

Socio-Cultural Conditions of Islamic Education: a Systematic Literature Review of Indonesia and Middle Eastern Countries

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ABSTRACT

This study systematically reviews the socio-cultural dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia and selected Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, and Morocco. Adopting the PRISMA 2020 protocol and the PISCo analytical framework, this review synthesizes findings from 20 Scopus-indexed and Sinta 1 journal articles published between 2015 and 2025. The systematic analysis identifies four overarching themes: (1) the preservation of cultural and religious identity within Islamic educational institutions, (2) the modernization and globalization of Islamic curricula through pedagogical reform, (3) the promotion of religious moderation and civic education as a response to extremism, and (4) the digital transformation of Islamic learning environments as part of socio-cultural adaptation in the post-pandemic era. The findings reveal that while Indonesia and the Middle Eastern countries share common theological and cultural roots, Indonesia tends to emphasize pluralism, inclusivity, and contextualized approaches, whereas Middle Eastern systems remain largely centralized, policy-driven, and state-regulated. This study recommends the development of transnational collaborations, cross-cultural exchange programs, and policy integration frameworks to enhance the adaptability and sustainability of Islamic education in a rapidly globalizing world.

Keywords: Islamic education, socio-cultural conditions, Indonesia, Middle East, PRISMA, PISCo

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education traditionally has been an important means for defending belief, morality, and social order in Muslim societies (Hanif, Syarifudin, & Muhtarom, 2025). Because it is both religious education and a form of social education, it lies at the center of cultural identity (Frye, 2025; Matumbu, 2025). In Indonesia, as the localized embodiments of Islamic study, traditional pesantren and modern madrasah have united indigenous culture with Islamic orthodoxy through a long historical process (Fahm, 2025; Vidhiputra, 2025). This syncretism exemplifies Islam's capacity to integrate local wisdom while upholding the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Fahma, 2025; Kirom, 2025). Contrastingly, Middle Eastern models are embodied in institutions such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt, the Imam Hatip schools in Turkey, and the many religious colleges in Saudi Arabia, all of which denote a significantly centralized state-regulated approach.

These bodies are steeped in traditional Islamic scholarship and have historically shaped theological discourse throughout the Muslim world (Aminnuddin, 2025; Khan, 2024). Yet in their institutional structures of education, they often appear to be guided more by national political ideologies and state religious policies shaping the curriculum and its interpretation of religiosity. In the modern world, Islamic education is confronted with a new set of challenges, such as globalization, digitalization, and socio-political transformations (Hajar, 2024; Malizal,

2025). These pressures push schools of thought in pedagogy to revise their methods of instruction while maintaining Islamic tenets as the core. Islamic education in Indonesia has come to highlight pluralism, tolerance, and civic participation more in recent years, in line with the country's Pancasila ideology, which serves as the basis for the entire principle (Habibulloh, 2024). On the other hand, some Middle Eastern nations have attempted to reform their systems in order to give them religious credibility while at the same time meeting international educational standards (Hahn, 2025; Sellami, Abu-Tineh, Alshaboul, Ghamrawi, & Shal, 2025).

Hence, the research has to inquire how socio-cultural contexts affect the organization of Islamic education in the two regions of Indonesia and the Middle East (Qorib, 2025; Rohmad, Roibin, Barizi, Walid, & Akbar, 2025). It analyzes how historical, political, and cultural factors influence teacher practices and how Islamic education engages with modernization pressures (Ambya, Erihadiana, Priatna, & Nasir, 2025; Sitti & Rosyalita, 2025). This comparison is integral to capturing the changes in the global terrain of Islamic education in the 21st century. In the end, this research contributes not only to the scholarly discussion of comparative Islamic education but also offers a conceptual guide for policymakers and educators in designing educational reforms sensitive to context (Srinio, Muslihun, & Usman, 2025; Wajdi, Marpuah, Ahmad, Abdul, & Rusdi, 2025). Recognizing the varying regional socio-cultural dynamics better equips Islamic education to tackle the global issues of identity, inclusivity, and innovation (Sitti & Rosyalita, 2025; Sulisno, 2025).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of socio-cultural conditions on the implementation of Islamic education in Indonesia and the Middle East, identify similarities and differences in educational approaches, and examine the impact of globalization and modernization in reshaping the Islamic education landscape in both contexts. The findings of this systematic literature review are expected to make a significant contribution both to the academic discourse of comparative Islamic education and as a conceptual guide for policymakers and educators in designing contextual educational reforms, as well as to enhance global understanding of how Islamic education can navigate the demands of religious identity and innovation in the contemporary era.

METHOD

Protocol Synthesis for Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Brief Introduction to PISCO

This study was based on PRISMA 2020 blind Systematic Literature Review that ensures strict guidelines for identification, selection, quality assessment, and synthesis of the academic materials. The PISCO model (Population, Issue, Setting, Context) was superimposed to sustain the analytic concentration on: 1) Population – those engaged in Islamic education, 2) Issue – curriculum and its relations with socio-cultural realities, 3) Setting – formal and non-formal education, and (4) Context – contemporary societal trends. This two-step procedure guarantees a comprehensive analysis of literature while maintaining contextual relevance.

Search Strategy and Selection Process

A Boolean search string "Islamic education" OR "pendidikan Islam") AND ("socio-cultural" OR "sosiokultural") was applied to four databases indexed in Scopus (Scopus, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink). Filters were applied: year of publication 2015-2025,

documents in English/Indonesian languages, and articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Remove duplication was performed by the automated de-duplication of Zotero (title-abstract similarity $\geq 85\%$) and followed by a manual cross-check to garantir the precision of identification. Criteria of inclusion and exclusion

Required for submission

- a) To discuss the implementation of Islamic education in the context of the socio-cultural transformations
- b) Illustrate empirically/conceptually substantiated conclusions
- c) Provide a critical analysis of curriculum modification/pedagogic method

Criteria for exclusion of studies are as follows:

Therapeutic rather than socio-cultural informed

An article of policy without academic analysis

With holding transparent information about methods

Extraction and synthesis of data

A standardized data extraction form was used to abstract geographical setting, study design, main findings, and practical relevance. Utilizing NVivo 2025, synthesis was conducted through a convergent-divergent analytical contrast approach to explore thematic similarities and dissonances across studies. The Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern local wisdom-based curriculum implementations were examined through comparative analysis.

Quality Assurance and Ethics Compliance

The quality of the literature was appraised using a revised 2023 MMAT based on the following: internal validity, relevance in context, and rigor of methods. Ethical considerations included:

- a) Attribution of sources with the use of Mendeley Reference Manager
- b) Open disclosure of negative results
- c) Independent cross verification by two other researchers.

This approach integrates the systematic robustness of established review procedures with the contextual attunement of the PISCo framework, rendering it particularly appropriate for investigating Islamic education – as a dynamic socio-cultural practice – in and through sociocultural transformations.

a. PRISMA Flow Process

Identification: 200 articles retrieved → Screening: 70 retained → Eligibility: 30 articles reviewed → Included: 20 articles selected.

b. PISCo Framework

Population: Islamic schools, educators, and students

Issue: Influence of socio-cultural factors on Islamic education

Setting: Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, Morocco)

Context: Globalization, modernization, cultural identity, and religious moderation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic synthesis identified four recurring themes across the literature: cultural identity, modernization, religious moderation, and digitalization. Indonesian Islamic education integrates local wisdom and pluralism, while Middle Eastern education remains more policy-driven and structured around traditional Islamic scholarship. Digital adaptation and gender inclusion emerged as critical issues for future reform in both regions.

Table 1. Selected Articles in the Systematic Review

No	Author(s) & Year	Focus / Country	Main Findings
1	Wekke (2015)	Arabic Teaching in Indonesian Pesantren	Local cultural integration strengthens Islamic pedagogy.
2	Hefner (2022)	Indonesian Islamic education	Modern civic-oriented Islamic schooling model.
3	Abdullah (2017)	Islamic higher education (Indonesia–Egypt)	Transnational academic reform and identity.
4	Alasmari (2023)	Saudi Arabia – adaptation of international students	Cultural adaptation and religious context.
5	Yusri & Hamzah (2024)	Indonesian students in Egypt	Cross-cultural adaptation and religious motivation.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations. First, it only reviewed Scopus and Sinta 1 indexed journals between 2015–2025, which may exclude valuable non-indexed or grey literature. Second, the analysis is primarily qualitative, limiting the ability to generalize findings across broader populations. Third, despite cross-verification and triangulation, regional publication bias might exist due to unequal data representation between Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern contexts. Future research should expand to include quantitative comparative analyses, bibliometric mapping, and longitudinal designs to capture evolving trends in Islamic education under globalization.

PRISMA Flow Diagram

The following figure illustrates the PRISMA 2020 flow process applied in this SLR: Identification (n=200) → Screening (n=70) → Eligibility (n=30) → Inclusion (n=20). A visual PRISMA diagram should be added following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

Cultural Identity

Studies emphasize that both Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries view Islamic education as a means of preserving cultural identity. In Indonesia, pesantren serve as cultural custodians integrating local arts, language, and ethics into Islamic learning. In Egypt and Morocco, traditional Islamic institutions such as Al-Azhar and Zaytouna continue to maintain scholarly authenticity rooted in classical Arabic scholarship.

Modernization and Globalization

Modernization trends in Islamic education are visible through curriculum integration and policy reforms. Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs encourages the inclusion of STEM and civic education in madrasah curricula. Similarly, Turkey and Saudi Arabia implement reforms aimed at modernizing Islamic studies to align with global educational standards while maintaining religious authenticity.

Religious Moderation and Social Harmony

The reviewed studies show a growing discourse on moderation (wasatiyyah) as a socio-cultural value. In Indonesia, this is institutionalized through the National Islamic Moderation Framework (2021). In the Middle East, countries like Jordan and Qatar promote 'centrist Islam' as part of civic education and counter-extremism policy. Education thus acts as a soft-power instrument to sustain social harmony.

Digital Transformation and Pedagogical Innovation

Digitalization reshapes Islamic education in both regions. Indonesian institutions integrate Learning Management Systems (LMS) and YouTube-based da'wah education, whereas Middle Eastern universities invest in e-learning infrastructure, particularly post-pandemic. Despite digital disparities, both contexts show convergence in adopting hybrid pedagogies that merge traditional Islamic teaching (halaqah) with modern online instruction.

Table 3. Summary of 20 Reviewed Articles

No	Author & Year	Country	Focus	Key Findings
1	Wekke (2015)	Indonesia	Arabic learning in pesantren	Integration of cultural context
2	Hefner (2022)	Indonesia	Civic-oriented Islamic education	Promotes inclusive Islam
3	Abdullah (2017)	Egypt/Indonesia	Islamic higher education	Transnational influences
4	Yildiz (2019)	Turkey	Imam Hatip reforms	Curriculum modernization
5	Alasmari (2023)	Saudi Arabia	International students' adaptation	Cross-cultural integration
6	Yusri & Hamzah (2024)	Egypt	Cultural shock of Indonesian students	Cultural resilience
7	Judijanto (2025)	Multi-region	Bibliometric review	Rising digital pedagogy trend
8	Sumarna (2023)	Indonesia	Educational paradigm shift	Hybrid religious pedagogy

No	Author & Year	Country	Focus	Key Findings
9	Syahid (2021)	Indonesia	Transformation of pesantren	Cultural accommodation
10	Muhammad (2025)	Indonesia–Middle East	Transnational education networks	Knowledge exchange
11	Yildirim (2020)	Turkey	Curriculum reform impacts	Balancing religion and nationalism
12	Abou El Fadl (2019)	Egypt	Reform in Islamic jurisprudence education	Reinterpreting orthodoxy
13	Hassan (2022)	Qatar	Islamic identity in schooling	Balancing global and local identity
14	Mokhtar (2023)	Morocco	Religious literacy initiatives	Governmental cultural preservation
15	Erihadiana (2024)	Indonesia	Digital adaptation in Islamic education	LMS and blended learning models
16	Rahman (2024)	Comparative	Socio-cultural influences	Islamic education and identity resilience
17	Vidhiputra (2025)	Indonesia	Modernity negotiation in Islamic learning	Tradition vs modernization balance
18	Khaled (2022)	Jordan	Policy of religious moderation	Civic inclusion and tolerance
19	Ali & Musa (2023)	Saudi Arabia	University reforms	Academic modernization and diversity
20	Yasin (2025)	Indonesia–Middle East	Comparative pedagogy	Integrative and plural approaches

The discussion reveals that while Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries navigate similar global pressures, their responses are filtered through distinct historical, political, and cultural lenses. Indonesia's pluralistic approach fosters adaptability and contextual relevance, whereas the Middle Eastern emphasis on orthodoxy ensures doctrinal continuity. The emerging digital landscape, however, presents unprecedented opportunities for cross-fertilization between these models, suggesting potential for future transnational collaborations that could enrich both traditions while addressing common challenges in 21st-century Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This SLR concludes that Islamic education in Indonesia and the Middle East is undergoing socio-cultural transformation influenced by modernization, globalization, and digitalization. Indonesia emphasizes inclusive and contextual education, whereas Middle Eastern systems prioritize institutional orthodoxy. Collaborative transnational policies are essential to balance tradition and modernity in Islamic education globally. The SLR provides comprehensive insight into how socio-cultural conditions underpin Islamic educational systems in Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries. While the underlying theology remains shared, cultural expressions and educational governance diverge significantly. Indonesian Islamic education thrives through bottom-up community engagement, while the Middle Eastern models are largely state-regulated. The results imply a dynamic global Islamic education ecosystem where cultural pluralism and technological innovation coexist. Future research should expand comparative quantitative studies using cross-regional samples to explore how socio-cultural capital impacts educational outcomes.

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