

Systematic Literature Review on Contemporary Methods of Teaching Islamic Education in Malaysian Schools

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Abstract: The transformation of Islamic Education pedagogy in Malaysian schools has become increasingly important in response to technological change, evolving learner needs, and growing demands for inclusive and contextually responsive teaching. Guided by PRISMA guidelines, this systematic literature review synthesises 22 peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2025 to examine contemporary pedagogical approaches and teaching practices in Malaysian school-based Islamic Education. The analysis identifies five interrelated themes: (1) digital and technology-integrated instruction; (2) student-centred and active learning; (3) culturally responsive and multicultural pedagogy; (4) integrative and values-based pedagogical approaches; and (5) specialised and inclusive pedagogy for students with special educational needs (SEN). Overall, the reviewed literature indicates an increasing emphasis on technology-enhanced and learner-centred practices, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and broader educational transformation. However, implementation remains uneven because of limitations in teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), disparities in infrastructure and access, insufficient multicultural resources and competencies, and inadequate adaptation of teaching materials for learners with special educational needs. The review suggests that future development should prioritise sustained teacher professional learning, equitable access to educational resources, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inclusive instructional adaptation. These measures may strengthen Islamic Education's capacity to remain pedagogically relevant while maintaining its spiritual, ethical, and educational foundations.

Keywords: Islamic Education, teaching methods, contemporary pedagogy, Malaysian schools, systematic literature review, 21st-century teaching and learning

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Islamic Education in Malaysia has undergone significant transformation over the past decade and a half, driven by technological advancements, educational policy reforms, and evolving societal needs. The Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM 2013-2025) has emphasised the importance of 21st-century learning skills, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, fundamentally reshaping pedagogical expectations for all subjects, including Islamic Education (Rahayu et al., 2025; Rashed et al., 2025).

The COVID-19 pandemic served as an important catalyst for digital transformation in Islamic Education, requiring teachers to adapt rapidly to online and blended learning environments. This period highlighted both the potential and the limitations of technology-mediated instruction, particularly regarding teacher readiness, access to digital resources, and the suitability of online approaches for different groups of learners (Ab Rahman et al., 2021; Rashed & Hanipah, 2022). In the post-pandemic period, digital technologies have therefore become an increasingly important component of Islamic Education pedagogy. However, the extent and effectiveness of their integration continue to vary across educational contexts.

At the same time, the Malaysian educational context requires Islamic Education pedagogy to remain responsive to cultural and learner diversity. Although Islamic Education primarily serves Muslim students, these learners come from diverse ethnic, linguistic, regional, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Contemporary teaching practices must therefore consider how Islamic values can be communicated through examples, learning activities, and classroom interactions that are relevant to diverse student experiences. Within this context, the National Education Philosophy's emphasis on balanced

development across physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions provides an important foundation for examining contemporary pedagogical approaches in Islamic Education.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite policy directives and technological advancements, research consistently indicates persistent challenges in the quality of Islamic Education teaching. Studies have shown that many teachers continue to employ traditional, teacher-centred methods that focus primarily on syllabus completion and examination preparation rather than on holistic student development (Suhid et al., 2021; Omar, 2021).

Several key problems have been identified in the literature. First, there is a significant gap between policy aspirations for technology integration and classroom realities, particularly in semi-urban and rural schools where infrastructure and connectivity remain inadequate (Bin Jamil et al., 2024; Rahimah & Rosnani, 2018). Second, many Islamic Education teachers lack the technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) necessary to effectively integrate digital tools into values-based instruction (Hadri & Hamzah, 2025; Suhid et al., 2021). Third, students with special educational needs (SEN) face accessibility barriers because mainstream Islamic Education materials are rarely adapted to diverse learning profiles (Norddin & Wan Muda, 2025; Nor, 2021). Fourth, multicultural competence among teachers remains inconsistent; reliance on Malay-centric instructional examples risks alienating non-Malay Muslim cohorts (such as indigenous, Sabah, Sarawak, and convert students) and undermines preparation for pluralistic societal interaction.

These persistent problems underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive, systematic review of contemporary teaching methods in Islamic Education to identify effective practices, gaps, and future directions. This study addresses these gaps through three primary objectives: (1) to identify contemporary Islamic Education teaching methods in Malaysian schools from 2010 to 2025; (2) to evaluate their reported effectiveness and implementation challenges; and (3) to formulate actionable recommendations for teaching practice, educational policy, and future scholarly research.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The SLR approach was selected because it enables a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable synthesis of existing research evidence (Norddin & Wan Muda, 2025), as illustrated in Figure 1.

2.2 Search Strategy

Electronic database searches were conducted across multiple platforms, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, ProQuest, and MyCite (Malaysian Citation Centre). Keywords and search strings included combinations of: "Islamic Education teaching methods," "contemporary pedagogy Islamic Education Malaysia," "digital Islamic Education," "multicultural Islamic education," "TPACK Islamic education," "special needs Islamic education," and "21st century Islamic education".

Additionally, manual searching of Malaysian Islamic education journals was conducted, including the Online Journal of Islamic Education (O-JIE), Journal of Islamic and Arabic Education, Jurnal Kurikulum & Pengajaran Asia Pasifik, Jurnal Usuluddin, and Jurnal Hadhari. The initial electronic search yielded 1,287 records across the five target databases: Google Scholar (n = 642), Scopus (n = 208), ProQuest (n = 171), ERIC (n = 143), and MyCite (n = 123). Manual searches of targeted Malaysian journals yielded an additional 72 records, bringing the total to 1,359.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were established as follows: (a) peer-reviewed journal articles or conference proceedings published between January 2010 and June 2025; (b) studies conducted in Malaysian school contexts (preschool, primary, secondary, or vocational college); (c) focus on Islamic Education teaching methods, pedagogy, or instructional strategies; (d) empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods), conceptual papers with clear theoretical frameworks, or systematic reviews; (e) articles in Malay or English; and (f) full-text availability.

Exclusion criteria included: (a) non-peer-reviewed sources (e.g., opinion pieces, unpublished theses unless officially indexed); (b) studies conducted outside Malaysia; (c) articles focusing solely on curriculum content without pedagogical discussion; (d) studies focused exclusively on higher education (university-level) Islamic Education; and (e) duplicate publications. Table 1 presents the eligibility framework for inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 1: Eligibility Criteria Framework

Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Temporal Horizon	January 2010 – June 2025	Pre-2010 publications
Geographic Context	Malaysian school systems (Preschool through Vocational/Secondary)	International contexts; Higher Education / University level
Substantive Focus	Instructional methods, pedagogical frameworks, and strategies in Islamic Education	Core curriculum design or theological content without pedagogical analysis
Study Type	Peer-reviewed empirical designs (Qualitative, Quantitative, Mixed-Methods), conceptual frameworks, SLRs	Non-peer-reviewed essays, op-eds, or unindexed master's theses
Language	English and Malay	Languages other than English or Malay

2.4 Data Extraction and Analysis

Across all database (n = 1,287) and manual (n = 72) search sources, a combined total of 1,359 records were identified. Prior to title and abstract screening, 527 duplicate records were identified and removed, leaving 832 unique records for initial screening. Title and abstract screening resulted in the exclusion of 724 records that did not meet the inclusion criteria or were not set within Malaysian school contexts. The remaining 108 articles underwent full-text assessment for eligibility. Of these, 86 articles were excluded for specific reasons: 27 were conducted outside Malaysia, 22 lacked a direct focus on teaching methods or pedagogy, 14 focused exclusively on higher education, 13 were non-empirical or irrelevant, and 10 were duplicate publications. Ultimately, 22 peer-reviewed articles met all criteria and were included in the final synthesis. Data extraction from the 22 included studies focused on author(s), year of publication, research method, sample characteristics, teaching method investigated, key findings regarding effectiveness, and identified challenges or limitations, as illustrated in Figure 1.

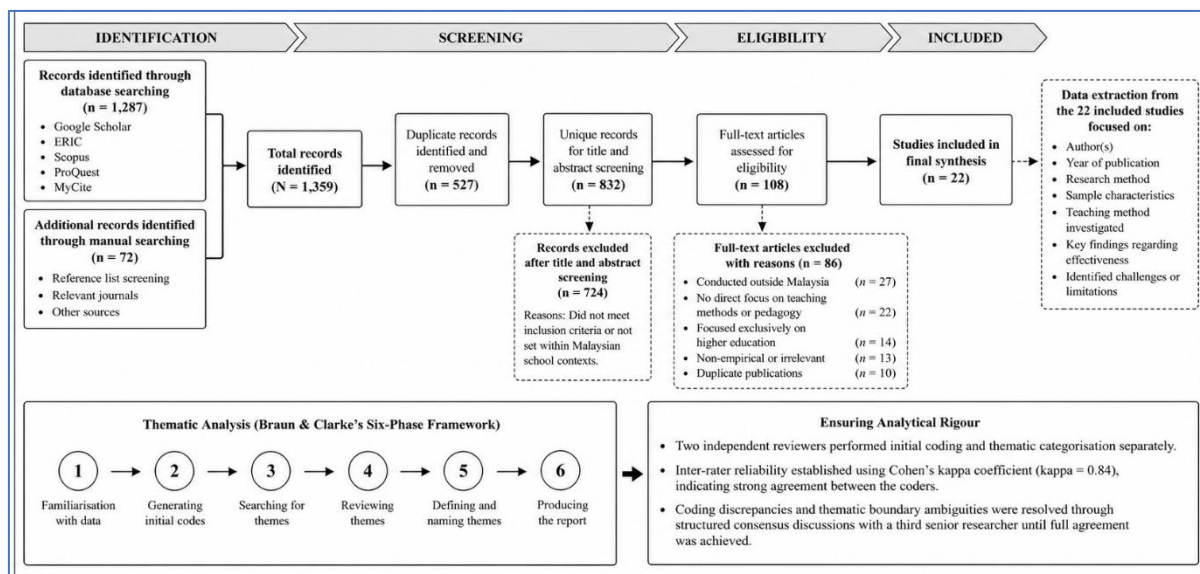


Figure 1: Methodology Flow Diagram: Systematic Literature Review on Contemporary Methods of Teaching Islamic Education in Malaysian Schools. (PRISMA-Adapted)

Thematic analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework to identify patterns across the included studies. The analysis followed a primarily inductive approach, while remaining guided by the review objectives. Initial codes were generated from the reported pedagogical approaches, learner groups, instructional contexts, outcomes, and implementation challenges. Related codes were subsequently compared and grouped into broader themes through iterative review and refinement. The final thematic structure comprised five interrelated dimensions of contemporary Islamic Education pedagogy: digital and technology-integrated instruction; student-centred and active learning; culturally responsive and multicultural pedagogy; integrative and values-based pedagogical approaches; and specialised and inclusive pedagogy for students with special educational needs.

2.5 Critical Appraisal and Quality Assessment

All 22 selected articles were critically appraised using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Tools (JBI, 2020) and supplementary quality criteria for non-empirical sources. The JBI framework provided standardised checklists to evaluate diverse study designs, including qualitative, quantitative, and systematic reviews, as well as conceptual papers (Aromataris & Munn, 2020). Empirical papers were assessed on sample representativeness, data collection appropriateness, and analytical rigour. Conceptual papers and theoretical frameworks were evaluated using adapted standards emphasising theoretical clarity, scope definition, synthesis rigour, and conceptual coherence (Moola et al., 2020). Evidence was weighted by methodological strength: robust empirical studies were prioritised for conclusions on pedagogical effectiveness and classroom outcomes, while conceptual frameworks and secondary reviews contextualised theoretical foundations, policy directives, and implementation challenges.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the 22 articles revealed five major thematic categories of contemporary teaching methods in Islamic Education: (1) digital and technology-integrated instruction; (2) student-centred pedagogical approaches; (3) multicultural and inclusive education elements; (4) integrative and values-based curriculum approaches; and (5) specialised pedagogy for students with special educational needs, as illustrated in Figure 2.

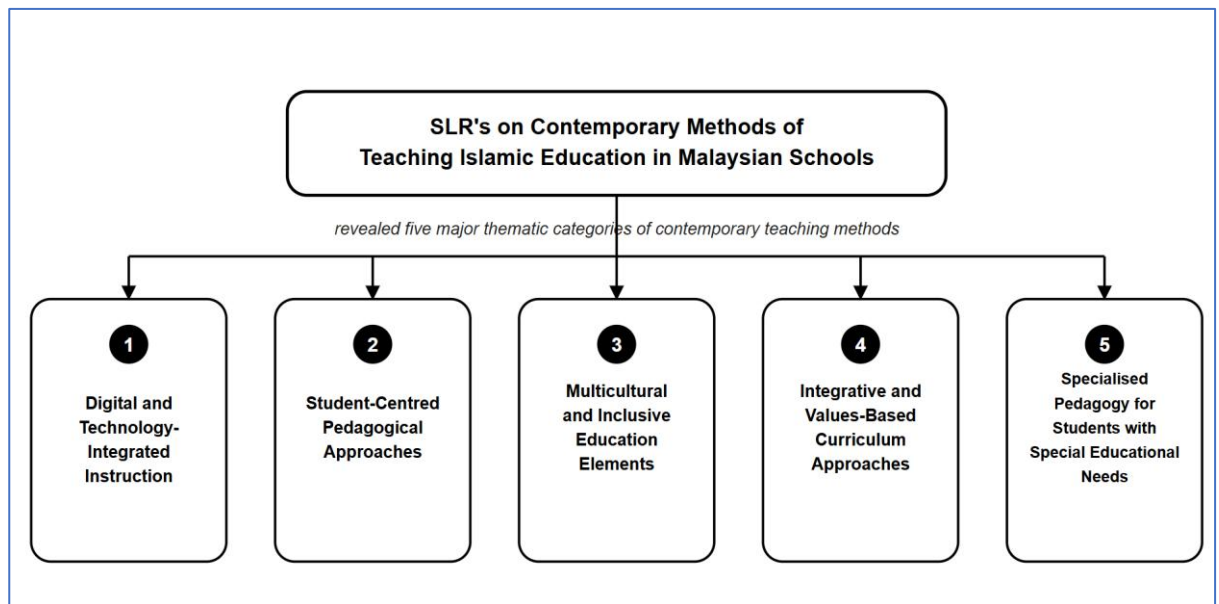


Figure 2: Five Major Thematic Categories of Contemporary Teaching Methods in Islamic Education in Malaysia

3.1 Digital and Technology-Integrated Instruction

3.1.1 TPACK Framework and Digital Competence

One of the most prominent developments identified in the reviewed literature is the increasing emphasis on teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) and the integration of digital technologies into Islamic Education. Hadri and Hamzah (2025) conducted a concept paper analysing 50 recent articles (2020-2025) on digital instruction in the al-Syariah Dini subject within Malaysia's Dini Integrated Curriculum (KBD). Their findings demonstrated that effective digital integration requires teachers to synthesise three knowledge domains: content knowledge (Islamic law and values), pedagogical knowledge (teaching strategies), and technological knowledge (digital tools). In the reviewed literature, the TPACK framework serves as an important lens for understanding Islamic Education teachers' readiness to integrate technology into instruction.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education's 2023 Digital Education Policy explicitly calls for developing teachers' digital competencies and preparing students for lifelong learning with technology (Hadri & Hamzah, 2025). However, studies indicate that many Islamic Education teachers remain cautious about digital learning, expressing concerns that technology might undermine moral instruction, citing insufficient training, and feeling that it might disrupt traditional teaching methods (Suhaimi & Baharudin, 2021). Despite these concerns, evidence suggests that digital tools can enhance Islamic Education when appropriately integrated. Teachers using online platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom have reported increased student engagement, easier access to resources, and greater teaching flexibility. Gamification and flipped classroom approaches have proven particularly effective in aligning with contemporary student motivation patterns (Abdul Rahman et al., 2020; Bashah & Zulkifli, 2022).

3.1.2 Mobile Applications and E-Learning

Mobile learning applications continue to represent a significant innovation in Islamic Education pedagogy. Building on earlier work by Nawati et al. (2014), subsequent studies have confirmed the potential of mobile apps for delivering Islamic Education. Recent research has focused on developing applications for specific purposes, including Quranic recitation, prayer learning, and Islamic jurisprudence.

Rashed et al. (2025) examined strategies for integrating Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0) concepts into Islamic Education. While advanced tools such as learning analytics, cloud-based resource sharing, and interactive simulations offer promise for customising religious instruction, their practical classroom application remains in its early stages. The authors emphasise that technology adoption must directly serve holistic human capital development across physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual domains.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of e-learning in Islamic Education. Ab Rahman et al. (2021) examined the challenges of teaching and learning Islamic Education in special education for students with learning disabilities during the pandemic. The study revealed that while online platforms enabled continuity of education, they also posed unique challenges for students with special needs, including limited accessibility features and reduced quality of teacher-student interaction.

3.1.3 Blended and Hybrid Learning Models

Post-pandemic, blended learning models combining face-to-face and online instruction have become increasingly prevalent. Anzaruddin (2022) investigated teaching approaches used by Islamic Education teachers to inspire prayer practices among Form 2 students in the Gombak district. The study found that teachers combined teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, incorporating ICT tools such as slide presentations, YouTube videos, and QR codes for exercises, alongside traditional methods such as explanations, exemplary stories, advice, monitoring, practice sessions, role modelling, and memorisation.

This blended approach aligns with international trends in religious education. Rahayu et al. (2025) conducted a comparative study of the Malaysian KSSM Islamic Education curriculum and Singapore's 21st-century values and competency-based curriculum. The study found that while Singapore consistently emphasises a social constructivist approach through its "Teach Less, Learn More" strategy, Malaysia faces ongoing challenges in teacher training and digital infrastructure, which affect the effective implementation of 21st-century pedagogy.

3.2 Student-Centered Pedagogical Approaches

3.2.1 Constructivist and Active Learning

The shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning represents a fundamental transformation in Islamic Education pedagogy. Rahayu et al. (2025) noted that KSSM explicitly emphasises a constructivist approach, encouraging student-centred learning, active participation, and reflective skills by fostering understanding of Islamic values in real-life contexts. Project-based learning, contextual learning, and collaborative learning have been integrated as forms of transformation from traditional teacher-centred approaches.

This pedagogical transformation is framed as a response to the perceived failure of traditional systems to prepare students for contemporary realities (Hashim, 2020). Contemporary pedagogical development does not necessarily require the complete replacement of traditional Islamic teaching practices. Rather, the reviewed literature suggests a growing effort to combine established approaches, such as teacher explanation, storytelling, role modelling, demonstration, and guided practice, with more learner-centred strategies that encourage participation, reflection, collaboration, and the application of Islamic values in contemporary contexts. The key pedagogical issue is therefore not a simple transition from "traditional" to "modern" teaching, but the development of appropriate combinations of instructional approaches according to learning objectives, student characteristics, and educational contexts. Consequently, teacher training through the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education (IPGM) and universities has been directed at strengthening innovative pedagogical competencies, including technology integration, value reflection, and Sharia-based problem-solving (Bin Jamil et al., 2024).

3.2.2 Active Learning in Practice

Empirical studies have documented various active learning strategies in Islamic Education classrooms. Anzaruddin (2022) found that students perceived teachers' explanations as the most effective approach for motivating prayer practice, with exemplary stories and persuasive advice being particularly influential. This finding suggests that even within student-centred frameworks, teacher explanation remains valuable when delivered in engaging, narrative-rich formats.

Action research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of creative, student-centred methods for marginalised student populations. A study of *Orang Asli* (indigenous) students, documented in the ICMuD proceedings (2013), showed that innovative methods such as "*Silat Jawi*" (martial arts-inspired Arabic letter recognition) and role-playing with songs to teach the components of ablution (*wuduk*) significantly reduced disruptive behaviour and increased student engagement. These findings demonstrate that creative, kinesthetic approaches can be particularly effective for students with limited prior exposure to Islamic Education or those facing language barriers.

3.3 Multicultural and Inclusive Education Elements

Given Malaysia's multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, multicultural sensitivity in Islamic Education remains critically important. Building on earlier work by Omar et al. (2014), recent studies have continued to emphasise the importance of incorporating cultural diversity into Islamic Education. The Islamic Education curriculum in Malaysia must address the reality that students live in a pluralistic society with diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds (Rahayu et al., 2025).

Rahayu et al. (2025) conducted a comparative analysis of Malaysia's KSSM and Singapore's competency-based curriculum, highlighting that while Malaysia emphasises spiritual and religious values rooted in Islamic traditions through a structured, thematic curriculum, Singapore promotes a more multicultural and value-neutral approach with strong emphasis on global competencies and critical thinking. The study concluded that an integrative curriculum model combining Malaysia's spiritual foundation with Singapore's multicultural perspective may enhance the development of holistic and regionally relevant Islamic Education.

However, challenges in implementing multicultural education persist. Time constraints, teacher attitudes resistant to learning local cultures, and limited reading materials about other cultures continue to hinder comprehensive multicultural integration. Teachers face particular difficulty providing diverse examples within limited class time while also covering required syllabus content (Omar et al., 2014).

3.4 Integrative and Values-Based Curriculum Approaches

The integration of revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge remains a fundamental concern in Islamic Education philosophy. The Malaysian KSSM Islamic Education curriculum continues to emphasise this integration, aiming to develop students who can apply Islamic values across all aspects of life (Rahayu et al., 2025).

The j-QAF program (*Jawi, Quran, Arabic, Fardhu Ain*) remains a key integrative initiative. However, research indicates that implementation remains inconsistent, with some teachers treating components separately rather than holistically. The integration of 21st-century competencies with Islamic values presents an ongoing challenge, as teachers must balance the development of critical thinking and technological skills with the maintenance of spiritual and moral foundations (Rashed et al., 2025).

Al-Zarnuji's classical learning principles continue to inform contemporary Islamic Education pedagogy. Tengku Abdul Aziz et al. (2025) examined the integration of Al-Zarnuji's learning principles with the Malaysian National Education Philosophy to develop an integrated model of Islamic spiritual intelligence.

This integration demonstrates the continuing relevance of classical Islamic educational thought for contemporary pedagogical challenges.

3.5 Specialised Pedagogy for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

3.5.1 Overview of SEN Research

One of the most significant developments in contemporary Islamic Education research is the growing focus on students with special educational needs. Norddin and Wan Muda (2025) conducted a systematic literature review examining the significance of Islamic Education among SEN students in Malaysia, analysing 21 articles. The review identified three major themes regarding significance: (1) significance to teachers, (2) significance to the country, and (3) significance to students.

The study emphasised that education should not focus only on typical students, but greater emphasis should also be given to SEN. Islamic Education should prioritise instilling pure Islamic values among SEN, so they always stay on the right path. This finding aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commitment to inclusive, equitable, quality education.

3.5.2 Teaching Strategies for Hearing-Impaired Students

Research on teaching Islamic Education to hearing-impaired students has identified specific challenges and strategies. Ali et al. (2021) examined issues and challenges in 21st-century learning of special education (hearing-impaired) in Islamic Education, finding that teachers face significant difficulties in adapting standard curricula for deaf learners. Communication barriers, limited sign language proficiency among teachers, and a lack of specialised resources were identified as major constraints.

Dzulkifli et al. (2020) investigated teacher communication when teaching the Quran to special-needs pupils with hearing disabilities. The study emphasised the importance of visual learning approaches, including clear visuals, stable and attractive colours, appropriate fonts, and the integration of sign language. The Fakihi method (number and colour-based Quranic learning) and Arabic finger spelling were identified as effective approaches for hearing-impaired Quranic education.

Mohd Rashid and Shahrudin (2024) examined Islamic Studies students' perceptions of the importance of religious education for deaf individuals, finding strong recognition among university students that deaf individuals have the same right to Islamic Education as hearing individuals. This awareness among future educators is encouraging for the development of inclusive Islamic Education.

3.5.3 Teaching Strategies for Students with Learning Disabilities

Yusmini and Azura (2019) examined the importance of Islamic values for the self-development of learning-disabled students, identifying three core components of value: faith (*aqidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and morality (*akhlak*). The study emphasised that effective teaching approaches for this population include practical demonstration, role modelling, direct instruction, and consistent repetition. Values should be taught according to students' cognitive levels rather than chronological ages, and the concept of *taklif* (religious responsibility) should be adapted according to individual capacity.

Harun et al. (2021) investigated Islamic Education teachers' teaching in inclusive classes, identifying current phenomena and the need for forming new teaching models. The study found that teachers in inclusive classrooms face unique challenges, including managing diverse ability levels within a single classroom, adapting materials for multiple learning profiles, and balancing attention between special-needs students and mainstream students.

Mustafa and Mohd Zhaffar (2024) examined Islamic Education teaching strategies for special education, identifying effective approaches including multisensory teaching, concrete materials, structured repetition, and positive reinforcement. The study emphasised that teacher creativity and flexibility are essential for successful inclusive Islamic Education.

3.5.4 Challenges in SENS Islamic Education

Multiple studies have identified consistent challenges in providing Islamic Education to SENS. Ishak et al. (2020) examined challenges in implementing Islamic Education for students with special needs, identifying teacher competency gaps, inadequate specialised training, limited appropriate resources, and insufficient administrative support as major barriers.

Ab Rahman et al. (2021) specifically examined pandemic-era challenges in Islamic Education for students with learning disabilities in special education. The transition to online learning exacerbated existing challenges, as students with learning disabilities often require hands-on, multisensory instruction that is difficult to deliver virtually. Additionally, reduced quality of teacher-student interaction and limited parental support for online religious learning were identified as significant obstacles.

Nor (2021) emphasised the role of Islamic Education teachers as murabbi (educators who nurture spiritual and moral development) for children with special needs. The study argued that SENS require not merely content delivery but holistic nurturing addressing their emotional and spiritual needs. This requires teachers to possess not only pedagogical skills but also patience, empathy, and deep commitment to inclusive Islamic values.

3.6 Synthesis of Findings

While contemporary Islamic Education teaching methods in Malaysian schools (2010–2025) demonstrate widespread evolution, evaluating the literature across study designs, educational levels, and methodological quality reveals critical nuances underlying this paradigm shift. Table 2 synthesises the research designs, context levels, and evidence grades of the included studies.

Table 2: Methodological Synthesis and Evidence Grading of Included Studies

Theme	Study Design Distribution	Educational Level Context	Evidence Strength / Rigour Grade	Key Pedagogical Syntheses & Findings
Digital & Technology Integration	Conceptual ($n = 1$), Empirical ($n = 3$), Comparative ($n = 2$)	Primary, Secondary, Vocational / KBD	Moderate to High: Empirical surveys & comparative studies show strong engagement; conceptual papers highlight TPACK barriers.	Digital tools (e.g., Google Classroom, mobile apps, IR4.0 tools) enhance student motivation and engagement, though implementation remains constrained by rural infrastructure and variable teacher TPACK readiness.
Student-Centred Pedagogy	Empirical ($n = 1$), Comparative ($n = 1$), Conceptual ($n = 2$)	Secondary, Teacher Training (IPGM)	Moderate: High qualitative depth; limited large-scale quantitative intervention trials on long-term retention.	Constructivist and project-based approaches significantly improve active learning and engagement, but teacher explanations and narrative instruction remain vital for values internalisation.
Multicultural & Inclusive Elements	Comparative ($n = 1$), Qualitative ($n = 1$)	Primary, Secondary	Moderate: Strong qualitative/comparative insights; needs broader	Cultural integration fosters social cohesion, though tight class

			empirical validation across diverse demographics.	schedules, limited multicultural learning resources, and gaps in teacher training hamper its implementation.
Integrative & Values-Based Curriculum	Concept=($n = 2$)	Primary, Secondary	Low to Moderate: Conceptual frameworks and theoretical models; lacks direct empirical classroom testing.	Synthesis of classical Islamic learning principles (e.g., Al-Zarnuji) with national frameworks provides robust theoretical models for spiritual and intellectual development.
Specialised Pedagogy for SENS	Systematic Revi=($n = 1$), Empirical / Qualitat=($n = 7$)	Special Education (Primary & Secondary: Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Learning Disabilities)	High: Robust empirical focus and qualitative designs; provides strong evidence for multisensory and visual adaptation.	Strong evidence supports visual methods (Fakih, Arabic fingerspelling), concrete materials, and direct instruction for SENS; online learning during COVID-19 severely hindered hands-on religious instruction.

Between 2010 and 2025, COVID-19 accelerated the integration of digital technologies in Islamic Education, expanding student engagement and access to resources. Although the TPACK framework highlights teacher readiness, educators often lack adequate preparation to integrate technology into values-based subjects (Hadri & Hamzah, 2025; Suhid et al., 2021). Consequently, while secondary and vocational institutions adapt quickly due to higher digital literacy, the primary, rural, and special education sectors continue to face severe constraints in adaptation and infrastructure.

Islamic Education policies increasingly champion constructivist, project-based, learner-centred approaches. However, classroom implementation remains inconsistent because teachers struggle to balance active learning with the teacher's traditional authority and core Islamic values (Anzaruddin, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2025). Furthermore, claims of widespread adoption stem primarily from policy literature rather than practical evidence; empirical findings indicate that direct instruction, storytelling, and guided explanation remain indispensable alongside active learning for spiritual and moral internalisation.

Research increasingly emphasises that Special Educational Needs Students (SEN) share equal rights to Islamic values education (Norddin & Wan Muda, 2025; Nor, 2021). Backed by robust qualitative field data in primary special education contexts, visual learning models and multisensory tools demonstrate high efficacy for deaf learners and those with learning disabilities. However, emergency online instruction proved ineffective for this cohort. Nevertheless, systemic implementation gaps persist, particularly in teacher training, resource limitations, and infrastructure inadequacies.

Despite policy efforts to promote national unity, multicultural integration within Islamic Education teaching remains incomplete. Educators struggle to source cross-cultural materials, provide diverse cultural examples, and reconcile Islamic particularism with universal values (Omar et al., 2014; Rahayu et al., 2025). While qualitative evidence demonstrates that cultural integration fosters social cohesion, establishing standardised best practices requires broader empirical validation across diverse demographic settings.

3.7 Comparison with Previous Reviews

Between 2010 and 2025, Islamic Education research matured, evolving beyond basic technology adoption to integrate frameworks like TPACK, social constructivism, and inclusive education theory. Scholarship expanded to address specialised populations (SEN, indigenous, and multicultural learners)

and targeted outcomes such as prayer practice, Quranic recitation, and moral development. Additionally, pandemic-era studies highlighted teacher resilience amid crisis-driven digital shifts while also revealing persistent structural inequities in access to and preparation for technology.

3.8 Identified Gaps

Despite research progress, several critical gaps remain: multi-year longitudinal studies tracking academic, spiritual, and behavioural outcomes are absent, while inquiries into specific disabilities beyond hearing and general learning difficulties, such as autism, visual, and physical impairments, remain sparse. Furthermore, the discipline lacks comparative cross-national studies between Malaysia and other contexts, as well as research that directly centres the voices of Special Educational Needs (SEN) students to guide inclusive pedagogy.

3.9 Theoretical Implications

This review advances educational theory by demonstrating how universal pedagogical principles apply to Islamic Education. It confirms TPACK's relevance to values-based contexts, requiring teachers to integrate content, pedagogy, and technology alongside Islamic values and spiritual goals (Hadri & Hamzah, 2025). Furthermore, student-centred constructivism enhances engagement without compromising teacher authority or core religious values. Finally, evidence shows that students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) thrive with tailored adaptations, reinforcing the fundamental Islamic principle that religious responsibility (*taklif*) is proportional to individual capacity.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

This systematic literature review examined contemporary teaching methods in Islamic Education in Malaysian schools between 2010 and 2025, analysing 22 peer-reviewed articles. The synthesis identified five major methodological themes: digital and technology-integrated instruction, student-centred pedagogical approaches, multicultural and inclusive education elements, integrative and values-based curriculum approaches, and specialised pedagogy for students with special educational needs. The review also demonstrates growing attention to inclusive Islamic Education for students with special educational needs, with emerging evidence for effective strategies including multisensory approaches, visual learning, sign language integration, and adapted materials. Despite this progress, significant gaps remain in teacher preparation, resource provision, and administrative support for inclusive Islamic Education.

4.2 Recommendations for Practice

To enhance Islamic Education practice, teacher professional development must prioritise sustained, practice-based TPACK training, mentoring, and multicultural modules to effectively integrate digital tools into values-based instruction within Malaysia's diverse cultural contexts. Simultaneously, educational authorities should ensure equitable technology infrastructure for under-resourced and rural schools, develop curated digital Islamic resources, and expand inclusive education capacity through specialised Special Educational Needs (SEN) training, sign language proficiency, and inter-departmental collaboration. Lastly, curriculum and assessment frameworks require reform to evaluate higher-order thinking, practical competencies, and the internalisation of values, rather than relying solely on content recall.

4.3 Recommendations for Policy

Policy initiatives in Islamic Education should focus on establishing a comprehensive national technology integration framework that defines standards for digital resources, teacher competence benchmarks, and infrastructure requirements. Additionally, national Special Educational Needs (SEN)

guidelines must be developed to standardise curriculum adaptations, assessment accommodations, and resource allocations across disability categories. Finally, educational authorities should increase funding for longitudinal and intervention research and create a national research network to coordinate scholarly efforts and disseminate findings effectively.

4.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Future scholarship in inclusive Islamic Education should prioritise longitudinal tracking of academic achievement, religious praxis, and moral development, alongside targeted research into adaptive strategies for specific conditions such as autism, visual impairments, and complex comorbidities. Additionally, expanding comparative cross-national frameworks between Malaysia and other Muslim-majority or minority contexts, while centring qualitative research on the voices of Special Educational Needs (SEN) students, will provide essential macro-level and stakeholder insights. Finally, the field must advance empirical rigour through design-based research (DBR), randomised controlled trials (RCTs), and evaluations of assistive technology tools to effectively bridge theoretical inclusivity and classroom practice.

4.5 Limitations

This review has several key limitations, including the exclusion of non-peer-reviewed literature; potential publication bias favouring positive outcomes; a geographic scope restricted to Malaysia, which limits generalizability; and the rapid pace of technological change, which renders findings on specific digital tools quickly outdated. Nevertheless, this systematic review offers a comprehensive, evidence-based foundation for understanding contemporary Islamic Education teaching methods in Malaysia, providing practical guidance for educators, administrators, policymakers, and researchers pursuing holistic student development.

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