

Islamic Values as an Ethical Foundation for Social Change in Global Education

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 November 2024

Revised 02 December 2024

Accepted 12 December 2024

Key words:

Islamic education,
globalization,
ukhuwah,
justice,
compassion,
cultural homogenization,
local values.

ABSTRACT

Globalization of education accelerates the circulation of knowledge, technology, educational standards, and cultural practices while reshaping learners' social relations and cultural identities. This article examines how the Islamic values of *ukhuwah*, *'adl*, and *rahmah* can provide an ethical foundation for responding to social changes associated with educational globalization, particularly cultural homogenization and pressures on local values. The study employs an integrative literature approach by comparing theoretical works on globalization, Islamic education, moral education, and cultural diversity and synthesizing their conceptual relationships. The synthesis indicates that *ukhuwah* frames education through solidarity and social responsibility, *'adl* provides a normative basis for equitable access and fair cultural representation, and *rahmah* directs educational change toward compassion and respect for human dignity. Together, these values support selective engagement with global educational developments rather than either unrestricted acceptance or cultural isolation. They also enable local traditions to be maintained critically by preserving practices compatible with justice, solidarity, and human dignity while allowing ethically necessary change. Islamic education can consequently develop global openness while sustaining moral orientation, cultural plurality, and socially rooted identity.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has expanded interregional connections through the increasingly rapid flow of knowledge, technology, people, information, and institutional practices. Education has become one of the areas undergoing the most intense changes as educational institutions grapple with international standards, digital technology, academic mobility, and the exchange of ideas across societies (Mense et al., 2018). Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) define globalization as a process that broadens and deepens social relationships beyond territorial boundaries, such that changes in one region become increasingly interconnected with dynamics occurring in other regions. In education, this interconnectedness enables students to access a broader range of knowledge sources while simultaneously exposing them to diverse value systems. The globalization of education, therefore, cannot be understood merely as an increase in access to knowledge. This phenomenon also transforms how society views identity, social relationships, cultural authority, and the goals of

education (Vasilyeva & Sinagatullin, 2020). These changes demand an ethical foundation capable of maintaining openness to global developments while preserving the significance of the values that thrive within society.

The relationship between globalization and education manifests through changes in policy, curriculum, learning technologies, academic language, and institutional models (Francois, 2015). Burbules and Torres (2000) demonstrate that the globalization of education is linked to the development of transnational economies, international media, communication technologies, and global institutions that influence educational policies and practices in various countries. In the field of education, technological advancements provide convenience and opportunities to expand access to information, learning resources, and more effective teaching methods (Arifin & Darmawan, 2021). Access to technology alone is insufficient to guarantee learning outcomes; strategies emphasizing self-directed learning together with adequate learning facilities

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determine how far such convenience translates into real academic gains (Imanuddin & Darmawan, 2024). These developments can broaden learning opportunities and accelerate the dissemination of knowledge, but at the same time, they establish certain standards regarding educational competencies, success, and modernity. This is reinforced by evidence that a supportive school environment together with student independence contributes significantly to academic achievement, indicating that global standards of success cannot be separated from the local conditions in which learning takes place (Haqiqi & Darmawan, 2023). When global standards are accepted without critical evaluation, educational practices may drift away from the social experiences of the communities where education takes place. Students then find themselves caught between global demands and the religious and cultural values that shape their daily lives. The main issue is not choosing between the global and the local in absolute terms, but rather determining a foundation of values that allows education to embrace beneficial developments while maintaining its moral orientation and social identity.

The cultural dimension plays a central role in this transformation because globalization has accelerated the circulation of symbols, languages, lifestyles, images of success, and consumption patterns through communication technologies (Steger, 2023). The development of digital technology has transformed human communication through the internet and mobile devices, creating a new public sphere that is global, fast-paced, and interactive (Rifaid et al., 2024). A comparable shift is visible in early education, where digital approaches have begun reshaping how children's character is formed from an early age, showing that the effects of digitalization extend well beyond communication patterns alone (Aryani et al., 2024). Appadurai (1996) explains that migration and electronic mediation allow various images of life to move beyond national borders and are subsequently reinterpreted by the receiving society. This perspective suggests that globalization does not always result in perfect homogenization, as societies can interpret global elements differently. Nevertheless, the dominance of certain cultural products can foster a tendency toward homogenization as choices, tastes, language, and measures of prestige increasingly align with globally disseminated patterns. Education also serves as a channel for this process through

instructional materials, language, technology, career guidance, and representations of advanced societies. If students do not acquire the ethical capacity to evaluate these cultural currents, their acceptance of global elements risks occurring without consideration of how well they align with religious values, social solidarity, and the traditions alive in their communities.

In Islamic education, social changes resulting from globalization have created a need to establish a healthy balance between intellectual openness and steadfast values. This concern is pressing given that heavy engagement with social media has been shown to influence student morality independently of academic achievement in Islamic religious education, signaling that intellectual openness without adequate ethical guidance carries real risks (Al Mursyidi & Darmawan, 2023). Islamic education focuses on shaping individuals who are knowledgeable and morally grounded in their relationships with God, fellow human beings, and society. Problems arise when the success of education is increasingly measured by competitiveness, economic mobility, technological proficiency, and mastery of global competencies, while the development of fair and caring social relationships receives less attention (Saepudin, 2022). This situation can exacerbate individualism, unhealthy competition, or the disconnection of students from their cultural environments. Addressing this disconnection calls for a collaborative strategy between family, school, and society, as such partnerships have proven effective in countering moral decline among adolescents amid digital disruption (Anshorullah et al., 2025). Islamic values can serve as a foundation for evaluating these changes through principles that govern social relationships. A framework grounded in Islamic human capital principles offers one practical model for translating these values into concrete educational management, ensuring that spiritual and social dimensions are managed as deliberately as academic ones (Darmawan, 2021). Ukhuwah grounds human relationships in bonds of solidarity; 'adl guides fair and proportionate treatment; and rahmah fosters compassion and respect for human dignity. These three values can be interpreted as an ethical framework for education in the face of global change.

Ukhuwah has a meaning that goes beyond emotional closeness among people. The complexity of social life has prompted educators

and researchers to develop educational approaches that focus not only on cognitive abilities but also on interpersonal skills, cooperation, and social responsibility (Hariani et al., 2021). Measuring the success of such approaches nonetheless remains difficult, since conventional assessment tends to privilege cognitive indicators over the spiritual and social affective domains that ukhuwah actually addresses (An Nafisah et al., 2025). In the educational context, this value emphasizes interconnectedness, social responsibility, cooperation, and the recognition that individual development occurs within relationships with others. The value of 'adl provides a standard to ensure that educational reforms do not result in an unequal distribution of opportunities, cultural discrimination, or the evaluation of individuals solely based on their economic and academic capabilities (Adytiya et al., 2024). Realizing this standard in practice depends heavily on teacher competence and parental attention, both of which have been found to shape students' character formation more directly than curriculum design alone (Firmansyah & Darmawan, 2023). Meanwhile, rahmah places compassion, empathy, and respect for humanity at the core of educational relationships. Character development research supports this emphasis, showing that school culture combined with a supportive parenting style contributes meaningfully to how compassion and empathy are cultivated in students (Dena & Darmawan, 2024). These three values are mutually complementary. 'Ukhuwah without justice can turn into exclusive solidarity that prioritizes certain groups. Justice without 'rahmah can be interpreted too formally and lose sensitivity to human conditions. 'Rahmah without a measure of justice can remain mere sympathy that does not resolve inequalities. The interconnection of these three values provides a normative foundation that can be used to interpret social change in a more focused manner.

The scientific issue that still requires clarification lies in the relationship between Islamic values and the social changes brought about by the globalization of education. Discussions on the globalization of education often focus on issues of identity, modernization, technology, or curriculum reform, whereas discussions on Islamic education tend to emphasize the preservation of religious identity and moral development. The conceptual relationship between ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah and mechanisms of social change such as cultural

homogenization, changing patterns of relationships, shifts in measures of success, and the diminishing authority of local values has not always been explained as a coherent line of argument. As a result, Islamic values are easily positioned as a symbol of resistance to globalization, even though these values can function as active principles of evaluation. Research linking social change to the normative functions of Islamic values is needed so that educational responses do not end in either a rejection of foreign elements or an indiscriminate acceptance of global developments.

This article posits ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah as the ethical foundations for evaluating and guiding the social changes accompanying the globalization of education. This position stems from the understanding that openness to knowledge, technology, and cross-cultural interaction can coexist with the preservation of religious and cultural identities. Local values are not treated as static elements that must be frozen in time, but rather as sources of social meaning capable of engaging in dialogue with new developments. At the same time, globalization is not viewed as a process that must be either entirely accepted or rejected. Elements that expand knowledge, cooperation, and educational opportunities can be harnessed, while those that reinforce inequality, erode solidarity, or demean cultural diversity must be critically evaluated. This perspective enables Islamic education to serve as a space for developing students' ability to interact globally without losing their ethical orientation toward the communities and cultures in which they are raised.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the role of ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah as ethical principles for addressing social change resulting from the globalization of education, as well as to explain how these three values shape attitudes toward cultural homogenization and pressure on local values. Theoretically, this paper brings together the discourse on the globalization of education with the philosophy of Islamic educational values through an examination of the relationship between social change and the moral orientation of education. Academically, this synthesis is expected to clarify that Islam's response to globalization can be constructed through selective ethical judgment, rather than through a simple opposition between global and local values. Practically, the results of this discussion can serve as a conceptual foundation for the development of an education system that is open to scientific progress while

remaining rooted in solidarity, justice, compassion, and respect for cultural diversity. Based on these objectives, the research questions of this paper are: (1) How do the values of ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah serve as an ethical foundation for addressing social changes resulting from the globalization of education? (2) How can the values of ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah shape an educational response to cultural homogenization and pressures on local values?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs an integrative literature review to construct a conceptual synthesis regarding the relationship between the globalization of education, social change, and Islamic values. This approach allows for the integration of theoretical works, conceptual articles, and educational research directly relevant to the subject matter. Snyder (2019) explains that a literature review can function as a research method when the search, selection, evaluation, and synthesis of sources are carried out through clear procedures. Whittemore and Knafl (2005) position the integrative review as an approach that allows sources with different characteristics to be brought together in the formation of conceptual understanding. The search focuses on publications regarding globalization and education, Islamic education, Islamic values, ukhuwah, justice, rahmah, moral education, cultural globalization, cultural identity, and multicultural Islamic education. Priority is given to sources such as scientific journal articles and academic books with verifiable bibliographic information. Popular literature, writings without clear publication details, and sources with a weak substantive connection to the research questions are excluded (Devulapalli, 2021).

The literature review process involves the stages of searching, evaluating relevance, grouping ideas, comparing arguments, and interpretive synthesis. Grant and Booth (2009) point out that the nature of a review can be understood through the elements of searching, evaluation, synthesis, and analysis; thus, a literature review must go beyond merely compiling summaries of sources. The selected literature was organized into two clusters. The first cluster encompasses the concept of Islamic education and the role of moral values as the foundation for individual development and social relationships. The second cluster covers changes in education within the context of globalization, the relationship between identity and culture, and the presence of diversity in the educational process.

Each source is compared to identify similarities, differences in emphasis, and conceptual relationships that can address the research question (Folayan, 2019). Interpretations are then constructed through the interconnection of ukhuwah with social solidarity, 'adl with fair distribution and recognition, and rahmah with humane educational relationships. This procedure yields an argumentative synthesis, rather than a calculation of effects or statistical generalizations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ukhuwah, 'Adl, and Rahmah as the Ethical Foundations of Social Change in Education

Islamic values serve as a solid ethical foundation for driving social change through Islamic religious education amid the global educational landscape, integrating spiritual values, social responsibility, and sustainability into the development of students' awareness and character. Education plays a crucial role in enhancing students' understanding of sustainability amid increasingly complex environmental challenges and social changes (Gautama & Mardikaningsih, 2022). This approach aligns with the role of social education in instilling global awareness in students, as noted by Hariani and Mardikaningsih (2022), and is also consistent with sustainability policies rooted in cultural values and local wisdom within the context of religious education development (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2023). Leadership grounded in noble and transformative values plays a crucial role as a catalyst for social change within the educational value system (Rojak et al., 2022), while the spiritual approach reflected in Islamic religious education has proven effective in unlocking intellectual potential while holistically shaping students' personalities (Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023). Amid social change and technological advancements, Islamic ethical values serve as a guide for fostering a culture of discipline and establishing effective leadership styles in educational settings (Al Laisty et al., 2024), while also providing a foundation for responsibly leveraging technological and media developments to disseminate beneficial educational values (Darmawan & Fajar, 2024). The development of students' character and discipline, grounded in Islamic ethical values, is also influenced by the synergy between parenting styles, the culture of the educational environment, and leadership that is ethical and socially responsible (Djazilan & Darmawan, 2021; Rojak & Darmawan, 2021), which is further strengthened through comprehensive character guidance and mentoring in education to

foster a generation that is not only well-informed but also possesses noble character and is capable of bringing about positive social change on the global stage (Rojak et al., 2024).

The globalization of education is transforming the environment in which values are formed and practiced. Today's students can engage with ideas, communities, and sources of knowledge that lie far beyond their immediate social circles. These changes broaden intellectual horizons, but at the same time increase the diversity of competing moral frameworks vying for acceptance. Islamic education faces challenges that go beyond simply maintaining a certain amount of religious content in the curriculum. It must cultivate students' ability to evaluate these changes using principles grounded in moral consistency (Saputra et al., 2024). Halstead (2004) frames Islamic education through the dimensions of individual development, social-moral education, and knowledge acquisition. This framework demonstrates that knowledge is not separate from human development and social life. From this perspective, successful education is not merely about developing intellectual abilities, as the application of knowledge must be guided by character and responsibility. The globalization of education can be accepted as an expansion of the learning space as long as this development remains oriented toward the formation of moral individuals and society.

Ukhuwah provides the foundational basis for understanding students as part of a network of social relationships. The spirit of brotherhood prevents education from being narrowed down to a project of enhancing individual abilities for the sake of economic competition. In a global environment that emphasizes mobility and competition, personal success can take on an overly dominant role, leading to relationships among students being understood primarily through the lens of competition (Sahin, 2017). This pattern resembles how social stereotypes can shape unequal opportunities across education, employment, and intergroup interaction, showing that unchecked competition tends to reproduce rather than resolve social disparities (Sajjapong et al., 2022). Ukhuwah corrects this tendency by framing individual ability as something that carries social responsibility. Achievement gains value when it can be developed without belittling others and when it benefits the common good. This orientation does not eliminate academic competition but anchors it within relational ethics. Students can pursue excellence

while maintaining cooperation, respect, and a willingness to help those with more limited opportunities. Within the framework of social change, ukhuwah serves to maintain social cohesion as educational systems become increasingly open to mobility, differentiation of abilities, and cross-regional competition.

The meaning of ukhuwah can also be expanded to include a willingness to live amidst differences. Globalization brings students into contact with increasingly diverse cultural identities, languages, customs, and ways of thinking. Brotherhood in education does not require the elimination of differences to achieve harmonious social relationships. Rather, it guides students to manage differences without fostering hostility or establishing hierarchies of human dignity. Halstead (2004) identifies social and moral education as one of the primary dimensions of education in Islam, meaning that building relationships with others is an integral part of educational goals. Classroom practices that encourage teacher adaptability and student participation have been shown to strengthen discipline and cooperative habits among learners, reflecting how ukhuwah can be cultivated through everyday institutional routines rather than abstract instruction alone (Rozikin et al., 2023). In educational practice, this perspective can be reflected through collaborative learning, a culture of mutual assistance, dialogue that respects differences, and the rejection of bullying and discrimination. Ultimately, ukhuwah functions as a social capacity to maintain unity as globalization amplifies the variety of identities and life choices present within educational spaces.

The second value, 'adl, provides an evaluative principle related to justice and the proper placement of things. Al-Attas (1980) includes justice as one of the concepts related to the framework of Islamic philosophy of education, as well as the orderliness of knowledge, humanity, and righteous actions. In the context of educational globalization, this principle carries broad significance because the benefits of change are not distributed evenly. Access to digital devices, international languages, high-quality schools, academic mobility, and global learning resources varies significantly among individuals and social groups. Gaps in digital literacy and exposure to misinformation online further widen this disparity, since students with limited capacity to evaluate digital content are more vulnerable to unreliable information (Issalillah & Khayru, 2024). An education system that pursues global standards without addressing these

inequalities can widen the gap between students with abundant resources and those with limited resources. 'Adl guides educational institutions to assess whether the changes implemented create equitable opportunities for diverse groups. This orientation toward justice means that educational modernization must be considered alongside questions regarding access, the distribution of resources, the recognition of identity, and the treatment of students.

Equity in education also encompasses cultural recognition. The dominance of a particular language, learning style, or measure of success can result in unfair treatment of students who grow up in different traditions. 'Adl provides a framework to ensure that educational standards do not automatically position global culture as superior to all local traditions. Evidence from classroom settings shows that teaching styles and instructional media strongly shape student interest and motivation, suggesting that a single dominant method risks disadvantaging students who learn differently (Mudzakkir & Darmawan, 2024; Laili & Darmawan, 2024). Fair treatment does not mean that all cultural elements must be preserved without evaluation (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016). Every practice can still be assessed according to moral principles, educational benefits, and respect for human dignity. Justice, in fact, calls for an evaluation process that is not built on the prejudice that anything global is always more advanced or that anything local is always better. This approach enables education to make proportionate selections. Global elements that strengthen knowledge and human dignity can be accepted, while patterns that lead to exclusion can be criticized. Local traditions that support moral living can be preserved, while local practices that contradict human justice can be evaluated.

Rahmah complements 'adl by adding relational depth to educational life. Justice guides fair distribution and appropriate treatment, while rahmah ensures that this process is sensitive to the needs of people undergoing change. The transition to digital education, the use of a global language, curriculum changes, and demands for new competencies can create different pressures for students, teachers, and families (Adha & Prawironegoro, 2024). Novice teachers in particular often need time and support to build resilience and adapt to these professional demands, indicating that rahmah must also extend toward educators navigating change, not only toward students (Liwak et al., 2023). The principle of rahmah

prevents educational change from being driven by a technocratic logic that merely pursues indicators without considering the human experience. In Islamic education, the process of knowledge formation is intrinsically linked to character development. Al-Attas (1980) links education to proper conduct and righteous actions, so that the educational process cannot be separated from the ethical structuring of human relationships. Rahmah reinforces this dimension through attention to students' vulnerabilities, needs, and dignity. Adaptation to globalization must therefore be carried out in a humane manner that does not leave any groups behind.

Rahmah is also relevant to the culture of communication that has emerged through the digitization of education. Online interactions accelerate the exchange of information but often diminish the depth of interpersonal relationships because communication can be brief, anonymous, or highly competitive. Students face social judgment, comparisons of achievement, and exposure to a wide range of opinions (Arifin et al., 2021). Such comparisons can raise stress levels and shape achievement motivation through reference groups, while unsupervised exposure to digital devices from an early age adds further pressure on students and families alike (Issalillah & Khayru, 2021; Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023). Rahmah provides the foundation for the development of communication ethics that reject insults, verbal abuse, and disregard for others' feelings. These values go beyond mere compassion; they encourage actions that safeguard psychological well-being and social dignity within the learning environment. Teachers who practice rahmah can still uphold academic standards while employing an approach that takes students' circumstances into account. Amid rapid social change, this approach ensures that education does not lose its relational nature. Technology can serve as a tool for learning, while human relationships remain central to the development of morality and character.

The relationship between ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah demonstrates that all three are stronger when applied as a unified whole. Ukhuwah provides a sense of community, 'adl defines the standard of justice within that community, while rahmah preserves human sensitivity when the principle of justice is applied (Tahir, 2024). If education emphasizes only ukhuwah, solidarity may be limited to groups considered similar. The presence of 'adl demands that ethical treatment be extended beyond group affiliations. If education

prioritizes only 'adl in the form of formal rules, educational relationships may lose their sense of closeness and empathy. Rahmah imbues a just structure with human qualities. Conversely, compassion without justice can lead to disproportionate decisions. The interconnection of these three elements forms a foundation capable of addressing complex changes because students are guided to consider social relationships, principles of justice, and human experience simultaneously.

In the realm of the curriculum, these three values can serve as criteria for interpreting global content. The curriculum need not reject knowledge derived from international academic traditions, as the advancement of knowledge is an educational necessity (Kusaka, 2024). How this knowledge is delivered matters as well; teaching style and parental support together influence how far students remain interested in learning, regardless of how globally sourced the content is (Safitri & Darmawan, 2023). Problems arise when the curriculum assumes that knowledge has only one cultural source or marginalizes the experiences of local communities. Ukhuwah encourages the curriculum to view knowledge as a means for the common good. 'Adl guides the proportional representation of the experiences and voices of diverse groups. Rahmah guides the use of knowledge to improve the quality of human life. Through this framework, curriculum globalization can be positioned as a process of selective knowledge exchange. Students can learn about global developments while also having the space to interpret how that knowledge relates to the social experiences and values they are familiar with. This approach prevents education from becoming isolated while also preventing the passive acceptance of a global academic culture.

At the institutional level, ukhuwah can be translated into a school culture that fosters cooperation among students, teachers, families, and the community. 'Adl can serve as the foundation for establishing policies on admissions, assessment, access to technology, and learning support that take into account differences in resources (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). A supportive school environment paired with competent, disciplined teachers has been linked to stronger student motivation, pointing to teacher professionalism as a practical entry point for institutions seeking to apply these values (Latif & Darmawan, 2024; Mubasysyir & Darmawan, 2024). Rahmah can be embodied through disciplinary and mentoring approaches

that recognize mistakes as opportunities for learning without absolving students of responsibility. These three values enable educational institutions to respond to change with a broader perspective than mere efficiency. Globalization often pushes schools to pursue reputation, rankings, certifications, and competitive advantage. While all these elements can be useful, their value must be subordinated to more fundamental educational goals. Institutional excellence is meaningful only when students grow into individuals capable of using knowledge responsibly and building dignified social relationships.

Applying Islamic values to address globalization also requires distinguishing between principles and social forms. The principles of ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah have a normative orientation, while their practical application can adapt to changing times. Collaboration, which once took place through in-person meetings, can now evolve through digital networks (Qorib, 2020). Justice, which was once primarily discussed in terms of access to schools, now encompasses disparities in devices, connectivity, algorithms, and digital literacy. Rahmah, which was practiced through face-to-face interactions, now needs to be expanded to include the ethics of online interactions. The flexibility of these forms allows Islamic values to remain relevant without having to preserve all old practices. To date, teaching methods in Islamic Religious Education still largely draw on classical Islamic scholarly traditions and the experiences of educators (Samsiroh et al., 2024). Islamic education can embrace new technologies and international learning methods as long as their use is guided by moral objectives. Such adaptations distinguish loyalty to values from absolute attachment to specific historical forms.

Social changes resulting from globalization must ultimately be understood as a context for ethical decision-making. Students will continually encounter new knowledge, technologies, and cultures, so it is impossible for education to control all the influences they are exposed to. A more fundamental skill is cultivating the disposition to evaluate what is received. Ukhuwah teaches students to consider the consequences of their choices on social relationships. 'Adl calls on students to assess whether a practice results in fair treatment (Guefara et al., 2023). Discipline and self-regulation play a similar role in this process, since students who can manage their own learning are generally better equipped to pause and evaluate

information before accepting it (Maharani & Darmawan, 2024). Rahmah directs attention toward the people affected by decisions. These three moral questions can be used to address various phenomena, ranging from the use of artificial intelligence, a culture of competition, and a global lifestyle to changes in language and tradition. Education thus shifts from a protective model toward the development of ethical capacity. Students are not isolated from the global world but are prepared to engage with it, equipped with the ability to make moral judgments.

Ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah can serve as three mutually reinforcing principles for addressing social change resulting from the globalization of education. Ukhuwah maintains the social orientation of education so that individual development remains connected to the common good. 'Adl provides a standard for evaluating the distribution of opportunities, the treatment of differences, and the consequences of educational policies. Rahmah ensures that change occurs with respect for human dignity and experience. Islamic educational thought, which places individual development, social morality, knowledge, adab, and justice in a close relationship, supports this interpretation (Halstead, 2004; Al-Attas, 1980). These three values do not require education to shut itself off from globalization. Their primary function is to provide a normative framework for the processes of selection and adaptation. The next question is how this framework functions when global trends promote cultural uniformity and undermine the standing of local values.

Islamic Values, Cultural Homogenization, and the Sustainability of Local Values

Cultural homogenization in education occurs when certain standards, languages, symbols of success, lifestyles, or learning methods become dominant, causing the diversity of social experiences to become less visible. This process does not always take place through direct coercion. It can operate through the assumption that models widely used globally automatically represent a higher level of progress (McNiven, 2022). Under such circumstances, education can produce students who are familiar with global symbols but increasingly distant from the social traditions in which they live. Niyozov and Memon (2011) point out that Islamic education faces the need to reexamine the relationship between self-identity, Islamic educational traditions, changing times, and respect for others. They emphasize the need for renewal

that is capable of learning from the past while engaging with current developments. This perspective opens the door to an approach that avoids creating a rigid dichotomy between Islam and the global world.

Ukhuwah can serve as a guiding principle for addressing homogenization, as brotherhood demands recognition of individuals as members of a community without requiring cultural uniformity. Social unity differs from uniformity in cultural expression (Abdullah & Shaari, 2019). Students may have different regional languages, family customs, artistic preferences, or community traditions while still building relationships based on mutual respect. If ukhuwah is interpreted as the elimination of differences, education risks creating internal homogenization. A stronger interpretation positions it as solidarity that allows differences to coexist within responsible social relationships. This is particularly relevant as globalization brings diverse identities together in schools. Education can foster unity through shared moral goals without negating symbolic diversity. This principle helps distinguish a unifying moral identity from cultural expressions that may vary. The result is an educational community with strong social bonds that does not make uniformity a prerequisite for togetherness.

In relation to local values, ukhuwah encourages education to interpret traditions as a source of social relationships, rather than merely a collection of artifacts from the past. Language, practices of mutual cooperation, respect for elders, the tradition of deliberation, and cultural expressions can embody values that strengthen community bonds (Mustamin et al., 2023). The inclusion of these elements in education helps students understand that their identity is shaped through their relationships with the community. As global culture enters through media and technology, this sense of belonging can provide a foundation for the process of discernment. Students can engage with global knowledge or culture without feeling the need to abandon all local markers in order to be considered modern. Ukhuwah transforms the preservation of local values into a social project, rather than a matter of individual nostalgia. Schools can involve families, community leaders, and cultural groups as learning partners so that the connection between formal education and the social environment remains unbroken.

'Adl provides a different foundation for addressing homogenization, namely

representational justice. A curriculum dominated by a single perspective can create the impression that the experiences of certain groups are more legitimate as sources of knowledge than those of other groups. The principle of 'adl calls for education to provide proportional space for diverse experiences as long as they possess academic and ethical relevance (R'boul, 2021). In this regard, local values should not be given prominence merely because they originate from the past, but rather because they can contribute knowledge, social memory, moral language, and meaningful community experiences to learning. Representational justice also applies to global elements. Education need not compromise academic quality to preserve local identity. What is needed is a balanced relationship, so that international knowledge does not monopolize the definition of progress and local knowledge is not treated as immune to criticism. The principle of 'adl creates a space for evaluating both.

Justice also demands attention to the power dynamics that determine which cultures have easier access to educational spaces. International languages, major technology platforms, global publishers, and cross-national assessment standards possess a distributional power that many local traditions lack. Formal equality between global and local elements therefore does not necessarily result in equal opportunities for students to be recognized. Schools can consciously make space for relevant local knowledge so that students have a point of reference when encountering global cultures (Zhao, 2024). This does not mean rejecting cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, students who understand their own identities have a stronger foundation for engaging in dialogue with other identities. 'Adl ensures that such dialogue does not take place within structures that automatically demean one party. Equitable global education opens access to the wider world while acknowledging communities' rights to preserve their sources of social meaning.

Rahmah adds a dimension of care to the process of cultural change. Shifts in language, customs, and relationship patterns can create a generational gap as students become more familiar with global culture while parents and communities maintain local traditions. A rigid educational response toward either group can widen that gap. Rahmah facilitates a dialogue process that treats both experiences with humanity (Haynes-Mendez & Engelsmeier, 2020). The younger generation needs the opportunity to explain the changes they are

experiencing, while the older generation is given space to convey the social significance embedded in traditions. Education can serve as a mediator connecting the two. Local values are then not taught through coercion, but through an understanding of the ethical and social reasons that make a tradition worth preserving. Global elements are not rejected simply because of their origin, but are evaluated based on their consequences for human dignity, social relationships, and human development.

The connection between Islamic values and cultural diversity can be found in multicultural educational practices. Rohmat (2016), through research on Islamic educational materials in madrasahs, identified the values of equality, justice, tolerance, brotherhood, and etiquette in the educational content, as well as a madrasah culture that is responsive to diversity. These findings indicate that Islamic values and the recognition of diversity need not be viewed as two conflicting orientations. Ukhuwah can foster brotherhood across social backgrounds, while 'adl serves as the foundation for equality and justice in treatment. Rahmah provides an empathetic orientation that ensures differences are not perceived as threats. If these three values are embodied in the school's curriculum and culture, education possesses a social mechanism to counter homogenization. Students are not directed to preserve all differences without judgment, but rather learn to respect diversity in a way that is consistent with human dignity and communal life.

Local values themselves need to be understood critically, as not all inherited customs automatically align with Islamic principles. This is where 'adl and rahmah serve as tools for evaluation, not merely as guardians of culture. Traditions that strengthen brotherhood, shared responsibility, intergenerational respect, and social concern have strong points of convergence with ukhuwah and rahmah (Insani et al., 2024). Conversely, practices that result in discrimination, injustice, or humiliation toward certain groups need to be reevaluated based on 'adl. This approach makes the relationship between Islam and local culture selective and ethical. Cultural preservation does not turn into a romanticization of the past. Education can safeguard meaningful community languages, arts, social practices, and knowledge, while allowing room for change if a practice no longer upholds human dignity. Islamic values serve as a moral standard that enables traditions to evolve without losing their social roots.

The same principle can be applied to evaluate

elements of global culture. Educational technology, the use of international languages, academic exchanges, and new learning methods can provide significant benefits by improving access to and the quality of learning. Any evaluation of these elements must consider whether such benefits strengthen social bonds, provide equitable opportunities, and uphold the humanity of learners. Global elements that support these three objectives can be accepted and developed (Burneo, 2022). Conversely, a consumerist culture, extreme individualism, status-based discrimination, or communication patterns that dehumanize people can be criticized even if they have a global reach. This framework prevents education from falling into two extremes: accepting all global elements simply because they are considered modern, or rejecting them all simply because they are considered foreign. Value-based selectivity makes educational openness an active process. Students learn to become interpreters capable of determining the relationship between new knowledge and the moral principles they hold.

Niyozov and Memon (2011) position Islamic education at a crossroads that requires creativity, collaboration, openness to contemporary experiences, and a reinterpretation of tradition. This idea reinforces the need to ensure that local values are not preserved through isolation. A living culture is constantly undergoing encounters, adaptations, and changes. Education can preserve the continuity of values by teaching their meaning, rather than freezing their outward forms. For example, the spirit of mutual cooperation can be translated into digital collaborative projects; concern for the community can be realized through social problem-based learning; and respect for linguistic diversity can be applied in the production of multilingual learning materials. New forms need not be viewed as a departure from tradition as long as the underlying social principles remain intact. This approach allows local values to take on new life amid changes in technology and communication patterns.

Teachers play a central role in this process because the learning environment is where global and local values are translated into concrete experiences. Teaching that merely requires students to memorize the concepts of *ukhuwah*, *'adl*, and *rahmah* is insufficient for developing the capacity to navigate social change (Luthfi, 2024). These three values must be presented as a framework for interpreting real-world issues.

Students can discuss digital access inequality through the principle of justice, the phenomenon of cyberbullying through *rahmah*, and identity conflicts through *ukhuwah*. They can also compare local cultural practices with Islamic values to determine which elements are worth preserving and which need improvement. This type of learning model fosters moral judgment. Islamic values thus go beyond being merely the content of a religious studies course; they become an intellectual and ethical framework for interpreting the social changes students experience firsthand.

Educational institutions also need to ensure consistency between the curriculum and institutional culture. Teaching about *'adl* loses its power if schools treat students discriminatorily. Education in *ukhuwah* struggles to foster solidarity if the school system continues to promote competition without room for collaboration. Teaching *rahmah* becomes ineffective if discipline is enforced through humiliation or violence (Adha & Prawironegoro, 2024). The values used to counter cultural homogenization must be alive in everyday structures and relationships. Rohmat (2016) highlights the connection between the presence of multicultural values in instructional materials and support for *madrasah* culture. This underscores that preserving values cannot be achieved solely through curriculum content. School policies, teacher-student relationships, respect for language and traditions, community activities, and the use of technology must all convey the same ethical message.

On a broader level, education grounded in *ukhuwah*, *'adl*, and *rahmah* can foster an identity that is open yet resistant to being absorbed into homogenization. This kind of identity differs from a defensive identity that views every difference as a threat (Adytiya et al., 2024). *Ukhuwah* fosters a sense of connectedness, *'adl* provides the courage to address inequality, and *rahmah* cultivates the ability to understand others' experiences. Students can recognize themselves as members of a religious and cultural community while also being individuals living in a global society. This identity enables dialogue without losing moral orientation. Globalization then becomes a space for encounter that needs to be managed, not a force that dictates the entire direction of educational life. The ability to accept, reject, adapt to, or develop new elements becomes part of the moral maturity that must be shaped through Islamic education.

Ukhuwah, *'adl*, and *rahmah* can guide the

educational response to cultural homogenization and pressure on local values through mechanisms of recognizing diversity, equitable representation, intergenerational dialogue, and ethical selection of global and local elements. Ukhuwah fosters unity without demanding uniformity. 'Adl ensures that cultures with global influence do not automatically dominate educational spaces while also providing a critical framework for local traditions. Rahmah safeguards the process of change so that it respects human experiences and social relationships. Islamic educational literature on renewal, respect for others, and multicultural values demonstrates that openness and identity can be reconciled in education (Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Rohmat, 2016). This approach allows for the globalization of education to become a selective process of exchange, while local values continue to flourish as a source of identity and social wisdom.

CONCLUSION

The globalization of education brings about social change through the expansion of the flow of knowledge, technology, and educational standards, as well as cultural exchange that influences students' identities and social relationships. Ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah provide an ethical foundation for addressing these changes. Ukhuwah ensures that education remains oriented toward solidarity and social responsibility amid increasing competition and mobility. 'Adl provides a measure for the equitable distribution of opportunities, fair cultural representation, and a balanced assessment of both global and local elements. Rahmah ensures that change occurs with respect for human dignity and experience. In the face of cultural homogenization, these three values enable education to foster unity without standardizing identities. Local values can be preserved through critical evaluation of their moral content and social benefits, while global elements can be selectively embraced. Islamic education can thus remain open to global developments while maintaining a clear normative foundation to guide social change.

Islamic values should be understood as an active evaluative framework for interpreting the globalization of education, rather than as a symbolic tool for defensively preserving identity. Ukhuwah, 'adl, and rahmah form a conceptual link between moral education, social change, and cultural diversity. Educational institutions can adopt these three values as guiding principles in curriculum development, technology access policies, cross-cultural learning, school

governance, and the evaluation of both global and local educational content. Teachers can use them to address current issues, thereby steering religious education toward the development of moral judgment. An education grounded in these values can foster intellectual openness without compromising responsibility toward the community or human dignity. At the policy level, educational institutions are advised to establish evaluation mechanisms that assess the alignment of educational innovations with the principles of solidarity, justice, and compassion. This approach can strengthen the capacity of Islamic education to develop openly without losing its moral orientation and social roots.

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