



Contextualizing Islamic Education in the Digital Era: An Analysis of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Approach

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Received: 10-07-2026

Revised: 20-08-2026

Accepted: 26-09-2026

KEYWORDS

Islamic Education; Digital Era; Fazlur Rahman; Double Movement; Educational Reform.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the contextualization of Islamic education in the digital era through an analytical review of Fazlur Rahman's double movement approach. The rapid development of digital technology has created new opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning, while simultaneously presenting challenges such as digital literacy gaps, the circulation of unverified religious information, and the declining emphasis on moral and spiritual values in educational practice. This study employs a library research design supported by content analysis to synthesize scholarly works related to educational reform and Rahman's hermeneutical framework. The findings indicate that Rahman's concept of integrating religious and scientific knowledge provides a strong theoretical foundation for developing an adaptive and value-oriented model of Islamic education. His double movement method—which combines historical contextualization of Qur'anic texts with their reinterpretation in contemporary socio-technological settings—offers a relevant pathway for reconstructing curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and ethical orientations in digital-age education. The study concludes that meaningful reform in Islamic education requires more than technological adoption; it necessitates epistemological reconstruction and pedagogical renewal grounded in Qur'anic values. Accordingly, Rahman's framework presents a promising conceptual foundation for shaping Islamic education that is moderate, critical, creative, and responsive to the demands of the digital era.

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Introduction

Islamic education faces increasingly complex dynamics in the digital era, a period characterized by rapid technological advancement, shifts in learning culture, and changing paradigms in accessing and managing information (Mufidah Hayati et al., 2023). In this context, Islamic education can no longer rely on traditional instructional patterns that are predominantly textual, lecture-based, or teacher-centered (Assalihee et al., 2024). Instead, it is required to be more adaptive, open, and responsive to technological developments in order to equip Muslim learners with spiritual, moral, intellectual, and digital competencies that align with the demands of contemporary society (Nur Iffah Qoyyumillah et al., 2025). The integration of digital technology within Islamic education offers opportunities to broaden access to diverse learning resources and to promote more interactive, collaborative, and experiential learning approaches. Through the use of digital platforms, learners are able to access Islamic learning materials more widely and flexibly, thereby strengthening the internalization of Islamic values in their daily lives.

Nevertheless, the utilization of digital technology also presents significant challenges. On the one hand, easy access to information enables learners to develop broader scientific insight; on the other hand, the overwhelming flow of digital content carries risks such as the spread of unverified, biased, or ideologically extreme religious material (Puspa & Aripin, 2025). These challenges become even more apparent given that disparities in technological access remain a serious issue in ensuring equitable Islamic education, particularly in regions with limited infrastructure (Hamzah & Mudlofir, 2025). This situation necessitates stronger digital literacy among educators and learners, the development of adaptive curriculum policies, and the renewal of instructional strategies that can harmoniously integrate Islamic

values with digital competencies.

In addressing these complex challenges, the thought of Fazlur Rahman as a neo-modernist scholar offers a relevant and strategic conceptual framework. Rahman is widely recognized for his critique of the dichotomy between religious sciences and secular sciences, a long-standing issue within the Islamic education system (Fahmi, 2016). For him, this dualism hinders the intellectual and social progress of Muslim communities in responding to the demands of the modern age. Rahman emphasizes that Islam, in essence, does not acknowledge a separation of value between religious knowledge and modern scientific disciplines, as both contribute to shaping individuals who are faithful, intellectually capable, and morally upright (Vachruddin, 2025). From Rahman's perspective, educational reform must be pursued through curriculum reconstruction that integrates Islamic moral and spiritual principles with developments in modern science and technology (Luthfiyah & Ulvi Na'imah, 2024). This vision aligns with contemporary needs in Islamic education, which require comprehensive, contextualized, and problem-solving-oriented knowledge integration.

Rahman's thought becomes increasingly significant in the context of the digital era, as his approach provides a methodological foundation for interpreting Islamic texts in a more relevant manner through the double movement method (Mastura et al., 2024). This method emphasizes the need to first return to the historical context in which a Qur'anic verse was revealed (the first movement), and then to carry the verse's universal values into the realities of contemporary society (the second movement) (Umair & Said, 2023). This conceptual framework directly addresses one of the central challenges faced by Islamic education in the digital era: how to preserve the authenticity of Islamic teachings while ensuring their relevance amid rapid technological advancement and modern societal dynamics. Thus, the application of the double movement method serves not only as a hermeneutical tool for understanding texts but also as a paradigm for reforming Islamic education grounded in rationality, ethics, and social relevance.

A range of studies on Fazlur Rahman's thought indicates that one of the fundamental problems in Islamic education lies in the persistent dichotomy between religious knowledge and modern sciences (Kurniyat, 2018). This separation not only creates curricular fragmentation but also weakens the capacity of Islamic educational institutions to produce graduates who embody an integrated balance between modern intellectual competence and moral-spiritual sensitivity (Humairah et al., 2024). Such a phenomenon is still evident in many institutions that sharply divide religious subjects from contemporary disciplines, resulting in learning processes that operate without a coherent epistemological vision. Numerous studies emphasize the need for reconstruction through curriculum harmonization, strengthening teacher capacity, and aligning educational orientations so that Islamic education can accommodate the advancement of modern scientific knowledge without

compromising the core values of Islamic teachings.

Other studies position Fazlur Rahman's neo-modernist approach as a strategic foundation for the modernization of Islamic education (Dafiki, 2022). Rahman's thought is understood as centering on the integration of Islamic intellectual tradition with the findings of modern science, emphasizing the importance of collective awareness among Muslims regarding the value of knowledge. The modernization he proposes encompasses three key dimensions: reconstructing epistemological consciousness about the role of knowledge as the basis of progress, eliminating educational dualism by unifying religious studies and modern sciences, and elevating language and scholarly communication as essential instruments for cultivating progressive thinking. A number of studies indicate that these principles have been adopted in various Islamic educational institutions, particularly within learning models that combine religious studies with contemporary knowledge as a complementary and coherent whole.

Subsequent studies highlight Rahman's orientation toward the renewal of Islamic education, which includes efforts to Islamize modern education, rationalize traditional curricula that are no longer effective, and integrate various scientific disciplines to prevent the emergence of a split personality (Hamsah & Nurchamidah, 2019). This approach aims to cultivate an integral human being—an individual capable of harmonizing Islamic moral values with critical and creative intellectual capacities. This perspective becomes increasingly relevant in the digital era, where the rapid flow of global information may lead to value disorientation if not supported by a strong ethical and epistemological educational framework. Consequently, Islamic education is required to adopt curricula and learning strategies that emphasize not only the transmission of knowledge but also the formation of character and integrative patterns of thinking.

From these various perspectives, it becomes evident that Fazlur Rahman's double movement approach offers a vital methodological framework for reforming Islamic education in the digital era. This method underscores the importance of understanding Islamic texts within their historical context while simultaneously translating their universal values into contemporary social realities. Through this lens, curriculum renewal, instructional strategies, and educational orientations can be developed in a more systematic and contextually relevant manner. The approach opens avenues for Islamic education to become more adaptive to technological advancements, remain firmly rooted in moral-spiritual values, and effectively prepare a generation that is moderate, critical, creative, and digitally competent. This conceptual framework serves as the central foundation of the present article in examining the urgency of contextualizing Islamic education through Rahman's hermeneutical paradigm in the digital age.

Research Methods

This study employs a library research approach, focusing on the identification, close

reading, and critical analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources (Saefullah, 2024). Data were gathered through documentation of various scholarly publications, including books, journal articles, and digital sources that discuss the reform of Islamic education and the contextualization approach proposed by Fazlur Rahman. All materials were selected based on their relevance, accuracy, and contribution to addressing the core issues of the study.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, a technique that emphasizes the identification, categorization, and interpretation of key themes within the examined sources. The analytical process consisted of several systematic steps: (1) collecting and organizing the data; (2) grouping information according to the research focus; (3) critically interpreting the content; and (4) drawing conclusions aligned with the objectives of the study. A deductive approach was employed to derive specific insights from broader theoretical frameworks, enabling the analysis to produce a structured and well-reasoned depiction of the issues under investigation.

This approach enables an in-depth exploration of key issues in the reform of Islamic education, particularly those related to the need for integrating Islamic values with developments in digital technology. Through a conceptual analysis of Fazlur Rahman's ideas, this study positions the double movement method as a framework for reinterpreting the principles of Islamic education in alignment with contemporary social and technological contexts. Accordingly, the research method employed provides a strong analytical foundation for assessing the relevance, direction of renewal, and practical implications of Islamic education in the digital era.

Results and Discussion

The Concept of Islamic Education from the Perspective of Fazlur Rahman

The analysis of Fazlur Rahman's works and intellectual contributions demonstrates that Islamic education is fundamentally grounded in the principle of integrating religious knowledge with modern sciences (Surya Arfan et al., 2025). Rahman rejects the separation between the two, arguing that such a dichotomy undermines the ability of Muslims to respond effectively to the demands of a changing era. For him, ideal Islamic education must unite spirituality, morality, and intellectuality within a coherent framework. Education, therefore, is not merely the transmission of knowledge but a process of forming individuals who possess moral depth and intellectual competence (Syah Putra, 2024).

These findings align with broader conceptions of Islamic education that emphasize *adab* as the core of the learning process—namely, the integration of scientific understanding, moral development, and the ability to exercise wise judgment (Fatimah & Siswanto, 2024). Within this framework, modern scientific knowledge is not viewed as a threat but as a means to deepen one's comprehension of Islamic values. Accordingly, Islamic education, in Rahman's view, must produce individuals who embody a balanced integration of intellectual capacity, spiritual depth, and moral character.

The analysis also indicates that applying this concept requires the development of an integrative curriculum. Such a curriculum should not be limited to presenting religious subjects but must also incorporate social analysis, scientific knowledge, and the development of essential life skills. Through this approach, Islamic education can equip learners to confront contemporary challenges without losing the value-oriented foundation upon which it is built.

The Challenges of Islamic Education in the Digital Era

The analyzed data indicate that the digital era presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education. Technology provides broad access to learning resources, enables interactive instructional processes, and supports flexible learning (Isti'ana, 2024). However, these conveniences also give rise to issues such as weakened critical thinking skills, exposure to unverified information, and an increasing dependence on technological tools.

The analysis of various publications shows that the digital literacy gap remains one of the major obstacles. Many Islamic educational institutions still lack adequate digital infrastructure, resulting in suboptimal use of technology. Another challenge is the risk of shifting educational orientations toward overly technical approaches that neglect ethical dimensions. In this context, Islamic education must maintain a balance between the utilization of technology and the cultivation of core values such as *adab*, morality, wisdom (*hikmah*), and ethical discernment.

The findings also indicate that the digital era requires a curriculum that goes beyond

academic content, emphasizing the development of critical skills, information literacy, and ethical understanding. Accordingly, the modernization of Islamic education must be carried out comprehensively—not merely through technological adoption, but by aligning Islamic values with digital learning patterns.

Contextualizing Islamic Education through Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Approach

The literature analysis confirms that Fazlur Rahman's double movement method offers an appropriate approach for addressing the challenges faced by Islamic education in the digital era (Afandi & Bagus Cahyadi, 2025). This approach involves two key steps: first, understanding the meaning of a text within the historical context of its revelation; and second, interpreting its universal values to respond to contemporary issues. Within the educational framework, this method guides curriculum development to move beyond textual orientation toward being contextual and solution-oriented in addressing the problems of the present age.

The application of this approach is reflected in curriculum designs that integrate the foundational values of Islam with modern social understanding. A curriculum developed through the double movement does not merely emphasize memorization or dogmatism; rather, it encourages learners to deeply comprehend the Qur'anic moral message and apply it to contemporary issues such as digital ethics, radicalism, religious moderation, technological competence, and global dynamics. (Iwani et al., 2024).

Rahman's approach also creates space for the use of technology as a medium for internalizing values. Technology functions not merely as a supporting tool but as a new sphere through which Islamic values can be strengthened—whether through digital simulations, online learning, Islamic ethics applications, or platforms that cultivate critical religious literacy (Ghani, 2025). Thus, the double movement serves not only as a hermeneutical method but also as a pedagogical paradigm that is highly relevant to the digital era.

Conclusion

This study affirms that Islamic education in the digital era requires an integrative, adaptive, and value-oriented paradigm. The literature-based analysis demonstrates that Fazlur Rahman's thought offers a comprehensive conceptual framework for bridging Islamic teachings with the demands of technological advancement. The principles of integrating religious and modern knowledge, emphasizing morality as the foundation of education, and highlighting rationality and social relevance stand as essential pillars in the reform of Islamic education.

The double movement method provides a robust methodological basis for contextualizing Qur'anic teachings so that they align with the dynamics of the digital era. This approach

enables Islamic education to develop curricula and learning strategies that are more responsive to the challenges of modernity while preserving the spiritual values that constitute its core identity.

Digital-era challenges—such as the digital literacy gap, the risks of religious misinformation, and shifting learning patterns—can be addressed through curriculum modernization, enhanced teacher capacity, and the critical and value-oriented use of technology. By integrating Rahman’s principles into educational practice, Islamic educational institutions can prepare a generation of Muslims who are moderate, critical, creative, and endowed with strong moral character.

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