

## **The Role of Islamic Education in Building a Lifelong Learning Society**

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**Abstract:** *The concept of a lifelong learning society has become an essential demand in responding to the dynamics of social, cultural, and technological changes in the modern era. However, the implementation of lifelong learning within Islamic education still faces various challenges, such as an education paradigm that tends to be formalistic, limited pedagogical innovation, and the suboptimal role of Islamic educational institutions in fostering a culture of continuous learning. This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society through a conceptual review and the values of Islamic education. This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. Data were collected through an extensive review of literature, including books, journal articles, and academic documents relevant to Islamic education and lifelong learning, and were analyzed using content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that Islamic education possesses strong philosophical foundations and values that support lifelong learning, such as the concept of learning as an act of worship, the balance between knowledge, morality, and practice, and the internalization of values such as tawhid (monotheism), sincerity, trustworthiness, and ijtihad (intellectual endeavor). Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic higher education institutions, play a strategic role as centers of formal and non-formal learning within society. The implications of this study emphasize the need to strengthen policies, promote pedagogical innovation, and utilize technology grounded in Islamic values in order to optimize the role of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society.*

**Keywords:** *Educational Values, Islamic Education, Lifelong Learning.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Islamic education has a strategic role in shaping human beings who are not only knowledgeable but also possess noble character and an integrated personality (Ismail & others, 2016; Maidugu & Isah, 2024; Munif, 2025). From an Islamic perspective, the educational process is not limited by space and time; rather, it continues throughout one's lifetime. This concept aligns with the principle of lifelong learning, which emphasizes continuous learning as a fundamental human need. Islamic education views the pursuit of knowledge as an obligation inherent from birth until the end of life (Haq, 2023; Mitra, 2021). Therefore, Islamic education is not solely oriented toward formal academic achievement, but also toward spiritual, moral, and social development. Islamic values encourage individuals to continuously learn, improve themselves,

and contribute positively to society. Thus, Islamic education has a strong normative foundation in supporting the formation of a lifelong learning society.

In modern societies characterized by rapid social, technological, and cultural change, the concept of a lifelong learning society becomes increasingly relevant (Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2025; Suprayitno, 2025). People are required to continuously develop their knowledge and skills in order to adapt to the dynamics of the times (Petrychenko et al., 2023; Sholeh, 2025). Islamic education has the potential to become an important instrument in building awareness of lifelong learning grounded in divine and humanistic values (Hendawi et al., 2024; Nordin et al., 2024). Through Islamic education, learning is understood as an act of worship and a form of devotion to Allah SWT. This understanding can foster intrinsic motivation to engage in continuous learning. Moreover, Islamic education emphasizes balance among intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects. This balance constitutes an essential foundation for building a sustainable learning society.

Despite its strong conceptual foundation, the implementation of Islamic education in supporting a lifelong learning society still faces various challenges. Islamic education is often perceived as being limited to formal institutions such as madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. Learning practices tend to remain oriented toward curricula and academic evaluation alone. Awareness of lifelong learning among learners and society has not yet been optimally developed. In addition, the integration of Islamic values with the learning needs of the modern era has not been fully realized. Limited pedagogical innovation and the underutilization of technology also pose obstacles. These conditions indicate a gap between the ideal concept of Islamic education and the realities of practice in the field.

Recent studies have enriched the discourse on Islamic education and lifelong learning. A study by Rushami Zien et al. in *Quality Education for All* (2024) emphasizes that strengthening a lifelong learning culture within Islamic educational institutions significantly contributes to improving educational quality through the integration of Islamic values, cross-border collaboration, and the continuous capacity development of educators and learners (Rushami Zien et al., 2024). Meanwhile, research by Muhammad Jum'at Dasuki in *IIUM Journal of Human Sciences* (2025) indicates that the internalization of Islamic values in child upbringing by Muslim

women plays a strategic role in instilling a lifelong learning culture from an early age as a foundation for character formation and the quality of future generations(Dasuki, 2025). Furthermore, the study by Ossman Nordin, Nik Md Saiful Azizi Nik Abdullah, and Mohamad Ridhuan Abdullah in BITARA International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Sciences (2024) underscores the importance of harmonizing lifelong learning with the values of tawhid, morality, and social responsibility as a framework for personal and societal development(Nordin et al., 2024). In addition, research by Ros Faizah Mohd et al. in International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences (2024) highlights that Islamic Education teachers' commitment to lifelong learning is influenced by intrinsic motivation, institutional support, and continuous professional development, which positively impact pedagogical quality(Mohd et al., 2024).

Based on the above discussion, there is a research gap that needs to be further examined. There are still limited studies that systematically analyze the role of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society from both conceptual and contextual perspectives. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to integrate the concept of lifelong learning with the paradigm of Islamic education. This study does not view Islamic education merely as a formal institution, but as a value system that encourages lifelong learning. This approach is expected to provide a new perspective in the field of Islamic education studies. In addition, this research seeks to bridge normative Islamic values with contemporary educational challenges. Thus, this study has significant theoretical and practical contributions.

This research aims to analyze the role of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society. Specifically, it seeks to examine the concept of lifelong learning from the perspective of Islamic education. The study also aims to identify Islamic educational values that support sustainable and continuous learning. Furthermore, it attempts to analyze the challenges of implementing Islamic education within the context of lifelong learning. This research is expected to contribute conceptually to the development of Islamic education theory. The findings are also expected to serve as a reference for educational practitioners and policymakers. In this way, Islamic education can be optimized in building a lifelong learning society.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design, because it focuses on a conceptual and theoretical analysis of the role of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society (Prastowo, 2016; Setiawan, 2018). This approach is chosen to explore in depth the ideas, concepts, and perspectives developed in the literature on Islamic education and lifelong learning. The research data sources consist of both primary and secondary materials relevant to the topic under study. Primary sources include classical and contemporary works on Islamic education, key reference books on lifelong learning, and official documents discussing education and sustainable learning. Secondary sources comprise scholarly journal articles, conference proceedings, research reports, and other academic publications related to Islamic education and the lifelong learning society. The selection of sources is conducted selectively by considering their relevance, credibility, and timeliness (Muhammad Mustofa, 2023). The collected data are then classified according to the main research themes, including the concept of Islamic education, principles of lifelong learning, and the role of education in shaping a learning society.

Data collection is carried out through systematic literature searches utilizing national and international journal databases, academic books, and reliable digital sources. Data analysis employs content analysis techniques with a descriptive-analytical approach, which involves examining textual content in depth to identify meanings, patterns, and relationships among concepts (Mustofa, 2023). The stages of analysis include data reduction, data presentation, and reflective and critical conclusion drawing. The analyzed data are then interpreted by linking the perspectives of Islamic education with the concept of a lifelong learning society. To ensure data validity, this study applies source triangulation by comparing various references with similar research focuses. In addition, the researcher conducts a critical review of arguments and findings from previous studies. Through this method, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the role of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The development of the modern era, marked by technological advancement, rapid social change, and the increasing complexity of global challenges, demands an educational paradigm

that is adaptive, sustainable, and long-term oriented. Education can no longer be understood as a process that ends at the level of schooling or higher education, but rather as a learning journey that continues throughout the entire span of human life. In this regard, the concept of lifelong learning becomes highly relevant as a framework for shaping individuals who are able to continuously learn, adapt, and contribute productively amid ongoing transformation. Lifelong learning emphasizes the importance of internal awareness to continuously develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in a sustained manner. Therefore, a strong philosophical and value-based foundation is required so that the learning process is not merely instrumental, but also meaningful in moral, spiritual, and social dimensions.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the process of learning carries a broader dimension than simply the transfer of knowledge or academic achievement. Islamic education views human beings as individuals endowed with intellectual, spiritual, and moral potential that must be developed in a balanced and continuous manner. Learning is not solely an intellectual activity, but also part of character formation and devotion to Allah SWT. Within this framework, Islamic education inherently contains principles of continuity, balance, and integration between knowledge, action, and morality. Such an orientation provides Islamic education with a strong conceptual foundation to support the formation of a lifelong learning culture. Therefore, it is essential to examine more deeply how the concepts, values, and institutions of Islamic education can play a strategic role in building a society that possesses sustained learning awareness at every stage of life.

### **1. The Concept of Islamic Education as a Foundation for Lifelong Learning**

Islamic education conceptually possesses learning characteristics that are holistic and continuous throughout life (Bando, 2025; Mauludin et al., 2025). The findings of this study indicate that, from an Islamic perspective, the pursuit of knowledge is an obligation that is not limited by age, space, or formal levels of education. This principle is reflected in various teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasize the importance of continuously seeking knowledge. Islamic education views human beings as learners who are constantly developing. Therefore, the educational process does not end at the stage of schooling or higher education, but continues throughout the entire human lifespan. This concept demonstrates that Islamic

education has a strong compatibility with the idea of lifelong learning. On this basis, Islamic education has the potential to shape individuals who possess sustained awareness of continuous learning.

Islamic education also interprets learning activities as part of worship that carry spiritual and transcendental value (Hendawi et al., 2024; Wijayanto, 2020). Learning is not only understood as an effort to acquire knowledge, but also as a means of drawing closer to Allah SWT. This interpretation generates strong intrinsic motivation within individuals to continue learning without external pressure. When learning is viewed as an act of worship, the learning process becomes meaningful and value-oriented. This distinguishes Islamic education from learning approaches that are purely pragmatic. Such spiritual motivation encourages the continuity of the learning process throughout life. Thus, Islamic education provides a solid motivational foundation for the realization of a lifelong learning society.

In addition to the spiritual aspect, Islamic education emphasizes balance between the mastery of knowledge, the formation of moral character, and its application in real life. The study shows that Islamic education does not separate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Knowledge acquired must be internalized into attitudes and manifested in concrete actions. This holistic approach makes learning a continuous and contextual process. Learning does not stop at the mastery of concepts, but continues to develop through reflection and practical life experience. With this balance, Islamic education is able to shape learners who are adaptive and responsible. This is a crucial element in building a lifelong learning society.

With these characteristics, Islamic education can be understood as a fundamental foundation in developing lifelong learning awareness. Islamic education is not oriented merely toward short-term academic achievement, but toward the formation of lifelong learners. This awareness encourages individuals to continuously improve their quality of life at various stages. Islamic education also teaches that the learning process has moral and social purposes. Through lifelong learning, individuals are expected to contribute positively to society. Therefore, Islamic education holds a strategic position in building a lifelong learning society. These findings affirm that the concept of Islamic education is relevant and contributive in responding to learning challenges in the modern era.

## **2. Islamic Educational Values in Promoting a Culture of Lifelong Learning**

The findings of this study indicate that the values of Islamic education play a fundamental role in shaping a culture of sustainable learning (Hajar, 2024; Jamil, 2024). Islamic education does not merely transmit knowledge, but also instills values that form the foundation of individuals' learning behavior. One of the primary values is tawhid, which places learning activities as part of devotion to Allah SWT. With a tawhid-oriented perspective, the learning process is inseparable from spiritual and moral purposes. This value provides direction and meaning to every learning activity. A learning orientation based on tawhid encourages individuals to continuously seek knowledge throughout their lives. Thus, the value of tawhid becomes the main foundation in building a lifelong learning culture.

In addition to tawhid, the value of sincerity (ikhlas) is an important element in encouraging the continuity of the learning process. Islamic education teaches that learning must be based on sincere intentions and not merely oriented toward material interests. The value of sincerity shapes a consistent learning attitude even in the absence of external rewards. With this attitude, individuals are motivated to continuously develop themselves independently. Sincerity also fosters learning resilience in facing various challenges. The learning process is not easily disrupted by failure or limitations. Therefore, the value of sincerity plays a crucial role in shaping lifelong learners.

The values of responsibility and trust (amanah) are also integral components of Islamic education that support a sustainable learning culture (Ambarawadi et al., 2025). Islamic education views knowledge as a trust that must be preserved, developed, and practiced. Awareness of this trust encourages individuals to continuously update and enhance their knowledge. Responsibility toward oneself and society becomes a motivation for continuous learning. This value also fosters awareness of the importance of learning not only for personal interests but also for social benefit. Thus, the learning process becomes part of moral and social responsibility. This further strengthens the position of Islamic education in building a lifelong learning society.

Islamic education instills the values of serious effort (ijtihad) and hard work in the learning process. The value of ijtihad encourages individuals to think critically, reflectively,

and innovatively in addressing various life challenges. Seriousness in learning prevents individuals from becoming easily satisfied with the knowledge they already possess. Learning is understood as a continuous effort to achieve better personal quality. The value of hard work also cultivates resilience and discipline in learning. The combination of these values shapes learners who are adaptive to the changes of the times. Thus, the values of Islamic education contribute significantly to fostering a culture of sustainable learning.

### **3. The Role of Islamic Educational Institutions in Building a Lifelong Learning Society**

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic educational institutions play a strategic role in building a lifelong learning society. Madrasahs, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), and Islamic higher education institutions function not only as formal educational institutions but also as centers for value formation and community capacity development. These institutions serve as primary spaces for the internalization of Islamic values that foster awareness of continuous learning. The educational process is not limited to the formal curriculum, but extends to social and religious learning. Through various academic and non-academic activities, Islamic educational institutions contribute to shaping a culture of learning. This role positions Islamic educational institutions as agents of social change. Thus, the existence of Islamic educational institutions holds significant importance in building a lifelong learning society.

Pesantren represent a concrete example of Islamic educational institutions that embody lifelong learning. The pesantren tradition demonstrates that the learning process is not restricted by age, time, or formal educational levels. Santri from diverse age backgrounds can engage in continuous learning activities. The study of classical texts, religious discussions, and the practice of worship are integral parts of the daily learning process. Learning in pesantren takes place both formally and informally within everyday life. This pattern reflects the concept of lifelong learning as natural and contextual. Therefore, pesantren have great potential as models of lifelong learning within Islamic education.

Madrasahs, as formal educational institutions, also play an important role in instilling lifelong learning awareness from an early age. Madrasahs not only teach general and religious knowledge, but also cultivate values of continuous learning. Through integrated learning,

students are guided to understand the importance of continuous self-development. Extracurricular activities, habituation of worship, and character development are integral parts of the learning process. Through this approach, madrasahs contribute to shaping sustainable learning attitudes. However, the role of madrasahs needs to be strengthened through pedagogical innovation. Such reinforcement is necessary to enable madrasahs to respond effectively to learning challenges in the modern era.

Islamic higher education institutions also play a strategic role in building a lifelong learning society, particularly at the level of advanced education and the broader community. Islamic universities have begun to develop continuing education programs, training initiatives, and community service activities. These programs expand access to learning for communities beyond regular students. In addition, Islamic higher education institutions contribute to the development of knowledge and research that are relevant to societal needs. Through academic and social collaboration, Islamic universities encourage the creation of a sustainable learning ecosystem. However, optimizing this role still requires stronger policies and resources. With such reinforcement, Islamic higher education institutions can become key drivers of a lifelong learning society.

## **Discussion**

This discussion shows that the concept of Islamic education as a foundation for lifelong learning is aligned with the views of classical and contemporary Islamic education thinkers. Al-Ghazali emphasized that knowledge is a means of purifying the soul and forming moral character; therefore, the pursuit of knowledge should never cease throughout human life. This view is reinforced by Ibn Khaldun, who regarded education as a continuous social process in the formation of civilization. The findings of this study strengthen the idea that Islamic education does not view learning as a temporary activity, but as a lifelong process. The concept of lifelong learning developed in modern education is essentially compatible with the principles of Islamic education. Thus, Islamic education has strong theoretical legitimacy in building a lifelong learning society.

The values of Islamic education identified in this study are also consistent with value-based education theory. The values of tawhid, sincerity (ikhlas), trust (amanah), and ijtihad

function as internal driving forces in the learning process. This aligns with the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who emphasized that the goal of Islamic education is the cultivation of adab and the formation of knowledgeable individuals with an integrated personality. These findings are also relevant to the views of Fazlur Rahman, who stressed the importance of integrating Islamic ethical values into the educational process. Learning grounded in values generates sustainable intrinsic motivation. Such motivation is a key element in the concept of a lifelong learning society. Thus, Islamic education offers a holistic and value-oriented approach.

The results of this study also reinforce previous research findings that highlight the role of Islamic educational institutions as agents in shaping learning culture. Studies on pesantren indicate that the tradition of lifelong learning has long been practiced within the Islamic education system. Non-formal and informal learning patterns in pesantren reflect a contextual and participatory concept of lifelong learning. These findings are in line with the work of Zamakhsyari Dhofier, who emphasized pesantren as centers for the continuous transmission of knowledge and Islamic values. Madrasahs and Islamic higher education institutions also play an important role in fostering awareness of continuous learning. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions have great potential as drivers of a lifelong learning society.

From the perspective of modern educational theory, the findings of this study are consistent with the lifelong learning concept promoted by UNESCO. UNESCO emphasizes that lifelong learning encompasses the dimensions of learning to know, to do, to be, and to live together. These dimensions correspond closely with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize balance between knowledge, practice, and moral character. Islamic education is not only oriented toward the mastery of knowledge, but also toward character formation and social responsibility. The integration of UNESCO's framework and Islamic education reveals significant points of convergence. This strengthens the relevance of Islamic education in the context of global education. Thus, Islamic education can contribute meaningfully to international discourse on lifelong learning.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study also confirm challenges that have been identified in previous research. Several studies indicate that Islamic education still faces obstacles in integrating technology and pedagogical innovation. This is consistent with findings regarding the

limited digital transformation in Islamic educational institutions. In addition, an education orientation that remains largely formalistic poses a barrier to the development of lifelong learning. This study reinforces the argument that a paradigm shift in Islamic education is necessary. Such a paradigm must accommodate the demands of continuous learning in the modern era. Therefore, existing challenges need to be addressed strategically and systematically.

Overall, this discussion affirms that Islamic education has strong theoretical and practical potential in building a lifelong learning society. The findings of this study expand the field of Islamic education by comprehensively integrating the concept of lifelong learning. The contribution of this research lies in its effort to bridge classical Islamic thought and modern educational theory. Through this approach, Islamic education is positioned not merely as a religious education system, but as a paradigm of lifelong learning. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are relevant for the development of policies and practices in Islamic education. Thus, Islamic education can be optimized as a main pillar in the formation of a sustainable learning society.

## **CONCLUSION**

Islamic education plays a strategic role in building a lifelong learning society through its philosophical foundations, educational values, and the role of Islamic educational institutions that inherently encourage lifelong learning. Islamic education views learning as a spiritual and social obligation that continues throughout life, thus aligning with the concept of sustainable learning in modern education. The values of tawhid, sincerity (ikhlas), trust (amanah), and ijihad serve as driving forces in the formation of a sustainable learning culture. Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, madrasahs, and Islamic higher education institutions function as centers of formal and non-formal learning for the community. However, the implementation of these roles still faces challenges in the form of formalistic paradigms, limited pedagogical innovation, and underutilization of technology. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen Islamic education policies oriented toward lifelong learning, develop pedagogical innovations grounded in Islamic values, and optimize the role of Islamic educational institutions in fostering a sustainable learning culture within society.

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