Islam's Response to Tradition and Modernity: The Integration of Global Values, Technology, and Civilization

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ABSTRACT

Islam is continuously engaged with diverse traditions, cultures, ethnic groups, races, and civilizations, including the dynamics of modernization, which is marked by technological progress and the swift circulation of information. The purpose of this study is to explore the concepts, challenges, and critical perspectives on tradition and modernity within Islamic thought. This paper employs a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach, gathering data and insights from a range of references such as books, scholarly articles, journals, and other relevant sources. The results show that Islam provides a selective response based on the principle of adopting new, beneficial ideas without abandoning good old traditions. Islam encourages the use of technology for da'wah (Islamic outreach), the integration of religious curricula with science, the development of sharia economics as an alternative to capitalism, the filtering of modern ideas, and an active contribution to creating a balanced global civilization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islam as a universal religion is not only understood as a belief system, but also as a guide to life that covers all dimensions of human life, ranging from spiritual, social, to cultural aspects. In the course of its history, Islam has always interacted with various traditions, cultures, and civilizations, including with modernity born from the West in the 18th and 19th centuries. (Uleng & Aderus, 2025)

Modernity, characterized by rationality, individualism, technological advancement, and secularization, brings challenges as well as opportunities for Muslims. On the one hand, modernity is often seen as at odds with traditional Islamic values, especially in the aspects of morality and spirituality. (Mahfud, 2025) But on the other hand, modernity also opens up space for Muslims to renew understanding, affirm identity, and contribute to global civilization. The development of the Islamic world today is marked by significant changes in almost all sectors, including in the field of education. These changes can be seen in the update of the curriculum, learning methods, educational concepts, and facilities that support the learning process. The shift from a traditional approach to a more modern, flexible, and open model is an important step in facing global dynamics and progress. (Usela et al., 2024)

In this modern era marked by technological advances and rapid information flows, Islamic education faces new challenges and opportunities. In the current era, it not only changes the way information is conveyed, but also affects the values and culture of the community's traditions so that Islamic education must be able to adapt without losing its identity or tradition. In the modern era, of course, this cannot be separated from technology so that the development of technology and information provides easy access to knowledge sources in order to develop the quality of human resources.(Zamroni, 2024) Islamic education has long been an inseparable part of the history and culture of Muslims. However, in the midst of the ongoing transition and modernization flow, various new challenges have emerged in maintaining their relevance and effectiveness.(Lubis & Ok, 2024) Therefore, it is necessary to understand how Islam adjusts, responds, and contributes to shaping the face of modernity.

Based on the previous description, there are a number of studies that are related to the discussion of Islam, tradition, and modernity. The first research was written by Kasyiful Akmalia with the title Islam and the Challenge of Modernity from Nurcholish Madjid's Perspective. This study concludes that according to Nurcholish Madjid, Muslims in the contemporary era are in dire need of renewal to answer various problems that arise, both from within Muslims themselves and from increasingly complex external influences. The solution offered by Nurcholish is to erode the stagnation of thinking while refostering the dynamic spirit of Islam in accordance with the challenges of the times.(Akmalia et al., 2021)

The second research was conducted by Ahmad Shofiyuddin Ichsan through his work entitled Islamic Education Facing Tradition, Transition, and Modernization. The results of his study show that the sustainability of Islamic education is highly dependent on efforts to improve the education system as a whole. This includes strengthening the capacity of teachers in the use of technology, the application of a curriculum that is adaptive to the needs of modern society, and learning innovations that adhere to the main goals of Islamic education. With these measures, Islamic education is believed to be able to survive the changing times.(Akmalia et al., 2021)

Meanwhile, the third research came from M. Agus Kurniawan through his article entitled Islam and Modernity: Tracing the Relationship Between Tradition and Innovation. This article finds a tendency to reinterpret religious texts, the birth of new institutions, and the use of modern technology that remains in line with Islamic principles. In addition, this study also highlights the various approaches taken by Muslims, ranging from conservative to progressive, as well as serious challenges in the form of secularization, radicalization, and identity conflict. The article emphasizes the urgency of an adaptive and inclusive approach in order to bridge tradition with innovation, so that Muslims can play an active role in building a harmonious global civilization without sacrificing their religious identity.(Kurniawan, 2024)

From the three sources above, it can be concluded that Islam, tradition, and modernity can run in harmony by maintaining Islamic values while adapting to the demands of the times and modern technology in the current era (Masti Yanto, 2025). This balance is achieved by maintaining fundamental Islamic values while being open to innovations that are relevant to the needs of the times, especially in the field of education which is now increasingly closely related to technological developments.

This article aims to analyze the dialectic between Islam, tradition, and modernity, particularly in the context of Islamic education. In more detail, this study wants to outline how Islam views modernity and the challenges and opportunities it offers and offers a critical and adaptive perspective so that Islam is able to maintain its relevance and actively contribute to shaping a balanced global civilization.

With this goal, this article is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between tradition and modernity in Islamic thought, while affirming the urgency of transforming Islamic education so that it remains contextual without losing its Islamic identity.

2. METHODS

The research in this journal was carried out using a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono, literature studies focus on the study of theories and

references related to values, culture, and social norms that are the object of research attention (Sugiyono, 2019). This method is taken by collecting data from various literatures, both in the form of books, journals, scientific articles, and other documents that have relevance to the research theme.

Literature study in the framework of qualitative research is carried out through reading, studying, and understanding literature sources that are in accordance with the topic systematically. Furthermore, the information obtained is interpreted based on the predetermined research objectives. Thus, the results of the resulting analysis not only provide conceptual understanding, but also strengthen the arguments built in the research.

The literature method also has a number of advantages. In terms of efficiency, this method is relatively faster and easier compared to qualitative field research. In addition, this method allows researchers to still be able to conduct studies on topics that are limited or difficult to reach directly due to time, distance, or institutional policies. This makes literature studies relevant to use when field research conditions are not possible.

In the context of this journal, researchers collect data and information from various references that are in accordance with the guidelines for writing scientific papers, including books, articles, academic journals, and other written sources. All the data obtained are then sorted, analyzed, and concluded critically so as to support the discussion of tradition and modernity in Islam. In this way, the resulting study is able to provide a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of Islamic thought while strengthening the theoretical basis of the research conducted.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islam and the Essence of Modernity

Modernity can be understood as a historical phase that brought humans to a major shift in the way of thinking, acting, and the way of looking at life. If previously human life was largely colored by a traditional mindset that prioritized cultural heritage, religious authority, and community values, then modernity comes with an emphasis on rationality, individual freedom, and the scientific method. This change did not happen overnight, but was the long-term result of the development of science, the industrial revolution, and the socio-political revolution in various parts of the world. (Afandi & Kurnia, 2023)

One of the cores of modernity is the courage of man to use his intellect freely in understanding reality. Rationality and objectivity are the main foundations that guide humans in seeking the truth. In this view, everything must be tested, criticized, and proven through empirical experience as well as logical study. However, if traced, values such as the use of reason and the drive to think critically have actually been part of the Islamic tradition since the beginning of revelation. (Adebolajo, 2022)

The Qur'an itself emphasizes the importance of the role of reason as an instrument to understand the truth. Many verses call on humans to think, research, and observe natural phenomena. For example, in QS. Jonah [10]:101, God directly commanded man to pay attention to what is in the heavens and the earth. This verse shows that Islam strongly encourages a scientific approach to reality, an approach that is later considered to be the main feature of modernity. Thus, modernity is not something completely foreign, but rather has a common thread with the basic values of Islamic teachings (Qurani, 2025).

History records that during the heyday of classical Islam (8th to 13th centuries AD), Muslims had succeeded in displaying a very modern face of civilization for their time. Muslim scholars and scientists not only copied or inherited knowledge from Greek, Indian, and Persian civilizations, but also developed it into new, more advanced knowledge. Figures such as Ibn Sina in medicine, Al-Khawarizmi in mathematics, Al-Farabi and Ibn Rushd in philosophy, and Al-Biruni in astronomy, are proof that Islam is not anti-modernity.(Ichwani & Firmaningrum, 2023)

The scientific and critical tendencies shown by such classical Muslim scientists are essentially the manifestations of modernity rooted in Islam. They not only mastered the religious sciences, but also sought to integrate them with the natural and social sciences. The result was the birth of a civilization that was able to become the center of world knowledge, and even became an inspiration for the revival of Europe through the Renaissance movement.(Afriadi & Hoktaviandri, 2024)

However, modernity in the contemporary context is not only limited to scientific enthusiasm, but also carries complex ideological and cultural implications. Along with advances in technology and rationality, modernity has also given birth to secularization, moral relativism, and extreme individualism. This is the side of modernity that is often seen as critical by Muslims. Because, if reason is placed as an absolute authority without the guidance of revelation, then human beings have the potential to lose moral and spiritual direction.(Ihsan et al., 2023)

In the Islamic perspective, reason does have a high position, but it cannot be separated from revelation. Human reason has limitations in reaching the essence of absolute truth. Therefore, Islam teaches that the use of reason should still be directed by the divine values contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah. With this balance, Islam is able to accommodate modernity without having to lose its spiritual and moral foundations.(Hasanah et al., 2024)

Therefore, the interaction between Islam and modernity should not be understood in black and white as opposition. The relationship between the two is more accurately described as a dialectic that influences each other. Islam can absorb positive aspects of modernity such as the development of science, technology, and research methods. At the same time, Islam has the right to criticize aspects of modernity that are contrary to the basic values of religion, such as hedonism, extreme secularization, or ethical relativism. This dialectic shows that Islam has epistemological flexibility: it does not close itself off from the development of the times, but it also does not dissolve infinitely in the currents of modernity. (Chande, 2023)

Furthermore, the relationship between Islam and modernity can be seen as an attempt to create a "creative synthesis" between revelation and reason, between tradition and innovation. This synthesis is what makes Islam relevant throughout time, because it is able to present a moral and spiritual orientation in the midst of rapid social change. In the context of education, for example, modernity encourages the birth of a more adaptive curriculum, technology-based learning methods, and an objective evaluation system. However, Islam adds a dimension of values by emphasizing the importance of morals, manners, and social responsibility as the foundation of education. Thus, the integration of the two results in an educational model that not only produces intellectually intelligent human beings, but also noble character.

In the socio-political realm, modernity presents the concepts of democracy, human rights, and gender equality. Some progressive Muslim thinkers view these values as being in line with the spirit of justice ('adl), deliberation (shura), and respect for human dignity that have existed in the Islamic tradition. On the other hand, conservatives highlight the potential for secularization that can erode people's religious values. This debate suggests that Islam's response to modernity is not monolithic, but rather very diverse, depending on the intellectual, social, and cultural backgrounds of Muslims themselves.

Finally, Islam and modernity can be positioned not as two poles that negate each other, but as critical partners in building civilization. Modernity provides the methodological and technological tools that make it easier for humans to achieve material progress, while Islam provides a spiritual and ethical foundation that prevents humans from falling into moral emptiness. If the two are placed in balance, then a civilization is born that is not only technologically advanced, but also firmly rooted in universal human values.

Islam's Challenge to Modernity

Modernity has brought a number of undeniable advances, but behind that, it also presents serious challenges for Muslims. This challenge arises because modernity not only offers scientific and technological advancements, but also brings a package of ideological and cultural values that are sometimes not in line with Islamic principles. The values of secularism, liberalism, and hedonism, for example, often clash directly with the basic values of Islam that emphasize monotheism, life balance, and the orientation of the hereafter.(Puspita, 2023)

One of the real forms of the challenge of modernity is the dominance of secularism in various aspects of life. Secularism places religion in the private realm and separates it from public affairs, such as politics, economics, and education. This concept is clearly contrary to Islam which regulates all dimensions of human life, both individual and social. Muslims are required to prove that religious teachings are not only relevant for matters of worship, but also capable of providing ethical solutions in the governance of modern society.(Shaukat & Basharat, 2022)

In addition to secularism, liberalism is also a big challenge. Liberalism emphasizes individual freedom without limits, even to the point of transcending moral and religious values. In the context of modernity, freedom is often interpreted as the absolute right of human beings to determine their own way of life, including in terms of beliefs, moral orientation, and lifestyle. Islam does recognize freedom, but that freedom is limited by the sharia so as not to harm oneself and others. This is the point of clash that makes Muslims have to be selective in dealing with developing liberal values.(Buchari, 2018)

Hedonism, or a lifestyle oriented towards worldly pleasures, is also a big challenge. Modern culture often measures happiness from material possession, the achievement of a luxurious lifestyle, and the pursuit of instant pleasure. Islam actually teaches simplicity, balance, and a broader orientation to life, namely happiness in this world as well as the hereafter. When society is too late in hedonism, Islamic spiritual values and ethics risk being marginalized.(Ahmed et al., 2022)

The individualism that is the hallmark of modernity also influences the social structure of Muslims. Modern culture tends to prioritize personal interests over collective interests. This is contrary to the principle of ukhuwah Islamiyah which emphasizes solidarity, brotherhood, and social responsibility. If individualism is allowed to flourish, then the spirit of togetherness which is one of the pillars of strength of Muslims can be weakened. (Syamsuddini et al., 2023)

In the digital era, the challenges of modernity are increasingly complex. Social media, for example, has two faces. On the one hand, it is a means of da'wah and the dissemination of knowledge. But on the other hand, it also gives birth to serious problems such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, pornography, and consumptive culture that affects the younger generation. Research shows that late teens tend to be vulnerable to identity crises due to social media exposure, where moral values are often obscured by instant trends and lifestyles.(Alfaridzi et al., 2024)

In addition, the rapid flow of information globalization through the internet also makes Muslims easily exposed to foreign values that are not in accordance with Islamic teachings. For example, the normalization of deviant sexual behavior, a shift in views toward the family, or the glorification of popular culture that is far from moral values. If not balanced with digital literacy and strong religious education, the young generation has the potential to lose moral and spiritual direction. (Sultana & Bukhari, 2020)

Modernity also brings challenges in the field of education. Modern education systems tend to emphasize the cognitive aspects and technical skills, while the moral and spiritual dimensions are often overlooked. As a result, a generation emerged that was intellectually superior, but poor in morals. In fact, in the Islamic view, education should give birth to Kamil people, namely human beings who are balanced between intellect, heart, and deeds.(Arifin & Maghfiroh, 2022)

In the economic field, modernity presents a challenge in the form of global capitalism. This system often emphasizes mere profit without consideration of social justice. As a result, there is a widening gap between rich and poor. Islam, with the concept of zakat, waqf, and the Islamic financial system, offers a fairer alternative. However, the challenge for Muslims is how to implement the concept in the midst of the dominance of the global capitalist system.(Hibrizie et al., 2023)

Another challenge arises in the political field. Democratization, which is part of modernity, often brings positive values such as popular participation and freedom of opinion. However, modern political practices are also fraught with pragmatism, corruption, and manipulation that are clearly contrary to Islamic values. Muslims must be able to integrate the principles of shura (deliberation) and justice in a modern political system so that it remains in accordance with the sharia. (Fazlurrahman, 2024)

In the realm of culture, modernity has given rise to a significant shift in values. Art, music, and entertainment, which were originally a means of expression and conveying messages, are now often turned into commercial instruments that actually distance humans from moral values. This phenomenon is a challenge for Muslims to continue to be creative in the field of art and culture, but still maintain Islamic values that are educational and soothing.(Badriyah, 2021)

Islam and the Response to Modernity

Islam is a religion that has been revealed to be a guideline for human life throughout time, so its flexibility in facing the changing times is one of the proofs of its universality. When modernity comes with new ideas, Islam does not necessarily reject them, but carries out a process of selection and integration. The principle that is used as a grip is *al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah wa al-ibqa' 'ala al-qadim al-shalih*, which is to take the new and better without leaving the old that is still good. This principle emphasizes that Islam is not a rigid religion, but has adaptive abilities as long as sharia values are maintained.(Amal et al., 2023)

Historically, Islam's response to modernity can be traced back to the golden age of Islamic civilization in the Middle Ages. At that time, Muslims not only received knowledge from other civilizations, but also processed, refined, and then developed it into new knowledge that was beneficial to the world. For example, Greek philosophical thought was not rejected outright, but combined with the principle of monotheism so that Islamic philosophy was born which was oriented towards strengthening faith. This shows that Islam was already accustomed to the process of dialogue and interaction with modernity, even long before the term "modernity" was born in the West.(Ali & Almulla, 2023)

In the contemporary context, Islam's response to modernity is very evident in the use of digital technology. Da'wah that was once limited to the taklim assembly or mosque is now developing through social media, video platforms, and mobile applications. Ustadz and Muslim leaders use *Instagram*, *TikTok*, *YouTube*, and *podcasts* to spread Islamic teachings creatively. This phenomenon is not only a communication strategy, but also a form of Islamic adaptation to remain relevant to the digital native generation. As long as the message conveyed is based on sharia, the use of modern media is not a form of compromise, but the actualization of Islamic values in a new space.(Qudratullah & Syam, 2024)

In addition to technology, modernity also brings challenges in the field of thinking. Ideas such as secularism, extreme pluralism, or liberalism that ignore the boundaries of sharia are often faced by Muslims. However, Islam responded by offering an alternative paradigm through maqashid alshari'ah. The principles of safeguarding religion (hifzh al-din), reason (hifzh al-'aql), soul (hifzh al-nafs), offspring (hifzh al-nasl), and property (hifzh al-mal) become benchmarks to judge whether a modern idea is in accordance with the goals of the sharia or is actually dangerous for humanity. With this filter, Muslims can still accept progress without losing their moral direction.(Ahmed, 2024)

The field of education is also an important arena in the Islamic response to modernity. Many Islamic educational institutions are now developing integrated curricula, which combine religious science with modern science. This step is proof that Islam does not reject science, but instead encourages a balanced integration between revelation and reason. This educational model seeks to produce a generation of Muslims who are not only spiritually obedient, but also intellectually superior and able to compete at the global level.(Fakhrurrazi et al., 2023)

Furthermore, Islam also responded to modernity through social and economic movements. The concept of sharia economics, for example, was born as a response to the modern capitalist system that is full of usury and exploitation. The presence of Islamic banks, Islamic insurance, and sharia-based fintech is clear evidence of how Islam offers relevant alternative solutions in the midst of the modern economy. Thus, Islam is not only reactive to modernity, but also proactive in giving birth to innovations that are in accordance with divine values.

Even so, it is necessary to realize that a selective attitude towards modernity is not an easy matter. Collective ijtihad is needed from Muslim scholars, academics, and scholars so that modernity is not just swallowed raw. Without the filter of Islamic values, modernity can drag the ummah to materialism,

individualism, and moral relativism. Therefore, Muslims must equip themselves with a strong understanding of religion in order to be able to become subjects, not objects, in the flow of global change.

Finally, Islam's response to modernity is not simply acceptance or rejection, but rather a dynamic process that is ongoing. Islam still adheres to the principles of sharia, but at the same time does not close itself to innovation. With this attitude, Islam proves itself as a religion that is relevant in every space and time, as well as being able to be a counterbalance in the midst of the rapid currents of modernity.(Awaludin, 2022)

The discussion in this research discussion shows that modernity brings great changes in the way humans think and live and is characterized by rationality, freedom, and scientific progress. Islamic history records that Muslim scientists such as Ibn Sina and Al-Khawarizmi had integrated religious science and knowledge long before the era of western modernity. This does not contradict the spirit of modernity as long as it adheres to sharia values without abandoning tradition.(Naim & Widjayanto, 2024)

However, modernity also brings ideological challenges such as secularism, liberalism, hedonism, and individualism that have the potential to weaken Islamic values. However, Islam responds to this with an adactive and selective approach in accepting things that are in line with maqashid al-shari'ah and rejecting those that are contrary to it. The use of digital media for da'wah, educational development, and others shows that Islam is able to adapt to the changes of this highly sophisticated era.(Wahid, 2024)

4. CONCLUSION

Islam Tradition and modernity have a mutually influencing relationship, not just a contradiction. Modernity that emphasizes rationality, freedom, and scientific methods is actually in line with Islamic teachings that encourage humans to think, research, and observe Allah's creation. The history of classical Islamic civilization proves that Muslims are able to integrate religious science and world science to give birth to great progress that inspires the Western world. However, modernity also brings negative sides such as secularism, liberalism, hedonism, and individualism that have the potential to weaken spirituality and shift Islamic values.

Modernity also presents challenges in the form of secularism, liberalism, hedonism, individualism, to capitalism and moral crisis. Therefore, Islam responds with a selective attitude, namely by taking the advances of science, technology, and modern systems that are useful, while rejecting values that are contrary to the sharia. In this way, Islam remains relevant, preserving spirituality, while contributing to the progress of global civilization.

In the face of this, Islam provides a selective response with the principle of taking new and useful things without abandoning good old traditions. Islam encourages the use of technology for da'wah, the integration of religious curriculum with science, the development of sharia economics as an alternative to capitalism, and the filtering of modern ideas with *maqashid al-shari'ah*. With a critical and adaptive attitude, Islam is not only able to survive in the modern era, but also actively contributes to creating a global civilization that is balanced between intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress.

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