



Pragmatism in Islamic Education: A Curriculum Reorientation Model Grounded in Islamic Values and Relevance to the World of Work

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Abstract

This article aims to formulate a pragmatism-based curriculum reorientation model for Islamic education that integrates Islamic values with relevance to the world of work. The study is motivated by the challenge faced by Islamic education in preserving its normative-spiritual foundation while responding to socio-economic change, technological development, and the competency demands of the twenty-first century. This research employs library research with a conceptual study design. The data sources consist of Sinta 1-2 journal articles, Scopus-indexed articles from the last six years, primary books, and government policy documents relevant to education, curriculum, and employment. The data were analyzed through conceptual content analysis involving concept identification, thematic categorization, relational analysis, and constructive synthesis. The findings indicate that pragmatism can be positioned as a pedagogical-curricular approach in Islamic education, rather than as a theological foundation. Islamic values such as tawhid, amanah, ihsan, adab, akhlaq, justice, and maslahah function as the normative foundation that directs learning experiences, competency development, and relevance to the world of work. This article proposes a Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model structured around Islamic values, learning experiences, competencies, relevance to the world of work, and social welfare. The model affirms that the world of work is not the ultimate aim of Islamic education, but rather a space for actualizing values, professional ethos, integrity, and social contribution. The article contributes to the development of Islamic educational philosophy and to the design of curricula that are contextual, applicable, and relevant to contemporary needs without reducing Islamic education to an instrument of the labor market.

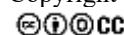
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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping human beings who are faithful, knowledgeable, morally upright, and capable of contributing to social life. This mandate cannot be understood merely as the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as the formation of personality, competence, social ethos, and human responsibility. In the context of contemporary socio-economic change, Islamic education faces the challenge of maintaining its Islamic value foundation while preparing students to participate productively in a world of work that is increasingly competitive, digitalized, and skill-based. Data from Statistics Indonesia through the August 2024 National Labor Force Survey indicate that employment remains an important national development agenda, as the publication maps the condition of the labor force, employed population, unemployment, and the educational characteristics of Indonesia's workforce (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2024a). In addition, BPS reported that the open unemployment rate in August 2024 stood at 4.91%, with vocational high school graduates recording the highest rate at 9.01% (BPS, 2024b). These facts show that the relevance of education to the world of work is not merely a technical issue, but an academic and policy agenda that Islamic education must address seriously.

The Future of Jobs Report issued by the World Economic Forum also shows that the future world of work increasingly demands critical thinking, creativity, technological capability, collaboration, and adaptability as key competencies in the global workforce. These changes require educational institutions, including Islamic education institutions, to orient learning not only toward mastery of religious content, but also toward the development of adaptive competencies relevant to contemporary socio-economic transformation (World Economic Forum, 2023).

This challenge is becoming more complex because the world of work no longer requires only mastery of formal knowledge, but also critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, digital literacy, adaptability, and integrity. In the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, Rahmi and Saefudin (2024) demonstrate that twenty-first-century education requires more innovative learning approaches so that students are better prepared to face future challenges. In line with this, Ramadhan and Arsyad (2025) argue that the Islamic educational tradition possesses an intellectual basis for cultivating critical thinking through *ijtihad*, deliberation, and scholarly tolerance. Thus, the main issue in Islamic education is not the absence of values or intellectual tradition, but the insufficient transformation of these values into curriculum designs that are contextual, applicable, and relevant to the demands of the times.

The central problem of contemporary Islamic education, therefore, does not lie in the weakness of its normative values, but in the limited transformation of those values into learning experiences that are contextual and relevant to modern socio-professional needs. As a result, Islamic education often succeeds in developing students' religious awareness, but has not fully developed their adaptive competencies, problem-solving skills, and readiness to engage with the dynamics of the contemporary world of work. This condition indicates the need to reconstruct curriculum approaches that not only preserve the normative identity of Islamic education, but also connect religious learning with social reality in a more practical and transformative way (Azra, 2019; Halstead, 2004).

At the same time, the reorientation of Islamic education toward relevance to the world of work must be undertaken carefully. Islamic education must not be reduced to an economic instrument or mere workforce training. Orientation toward the world of work should be placed as a space for actualizing Islamic values, not as the final purpose of education. Values such as *sidq* or



honesty, amanah or responsibility, ihsan or commitment to quality, and al-mas'uliyah or social responsibility are directly related to the formation of professionalism and work ethics. Orgianus et al. (2024) show that the integration of Islamic values into the development of educator competencies can strengthen professional, pedagogical, personal, social, and ethical dimensions. This finding is important because it confirms that Islamic values do not contradict professional competence; rather, they can serve as an ethical foundation for competency development in Islamic education.

Within this framework, pragmatism becomes relevant for reinterpretation as a pedagogical-curricular approach in Islamic education. Pragmatism, especially in the thought of John Dewey, emphasizes that education must be rooted in experience, activity, problem solving, and the continuous reconstruction of experience. Dewey (1938) asserts that not every experience is educative; an experience becomes educational only when it expands growth, enriches meaning, and guides learners toward a more mature life. This principle is important for Islamic education because religious learning should not stop at memorization, normative explanation, or conceptual mastery. It needs to be transformed into learning experiences that shape attitudes, skills, responsibility, and the ability to address real-life problems.

Nevertheless, the application of pragmatism in Islamic education cannot be carried out reductively through the full adoption of secular pragmatism. Modern pragmatism is often criticized for placing practical utility as the central orientation of education, whereas Islamic education has theological and ethical foundations that transcend instrumental interests. Therefore, pragmatism in the context of Islamic education needs to be reconstructed as a pedagogical approach that strengthens learning experiences, social relevance, and students' competency development without removing tawhid, akhlaq, and maslahah as the primary foundations of Islamic education (Cook, 1999; Hashim, 2014).

A number of recent studies have discussed the transformation of Islamic education curricula. Sholeh et al. (2023) emphasize that curricular change in Islamic education is necessary so that educational institutions can respond to social development, technological change, and contemporary needs. Nurdin et al. (2024) show that the development of Islamic Religious Education curricula must consider learners' needs, institutional contexts, and the principle of inclusivity. Meanwhile, studies on Islamic Religious Education learning based on twenty-first-century skills emphasize the importance of strengthening critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication so that graduates are prepared to face social and professional change (Rahmi & Saefudin, 2024). However, these studies generally treat curriculum transformation, Islamic values, and work-related competencies as separate issues. There remains a lack of studies that specifically formulate a curriculum reorientation model for Islamic education by employing pragmatism as a philosophical framework for integrating Islamic values and relevance to the world of work.

In addition, existing studies on Islamic education tend to place the curriculum within a normative orientation and the transmission of religious values, while studies of educational pragmatism have developed more extensively within the modern-secular educational tradition. Consequently, the development of work-related competencies, experiential learning, and adaptive skills is often positioned apart from the epistemological construction of Islamic education. This condition reveals a conceptual gap between the need to develop pragmatic competencies and the strengthening of Islamic values in Islamic curriculum design (Tan, 2011; Niyozov & Memon, 2011). To date, research that systematically develops a pragmatism-based Islamic education



curriculum model capable of integrating normative, pedagogical, and socio-professional dimensions simultaneously remains limited.

Unlike previous studies, this article does not merely discuss the relevance of pragmatism in Islamic education conceptually. It also proposes a Pragmatic-Islamic curriculum reorientation model that integrates Islamic values, experience-based learning, and work-related competency orientation within a systematic conceptual framework. This model positions pragmatism not as a substitute for the normative foundation of Islamic education, but as a pedagogical approach that strengthens social relevance, learning experience, and the development of students' adaptive competencies in facing the contemporary world of work.

METHODS

This study employed library research with a conceptual research design. Library research was selected because this article aims to examine, compare, and synthesize scholarly literature in order to formulate a pragmatism-based curriculum reorientation model for Islamic education. In qualitative research, clarity of design, data sources, data collection procedures, and analytical strategies is essential for maintaining the traceability of the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A literature review as a research method does not merely summarize sources; it also maps the development of knowledge, identifies research gaps, and builds the basis for developing new concepts (Snyder, 2019). A conceptual research design was used because this article is oriented toward constructing theoretical ideas through concept clarification, analysis of relationships among concepts, and argumentative synthesis (Jaakkola, 2020).

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included reputable journal articles published within the last six years, comprising at least 20 Sinta 1-2 journal articles and five Scopus-indexed articles. Articles were selected based on their relevance to Islamic education, educational pragmatism, curriculum development, twenty-first-century skills, and the relevance of education to the world of work. Secondary sources included six primary books on pragmatism, Islamic educational philosophy, curriculum theory, and research methods, as well as four government policy documents related to curriculum, national education, and employment. Sources were selected purposively by considering publication reputation, traceability through DOI or URL, thematic relevance, and contribution to the construction of the conceptual model.

Data were analyzed using conceptual content analysis. Content analysis was used to interpret textual meaning systematically and to develop conceptual categories based on patterns of ideas emerging from the literature (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The analytical procedure consisted of four stages. First, concept identification traced key ideas concerning Islamic values, learning experiences, competencies, work relevance, and social welfare. Second, thematic categorization grouped these ideas into Islamic normative foundations, pragmatic pedagogical approaches, and socio-practical orientations. Third, relational analysis examined the relationships among Islamic values, principles of pragmatism, curriculum design, and the needs of the world of work. Fourth, constructive synthesis formulated a curriculum reorientation model for Islamic education grounded in Islamic values and relevance to the world of work. Conceptual validity was maintained through literature source triangulation, the use of reputable references, DOI/URL traceability, and consistency among research objectives, data, analysis, and the resulting model.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To avoid a discussion that is merely normative, this section positions the curriculum reorientation model as the result of a synthesis between theory, findings from previous research, and the operational needs of curriculum design. Pragmatism is therefore not read only as a philosophical idea, but also as an approach for designing learning experiences, authentic assessment, and competency development. International literature indicates that employability enhancement programs become effective only when translated into systematic curriculum design, learning experiences, and evaluation, rather than remaining institutional slogans (Scandurra et al., 2024). Thus, the model proposed in this article is directed not only as a conceptual construction, but also as an implementable framework for Islamic education.

Pragmatism as a Pedagogical-Curricular Approach in Islamic Education

The synthesis of the literature indicates that pragmatism can be positioned as a pedagogical-curricular approach in Islamic education, rather than as a theological foundation or a source of values. This position is important because Islamic education has a normative basis derived from tawhid, revelation, adab, akhlaq, and the orientation of maslahah. Pragmatism, meanwhile, arises from a modern philosophical tradition that emphasizes experience, practical consequences, the usefulness of knowledge, and problem solving. Therefore, the acceptance of pragmatism in Islamic education must be selective and critical: it may enrich learning strategies and curriculum design, but it must not replace the value foundation of Islamic education.

In John Dewey's thought, education is understood as a continuous process of reconstructing experience. Dewey rejected the view of education as a passive process of transmitting information because learning experiences must enable students to grow, think, and participate actively in social life (Dewey, 1938). This idea is relevant to Islamic education because religious learning often risks stopping at cognitive mastery, memorization, and normative understanding without sufficiently linking them to students' lived experiences. Within a pragmatic framework, religious content needs to be translated into learning experiences that allow students to practice values, reflect on actions, and solve real problems in an ethical and civilized manner.

Dewey's pragmatism also places the school as a social space in which learners learn through activity, interaction, and problem solving. Education, from this perspective, is not only preparation for the future; it is part of life itself (Dewey, 1916). This principle provides a basis for reorienting the Islamic education curriculum. The curriculum is no longer understood merely as a collection of materials on creed, worship, morality, jurisprudence, or Islamic history, but as a design of learning experiences that connects those values with social, cultural, technological, and work realities. Thus, Islamic learning should not only explain the meaning of amanah, ihsan, honesty, and responsibility, but also design learning situations in which students experience and practice them.

However, the analysis of pragmatism cannot rest solely on Dewey. William James explains that the meaning of an idea can be seen from the practical consequences it produces in human life (James, 1907). In the context of Islamic education, this perspective can be used to examine whether religious learning truly affects students' behavior, work ethos, social concern, and responsibility. The important question is not merely whether students know the concept of akhlaq, but whether that knowledge functions in their attitudes, decisions, and actions. In this way, pragmatism helps Islamic education move from a verbalistic orientation toward a performative and transformative one.



Charles Sanders Peirce also makes an important contribution through his view of pragmatism as a method for clarifying meaning. According to Peirce, the meaning of a concept can be understood through the practical consequences that may result from it (Peirce, 1992). If this principle is applied to the Islamic education curriculum, Islamic values need to be clarified through their educational consequences. For example, *tawhid* should not be explained only as a theological doctrine, but should be visible in students' integrity, life orientation, and moral responsibility. *Amanah* should not remain a normative term, but should appear in discipline, academic honesty, and professional responsibility. *Ihsan* should not merely be taught as a spiritual concept, but should be actualized in work quality and seriousness in learning.

Recent studies on Islamic education also indicate the urgency of more contextual pedagogical approaches. The transformation of Islamic education curricula needs to be directed toward greater responsiveness to social development, technology, and contemporary needs (Sholeh et al., 2023). The development of Islamic Religious Education curricula also requires attention to learners' needs, institutional contexts, and diverse learning conditions (Nurdin et al., 2024). These findings strengthen the argument that Islamic education requires a curriculum approach that is not only normative, but also oriented toward experience and social relevance. The article by Nurdin et al. can be traced through the *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, with its DOI and article page openly available.

Accordingly, pragmatism can function as a methodological tool for rearranging the Islamic education curriculum. The principles of experience, learning by doing, problem solving, usefulness, and the reconstruction of experience can be used to strengthen the internalization of values. However, these principles must remain directed by Islamic values so that they do not fall into shallow pragmatism that pursues only short-term practical benefits. In this position, Islam provides the value direction, while pragmatism provides the pedagogical strategy. The world of work then becomes one context for actualizing values, not the final purpose of education.

Islamic Values as the Normative Foundation of Curriculum Reorientation

If pragmatism functions as a pedagogical approach, Islamic values must serve as the normative foundation of curriculum reorientation. This foundation is necessary so that the Islamic education curriculum does not become trapped in a utilitarian orientation that measures educational success solely in terms of work readiness, economic productivity, or market competitiveness. Islamic education has broader aims: to form human beings who are faithful, knowledgeable, morally upright, civilized, responsible, and beneficial to life. For this reason, relevance to the world of work must be placed within the framework of values, not the other way around.

Al-Attas emphasizes that the essence of Islamic education is the inculcation of *adab*: the recognition and acknowledgment of the proper place of things in the order of existence, knowledge, and action (Al-Attas, 1999). This view is important in limiting the use of pragmatism within Islamic education. Without *adab*, competence can become an instrument of personal interest; knowledge can be detached from moral responsibility; and education can be reduced to a mechanism for producing labor. Therefore, the Islamic education curriculum must place *adab* as a guiding principle so that learning experiences, competencies, and work relevance remain within a moral-spiritual horizon.

Al-Ghazali's thought also strengthens the position of values as the foundation of education. For al-Ghazali, knowledge must not be separated from purification of the soul, formation of



character, and orientation toward ultimate happiness in the hereafter (Al-Ghazali, 2005). Beneficial knowledge, therefore, is not only knowledge that produces technical ability, but knowledge that guides human beings toward goodness, closeness to God, and social welfare. This perspective becomes a corrective to the possible narrowing of pragmatism into a mere work orientation. Islamic education can accept practical usefulness, but such usefulness must be weighed through *akhlaq*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, and *maslahah*.

In addition to al-Attas and al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun's thought is also relevant in strengthening the relationship among education, society, and the realities of life. In the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun sees education as part of the dynamics of civilization and human social life. Knowledge, skills, and social habituation develop within the context of society and the needs of life (Ibn Khaldun, 1967). This view provides a foundation for the argument that Islamic education must not be detached from social realities, including changes in the world of work. However, connection with reality does not mean submission to market logic; rather, it means directing knowledge and skills toward a civilized and beneficial life.

Based on this synthesis, several key values form the foundation of Islamic curriculum reorientation. First, *tawhid* is the principle that unifies the orientation of knowledge, action, work, and responsibility as forms of devotion to God. *Tawhid* prevents the curriculum from becoming merely a tool of economic mobility. Second, *amanah* is the awareness that knowledge and profession contain moral responsibility. In the curriculum, *amanah* can be translated into academic honesty, learning discipline, responsibility in assignments, and professional integrity. Third, *ihsan* is the commitment to excellence and quality. *Ihsan* can become the basis for a culture of quality in learning and work.

Fourth, *adab* and *akhlaq* are principles that regulate learners' relationships with knowledge, teachers, society, the environment, and professions. *Adab* ensures that competence is not detached from courtesy, responsibility, and self-control. Fifth, justice is a value that directs students to understand rights, obligations, and balance in social life. Sixth, *maslahah* is an orientation toward benefit for the wider community. *Maslahah* becomes the ultimate purpose so that relevance to the world of work does not stop at employability, but develops into social contribution.

Contemporary studies show that Islamic values can be integrated into competency development in education. Orgianus et al. (2024) show that values such as *sidq*, *amanah*, and *al-mas'uliyah* can strengthen educators' professional, pedagogical, personal, social, and ethical competencies. This finding confirms that Islamic values do not conflict with competence; rather, they provide the ethical basis for competence. The article is available in *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam UIN Sunan Kalijaga* and can be traced through the DOI provided on the journal website.

Thus, curriculum reorientation in Islamic education must begin with values, not with labor market demands. Islamic values direct learning experiences, competency development, and professional actualization. Pragmatism can help the curriculum become more vivid and applicable, but Islamic values ensure that its practical orientation does not lose direction. At this point, Islamic education can respond productively to the world of work without losing its normative identity.

Relevance to the World of Work as a Space for Actualizing Islamic Values

The relevance of Islamic education to the world of work needs to be understood proportionally. The world of work cannot be made the ultimate aim of Islamic education, yet it also cannot be ignored as a social reality that students will face after completing their education. Within



this framework, the world of work should be read as a space for actualizing Islamic values: a space in which students practice amanah, ihsan, honesty, responsibility, discipline, professionalism, and the orientation of maslahah. With this understanding, Islamic education is not reduced to job training, but it also does not become trapped in a normative orientation detached from the needs of real life.

The urgency of work relevance is supported by national employment data. Statistics Indonesia, through the August 2024 National Labor Force Survey, shows that Indonesia's employment condition remains an important issue related to education, competencies, and the work readiness of the productive-age population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024a). BPS also reported that the open unemployment rate in August 2024 was 4.91%, with vocational high school graduates recording the highest rate at 9.01% (BPS, 2024b). Although these data do not specifically address Islamic education, they signal that educational institutions, including madrasahs, pesantren, Islamic schools, and Islamic higher education institutions, need to give more serious attention to the relationship among curriculum, competence, and students' readiness to enter socio-professional life.

This need is also consistent with the direction of national education policy. Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 5 of 2022 on Graduate Competency Standards places graduate competence not only in the domain of knowledge, but also in character, skills, and learners' readiness to become members of society who are faithful, pious, morally upright, critical, creative, independent, and able to collaborate (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). In the context of madrasahs, Minister of Religious Affairs Decree Number 347 of 2022 affirms that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in madrasahs is directed toward giving educational units autonomy to develop curricula in accordance with institutional characteristics, students' needs, and twenty-first-century competency demands (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022, pp. 8-10). These two policies show that the relevance of curriculum to real life and twenty-first-century competencies is not only an academic demand, but also a national education policy direction.

Recent literature on employability strengthens this argument. Tushar and Sooraksa (2023) show that the twenty-first-century workplace requires a combination of skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, adaptability, creativity, and lifelong learning. Abelha et al. (2020) also emphasize that the development of graduate competencies in higher education must be linked to employability, but should not be understood narrowly as adjustment to market needs. Meanwhile, Herlinawati et al. (2024) highlight the importance of integrating twenty-first-century skills into the curriculum, especially critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. These studies provide a basis for understanding work relevance not merely as the ability to obtain employment, but as readiness to contribute productively, adaptively, and responsibly.

From the perspective of Islamic education, workplace competencies can be integrated with Islamic values. Critical thinking can be read within the traditions of tafakkur, tadabbur, and ijtihad; communication can be linked to the principle of qaulan sadidan and the adab of speech; collaboration can be related to ta'awun in goodness; creativity can be understood as productive ikhtiar to improve life; adaptability can be associated with the ability to respond to change without losing principle; and integrity is directly related to sidq and amanah. Thus, work-related competencies are not foreign elements in Islamic education. They can become forms of value actualization when directed by ethical and spiritual foundations.



Studies on innovation in Islamic education also show that Islamic educational institutions have begun to move toward learning that is more relevant to social and technological development. Susanti et al. (2024) show that the use of digital media in Islamic Religious Education learning can serve as a strategy for responding to technological development and the needs of contemporary learners. Fahrudin and Malik (2025) also emphasize the need for a learning model based on pesantren cultural values that integrates Islamic values with twenty-first-century skills. These findings indicate that Islamic education has a significant opportunity to build curricula that are not only religious in substance, but also responsive to socio-professional change.

Accordingly, work relevance in this article is not positioned as a form of economizing Islamic education. It is placed as a space for actualizing values. Work can become worship when carried out with proper intention, ethics, and responsibility; professionalism can become a manifestation of *ihsan*; work integrity can become an expression of *amanah*; productivity can be directed toward *maslahah*; and competence can become an instrument of social contribution. Islamic education therefore needs to develop curricula that connect religious content with professional ethics, digital literacy, *fiqh muamalah*, social entrepreneurship, communication, leadership, and contemporary socio-economic problems.

Integrative Synthesis of Pragmatism, Islamic Values, and Relevance to the World of Work

Based on the preceding discussion, curriculum reorientation in Islamic education requires an integrative synthesis of pragmatism, Islamic values, and relevance to the world of work. These three elements must not be placed separately. If Islamic education emphasizes values without concrete learning experiences, learning risks becoming normative and verbalistic. If pragmatism is applied without an Islamic foundation, education risks falling into a shallow practical orientation. If relevance to the world of work becomes the main goal, Islamic education may lose its moral-spiritual orientation. Therefore, the required synthesis is to place Islam as the value foundation, pragmatism as the pedagogical approach, the world of work as the context of actualization, and *maslahah* as the ultimate aim.

This synthesis can be explained through the convergence between pragmatic principles and Islamic educational values. Pragmatism emphasizes experience; Islamic education emphasizes *amal*. Pragmatism emphasizes usefulness; Islamic education emphasizes *maslahah*. Pragmatism emphasizes problem solving; Islamic education has the traditions of *ijtihad*, deliberation, and *ikhtiar*. Pragmatism emphasizes learning by doing; Islamic education emphasizes the unity of knowledge and action. Pragmatism requires social relevance; Islamic education directs human beings to become mercy for life. The convergence between the two is therefore not theological, but pedagogical, ethical, and social.

In the curriculum context, this synthesis requires a shift in how religious learning is viewed. Religious subject matter should not merely be arranged as a collection of normative concepts; it should be designed as learning experiences that connect text, context, and action. *Fiqh muamalah*, for example, can be linked to economic literacy, business ethics, and social entrepreneurship. *Akhlaq* can be linked to professional ethics, communication, and work culture. *Tawhid* can be connected to integrity, life orientation, and moral responsibility. Islamic history can be linked to leadership, social innovation, and the formation of civilization. In this way, the Islamic education curriculum does not lose its value substance; rather, it becomes more applicable and contextual.



This integrative synthesis also requires a transformation of the roles of educators and learners. Teachers or lecturers should not merely act as transmitters of content, but as facilitators of learning experiences, guides of values, and designers of pedagogical situations that connect Islamic values with real-life problems. Learners should no longer be positioned as passive recipients, but as active subjects who think, collaborate, solve problems, reflect on experience, and actualize values. This perspective is in line with the principle of modern curriculum theory, which places learning experience as an important element in achieving educational goals (Tyler, 1949). In Islamic education, such experiences must be directed toward forming individuals who are faithful, morally upright, competent, and beneficial.

The need for this integration is strengthened by contemporary Islamic education research. Afriyanto and Anandari (2024) show that the transformation of Islamic Religious Education in a multicultural context requires changes in curriculum, learning methods, and social interaction so that education becomes more inclusive and responsive. Sidik et al. (2024) show that an integrated Islamic Religious Education curriculum can reduce the dichotomy of knowledge and form stronger socio-religious identity. Meanwhile, research on internship programs for prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers at UIN Sunan Kalijaga indicates that internships contribute to the development of prospective teachers' soft skills, making direct experience an important part of shaping professional competence among PAI teacher candidates (Sukiman et al., 2024). These studies strengthen the argument that Islamic education needs to integrate values, experience, competence, and social context.

This integrative synthesis can be formulated into three basic principles. First, values direct competencies. Work-related competencies such as communication, collaboration, creativity, adaptability, and digital literacy must remain under the guidance of Islamic values. Competence without values can produce instrumental intelligence that does not necessarily serve the good. Second, experience becomes the medium for internalizing values. Islamic values are not sufficiently taught through lectures alone; they must be experienced through projects, social practice, case studies, simulations of professional ethics, and reflection. Third, the world of work becomes the context for actualizing values. Through this principle, the world of work is not the center of Islamic educational orientation, but a field for applying values in socio-professional life.

The relationship between pragmatism and Islamic values in this model is pedagogical, not fully epistemological. This means that pragmatism is not positioned as a source of truth or a value foundation, but as a strategy for transforming Islamic values into learning experiences that can be observed, practiced, and evaluated. The convergence lies in the orientation of *amal*, usefulness, problem solving, and social relevance; the boundary lies in the source of values. Pragmatism rests on human experience, while Islamic education remains grounded in *tawhid*, revelation, *adab*, *akhlaq*, and *maslahah*. Islamic values therefore function as the guide for competencies so that they do not fall into narrow utilitarianism. Literature on competency-based education also confirms that competencies must be clearly formulated in graduate profiles, learning experiences, and assessment so that they do not remain normative statements (Brauer, 2021).

Thus, the integrative synthesis of pragmatism, Islamic values, and relevance to the world of work forms the basis of a more holistic curriculum reorientation model. This model does not reject the needs of the world of work, but places them within the horizon of *maslahah*. It does not reject pragmatism, but uses it selectively as a pedagogical approach. It does not treat Islamic values as slogans, but requires that those values be translated into learning experiences, competencies, and



social action. With this structure, Islamic education can maintain its normative identity while responding to contemporary life more relevantly and productively.

The Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model

Based on the synthesis of pragmatism, Islamic values, and relevance to the world of work, this article formulates the Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model. This model is built on the assumption that Islamic education requires a curriculum design that does not stop at the mastery of normative content, but is able to connect Islamic values with learning experiences, competencies, and socio-professional actualization. The model does not place pragmatism as a theological foundation, but as a pedagogical approach for enlivening Islamic values in the learning process. Accordingly, the structure of the model can be formulated as follows:

Islamic Values -> Learning Experiences -> Competencies -> Relevance to the World of Work -> Social Welfare

The first element is Islamic values as the normative foundation. Islamic values become the starting point because the Islamic education curriculum must have a clear theological, moral, and social direction. Tawhid provides the orientation that knowledge, action, and work are part of devotion to God. Amanah emphasizes moral responsibility in learning and working. Ihsan encourages quality, seriousness, and professionalism. Adab and akhlaq regulate learners' relationships with knowledge, teachers, society, the environment, and professions. Justice develops social sensitivity, while maslahah directs competencies so that they do not stop at individual interests. In this context, the proposed model is aligned with the principle of Islamic education that positions knowledge as a means of forming civilized and responsible human beings, rather than merely as an instrument of economic mobility.

The second element is learning experience. At this point, pragmatism functions as a pedagogical approach. Islamic values are not sufficiently transmitted through lectures, memorization, or normative explanation; they need to be internalized through active, reflective, and contextual learning experiences. Tyler argues that educational objectives can be achieved only when learners undergo learning activities that correspond to those objectives (Tyler, 1949). In Islamic education, this means that values such as amanah, ihsan, cooperation, and responsibility should not only be explained as concepts. They must be presented in learning experiences such as social projects, case studies, professional ethics practice, decision-making simulations, problem-based learning, and self-reflection.

The third element is competence. Competence in this model is not understood narrowly as technical skill for obtaining employment, but as the integration of religious, social, intellectual, professional, and adaptive competencies. The Islamic education curriculum needs to produce learners who are religious and critical, moral and creative, principled and adaptive, and capable of working collaboratively in socio-professional life. Research on the development of digital Islamic Religious Education modules shows that digital-based teaching material innovation is needed so that religious learning becomes more aligned with contemporary learners' needs and developments in educational technology (Hamdi et al., 2024). This finding strengthens the idea that competence in Islamic education is not only related to mastery of content, but also to readiness to face changes in media, technology, and ways of learning.



The fourth element is relevance to the world of work. In this model, the world of work is not the final aim, but a context for actualizing values and competencies. Islamic education must not be fully subordinated to labor market interests, but it also must not ignore the fact that learners will live in a working society that demands integrity, productivity, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, and problem-solving ability. Research on digital media in Islamic Religious Education learning shows that media innovation is an important part of Islamic education's response to technological development and the characteristics of contemporary learners (Susanti et al., 2024, p. 42). Thus, work relevance means not only readiness to obtain employment, but also readiness to actualize Islamic values in socio-professional life.

The fifth element is social welfare as the ultimate aim. This model rejects the view that the success of the Islamic education curriculum should be measured only by employability or graduates' absorption into the labor market. Employability is important, but in the perspective of Islamic education it must be placed within the framework of social contribution and *maslahah*. Graduates of Islamic education should therefore not only be able to work, but also able to work honestly, professionally, responsibly, and beneficially for society. *Maslahah* becomes the endpoint so that the curriculum does not become trapped in an economistic orientation, but continues to preserve the transformative mission of Islamic education.

To ensure that this model does not remain a conceptual diagram only, its implementation can be formulated in four operational stages. First, mapping values and competencies, namely connecting *tawhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, *adab*, and *maslahah* with competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, integrity, and social responsibility. Second, formulating integrative learning outcomes, namely designing curricular objectives that combine religious, ethical, social, and professional dimensions. Third, designing learning experiences, namely translating values into case studies, social projects, problem-based learning, simulations of professional ethics, and reflection. Fourth, authentic evaluation, namely assessing not only conceptual mastery, but also the application of values and competencies through portfolios, projects, attitude rubrics, performance tasks, and self-reflection. Sokhanvar et al. (2021) show that authentic assessment can strengthen learning experiences and employability skills because learners are involved in tasks that resemble real-life situations. The model may be illustrated as follows.

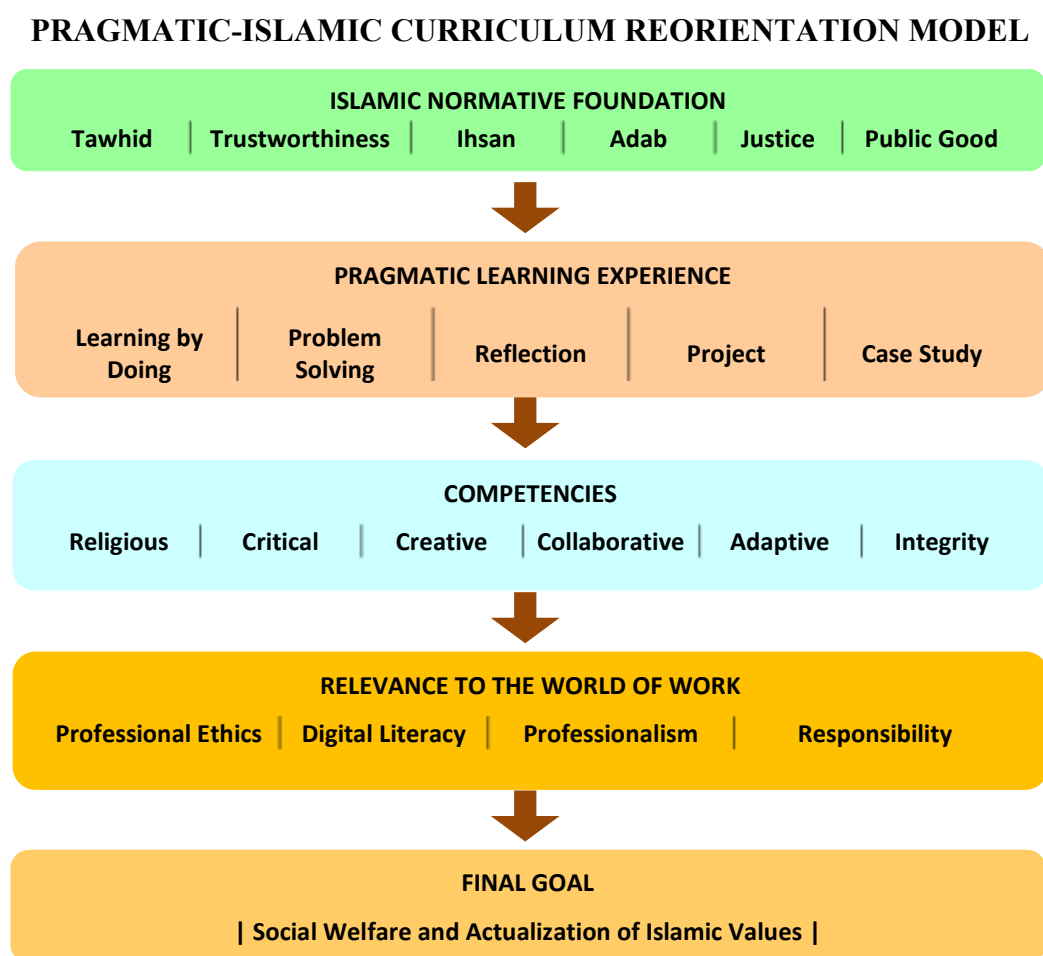


Figure 1. Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model

The diagram shows that the model begins with the foundation of Islamic values, not with labor market needs. Pragmatism functions at the level of learning experience, helping Islamic values become more operational in pedagogical activities. Competence becomes an intermediate outcome that connects values and practical abilities. The world of work becomes the context of application, while social welfare becomes the final orientation. With this structure, Islamic education can respond to the needs of the world of work without losing its normative direction.

Table 1. Operational Framework of the Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model

Component	Operationalization in the Curriculum
Islamic Values	Tawhid, amanah, ihsan, adab, akhlaq, justice, and maslahah serve as the basis for learning outcomes.
Learning Experience	Values are internalized through projects, case studies, reflection, social practice, and problem-based learning.
Competence	Religious, ethical, social, digital, communicative, collaborative, and adaptive competencies are developed in an integrated manner.
Relevance to the World of Work	The world of work is positioned as a context for actualizing values through professional ethics, work literacy, and social responsibility.
Evaluation	Assessment is conducted through portfolios, performance tasks, attitude rubrics, projects, and self-reflection.

The table shows that the Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model is not merely conceptual, but can also be translated into operational curriculum steps. Each component of the model has an interrelated implementative function: Islamic values become the basis for learning outcomes; learning experiences become the medium for internalizing values; competence becomes the result of learner development; the world of work becomes the context of actualization; and evaluation becomes the instrument for assessing the integration of values and performance. Thus, this model offers a curriculum framework that does not stop at strengthening the normative aspect, but also provides practical direction for Islamic education learning that is contextual, applicable, and oriented toward social welfare.

Implications of the Model for Reorienting Curriculum Components

The Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model has direct implications for six main curriculum components: objectives, content, process, evaluation, the role of teachers or lecturers, and the position of learners. These implications are important because a conceptual model should not stop at the philosophical level; it must be translatable into a more operational curriculum design. Curriculum reorientation in Islamic education must therefore touch the basic structure of learning, from the outcomes to be achieved, the materials selected, the strategies used, the mode of assessment, and the pedagogical relationship between educators and learners.

First, curriculum objectives need to be reoriented from the mastery of religious content toward the formation of learners who are religious, competent, morally upright, adaptive, and contributive. The objectives of Islamic education remain grounded in the formation of faith, *akhlaq*, and *adab*, but they should be expanded to include the ability to face real-life problems. This direction is in line with the Graduate Competency Standards, which emphasize the formation of learners who are faithful, pious, morally upright, critical, creative, independent, and able to collaborate (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). In the context of *madrasahs*, Minister of Religious Affairs Decree Number 347 of 2022 also provides room for curriculum development that is adaptive to students' needs, *madrasah* characteristics, and twenty-first-century competency demands (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022).

Second, curriculum content needs to move from normative-theoretical material toward the integration of Islamic values, social problems, professional ethics, digital literacy, and relevance to the world of work. *Fiqh* materials, for instance, can be connected to contemporary *muamalah*, business ethics, Islamic finance, and social responsibility. *Akhlaq* materials can be linked to professional ethics, communication, integrity, and work culture. Islamic history can be connected to leadership, social innovation, and civilizational contribution. In this context, the development of digital Islamic Religious Education teaching materials becomes important because it allows religious content to be presented in a more interactive, contextual, and learner-responsive manner (Hamdi et al., 2024).

Third, the learning process needs to shift from a pattern dominated by lectures and memorization toward experience-based learning, projects, cases, reflection, and problem solving. This reorientation does not mean rejecting lectures entirely, but placing them as one strategy rather than the only strategy. Islamic Religious Education learning can be developed through case studies in professional ethics, socio-religious projects, simulations of value-based decision making, Islamic digital literacy practices, and reflective learning. Innovation in digital media for Islamic Religious



Education indicates that technology can expand the learning space, increase student engagement, and make religious learning more relevant to contemporary life (Susanti et al., 2024).

Fourth, evaluation needs to be reoriented from cognitive testing toward authentic assessment. So far, the success of religious learning has often been measured through the ability to answer questions, memorize concepts, or explain definitions. Yet Islamic values such as amanah, ihsan, responsibility, and adab need to be assessed through practice, performance, and behavioral consistency. Authentic assessment can take the form of portfolios, projects, presentations, case studies, self-reflection, attitude observation, learning journals, and performance assessment. In this way, assessment measures not only what learners know, but also how that knowledge is used in action.

Fifth, the role of teachers or lecturers needs to be reoriented from transmitters of knowledge into facilitators, guides of values, and designers of learning experiences. Educators in this model are not only expected to deliver content, but also to design activities that connect Islamic values with life problems and the world of work. Educators must also become role models in integrity, work ethos, intellectual openness, and adaptability. Studies on internship programs for prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers show that direct experience plays a role in developing prospective educators' soft skills; therefore, the formation of teacher competence cannot be separated from practice, reflection, and field experience (Sukiman et al., 2024). This confirms that educators who are expected to build experience-based learning should themselves be formed through meaningful experiences.

Sixth, the position of learners needs to shift from recipients of material to active, reflective, productive, and responsible subjects. Learners must be given room to ask questions, engage in dialogue, solve problems, collaborate, use technology ethically, and reflect on learning experiences. In the Pragmatic-Islamic model, learners are not merely objects of moral formation, but learning actors who actualize Islamic values in real life. This position is important so that Islamic education forms not only formal obedience, but also moral awareness, social competence, and professional responsibility. These implications can be summarized in the following matrix.

Table 2. Implications of Pragmatic-Islamic Reorientation across Curriculum Components

Curriculum Component	Previous Orientation	Pragmatic-Islamic Reorientation
Objectives	Mastery of religious content	Religious, competent, morally upright, adaptive, and contributive learners
Content	Normative-theoretical	Integration of Islamic values, social problems, professional ethics, and work literacy
Process	Lectures and memorization	Experience, projects, case studies, problem solving, and reflection
Evaluation	Cognitive testing	Authentic assessment, portfolios, performance, reflection, and attitude assessment
Teachers/Lecturers	Transmitters of knowledge	Facilitators, value guides, and designers of learning experiences
Learners	Recipients of content	Active, reflective, productive, and responsible subjects



The matrix shows that curriculum reorientation does not only affect lesson content, but the entire learning ecosystem. If objectives change while evaluation remains cognitive, reorientation will not succeed. If curriculum content is already contextual but the learning process remains passive, values will not become lived experiences. If the world of work becomes the context but Islamic values do not serve as the foundation, Islamic education risks becoming trapped in an instrumental orientation. Therefore, all curriculum components must move consistently.

Consequently, the implication of the model lies not only in changing curriculum content, but in aligning objectives, learning experiences, and evaluation. If curriculum objectives are directed toward forming learners who are religious, competent, adaptive, and full of integrity, then the learning process must be based on real experience, and assessment must be able to evaluate the application of values. Vlachopoulos and Makri (2024) show that authentic assessment is effective in developing twenty-first-century skills when supported by contextual task design and clear assessment criteria. This finding strengthens the argument that evaluation in Islamic education must move from cognitive tests toward authentic assessment that measures the application of values, performance, and social responsibility.

Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

The Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model formulated in this article has theoretical contributions and practical implications for the development of contemporary Islamic education. Theoretically, the main contribution of this model lies in its effort to expand the discourse of Islamic educational philosophy through a critical dialogue with pragmatism. Pragmatism has often been narrowly understood as a practical orientation or instrumental tendency. This article shows that pragmatism can be read more productively as a pedagogical-curricular approach, as long as it remains placed under the foundation of Islamic values. Pragmatism is therefore not positioned as a replacement for the theological basis of Islamic education, but as a conceptual instrument for transforming Islamic values into concrete, reflective, and applicable learning experiences.

The next theoretical contribution is the strengthening of the relationship among values, experience, competence, and socio-professional relevance within a single curriculum framework. Islamic education should not be understood merely as the transmission of normative teachings, but as a process of forming human beings who are able to practice values in real-life contexts. Within this framework, *tawhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, *adab*, *akhlaq*, justice, and *maslahah* do not stop as instructional materials, but become guiding principles for designing curriculum objectives, content, processes, and evaluation. This idea is consistent with the national education objective of developing learners' potential so that they become faithful, pious, morally upright, capable, creative, independent, and responsible citizens (Republik Indonesia, 2003, Article 3). In other words, the proposed model does not stand outside the national policy framework, but can strengthen it through the perspective of Islamic education.

Practically, this model provides direction for Islamic educational institutions in designing curricula that are value-based while also relevant to social life and the world of work. Madrasahs, pesantren, Islamic schools, and Islamic higher education institutions can use this model to develop learning outcomes that integrate religiosity, *akhlaq*, twenty-first-century competencies, digital literacy, professional ethics, and social responsibility. In learning practice, teachers or lecturers need to shift their role from mere content deliverers to facilitators of learning experiences, value mentors, and designers of reflective activities. This is in line with the Graduate Competency Standards, which



emphasize character, competence, independence, critical reasoning, creativity, and cooperation as part of educational outcomes (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

Another practical implication lies in evaluation design. If the Islamic education curriculum aims to develop amanah, ihsan, adab, integrity, and social responsibility, then evaluation cannot rely solely on cognitive tests. Evaluation needs to be directed toward authentic assessment through portfolios, social projects, case studies, self-reflection, presentations, attitude observation, and performance. Thus, the success of religious learning is measured not only by learners' ability to explain concepts, but also by their ability to apply values in real actions. At this point, the Pragmatic-Islamic model provides a basis for making Islamic education curricula more operational and preventing them from stopping at normative idealism.

However, the implementation of this model still faces practical challenges. First, Islamic educational institutions require educator readiness in designing experience-based, project-based, and problem-solving learning. Second, teaching materials need to be developed so that they can connect Islamic values with social issues, technology, professional ethics, and the world of work. Third, evaluation systems need to be adjusted so that cognitive, affective, and performative dimensions can be assessed more proportionally. Fourth, partnerships with the world of work must be built selectively so that they do not shift the moral-spiritual orientation of Islamic education. Accordingly, this model can serve as a curriculum development framework that maintains balance among values, competencies, relevance, and social welfare.

CONCLUSION

This article affirms that pragmatism can be positioned productively within Islamic education when it is understood as a pedagogical-curricular approach rather than as a theological foundation. Islamic education remains grounded in normative values such as tawhid, amanah, ihsan, adab, akhlaq, justice, and maslahah. Pragmatism, meanwhile, functions as an operational instrument for arranging learning experiences so that religious learning does not stop at the transmission of normative knowledge, but develops into a process of forming attitudes, competencies, social responsibility, and the ability to solve real-life problems.

The conceptual synthesis in this article shows that pragmatic principles, such as experience-based education, learning by doing, problem solving, the usefulness of knowledge, social relevance, and the reconstruction of experience, converge with the orientation of Islamic education that emphasizes the unity of knowledge, action, akhlaq, and maslahah. However, this convergence must be read selectively and critically. Pragmatism should not be understood as a value-free practical orientation, but as a pedagogical approach guided by Islamic foundations. In this way, Islamic education can become more contextual and applicable without losing its moral-spiritual identity.

This article also emphasizes that relevance to the world of work in Islamic education must not be understood as the final aim of education, but as a space for actualizing Islamic values. Competencies such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, digital literacy, adaptability, integrity, work ethos, and social responsibility can be developed within the framework of Islamic values. The world of work thus becomes a field for practicing amanah, ihsan, honesty, professionalism, and social contribution, not merely an arena of economic competition.

The model proposed in this article is the Pragmatic-Islamic Curriculum Reorientation Model, structured as follows: Islamic Values -> Learning Experiences -> Competencies ->



Relevance to the World of Work -> Social Welfare. This model requires the reorientation of objectives, content, process, evaluation, the role of teachers or lecturers, and the position of learners. Curriculum objectives are directed toward the formation of persons who are religious, morally upright, competent, adaptive, and contributive. Curriculum content needs to integrate Islamic values, social problems, professional ethics, digital literacy, and work relevance. The learning process needs to be based on experience, projects, case studies, reflection, and problem solving. Evaluation is directed toward authentic assessment that measures the application of values and real performance.

Thus, this article contributes to the development of Islamic educational philosophy and to curriculum design that is more contextual, applicable, and relevant to contemporary needs. The model offers a middle path between normative-transcendental Islamic education and the practical-professional demands of the world of work.

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