



The Role of Islamic Education in Strengthening Literacy for Human Resource Development

Siti Maftukah^{1*}, Moch. Tolchah², Shokhibul Arifin³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: smaftukah343@gmail.com

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Abstract

Islamic education has a strategic role in shaping the quality of human resources who are knowledgeable, moral, and capable of facing the development of the times. This study aims to analyze the construction of Islamic education toward strengthening literacy in the development of human resource quality. Literacy strengthening is understood not only as the ability to read and write, but also as the ability to understand, process, and utilize information critically and responsibly. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a library research method through the analysis of various relevant literature, journals, books, and scientific sources. The results of the study indicate that Islamic education contributes to literacy strengthening through the inculcation of scientific values, the habituation of reading culture, the development of critical thinking, and the integration of knowledge and morality. In addition, Islamic education is able to shape human resources who are not only intellectually superior but also possess strong moral and spiritual character. Therefore, the construction of Islamic education becomes one of the important foundations in improving the quality of human resources that are adaptive, competitive, and based on Islamic values in the era of globalization.

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Introduction

Education is one of the primary instruments in building high-quality and competitive human resources. In the context of globalization and advancements in information technology, strengthening literacy has become a critical need to enhance individuals' ability to understand, manage, and utilize information wisely and critically. Literacy no longer understood merely as the ability to read and write but encompasses critical thinking, digital literacy, cultural literacy, and the ability to solve problems in social life (UNESCO, 2021).

Islamic education, as an integral part of the national education system, plays a vital role in the development of human resources. Islamic education not only emphasizes intellectual aspects but also fosters the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of students. From an Islamic perspective, knowledge holds a very high status, as affirmed in the Qur'an, which commands humans to read and seek knowledge as part of their worship of Allah (Nata, 2017).

According to Moch. Tolchah, Islamic education must be able to address the challenges of modernity by providing an educational system that integrates Islamic values with scientific advancements. Islamic education is not sufficient if it is oriented solely toward the transfer of religious knowledge; rather, it must also be able to foster students' critical, creative, and innovative thinking skills in facing the development of global society (Tolchah, 2019). This perspective indicates that strengthening literacy is a crucial component in the construction of Islamic education to cultivate high-quality human resources.

Furthermore, the concept of literacy in Islamic education is closely tied to character development and social ethics. The culture of reading, writing, discussing, and expanding knowledge is part of the Islamic intellectual tradition that has evolved since classical times. Therefore, strengthening literacy in Islamic education is not only directed toward mastering information but also toward fostering moral character and social responsibility (Azra, 2015).

In today's digital age, educational challenges have become increasingly complex due to the overwhelming flow of information and technological advancements. Low reading culture, misuse of digital media, and weak critical thinking skills are issues that require serious attention. These conditions demand that Islamic education construct learning approaches capable of strengthening literacy culture as an effort to enhance the quality of human resources. Strengthening literacy through Islamic education is expected to produce a generation that excels not only academically but also possesses adaptability, creativity, and religious character in social life (Suyadi, 2020).

Although many studies have discussed Islamic education and literacy separately, limited research specifically examines how Islamic education constructs literacy strengthening as a strategic foundation for human resource development in the globalization era (Febriyani, Azani, & Maksum, 2025; Qolbi & Noviani, 2025). Previous studies tend to focus only on religious learning outcomes or general literacy skills without integrating intellectual, moral, spiritual, and digital literacy dimensions comprehensively (Afriyanto & Sukiman, 2025; Dewi, Ariyanti, & Selamat, 2026). Therefore, this study offers a broader perspective by analyzing the role of Islamic education in developing literacy culture that contributes to adaptive, competitive, and morally grounded human resources.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach that connects Islamic educational values, literacy strengthening, and human resource development within the context of globalization and digital transformation. This study emphasizes that literacy in

Islamic education should not only focus on academic competence but also on ethical awareness, critical thinking, and spiritual character development.

Based on the above discussion, this study is important to analyze how the framework of Islamic education contributes to strengthening literacy and its implications for the development of human resources. This study expected to contribute to the discourse on the importance of integrating Islamic education and a culture of literacy in addressing the challenges of globalization and human development in the future.

Literature Review

Theory of Islamic Education

Islamic education is a comprehensive process of human development that encompasses intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social aspects based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadiths. According to Moch. Tolchah, Islamic education serves not only as a transfer of knowledge but also as a process of character building and the cultivation of a human civilization capable of facing the challenges of modernity (Tolchah, 2019). Islamic education aims to shape individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and of noble character so that they can contribute to society.

Meanwhile, according to Nata, Islamic education is a conscious effort to guide students to develop to their fullest potential in accordance with Islamic teaching, both physically and spiritually (Nata, 2017). Thus, Islamic education plays a strategic role in improving the quality of human resources through the development of knowledge and moral values.

Theory of Literacy

Literacy is an individual's ability to read, write, understand, analyze, and use information effectively in daily life. (UNESCO, 2021) defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, and communicate information in various contexts.

In modern times, literacy is no longer limited to reading and writing skills but encompasses: digital literacy, information literacy, cultural literacy, media literacy, and critical thinking skills.

Literacy theory emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and the utilization of information to improve the quality of life for individuals and society. Therefore, strengthening literacy in Islamic education is a vital component in building a generation that is intelligent and adaptable to the changing times.

Theory of Human Resources Development

Human resources development theory explains that human quality can be improved through education, training, skills, and character building. According to the Human Capital Theory developed by Theodore Schultz, education is a primary investment in improving human quality and societal productivity (Schulz, 1961).

In the context of Islamic education, human resources development is not only focused on improving intellectual abilities and work skills, but also on fostering moral character, ethics, and spirituality. Consequently, the human resources produced are not only academically competitive but also possess integrity and a sense of social responsibility.

Theory of constructivism

Constructivist theory states that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through experience, social interaction, and the learning process. According to Piaget, learning occurs when individuals are able to connect new experiences with their existing knowledge structures (Piaget, 1972).

In Islamic education, constructivism is relevant because students do not merely passively receive knowledge; rather, they are encouraged to think critically, understand Islamic values, and apply them in their daily lives. Strengthening literacy through a constructivist approach can help students become more active in seeking, understanding, and developing knowledge.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research methods. The data were collected from various academic sources, including books, scientific journals, research articles, and official reports related to Islamic education, literacy, and human resource development. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical techniques through data reduction, classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. This method was chosen to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic education in strengthening literacy for improving the quality of human resources.

Results and Discussion

The research results indicate that the framework of Islamic education plays a crucial role in strengthening literacy as an effort to develop human quality. Islamic education serves not only as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a process of shaping students' mindset, character, and intellectual abilities in adapting to the changing times. Strengthening literacy in Islamic education is an integral part of cultivating individuals capable of critical and creative thinking, as well as possessing noble character.

The framework of Islamic education in strengthening literacy

Islamic education is fundamentally built upon the foundation of revelation, which positions knowledge as an essential part of human life. The command to read in Surah Al-'Alaq, verse 1, indicates that literacy is the primary foundation for the development of Islamic knowledge and civilization. In practice, Islamic education encourages students to cultivate a culture of reading, writing, discussing, and continuously expanding their knowledge.

According to Moch. Tolchah, Islamic education must be able to integrate Islamic education must be able to integrate Islamic values with the development of modern science so that students possess both strong intellectual and moral capabilities (Tolchah, 2019). This indicates that literacy in Islamic education is not only directed toward the mastery of knowledge but also toward character building and social ethics.

Strengthening literacy in Islamic education can be achieved through several approaches, including:

- a. Encouraging the reading of Islamic literature and general knowledge,
- b. Developing critical thinking skills in the learning process,
- c. Utilizing digital technology as a learning medium,
- d. Strengthening of a culture of discussion and scientific writing

Thus, the framework of Islamic education is capable of creating a learning environment that supports the development of a culture of literacy among students.

The role of literacy in human resource development

Literacy is closely related to the improvement of human resource quality. Individuals with strong literacy skills tend to find it easier to comprehend information, solve problems, and adapt to technological and social developments. In the context of Islamic education, literacy pertains not only to academic abilities but also to the capacity to understand moral and spiritual values.

Research findings indicate that strengthening literacy can improve:

- a. Students' critical thinking skills,
- b. Communication skills,
- c. The ability to analyze information,
- d. Creativity and innovation,
- e. As well as the development of religious and social character

Literacy-based Islamic education can produce human resources who are not only intellectually superior but also possess moral integrity. This aligns with the goals of Islamic education, which emphasizes a balance between intellectual, spiritual, and social aspects.

In addition, literacy strengthening in Islamic education can encourage students to become more independent learners in responding to social and educational changes (Sani & Majeed, 2025). Through literacy activities such as reading, writing, discussion, and reflection, students are trained to analyze problems critically and develop logical arguments. This process contributes significantly to the formation of intellectual maturity and decision-making abilities. Islamic education also teaches students to use knowledge responsibly based on ethical and spiritual values. Therefore, literacy development in Islamic education does not only improve academic competence but also shapes students' moral awareness in social life.

Moreover, literacy-based Islamic education plays an important role in preparing human resources capable of competing in the global era (Maulida, Hernawati, & Nurcholis, 2025). The rapid advancement of technology and information requires individuals to possess adaptive thinking skills and digital competencies. Islamic educational institutions are therefore expected to integrate literacy practices with technology-based learning to improve students' creativity and innovation. By strengthening literacy culture, students can better understand information, avoid misinformation, and participate actively in knowledge development. As a result, Islamic education can contribute to producing qualified human resources who are intellectually competent, ethically grounded, and socially responsible.

Furthermore, strengthening literacy also has a positive impact on students' readiness to face the digital age and globalization (Ansoriyah, Irawan, Murcahyanto, & Judijanto, 2026). The ability to discern information, understand digital media, and think critically are essential competencies in modern life. Therefore, Islamic education must continue to innovate in teaching methods to effectively address the challenges posed by technological and information advancements.

Challenges in Islamic education regarding literacy enhancement

Despite its strategic role, Islamic education still faces several challenges in literacy enhancement. One of the main challenges is the low reading culture among students. Furthermore, the development of digital media, if not balanced with information literacy, can lead to the spread of invalid information and a lack of critical thinking skills. Another challenge is the still limited integration of technology into Islamic education. Some Islamic educational institutions still use conventional teaching methods that do little to encourage students to actively seek and develop information independently.

To address these challenges, strategic steps are needed, such as: enhancing teachers' competencies in digital literacy, developing literacy-based curricula, providing adequate learning facilities, and strengthening academic culture within Islamic educational environments (Saepurohman, Badrudin, Erihadiana, & Lestari, 2025). With these efforts, Islamic education can become an effective means of improving the quality of human resources that are excellent, adaptive, and possess Islamic character.

Implication of Islamic education for human resources quality

The construction of Islamic education based on strengthening literacy has significant implications for the development of human resources quality. Islamic education is capable of producing a generation that: possesses strong intellectual abilities, is capable of critical and creative thinking, has strong ethics and morals, is adaptable to technological developments, and is able to contribute positively to social life.

Thus, Islamic education serves not only as a religious educational institution but also as a means of building civilization and enhancing human development. Strengthening

literacy in Islamic education is a strategic step toward creating a competitive workforce grounded in Islamic values in the era of globalization.

These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by (Suyadi, 2020), which emphasized that digital literacy in Islamic education is essential for preparing students to face the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Similarly, (Azra, 2015) highlighted that Islamic intellectual traditions historically encouraged critical inquiry, discussion, and scientific development. Therefore, literacy strengthening in Islamic education can be understood not only as an educational necessity but also as part of the Islamic civilization tradition.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the structure of Islamic education plays a strategic role in strengthening literacy as an effort to develop the quality of human resources. Islamic education does not merely function as a process of transferring religious knowledge but also as a means of character formation, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and social skills among students. Strengthening literacy in Islamic education is a crucial component in building a generation capable of addressing the challenges of globalization and advancements in information technology. However, Islamic education still faces various challenges, such as a low reading culture, suboptimal digital literacy, and limited integration of technology into the learning process. Therefore, innovation and strengthening of the Islamic education system are needed to create a stronger literacy culture that is relevant to the needs of the modern era. This study contributes theoretically to the discourse of Islamic education by emphasizing that literacy strengthening should become a central component of educational transformation in Islamic institutions. Practically, this study provides insights for educators and policymakers to design literacy-oriented educational programs that integrate intellectual, moral, and technological competencies in facing global challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, there are several recommendations that can be implemented to strengthen the role of Islamic education in literacy development and human resource quality, namely:

1. For Islamic educational institutions, it is necessary to develop a literacy-based curriculum that integrates Islamic values with modern science and technology so that students possess a balanced intellectual and moral capacity.
2. For educators or teachers, it is necessary to enhance competencies in digital literacy and innovative teaching methods so that the learning process becomes more interactive, critical, and capable of encouraging students to actively seek and develop information independently.

3. For students, a culture of reading, writing, discussing, and critical thinking must be instilled as part of Islamic intellectual tradition so that literacy skills can develop optimally.
4. For the government and policymakers, support is needed in the form of providing learning facilities, strengthening literacy programs, and training for educators in Islamic educational institutions so that they are able to face the challenges of the digital age.
5. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct more in-depth research on the implementation of digital literacy in Islamic education and its impact on improving the quality of human resources at various levels of education.

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