



Islamic Education Innovation as a Strategic Foundation in the Development of Initiator Teacher Competency

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Abstract

This research is grounded in the challenges faced by Islamic education amid rapid globalization and increasing moral degradation among students. The study examines Islamic educational innovation as a strategic foundation for strengthening the competency of initiating teachers. The main research question is: How can Islamic educational innovation enhance the competency of initiating teachers in addressing contemporary educational challenges? Literature findings highlight innovations such as integrative learning models that combine cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual dimensions, Qur'an, Hadith, based value internalization, contextual and project-based learning, and character-oriented pedagogies rooted in Islamic ethics. These innovations position teachers as transformative initiators rather than passive transmitters of knowledge. This study employs a descriptive qualitative literature review using content analysis to identify thematic patterns, compare scholarly perspectives, and synthesize relevant insights. Sources include academic books, Qur'anic and Hadith commentaries, reviewed journal articles, policy documents, and previous research. Reference searches used the keywords "Islamic Education Innovation", "Teacher Competency", "Initiator Teacher", and "Islamic Pedagogy". Materials were gathered through Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, SpringerLink, ResearchGate, and national databases such as Garuda and SINTA. In conclusion, Islamic educational innovation provides a solid conceptual and practical framework for empowering initiating teachers to cultivate adaptive, intelligent, and ethically grounded students.

Keywords: Islamic Education Innovation; Teacher Competency; Initiator Teacher.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini didasarkan pada tantangan yang dihadapi pendidikan Islam di tengah pesatnya globalisasi dan meningkatnya degradasi moral di kalangan siswa. Studi ini mengkaji inovasi pendidikan Islam sebagai landasan strategis untuk memperkuat kompetensi guru inisiasi. Pertanyaan penelitian utama adalah: Bagaimana inovasi pendidikan Islam dapat meningkatkan kompetensi guru inisiasi dalam mengatasi tantangan pendidikan kontemporer? Temuan literatur menyoroti inovasi seperti model pembelajaran integratif yang menggabungkan dimensi kognitif, afektif, psikomotorik, dan spiritual, Al-Qur'an, Hadis, internalisasi nilai berbasis dasar, pembelajaran kontekstual dan berbasis proyek, dan pedagogi berorientasi karakter yang berakar pada etika Islam. Inovasi ini memposisikan guru sebagai inisiatör transformatif daripada

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pemancar pengetahuan pasif. Penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur kualitatif deskriptif menggunakan analisis konten untuk mengidentifikasi pola tematik, membandingkan perspektif ilmiah, dan mensintesis wawasan yang relevan. Sumber-sumber termasuk buku-buku akademis, komentar Al-Qur'an dan Hadis, artikel jurnal yang diulas, dokumen kebijakan, dan penelitian sebelumnya. Pencarian referensi menggunakan kata kunci "Inovasi Pendidikan Islam", "Kompetensi Guru", "Guru Penginisiator", dan "Pedagogi Islam". Materi dikumpulkan melalui Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, SpringerLink, ResearchGate, dan database nasional seperti Garuda dan SINTA. Kesimpulannya, inovasi pendidikan Islam memberikan kerangka konseptual dan praktis yang solid untuk memberdayakan guru inisiat untuk menumbuhkan siswa yang adaptif, cerdas, dan berlandasan etis.

Kata kunci : Inovasi Pendidikan Islam; Kompetensi Guru; Guru Inisiator.

I. Introduction

Islamic education not only functions as a medium for knowledge transfer, but also as a strategic vehicle to grow the character, competence, and integrity of student holistically. Islam as a religion of life (al-hayat), humanity (al-insaniyah), awareness (al-wa'iyah), education (al-tarbiyah), and development (al-ishlah) emphasizes the importance of developing human potential which includes spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual dimensions (Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, 1992: 16). As a religion pf education, Islam places the development of science as the most important activity that forms the foundation of human thought and attitude in life (Lahmar, 2020: 3; Sabic-El-Rayess, 2020: 1-2). The National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 emphasizes that education is a conscious and structured effort to develop the cognitive, spiritual, moral, social, and emotional aspect of student (BPK RI, 2003). Education functions to form intellectual, spiritual, self-control, personality, moral integrity, and adaptive skills so that individuals are able to contribute to themselves, society, nation, and global civilization (Fidelis et al., 2024: 1; Zhou et al., 2024: 1-2).

Islamic education in empowering teachers to become initiators is of course motivated by the social phenomenon of the existence of students that is not controlled by the presence of sophisticated technological media (internet) which can quickly affect student behavior to be positive and at the same time negative. Basically, every student has constructive cognitive potential if they receive professional guidance from teachers who are competent in their field (Upadhyaya & Vrinda, 2021: 1647-1648) . However, the current reality of education is that we often witness a degradation of learning orientation that is influenced by various external factors, such as promiscuity, alcohol and narcotics abuse, online gambling practices, consumptive smoking behavior, exposure to pornographic content, and excessive use of gadgets without parental control.

Kuş, (2025: 1) A meta-analysis of more than 124.000 student in 28 countries showed a significant negative correlation between smartphone use, social media, and digital games and academic achievement, while another study noted that the prevalence of excessive social media use reached 24% in 32 countries with student and college student

Islamic Education Innovation as a Strategic Foundation in the Development of Initiator Teacher Competency as the main group (Mou et al., 2024: 2). These findings confirm that education, as a conscious and continuous effort to guide children to grow up, independent, disciplined, and responsible, as well as adaptive to the times, is an important foundation in the formation of character, competence, and integrity of future generations. Meanwhile on the other hand, the quality of education is highly determined not only by the learning behavior of student, but also by the quality of educational materials and teaching staff (Rahman & Azzahra, 2024: 258; Reinius et al., 2022: 1).

According to M. J. Langeveld in Kartini Kartono (1996: 16), education is understood as an activity that guides human children toward maturity and independence. In line with that, Kingsley Price (1962:4) states: Education is the process by which the nonphysical possessions of a culture are preserved or increased in the rearing of the young or in the instruction of adults. Meanwhile, According Ahmad D. Marimba in Nasir (2017:48) emphasizing that education is a guidance carried out consciously by educators for the physical and spiritual development of student, with the aim of forming the main personality. This is also in line with research conducted by Yudaningsih (2025:709) related to the pursuit of quality education which has been positioned as the main foundation of social progress. Of course, this requires educators who are more inclusive, resilient, and future-oriented. In the realm of Islamic education, research conducted Memon et al. (2024: 1) emphasizing that Islamic teacher education is a fundamental need in building an educational framework based on spiritual and moral values. This is in line with the findings Assalihee et al. (2024: 1) which shows that Islamic education has a fundamental role in shaping the moral, spiritual, and academic development of student. This connection is strengthened by research Hakim (2018:1) which emphasizes that the strategy for developing pedagogical competencies of Islamic religious education teachers is an integral part of effort to improve the professionalism and effectiveness of the teacher's role.

Although Islamic education has been widely explored in relation to curriculum, learning outcomes, and student development, attention to how Islamic educational innovation shapes initiating teacher competencies remains limited. In an era marked by digital acceleration, shifting moral landscapes, and global interconnectedness, teachers are increasingly expected not only to teach but also to craft innovative learning designs that strengthen students' character, competence, and integrity. Understanding how innovation within Islamic education contributes to the formation of such teacher competencies is therefore essential for enhancing learning quality and cultivating a value-driven, adaptable generation (Pantić et al., 2022: 147; Rechsteiner et al., 2022: 1–2).

This study seeks to clarify the ways Islamic educational innovation can function as a strategic foundation for developing teachers who initiate change and act as transformative agents. By synthesizing insights from existing literature, the study

highlights patterns showing how innovative practices within Islamic education support professional growth, pedagogical creativity, and character-oriented learning environments. The findings are expected to offer conceptual and practical guidance for educators, policymakers, and educational institutions in designing integrative and innovation based pedagogical strategies anchored in Islamic values. Through these efforts, Islamic education can more effectively foster a generation that is intellectually capable, morally grounded, spiritually aware, and prepared to navigate contemporary complexities.

II. Research Method

The study adopts a systematic literature review method guided by the PRISMA framework, ensuring that the entire process of identification, screening, feasibility assessment, and determination of the included final study is carried out transparently and systematically. The literature search began with the formulation of keywords such as "Islamic Education Innovation", "Teacher Competence", "Initiating Teachers", "Islamic Pedagogy", and "Character-Based Education" which were used consistently in several major academic databases including Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, SpringerLink, ResearchGate, Garuda, and SINTA. In accordance with the PRISMA identification phase, all the records taken were collected, resulting in a total of 69 references. After this, the PRISMA screening stage is carried out by removing duplicates, filtering out non-academic sources, and reviewing titles and abstracts for relevance.

Feasibility assessment involves a core reading of the text discussion and application of inclusion criteria, peer-reviewed publications, authoritative books, the Qur'an, Hadith commentaries, and policy documents officially published in English or Indonesian that directly address Islamic educational innovations or teacher competencies. Exclusion criteria include unavailable full texts, studies without methodological clarity, irrelevant themes, and duplicate entries. Through this sequential PRISMA flow, out of 69 references, 7 references were identified as not eligible to be used as analytical data, leaving 62 references. However, through a deeper screening with a core study of Islamic educational innovations and initiation teachers, 59 relevant references were generated.

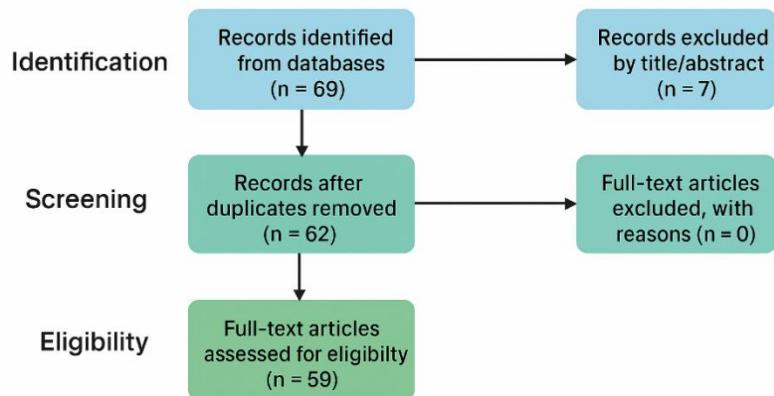


Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

These eligible studies were then examined through coding, categorization, and thematic synthesis to reveal dominant innovation patterns within Islamic education. A meta-analysis further demonstrated recurring themes such as integrative learning, Qur'an-Hadith value internalization, character-based pedagogy, contextual and project-based learning, spiritual ethical learning design, and technology based Islamic approaches.

III. Result and Discussion

A. Research Finding

1. Theological and Epistemological Foundations of Findings

The results of a systematic review of 59 eligible studies screened through the PRISMA procedure show that Islamic education innovation has a significant contribution to strengthening the competence of initiating teachers in pedagogic, professional, spiritual, and technological contexts. These findings provide a comprehensive answer to the research question: "How do Islamic educational innovations strengthen the competence of initiating teachers in 21st century learning?". Preliminary findings show that Islamic education in 59 studies consistently refers to the concept of tarbiyah as a continuous holistic process, as affirmed in QS. Luqman Verse 13:

الشِّرْكَ إِنَّ بِاللَّهِ تُشْرِكُ لَا يَبْنَيَ يَعْزَةً وَهُوَ لِابْنِهِ لُقْمَنْ قَالَ وَإِذْ
○١٣ عَظِيمٌ لَظُلْمٌ

And (remember) when Luqman said to his son, when he was teaching him: "O my son, do not associate with Allah, indeed associating with (Allah) is indeed a great tyranny.

The verse is used in a number of studies to affirm that Islamic education is a process of cultivating monotheism that involves the integration of intellectual, moral, spiritual, and professional skills. Most studies state that the Islamic education dimension works

simultaneously through four main domains: cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual. These findings show that Islamic education cannot be reduced to the transmission of knowledge alone, but includes the formation of morals, character, and divine consciousness as the core of the competence of teachers and students. The following conceptual visualization summarizes the integration of the four dimensions of Islamic education based on a literature review

Table 1. Mapping of Cognitive, Affective Psychomotor and Integration Dimensions in Islamic Education

Dimension	Conceptual Foundations	Main Objectives	Implication of the Modern Curriculum
Cognitive	(Abdurrahman Nahlawi, 1996: 21)	Develop intelligence, critical thinking, reflective proportional	Integration of general science and religion, problem solving learning methods, strengthening Qur'anic literacy
Affective	(Shaliba & Kamil, 1978: 266; Zakiah Daradjat, 1995: 7–8)	Forming noble, religious, and civilized morals	Islamic character education, habit of daily worship, internalization of moral values in the curriculum
Psychomotoric	(Zakiah Daradjat, 1995: 7–8)	Improve professional and useful practical skills	Technology-based skills and entrepreneurship, experiential learning, social leadership training
Integration	(QS. Al-Anbiya': 7; QS. Luqman: 13)	Becoming a <i>kamil</i> person through the synergy of revelation, intellect, and charity	Revelation-based integrative curriculum, synergy between knowledge, faith, and charity, age-responsive education without losing Islamic identity

Islamic education, as found in classical literature, works through the integration of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual dimensions (Gunawan et al., 2023: 984–985). This process is systematic, structured according to the development stage of the learner, and directed through scientific competence and the example of an educator (X. Huang et al., 2024: 5–6). In addition, important findings from this approach show that when learners are given space as subjects, they are able to explore and discover knowledge independently (Aryani et al., 2024: 330), by leveraging learning to give birth to more participatory, creative, dynamic, and innovative learning, as well as encouraging the growth of sustainable learning independence (F. Huang et al., 2019: 4). Important findings in Islamic education show that students are required to have intelligence, enthusiasm for learning, patience, material support, teacher guidance, and adequate time management (Thoifuri, 2011: 36). This requirement emphasizes a balance between intellectual capacity, internal motivation, and practical readiness in the learning process. Meanwhile, Imam Al-Ghazali's thought emphasizes spiritual aspects, such as purity of heart, focus on learning, and respect for teachers. In addition, students are expected to stay away from envy, arrogance, and hatred, and prioritize religious science that is

Islamic Education Innovation as a Strategic Foundation in the Development of Initiator Teacher Competency oriented towards happiness and transcendental-Divine (Barni & Mahdany, 2017: 252; Sajid Ullah Sheikh & Muhammad Abid Ali, 2019: 114-115).

2. Initiator Teachers as Manifesting Islamic Education Innovation

The literature shows consistency that initiator teachers are contemporary representations of the ideals of educators in the Islamic tradition. Initiator teachers are educators who are able to bring new, creative, contextual, and meaningful learning experiences to students. Their learning innovations have been shown to prevent burnout, increase intrinsic motivation, and expand students' space for exploration through the use of representative media, varied methods, and project-based learning or field experience (Mishra & Koehler, 2006: 1020; Valtonen et al., 2017: 18).

Almost all references taken affirm that the initiator teacher is a contemporary representation of the figure of mua'lim, murabbi, uswah khasanah in the Islamic tradition. Initiator teachers are not only material presenters, but learning leaders who have multidimensional functions, including: facilitators, evaluators, material curators, motivators, social mediators, learning designers, and innovators (Yanti et al., 2024: 162). This is in line with the hadith which states:

مُحِبًا أَوْ مُسْتَمِعًا أَوْ مُتَعَلِّمًا كُنْ فَتَهْلِكْ خَامِسًا تَكُنْ وَلَا

“Be learned person a seeker of knowledge, a listener of knowledge, or a lover of knowledge. And do not be the fifth, for you will be doomed” **(HR. Al-Baihaqi and Al-Tabrani from Abu Bakr)**

Various studies in the dataset show that the value framework of sincerity, exemplary, moral wisdom, and divine orientation determines the effectiveness of teachers in forming a healthy and meaningful learning culture. These findings also reinforce the human identity as homo educandum, beings who have a natural tendency to learn, educate, and be agents of change (Thayyibi & Ratnasari, 2022: 51-52). The results of the synthesis show that initiator teachers have three core characteristics:

- a) Pedagogical creativity, especially through the use of varied methods, contextual learning, and authentic activity design.
- b) Technology Integration, which places them in the category of *Digital Adapters* within the framework of the Teacher Identity Continuum (TIC) (El-Soussi, 2025: 7-8).
- c) Spiritual Exemplarity, as emphasized by Al-Ghazali that true teachers educate with sincerity, piety, and moral responsibility (Sajid Ullah Sheikh & Muhammad Abid Ali, 2019: 114-115)

Some important studies Henriksen et al. (2017: 140) & Thoifuri, (2013: iii) state that initiator teachers are professional figures who are able to connect theory with social reality, as well as lead learners to think critically and read social phenomena reflectively.

3. Five Dominant Themes of Islamic

After synthesizing data from 59 studies, five innovation themes were found that consistently strengthened the competence of initiating teachers. These themes were derived from initial coding, categorization, and cross-study consolidation.

Table 2. Five Themes of Islamic Education Innovation Patterns Synthesized

No	Themes and Innovations	Description of Key Findings	Forms of Innovation Identified in Studies
1	Integrative Islamic Learning	This theme appears predominantly in various studies that emphasize the need to unify cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual aspects in a single learning design.	Integration of science-religion, blended learning with Islamic nuances, and a holistic learning model based on revelation values.
2	Internalization of Qur'an-Hadith Values	Many studies place the internalization of Islamic values as the core of learning to form the moral and ethical awareness of students.	Thematic interpretation approach, the practice of living hadith, the integration of monotheistic values in assignments, projects, and class discussions.
3	Character-Based Pedagogy	Studies emphasize that Islamic education places character formation as the main goal through habituation and example of teachers.	Habituation of manners, moral literacy, and strengthening Islamic school culture.
4	Contextual Learning and Project-Based Learning	Many findings show that Islamic learning must be relevant to the social context so that students are able to relate concepts to reality.	Social projects, mini-research, observation of religious and environmental phenomena, context-based problem-solving.
5	Islamic Technology Approach	Studies show an increase in the use of technology as a means of strengthening Islamic digital learning and literacy.	The use of Islamic LMS, digital Qur'an applications, value-oriented virtual classes, and religious interactive media.

The results of this synthesis show that integrative Islamic learning, internalization of Qur'an-Hadith values, character-based pedagogy, and contextual and project-based learning are innovative elements that support teachers to design holistic, value-oriented, and relevant learning to the needs of the times. The visualization of the table confirms that the emerging innovation patterns not only enrich pedagogical strategies, but also directly answer research questions about how Islamic educational innovations strengthen the competence of initiating teachers.

Based on the literature analysis, the Contextual Learning and Project-Based Learning method is the most frequently studied and dominant method used by PAI teachers. Both methods allow students to relate Islamic values to real situations. Then followed by the Internalization of Qur'an-Hadith Values by practicing the principles of the Qur'an and

Islamic Education Innovation as a Strategic Foundation in the Development of Initiator Teacher Competency Hadith, and developing critical and reflective thinking skills (E. Adams, 2017: 153). An important finding of this pattern is that PAI learning innovations are increasingly moving towards methods that emphasize students' active involvement and a more contextual appreciation of religious values.

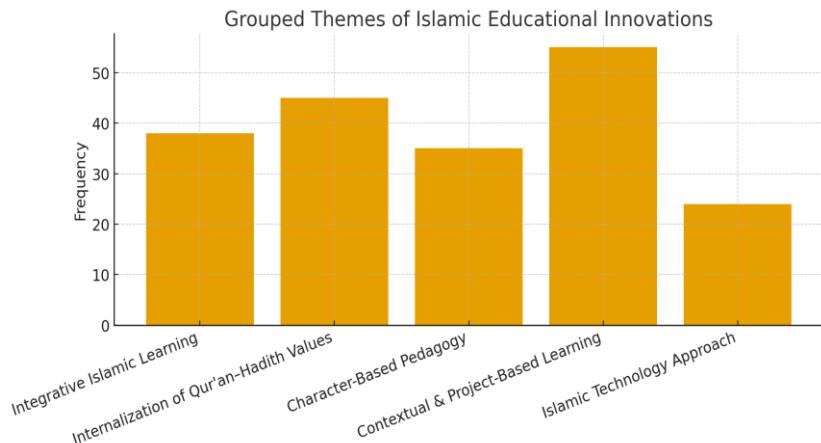


Figure 2. Frequency of Key Themes in Islamic Educational Innovations Across 59 Studies

4. The Contribution of Islamic Innovation to the Competence of Initiator Teachers

A comparative synthesis of 59 studies shows that Islamic educational innovation makes a significant contribution to the five core dimensions of initiating teacher competencies:

- Cognitive Competence, innovations such as integrative and inquiry-based learning improve teachers' ability to design materials that encourage high-level reasoning (HOTS), critical literacy, and independent thinking. It also enables teachers to shift the paradigm from a teacher-centered model to a student centered model that is more in line with the demands of modern learning (Dong et al., 2019: 2; Woods & Copur-Gencturk, 2024: 11).
- Affective Competence and Attitude, The internalization of Qur'an-Hadith values facilitates the formation of attitudes, such as ethical awareness, sense of responsibility, discipline, empathy, and scientific honesty. Initiating teachers utilize a reflective approach to ensure that learners not only understand concepts, but also build a strong moral disposition (van der Steen et al., 2022: 3; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2024: 1421–1422).
- Emotional–Spiritual Balance, The findings of the study show that students who are guided by initiating teachers experience improved ability to regulate emotions, intrinsic motivation, and spiritual awareness Ampadu et al. (2024: 4). The principles of *ijad* (awareness of divine origin) and *imdad* (gratitude as spiritual strength) are

important frameworks that foster psychological resilience and inner shade of students.

- d) Skill Competencies (Actional/Skills), Learning innovation strengthens perception skills, connecting knowledge, mastery of methodology, guidance responses, and teachers' adaptability to the diversity of student characteristics (Weldesilassie et al., 2025: 23). Initiating teachers consistently demonstrate proficiency in designing relevant learning strategies, media, and evaluations (Rincon-Flores et al., 2024: 5–6).
- e) Technology Adaptation, the technology-based approach to Islamic education enables teachers to utilize Learning Management Systems (LMS), Qur'anic learning applications, digital discussion platforms, and artificial intelligence to expand acces, enrich interactions, and increase learning effectiveness.

Based on the overall findings, the research question "How does Islamic educational innovation strengthen the competence of initiation teachers?" was answered comprehensively as follows: Islamic educational innovation strengthens the competence of initiation teachers through the integration of revelation-based spiritual-ethical values with modern pedagogical practices, so that teachers are able to become transformational agents who are adaptive, creative, and responsive to moral, digital, and global challenges. The integration between the value of revelation and methodological innovation results in competencies that are not only technical, but also philosophical and spiritual. The initiator teacher is not only the implementer of the curriculum, but a learning leader (tarbiyah-oriented leadership) who brings together intellectual skills, morality, spirituality, and technological proficiency

B. Discussion

The results of this study show that the research goal of exploring Islamic educational innovations has been achieved comprehensively and systematically. Based on the synthesis of 59 eligible studies analyzed through the PRISMA procedure, Islamic education cannot be understood solely as a mechanism for knowledge transfer. Islamic education is an intellectual-spiritual engineering that is structured to actualize human potential in its entirety, both from cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual aspects (Aminullah Poya & Habiburrahman Rizapoor, 2023: 610). These findings are in line with the Holistic Islamic Education Model (HIEM), which places revelation as the normative center and paradigmatic foundation, while the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual dimensions function as integral instruments to shape human beings. Within this framework, learners not only gain knowledge, but also experience behavioral, moral, and spiritual transformations, so that Islamic learning is holistic and transformative (Gunawan et al., 2023: 984–985).

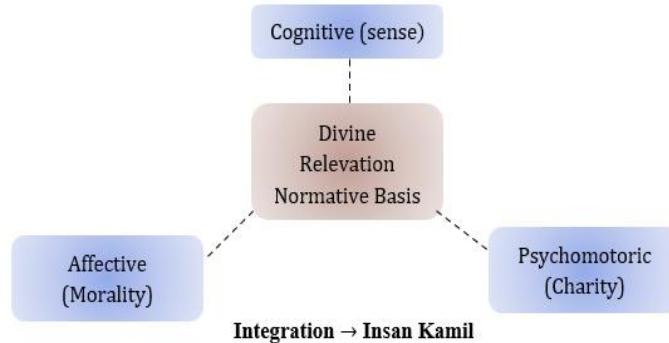


Figure 3. Holistic Islamic Education Model (HIEM)

Analysis within the framework of the Holistic Islamic Education Model (HIEM) shows that students' mental activities ranging from understanding, interpreting, to forming beliefs become the foundation for the formation of new cognitive structures that are in harmony with spiritual, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Thus, learning is not only the accumulation of knowledge, but also an integrative effort to build mature behavior, thinking, and decision-making based on Islamic values.

1. Achievement of Research Objectives in Exploring Islamic Education Innovation

The first research question emphasizes whether the research objectives are achieved in exploring Islamic educational innovations. The results of this study confirm that this goal has been achieved comprehensively. Literature analysis shows that Islamic educational innovation is not limited to the innovation of learning methods alone, but also includes the strengthening of the values of revelation, character building, and the integration of technology. Initiator teachers emerge as a tangible manifestation of Islamic education, which plays the role not only of delivering material, but of educators who are sensitive to the cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual conditions of learners (Rincon-Flores et al., 2024: 2).

The HIEM framework helps to understand how the Islamic learning process works in an integrative manner. In this model, the mental activity of the learner, from comprehension, interpretation, to the formation of beliefs (al-yaqin, 'ain al-yaqin, haqq al-yaqin):

First, the science of al-yaqin, which is a person's belief in something that is only based on science. In other words, the belief that is still in the mind or idea, as in the Qur'an Surah At-Takatsur Verse 5:

الْيَقِينُ عِلْمٌ تَعْلَمُونَ لَوْ كَلَّ

Do not be so, if you know with sure knowledge

Second, 'ainul yaqin, which is believing something based on the vision of the five senses or based on direct observation, in the Qur'an Surah At-Takatsur Verse 7:

الْيَقِينُ عَيْنَ لَتَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ

And indeed you will indeed see it with 'ainul yaqin

Third, *haqqul al-yaqqin*, which is a person's belief in something based on truth, says Allah in the Qur'an Surah Al-Waqiah Verse 95:

الْيَقِينُ حَقٌّ لَهُوَ هَذَا إِنَّ

True belief (this is mentioned) is a true

Al-yaqin: knowledge gained through reason or theory, 'Ain al-yaqin: knowledge through direct experience or observation, Haqq al-yaqin: knowledge that yields true conviction through transformative practice and experience. This is the foundation for the formation of cognitive structures that are in harmony with the spiritual and affective dimensions (Sarafraz et al., 2025: 96). Thus, Islamic learning does not stop at the accumulation of knowledge, but is an integrative process to build critical thinking skills, moral maturity, and practical skills based on the values of revelation.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's view that emphasizes the importance of developing the spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions of students emphasizes that Islamic education must lead to the formation of kamil people. In this context, the initiating teacher not only teaches, but also guides students to experience internal transformation, develop moral awareness, discipline, learning motivation, and adherence to the values of revelation (Md Isa et al., 2022: 53; Sajid Ullah Sheikh & Muhammad Abid Ali, 2019: 111). Based on these findings, the research succeeded in answering the first question, namely the goal of exploring Islamic educational innovations was achieved by mapping how Islamic educational innovations are applied to form the competence of initiating teachers and their impact on student development.

2. Islamic Education Innovation and The Most Dominant Method Used by PAI Teachers

The second research question emphasizes innovations found through eligible literature and the most dominant methods used by PAI teachers. Based on a synthesis of 59 studies, this study found five themes of Islamic education innovation that consistently strengthen the competence of initiating teachers:

- Integrative Islamic Learning, this theme emphasizes the unification of religious science and science as well as the integration of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual dimensions in one learning design. Teachers design strategies that allow students to understand the concepts of religion and science in an integrated manner, so that higher order thinking skills and spiritual understanding develop together (Habibatul Imamah, 2025: 30).

- b) Internalization of Qur'an-Hadith Values, many studies show that the internalization of the values of revelation is the core of Islamic learning. The practice of Qur'an and Hadith values is applied through projects, discussions, reflections, and real activities in the school and community environment. This strategy fosters students' moral, ethical, and spiritual awareness consistently (Aderibigbe et al., 2023: 3; Rohmatulloh et al., 2023: 3).
- c) Character-Based Pedagogy, character formation through moral habituation and teacher example is the center of innovation. The initiating teacher shows concern for the attitudes, behaviors, and morals of students, so that learning not only produces intellectual intelligence, but also the formation of ethics and religious awareness (Birhan et al., 2021: 5).
- d) Contextual and Project-Based Learning, learning is associated with social, environmental, and real-life phenomena of learners. This method facilitates students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills through projects or mini-research that are relevant to daily life (Markula & Aksela, 2022: 1–2; Zhao & Wang, 2022: 3–4).
- e) The Islamic Technology Approach, technological innovation is used to strengthen the integration of the value of revelation with 21st century competence. LMS, Qur'anic digital applications, and interactive media support teachers as digital adapters, expand access, interaction, and learning effectiveness, as well as become a companion means of character and moral formation (Luqmi et al., 2020: 275).

A literature review in a frequency analysis diagram of 59 studies related to five themes of Islamic learning innovation shows that Project-Based Learning and Contextual Learning are the most studied approaches, reflecting the trend towards methods that link Islamic values to real-world situations. This pattern confirms a shift towards more active and meaningful learning. Meanwhile, the Internalization of Qur'an-Hadith Values remains an important focus in research, because it plays a role in fostering spiritual understanding as well as the ability to think critically and reflectively in students. This method shows high effectiveness in shaping students' cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual competencies. The Islamic technology approach also supports the application of this method by increasing flexibility, interactivity, and student engagement.

The initiator teacher plays a key role in ensuring that learners not only understand the theory, but also apply and internalize the values, resulting in a thorough understanding and mature belief. Thus, the innovations found are not only methodological, but also holistic and transformative, strengthening the role of teachers as educational agents that integrate revelation, morality, modern pedagogy, and technology (Succarie, 2024: 1–2). Furthermore, initiator teachers function as learning risk managers, optimize students' potential, and facilitate the development of talents

systematically. They utilize both formal and informal environments to develop students' creativity and social abilities (Rashid et al., 2025: 636–639; Subotnik et al., 2019: 1–2). Parental support is also integrated into learning strategies to increase motivation to learn outside of school (Ventista & Brown, 2023: 3). This process shows that initiating teachers are not only running the curriculum, but also driving the transformation of Islamic education that is effective, adaptive, and relevant to the needs of the 21st century. From this explanation, this study presents a conceptual analysis that emphasizes the roles of the initiating teacher in facilitating student optimization.

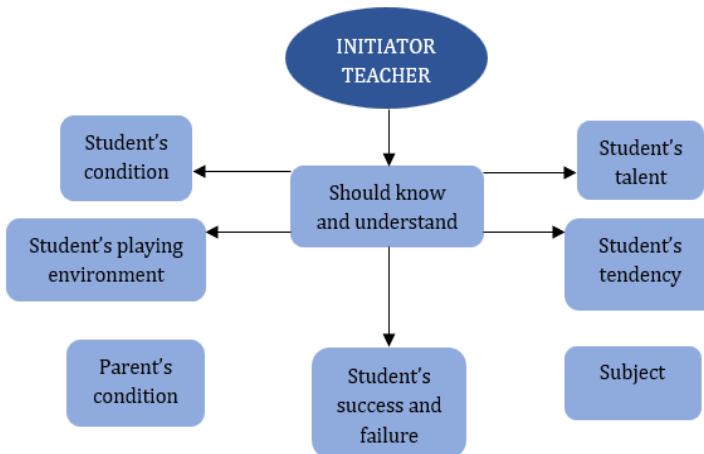


Figure 4. The Role of Initiator Teacher

Overall, this study confirms that Islamic educational innovation strengthens the competence of initiating teachers through the integration of revelation values, modern pedagogical practices, and technology. Initiator teachers become educators who are adaptive, creative, and able to guide students to mature intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and morally. These findings clearly answer both research questions: First, the goal of exploring Islamic educational innovations has been achieved through the analysis of the literature and the HIEM framework. Second, Islamic education innovations and the most dominant methods used by PAI teachers have been identified, as well as showing the contribution of these innovations to strengthening the competence of initiating teachers as a whole.

IV. Conclusion

This study concludes that Islamic educational innovation has an important and transformative role in strengthening the competence of initiating teachers in the context of modern learning. Through a systematic literature review with the PRISMA framework, five main themes of innovation were found: integrative Islamic learning, internalization of Qur'an-Hadith values, character-based pedagogy, contextual and project-based learning, and the integration of technology in Islamic education. This overall innovation

Islamic Education Innovation as a Strategic Foundation in the Development of Initiator Teacher Competency not only resulted in new teaching techniques, but formed a holistic pedagogical framework that combines revelation, morality, modern pedagogy, and digital literacy.

The initiator teacher emerges as a key actor who ensures that students not only understand theoretical concepts, but also are able to internalize, experience, and practice Islamic values in real life. As educators, motivators, role models, and learning designers, initiator teachers play the functions of mu'allim, murabbi, and uswah hasanah. The integration of Qur'anic values, for example as described in QS. Luqman strengthens the spiritual and ethical dimensions in the learning process, so that students reach a level of understanding ranging from 'ilm al-yaqin to haqq al-yaqin.

Innovations such as Project-Based Learning and contextual learning have been proven to improve students' critical thinking, creativity, and moral reasoning skills. Meanwhile, technology integration encourages teachers to become "digital adapters" who are able to bridge spiritual values with modern learning tools. These approaches contribute to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of learners in a balanced manner, making learning more relevant and meaningful.

Overall, the research findings show that Islamic education innovation is holistic, dynamic, and transformative. These innovations strengthen the role of initiator teachers as educational agents who lead the learning process, cultivate character, and align spiritual values with the demands of 21st century education. These findings are an important basis for curriculum development, teacher training, and Islamic education policies in the future.

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