitif* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2009).

⁴⁶ Sarkowi, “Keunggulan Bersaing: Kajian Tematis Tafsir Al Qur'an,” *Jurnal Qolamuna* 3, no. 1 (2017): 117–32.

⁴⁷ N.K Ningrum, “Strategi Keunggulan Bersaing Lembaga Pendidikan Dan Pelatihan Magistra Utama Jember,” *Lan Tabur: Jurnal Ekonomi Syari'ah* 3, no. 2 (2022): 180–91.

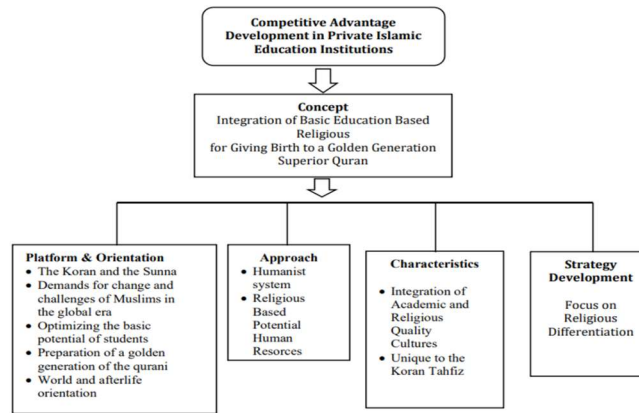


Figure 7. Competitive Advantage Development in Islamic Education.⁴⁸

The picture above explains that Islamic educational institutions' competitive advantage development model develops a pre-existing competitive advantage theory. For Islamic educational institutions to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage of educational institutions, their development relies on concepts, foundations, orientations, approaches, characteristics, and development strategies that are always based on Islamic values.

Thus, to develop a model for creating competitive advantage in Islamic educational institutions, namely *first*, by developing integrated religion-based primary education and training the next generation of the Koran, Islamic educational institutions must understand the concept of their competitive advantage. *Second*, the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah serve as the foundation of education, as well as the needs of change and challenges faced by Muslims in the modern world, as well as maximising the fundamental potential of students and developing the golden generation of the Qur'an so that the world and the hereafter is the long-term orientation of competitive advantage. *Third*, the method adopted for developing human resources may be religious. *Fourth*, integrating a high standard of academic and spiritual culture and the school's uniqueness through reciting the Qur'an are characteristics of greatness. *Fifth*, religion-based differentiation focuses on strategies for creating a competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

Islamic higher education innovations that are adaptive and flexible to the development of society 5.0 era, the role of Islamic education management must prioritise quality elements as the responsibility of educational innovation

⁴⁸ Hizfa and Aslan, "The Model of Competitive Advantage Development in Private Islamic Education Institutions," in *BASA* (Surakarta: Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2020), 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.20-9-2019.2297058>.

itself. The foundation for innovation in Islamic higher education includes *aqidah sobihab*, philosophy, five senses, intuition, character, rationality, and authority as a source of knowledge, all of which must be used as an inspirational approach. They are creating a competitive advantage in Islamic higher education, characterised by measures of leadership skills and human resources, differentiation of teamwork in the workplace and cooperative networks, differentiation of service quality with financial innovation, religious culture, and quality culture.

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