



## Transformation of adaptive and contextual Islamic curriculum from Abdullah Saeed's education perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Islamic education faces various challenges amid global changes that demand a more relevant and adaptive approach. Abdullah Saeed proposes a contextual ijtihad strategy to improve the adaptability and relevance of Islamic education. This article aims to explore Abdullah Saeed's thoughts on Islamic education, particularly in the context of creating a contextualized and flexible curriculum. This research examines the fundamental concepts of Saeed's philosophy and their application to the development of an Islamic curriculum through a literature study approach. The research method employed is a literature review, which involves reviewing relevant journals, articles, books, and official documents. The conclusion of this study reveals that Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach facilitates Islamic education that is more adaptable and relevant to contemporary life. The curriculum based on this approach not only provides a normative understanding but also encourages students to apply Islamic principles critically within their socio-cultural context. This is expected to produce a generation that is responsive to social change and make Islamic education relevant and constructive for modern society.

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### ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam menghadapi berbagai tantangan di tengah perubahan global yang menuntut pendekatan yang lebih relevan dan adaptif. Abdullah Saeed mengajukan strategi ijtihad kontekstual untuk meningkatkan kemampuan adaptasi dan relevansi pendidikan Islam. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pemikiran Abdullah Saeed dalam konteks pendidikan Islam, khususnya yang berkaitan dengan pembuatan kurikulum yang kontekstual dan fleksibel. Penelitian ini melihat ide-ide dasar filosofi Saeed dan bagaimana hubungannya dengan penciptaan kurikulum Islam dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi literatur. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan mengkaji jurnal, artikel, buku, dan dokumen resmi yang relevan. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan kontekstual Abdullah Saeed memungkinkan pendidikan Islam yang lebih adaptif dan relevan dengan kehidupan modern. Kurikulum yang didasarkan pada pendekatan ini tidak hanya memberikan pemahaman normatif tetapi juga mendorong siswa untuk menerapkan prinsip-prinsip Islam secara kritis sesuai dengan konteks sosial-budaya. Hal ini diharapkan dapat menghasilkan generasi yang tanggap terhadap perubahan sosial dan menjadikan pendidikan Islam relevan dan konstruktif bagi masyarakat modern.

**Kata Kunci:** Abdullah Saeed; pendidikan Islam; rekonstruksi pemikiran

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in the contemporary era faces a variety of significant challenges in modern times that require adjustment and transformation. Instilling strong religious principles in students is a key responsibility of Islamic education (Marjuni, 2020). However, the education system should also equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to address social, cultural, and economic challenges in the modern world. In this context, Abdullah Saeed and Ali Akbar highlight the importance of contextual analysis in understanding Qur'anic texts. They believe that textual or literal interpretation is often at odds with contextualization, and that aspects of the text relevant to contemporary realities enable Muslims to engage with the teachings of the Qur'an without undermining its meaning. Emphasis on Qur'ānic teachings from a fresh perspective and with a strong focus on present-day realities. Such an approach to interpreting verses can yield different results from a textualist or literalist approach (Saeed & Akbar, 2021).

On the other hand, traditional Islamic education curricula are often based on methods that overlook historical context. Thus, it is inflexible and less adaptable to the demands of contemporary life. In his book *Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century*, Saeed gives an example of how Umar bin al-Khattab interpreted the Qur'an by highlighting the social and economic changes that occurred in the modern era. This demonstrates that, despite quotations from the Qur'an, the specific analysis requires continuous reflection to remain relevant to the changes that occur over time. While the ideals of Qur'ān remain, the specific application of some of its teachings (especially those related to changing socio-economic and political changes) requires constant reflection. Ideas such as the public interest, the common good, a sense of justice and honesty, and an awareness of changing contexts seem to be at the forefront of Umar's quasi-contextualist thinking as he applies Qur'ānic guidance (Hatta, 2023). Islamic education today must emphasize a transformative approach, rather than a normative one. A curriculum that fails to consider social dynamics keeps students away from the applicable Islamic values.

Abdullah Saeed's hermeneutic approach demonstrates that a contextual understanding of religious texts enables the development of educational strategies that address the complexities of modern times. This finding reinforces the urgency of integrating contextual principles into curriculum design to produce learners who think critically, are tolerant, and reflective of social reality. Therefore, many graduates of Islamic schools feel unprepared to deal with the intricacies of the contemporary world or struggle to make connections between their religious education and the realities of everyday life (Rahmawati & Supriyanto, 2023). Globalization, social change, and advances in science and technology are significantly changing people's life patterns. Islamic education in this context requires change, as shown by Abdullah Saeed's book entitled *"Towards Religious Tolerance Through Change in Islamic Education"* which explains how reformed Indonesian IAINs, particularly in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, have successfully integrated sharia with modern values through progressive curriculum development. This strategy emphasizes the importance of critical thinking, reflection, and creativity in a supportive learning environment, along with positive guidance, to develop an adaptive and contextual Islamic education system. This integration must be

based on an understanding of social change, religious tolerance, and its relationship with national development (Malik & Hindi, 2021).

Thus, modern Islamic education can be described through a methodology that combines the basic principles of Islam that are relevant to modern times, as reflected in the need to develop a flexible and contextual Islamic education system, which not only emphasizes the normative aspects of religious teachings, but also comprehensively considers the social, cultural and intellectual dynamics of contemporary society. This educational model encourages the integration of spirituality and rationality, thereby forming individuals with an Islamic character while also being adaptive to global changes (Isnaniah, 2025). In this framework, the curriculum must be designed with a multidisciplinary approach, intercultural dialogue, and the principle of inclusiveness, so that Islamic values are not reduced to mere dogma but rather become a source of ethics and motivation in building a civilized and just society. This approach requires a clear educational vision, consistency in implementation, and a moral commitment from all elements of education to remain open to criticism and evaluation, thereby maintaining the relevance of Islamic teachings in modern life without compromising the essence of their universal values.

Abdullah Saeed, a contemporary Muslim thinker, proposes a contextual *ijtihad* approach, which involves the application and interpretation of Islamic teachings in consideration of the social and cultural environment (La Harisi et al., 2024). This approach holds great promise for bridging the gap between Islamic principles and contemporary demands, particularly in the field of education. Abdullah Saeed argues that to meet the demands of students in understanding and applying Islamic beliefs appropriately, the Islamic education curriculum must be organized adaptively and contextually (Ilham et al., 2023). By employing this method, Islamic education is expected to produce individuals who are not only devout but also adaptable to the challenges and changes of the modern world. However, Islamic education reform faces several challenges, including the lack of a universally acceptable definition of Islamic education. The long history and diversity of Islamic education models are considered even more complex. On September 11, some Western commentators criticized the concept of Islamic education with negative statements, even calling it the cause of radicalism. In his book, Abdullah Saeed discusses how Islamic education developed and survived during the premodern era, highlighting the increasingly heated debate over modern reforms in response to the aforementioned global crisis (Nuraini et al., 2024).

However, the application of this concept in the Islamic education curriculum still faces many obstacles, such as resistance from those who maintain traditional teaching methods and the lack of practical guidelines for integrating contextual concepts in the curriculum (Hajri, 2023), the need for in-depth studies to incorporate Abdullah Saeed's contextual ideas into a flexible and responsive Islamic education curriculum must be thoroughly investigated. In Indonesia, Saeed's ideas are also relevant to the context-based *ijtihad* model, as outlined in neo-modernist writings. In his book *"Ijtihad and Innovation in Neo Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia"*, Saeed discusses how this paradigm serves to reconcile traditional Islamic knowledge with modern Western education. Thanks to the support of figures such as Nurcholish Madjid, a leading neo-Modernist thinker, and Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, this approach is gaining acceptance among the younger generation of Indonesians, although it is still considered problematic by some Muslims (Aminudin, 2021).

In the book *"Islamic Thought: An Introduction,"* Abdullah Saeed elaborates on contemporary Islamic thought, focusing on how to interpret and understand Islamic teachings within modern contexts. Saeed further discusses the theory of adaptation in Islam. Although he has not developed a specific method for shaping Islamic curricula, the article provides guidelines for developing more relevant and contextualized curricula. This research aims to address this issue by implementing an adaptive and contextualized Islamic education curriculum and offering practical advice on how to develop a flexible, modern, and engaging curriculum that takes into account the sociocultural realities of the modern world. Thus, this curriculum transformation is expected to help students develop a religious, adaptive, and relevant character in today's world. This research aims to address this need by examining Abdullah Saeed's thoughts on Islamic education, particularly concerning the contextual concept, and providing recommendations for curriculum updates that are more relevant, flexible, and in line with contemporary needs. This transformation is expected to strengthen the character of students who are both religious and adaptable in contemporary life.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Abdullah Saeed and the Contextual Approach to Qur'anic Interpretation**

Abdullah Saeed and the Contextual Approach to Qur'anic Studies: According to Abdullah Saeed's book entitled *"Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century": A Contextualist Approach*, any interpretation of the Qur'an that is relevant today must consider the social, historical, and cultural context of Islam, both at the time of its creation (macro context 1) and in the present (macro context 2). Saeed presents a contextual analysis that highlights the Qur'ān's ethical and universal principles as compelling and must be reflected upon in light of changing times. This approach does not deny the authority of the text, but encourages the text to be read actively and reflectively by emphasizing transhistorical moral principles and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Hatta, 2023). Saeed's approach has a strong relevance in contemporary Islamic education because it provides space for Qur'anic interpretation that is not confined by a literalistic approach. In an educational environment, this approach encourages teachers and learners to examine Qur'anic values in a more open, transformative, and contextual manner while maintaining scientific integrity and the authority of revelation. This aligns with the principles of academic ethics, which require the use of critical methods, acknowledgment of sources, and reflective thinking when addressing sacred texts, thereby fostering a dynamic and inclusive understanding of Islam in response to the complexities of modern times.

### **Neo-Modernism and Contemporary Ijtihad**

The contributions of Indonesian neo-modernist thinkers such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid highlighted the importance of new ijtihad in responding to the challenges of modernity. They believe that Islamic authorities must pay attention to social changes and advances in knowledge, and they must not be blind to the need for textual conservatism. By creating contextual interpretations that integrate Qur'anic principles with current realities, Abdullah Saeed himself advances the neo-modernist movement. This principle is crucial for

Islamic education today as it encourages students to learn about pluralism, democracy, human rights, and social justice as components of the universal Islamic faith (Bushra & Pakeeza, 2022). In the context of Islamic education, the contribution of neo-modernist thought is an important foundation for curriculum development that is more reflective and relevant to social reality. The application of contemporary *ijtihad* enables the adaptation of subject matter to suit the dynamics of the times without compromising the essence of Islamic values. This is also in line with the principles of scientific ethics that prioritize continuity of thought, respect for novelty, and openness to diverse scientific discourses. Thus, neo-modernism is not only a religious school of thought but also a methodological strategy in Islamic education that is ethical and future-oriented.

### **Tolerance Approach in Islamic Education**

The article also discusses reforms in Islamic educational institutions such as IAIN (formerly UIN). These reforms aim to highlight Islamic scholars and believers who not only uphold traditional values but also embrace contemporary principles such as tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and intellectual integrity. It begins with Abdullah Saeed's essay, which highlights the need for reinterpreting religious texts while balancing the social and political context of the modern world. An Islamic education curriculum, grounded in this paradigm, is essential for creating a community that is inclusive, tolerant, and accepting of others (Malik & Hindi, 2021). The application of the tolerance approach in Islamic education is significant as a form of ethical responsibility of educational institutions to the broader community. In the academic context, this reflects a commitment to human values, human rights, and social peace. In addition, the integration of the principle of tolerance in education is also a manifestation of the humanistic pedagogy principle, which prioritizes respect for the diversity of identities and views. This approach reinforces that Islamic education is not only normative and doctrinal, but also dialogical and empathetic, and is able to form Muslim individuals who respect plurality within a national and global framework.

### **Relevance of Qur'anic Ethics and Contextual Education**

In the book, Abdullah Saeed emphasizes the importance of transhistorical Qur'anic ethical values in the formulation of the Islamic education curriculum. He believes that Islamic education cannot be separated from the development of social ethics and moral awareness of students towards the reality of contemporary life. Therefore, the ideal Islamic curriculum must be oriented towards basic principles such as justice, compassion, and social responsibility enshrined in the Qur'an, and be able to be translated contextually in the dynamics of modern society. This approach supports the transformation of Islamic education from a normative, doctrinal to a humanist and responsive approach, adapting to changing times. This emphasis on Qur'anic ethics provides a solid moral dimension in Islamic education, which not only shapes pure religious understanding but also a socially responsible attitude to life. In the context of education, the integration of these values is a concrete manifestation of the principles of curricular justice and learner character development. This approach aligns with academic principles that emphasize the relevance between learning content and community needs. The development of a contextualized Qur'anic ethics-based



curriculum will strengthen the mission of Islamic education, fostering a generation of faith, knowledge, and global morals while preserving its spiritual roots, so that religiosity becomes the core basis for preparation based on Qur'anic ethical values (Susilana et al., 2020).

### **Integration of Contextualism in Islamic Education Curriculum Reform**

A study by Hosen examines how Abdullah Saeed's concept of contextualizing the interpretation of the Qur'an can serve as a foundation for reformulating the Islamic education curriculum. This study highlights that Saeed's approach enables pedagogical updates that are not only based on the text but also the social and cultural realities of students. It is essential to create a dynamic learning space that is relevant to the development of science and promotes universal values such as tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity. This research also demonstrates that contextualism can bridge the gap between traditional education and the needs of today's global society (Ashfiya, 2024). This integrative idea provides a new direction for the development of an Islamic education system that is more progressive and responsive to global challenges. Curriculum reform based on a contextual approach aligns with the spirit of innovation in education, which demands the courage to reframe the structure of teaching materials, learning strategies, and educational goals. From the perspective of academic ethics, this approach not only upholds text-based science but also takes into account human values and relevant local wisdom. Thus, Islamic education can serve as a medium of social transformation that is both inclusive and contributory in facing a changing world.

### **METHODS**

This research employs the literature review method, which aims to produce an analysis of available data and an explanation of findings, thereby serving as a reference for preparing a structured and in-depth research study related to the problem under investigation. The author collected data from various sources, including journals, articles, and book references, to build a strong theoretical foundation for the discussion. This research employs a systematic literature review method to collect, analyze, and synthesize various journals in the field of sociology. The results are summarized in the form of conclusions that are examined in depth using a detailed approach, resulting in final findings that are relevant and in line with the research objectives (Ardana et al., 2025). The research process was divided into several stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Sastypratiwi & Nyoto, 2020).

In the identification stage, the author conducted an initial search for articles from various online scientific databases using relevant keywords according to research topics in the field of sociology, with a publication period between 2020 and 2025. Furthermore, the screening stage involved evaluating titles and abstracts to eliminate articles that did not meet the topic or context criteria. At the eligibility stage, articles that pass the initial selection are thoroughly reviewed to ensure their scientific quality, especially by selecting only articles that have passed the peer-review process. The final stage, inclusion, involves selecting articles that are genuinely relevant and meet academic eligibility standards for further analysis. This entire process was conducted following the principles of scientific ethics, including avoiding

plagiarism, maintaining objectivity, and upholding transparency in reporting the review's results.

**Table 1.** The Research Process

Research Phase	Activity Description
Identification	Searching for articles from online databases using relevant keywords and spanning the years 2020-2025.
Screening	Removing duplicate articles and assessing suitability based on title and abstract.
Eligibility	Reviewed the full content of the article, evaluated the methodology, and ensured topical relevance.
Inclusion	Selected relevant and quality final articles for further analysis.

*Source: Research Documentation, 2025*

In maintaining academic integrity and scientific ethics, the entire process was carried out by avoiding plagiarism, upholding the validity of sources, and ensuring transparency in reporting findings. To clarify the systematic steps taken in this research, the following research flow chart is presented in **Table 1**. The period of the journal search was explicitly set to journal publications between 2020 and 2025. The search was conducted based on the index generated from the keywords used. This systematic review was limited to research presented in the form of articles, which were peer-reviewed and published. In managing articles obtained from online databases, the author utilized the Mendeley tool.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Background: Analyzing Islamic Education Transformation & Abdullah Saeed's Perspective**

#### ***Transformation of Islamic Education***

Islamic education, as a tool to civilize Islam in society, has a flexible nature that allows for the development of human life ideals throughout the ages (Ilham et al., 2023). Such a character without eliminating the underlying value principles. Islamic education can accommodate the demands of human life at various times, including those in the fields of science and technology. Specifically related to the demands of science and technology development, Islamic education is directed and controlled so that its fundamental values, derived from faith and piety in God, can function in the lives of people who create and use technology.

His faith and piety animate the science and technology he creates, so that its utilization is directed at creating prosperity for human life, not destroying it.

رُوِيَ عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "إِذَا أَحْسَنَ الرَّجُلُ تَرْبِيَةَ عَبْدِهِ، وَعَلَّمَهُ تَعْلِيمًا حَسَنًا، ثُمَّ أَعْتَقَهُ وَتَزَوَّجَهُ، فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَإِذَا آمَنَ بِعِيسَى وَآمَنَ بِي، فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَإِذَا خَافَ الْعَبْدُ رَبَّهُ وَأَطَاعَ سَيِّدَهُ، فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ

*"Narrated to me Abu Darda' from my father Musa al-Ash'ariy ra said: The Messenger of Allah said: "If a man educates his servant well and teaches him well, then releases him and marries him, then he two rewards, and if he believes in Jesus and believes in me, he will have two rewards, and if a slave fears his Lord and obeys his master, So for him two rewards,"*

The hadith above is in line with the objectives of Islamic education, as described by Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamaly, which states that the purpose of Islamic education is to raise awareness of humanity itself and the Islamic social system. Attitude and sense of social responsibility to the experience of creation, as well as awareness of developing and managing nature for the benefit and welfare of mankind (Astuti et al., 2023). What is more important is the development of knowledge of Allah, the creator of the universe, through worshiping Him by obeying His commands and staying away from prohibitions. As a contemporary Muslim scholar, Abdullah Saeed offers contextual ijtihad, which is the interpretation and application of Islamic teachings while balancing the social and cultural environment (La Harisi et al., 2024). This research examines the tension between Islamic principles and modern ideas, particularly in the field of education.

According to Abdullah Saeed, the Islamic education curriculum should be structured in a flexible and contextualized manner to support students' efforts to understand and apply Islamic principles effectively (Ilham et al., 2023). According to this theory, Islamic education should be able to produce individuals who are both religious and adaptable to changing circumstances. Islamic education serves as a tool to spread Islam throughout society with a flexible attitude towards the progress of humanity throughout history. This flexibility adheres to the essential principles of Islam, thus allowing education to accommodate students in various fields, including knowledge and technology. In this process, faith and piety become the soul that contributes to the advancement of knowledge and technology, influencing its usefulness for human welfare rather than its destruction (Anggini et al., 2022). This is following the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, who stated that a person who is well educated and guided has significant value in the sight of Allah.

The purpose of Islamic education is to foster human dignity and social sensitivity in a way that contributes to the well-being of all people. This highlights the need to develop knowledge that is based on worshiping Allah by understanding His will and respecting His laws. However, as stated in the book *"Islamic Religious Education and the Debate on Its Reform"*, one of the most significant challenges in reforming Islamic education is the lack of a clear definition of Islamic education in general. The long history and diversity of educational models make this study more complex, particularly in addressing the hostile generalizations made by some commentators following September 11. Abdullah Saeed emphasizes the importance of understanding the history and foundations of Islamic education, as well as the impact of contemporary reforms on its development. In Indonesia, Saeed's contextual-based education has significant relevance, especially in terms of integrating Islamic knowledge with traditional Western education.



According to Ijtihad and Innovation in its book *"Ijtihad and Innovation in Neo Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia"*, this movement started from the younger generation of Indonesia, despite resistance from some (Rabbani, 2021). Based on this principle, the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum offers an opportunity to make Islamic education more relevant, flexible, and responsive to the modern world. Saeed provides an overview of the theory of adaptation in Islam: An Introduction, although it is not entirely accurate in its representation of the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum. This study aims to address this gap by developing a curriculum that is flexible, modern, and responsive to the needs of society. It is believed that by integrating Islamic principles, education will be able to recognize religious individuals who are virtuous, open to the world, and beneficial to humanity

### **Abdullah Saeed's Perspective**

Abdullah Saeed is Sultan of Oman, Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and Director of the Center for Contemporary Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia (Anggraini et al., 2024). He has written widely on Islam and contemporary Muslim issues. He is the author and editor of several books, including *Interpreting the Qur'an* (2006), *Qur'anic Approaches in Contemporary Indonesia* (editor, 2005), *Religious Freedom, Apostasy and Islam* (co-author 2004), *Islam and Political Legitimacy* (co-editor 2004), *Islam in Australia* (2003) and *Islamic Banking and Interest* (1996). *Islamic Thought* is ideal for anyone seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the Muslim faith and Islamic creed. *Islamic Thought* is a fresh and contemporary introduction to Islamic philosophy and doctrine. Abdullah Saeed, a leading Muslim scholar, traces the development of religious knowledge in Islam from pre-modern to modern times. Abdullah Saeed, in his book *Islamic Thought: An Introduction*, focuses on Muslim thought, as well as the development, production, and transmission of religious knowledge, and the trends, schools, and movements that contribute to the production of this knowledge (Nuraini et al., 2024).

Abdullah Saeed is known as one of the contemporary Islamic thinkers who emphasizes the need for a more flexible interpretation of Islam that is relevant to the context of modern life. According to Saeed, Islamic teachings should not be understood in a static or literal way, but through an approach that considers the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which the religious texts were revealed. He argues that every religious text, notably the Qur'an and Hadith, conveys a moral message and primary purpose that can be applied in various societal contexts (Misbakhuddin, 2023). Saeed emphasizes that Islamic education should not only teach normative religious laws but also encourage a deep and critical understanding of Islamic teachings. He argues that by understanding the context behind Qur'anic verses, Muslims will be better able to draw lessons that are relevant and applicable to their lives. This perspective provides a foundation for Islamic education that is more adaptive, contextual, and inclusive, enabling learners to engage with society while actively upholding Islamic values.

## **Inclusive and Responsive Curriculum: Abdullah Saeed's Contextual Approach**

According to Abdullah Saeed, the contextual approach is an attempt to view Islamic teachings flexibly without losing the essence of its values (Al-Ayyubi, 2023). Saeed proposes that religious texts, especially the Qur'an and Hadith, should be understood not only within the framework of the time and culture in which they were revealed, but also adapted to the conditions of the current era. Abdullah Saeed, a contemporary Islamic thinker, proposes a contextual approach as a solution to overcome the limitations of Islamic education in the modern era, in the face of challenges to remain relevant in the current times. Saeed's approach emphasizes the understanding of Islamic texts by considering the social, historical, and cultural context in which the teachings were revealed, as well as how they are applied in today's reality. The contextual approach introduced by Abdullah Saeed emphasizes the importance of understanding religious texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, within their historical, social, and cultural contexts of revelation, as well as their relevance in contemporary life (Zahra et al., 2025).

Saeed argues that religious texts must be understood dynamically, not just adhering to their literal meaning, but also to their broader message and purpose (Fauzi et al., 2023). This approach aims to keep Islamic teachings relevant and adaptable to the challenges of the times, without compromising the essence of their fundamental values. In terms of Islamic education, Saeed's contextual approach opens up opportunities to design a curriculum that is more inclusive and responsive to social developments. Through contextual understanding, students can be invited to see Islamic teachings as a foundation of values that accommodate cultural diversity and changing times. In this way, Islamic education not only teaches normative rules but also encourages the ability to think critically and adaptively to complex situations. Abdullah Saeed believes that this approach will create a generation that not only understands Islamic teachings dogmatically, but is also able to apply them relevantly and positively in modern life (Ridwan & Maryati, 2024).

## **Discussion**

### **Adaptive and Contextual Islamic Education Curriculum**

One of the most important elements of the education system is the curriculum, which serves as a guide for implementing teaching at all levels of education, as well as a tool to achieve educational goals (Anggini et al., 2022). In 1856, Webster's dictionary first used the term "curriculum" to refer to a course of study (Drajat, 2020). In the realm of education, the term "curriculum" was first used in 1955 to refer to the subjects taught at school or the courses taken at college that are required to achieve a certain level, or the number of courses provided by a large educational institution. Islamic education in the modern era faces challenges to remain relevant in these times (Ridwan & Maryati, 2024). The Islamic education curriculum is often trapped in a rigid, normative, and textual approach, which can make it difficult to be accepted by the younger generation, who live in a globalized and dynamic social environment.

Along with the changing times, the importance of Islamic education will never diminish. Islamic education is always alive and exists to guide the course of human life to the pinnacle of happiness in both the world and the hereafter (Muvid et al., 2020). Islamic education remains essential in these times of change to protect individuals from various external influences that are often detrimental. This is understandable because everyone can easily obtain information, news, and everything through the internet nowadays. This includes both positive and negative information, as well as ordinary people and officials. The Islamic education curriculum comprises Islamic education materials in the form of activities, knowledge, and experiences that are deliberately and systematically provided to children to educate them within the framework of achieving the objectives of Islamic education. Alternatively, the Islamic education curriculum encompasses all activities, knowledge, and experiences that are deliberately and systematically provided by educators to students within the framework of Islamic education's objectives (Basyar, 2020).

An adaptive and contextual Islamic education curriculum is an educational approach that seeks to bridge between the fundamental teachings of Islam and the changing realities of life. This curriculum is designed to consider social, cultural, and economic developments, as well as the challenges of the times, to meet the needs of students in the modern era. Through this approach, students are not only equipped with a normative understanding of religious teachings but also encouraged to critically and flexibly apply Islamic principles in various contemporary situations. The implementation of an adaptive and contextual curriculum also includes participatory and interactive learning methods, where students are invited to connect Islamic teachings with social phenomena and daily life issues (Khotijah et al., 2022).

Thus, this curriculum encourages students to become individuals who think critically and reflectively, and are able to face social dynamics with an Islamic attitude that is also relevant to the current situation. In addition, the curriculum aims to instill an understanding of the objectives of sharia (maqasid al-shari'ah) in education, enabling learners to grasp the core moral messages of Islamic teachings, such as justice, benefit, and welfare (Yosita et al., 2023). With this focus on the objectives of *shari'ah*, learners are encouraged to develop an insight into Islam that is not limited to technical regulations, but is broader, referring to the essence and primary purpose of Islamic teachings. This enables them to interpret and apply Islamic teachings positively and constructively, facing the challenges of the modern world.

## CONCLUSION

The transformation of Islamic education, as seen from Abdullah Saeed's perspective, underscores the importance of a contextual approach in responding to the challenges of modern life. Saeed offers a more adaptive and relevant approach, where the understanding of Islamic teachings does not only focus on literal interpretation, but also considers historical, social, and cultural contexts. With this approach, Islamic education can adhere to the fundamental principles of faith and piety while also meeting the demands of modern life and dynamic times. An adaptive and contextualized Islamic education curriculum, as developed in Saeed's framework, serves as a tool that enables students to understand and practice Islamic teachings critically and creatively. Through this curriculum, learners are not only

equipped with a normative understanding of religion but also encouraged to apply Islamic principles in the changing context of daily life. The application of *Shari'ah* values, which focus on key objectives such as justice, welfare, and benefit, enriches Islamic education with values that are inclusive and responsive to social developments. This contextual approach, as Saeed explains, fosters the development of a generation capable of critical thinking and responsiveness to diverse situations. Thus, the transformation of Islamic education through adaptive and contextual curricula not only maintains the relevance of Islamic teachings but also establishes a strong and powerful value foundation for human life in the modern era.

### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

There is no conflict of interest with the publication of this article, the author states. The author states that the information and facts in the article are based on plagiarism.

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