Malaysia's Islamic Education Policies in Addressing the Challenges of Globalization

Helmiati
Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia
Email: emikahar@yahoo.com

Surya Arfan
Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia
Email : suryaarfan60@gmail.com

Abstract

Globalization presents challenges and opportunities for Islamic education. This article aims to examine Malaysia's Islamic education policies in addressing the challenges and opportunities of globalization and analyze them based on experts' perspectives. A literature study with a qualitative approach is used to analyze policy documents and the views of Islamic education experts and researchers. The results show that among Malaysia's education policies to strengthen Islamic education are curriculum reform, integration of science and Islam in the curriculum, emphasis on character education, development of teacher professionalism, integration of information and communication technology in education, improvement of the quality of leadership and school management, development of Islamic higher education. The policies are intended to create a balance between maintaining the identity and practice of Islam and the development of the country according to the demands of globalization. With these strategic steps, the younger generation is expected to compete at the national and international levels with a strong national character without losing fundamental values. The Islamic education policy in Malaysia shows an adaptive effort to the challenges of globalization.

Keywords: *Islamic Education, Policy, Malaysia, Globalization, Curriculum.*

Abstrak

Globalisasi menghadirkan tantangan dan peluang bagi pendidikan Islam. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kebijakan pendidikan Islam di Malaysia dalam menghadapi tantangan dan peluang globalisasi dan menganalisisnya berdasarkan perspektif para ahli. Studi literatur dengan pendekatan kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisis dokumen kebijakan dan pandangan para ahli dan peneliti pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa di antara kebijakan pendidikan Malaysia untuk memperkuat pendidikan Islam adalah reformasi kurikulum, integrasi sains dan Islam dalam kurikulum, penekanan pada pendidikan karakter,

pengembangan profesionalisme guru, integrasi teknologi informasi dan komunikasi dalam pendidikan, peningkatan kualitas kepemimpinan dan manajemen sekolah, dan pengembangan pendidikan tinggi Islam. Kebijakan-kebijakan tersebut dimaksudkan untuk menciptakan keseimbangan antara mempertahankan identitas dan pengamalan Islam dengan pembangunan negara sesuai tuntutan globalisasi. Dengan langkah-langkah strategis tersebut, generasi muda diharapkan dapat bersaing di tingkat nasional dan internasional dengan karakter kebangsaan yang kuat tanpa kehilangan nilai-nilai fundamental. Kebijakan pendidikan Islam di Malaysia menunjukkan upaya adaptif terhadap tantangan globalisasi.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Kebijakan, Malaysia, Globalisasi, Kurikulum.

Introduction

Globalization has brought rapid, complex, and diverse changes (Wani 2011; Nag, 2019; Haloi, 2021). It is undeniable that globalization brings positive impacts such as enriching the morals of nations through the exchange of ideas and values (McKenzie, 2020; Zalli, 2024), economic growth (Ulucak, 2019), expanding access to information and technology (Skare, 2021), cultural exchange and increasing human mobility, including in education (Google Sir; Gerda, 2024). However, globalization also brings negative impacts such as economic inequality between developed and developing countries (Hamdi, 2013; Iryna, 2017), social crises such as unemployment and decreased quality of life (Siddiqa, 2018), and last but not least, the loss of local cultural identity due to the dominance of global culture, as well as the erosion of cultural and religious values embraced by the community (Kaul, 2012; Onuoha, 2020), the emergence of negative behaviors such as drug abuse (Singh, 2024), and violence that is often triggered by values promoted through global media, as well as the emergence of unhealthy competition (Lindley, 2007). Because of the pressure to compete, it triggers people to behave unethically, such as cheating or pursuing profits by ignoring morality.

Globalization provides many challenges for education generally, and Islamic education specifically (Hashim, 2014). In Malaysia, among the challenges is the influence of foreign cultures and global lifestyles that are not necessarily consistent with Islamic values and can affect the mindset and behavior of the younger generation (Baharuddin and Azizan, 2010). Globalization also brings secularism and liberalism that erode religious values and morality. These ideas can affect the way young people view religion and encourage them to separate religion from their daily lives (Daud, 2003a). Meanwhile, several Islamic education experts state that religious education should be able to fortify the younger generation from secularism and liberalism that are contrary to Islamic teachings. In the age of globalization, information and communication technology advancements have both beneficial and detrimental effects on Islamic education. (Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, 2012). On the one hand, technology can facilitate access to information and learning, but on the other hand, technology also has the potential to become a means of disseminating information that is not in accordance with national cultural values and eroding Islamic values and Malaysian cultural identity (Baharuddin, 2006; Paterska, 2021). Another globalization challenge for Islamic education is the need

to improve the quality of graduates who can compete in the global market (Wibowo, 2020; El-Mubarak & Hassan, 2021).

For this reason, Malaysia's Islamic education system needs to adapt and innovate to address the challenges of globalization in order to remain relevant and effective in shaping a generation of qualified Muslims. As emphasized by the Prime Minister, Najib Tun Razak, education is a significant factor in the development of Malaysia's economic and social capital. It provides the necessary skills for the young generations to be competitive in the contemporary job market; inspires creativity and encourages innovation; and is a main driver of economic growth. Thus, Najib explained, the state will keep competing in a more sophisticated world economy (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Herein lies the urgency of the government's endeavour to fortify the children from the impacts of globalization and continue to improve their competencies and life skills so that in the future they are able to contribute to economic growth, access to information and technology, and positive cultural exchange (Mohammadzadeh, 2017; The Policy Brief No.7, 2019).

So far, there are several studies related to Islamic education and education policy in Malaysia, but none have specifically discussed how Islamic education policy in Malaysia is facing the challenges of globalization. For example, Noor & Symaco's study (2017) explains the shifts in Malaysian education policies and practices over the years due to socio-cultural and political demands. These policies show the direction the nation is going, even though some of them might be viewed as controversial. Different study by Kadir et al. (2022) discovered that although government policies are focused on modernizing the model and structure of the religious education system so that it can significantly contribute to Malaysia's development process, Malays remain ardent supporters of the traditional educational system. Thus, this research is important to further examine how Malaysia's Islamic education policy responds to the challenges of globalization. An analysis of the policy will provide an overview of the relevance, effectiveness, implications, and challenges in enhancing the quality of Islamic education in Malaysia in order to generate graduates with high caliber and moral character who can contribute to economic growth and competitiveness at the global level.

Method

This research, which is library-based, is carried out throughout the study and analysis of several relevant documents, books, journal articles, notes, and reports that are pertinent to the topic. A descriptive analysis method is used to examine the gathered data. The stages of the analysis begin with reducing data from literature sources, followed by organizing and presenting data, verifying data, and ending with drawing conclusions that aim to answer the formulation of research problems.

Results and Discussion

Malaysia's Islamic Education Policy

In Malaysia, Islamic education plays a significant role in forming both national and religious identity (Ukhami et.al., 2020; Kadir et.al, 2022). As a predominantly Muslim country, Malaysia considers Islamic education a fundamental component of the country's education system (Kadir et. al, 2022). The strategic policy of Islamic education in Malaysia focuses not only on teaching religion as a formal subject, but also on building a foundation of spiritual, ethical, and moral values to face the challenges of modernization and globalization, contributing to modern science, and competing more successfully in an increasingly knowledge-based economy (The Policy Brief No.7, 2019). The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 is Malaysia's present education reform policy plan. It

establishes ambitious targets to improve Malaysia's educational system so that, by 2025, Malaysia will no longer be in the bottom quartile of nations in global index like the the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), but will instead be among the top three. The following significant measures have been implemented to raise the standard of education, including Islamic education.

Curriculum Reform

Since obtaining independence, the Malaysian government has been centralizing the management of Islamic education and actively upgrading the curriculum to meet contemporary demands (Hamid, 2018). The Malaysian Ministry of Education, with the involvement of several related institutions, such as Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) and Majlis Agama Islam Negeri, undertook curriculum reforms to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and secular education. As a result, Islamic teachings are integrated with modern science and technology to produce Muslim generations who can compete at the global level without losing Islamic values (Kassim, 1991; Embong & Hashim, 2008; Hashim, 2018; Kadir, 2022). In other words, it aims to help Muslim students comprehend religious teachings in an increasingly advanced global context (Souad & Ramdane, 2014).

Among the curriculum reform policies is the use of a holistic approach that includes the development of learners' physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects in the Integrated Primary School Curriculum (KBSR) and Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM). Regardless of the subject they teach, all teachers must inculcate moral and religious values since KBSR and KBSM support this idea across the curriculum. This is crucial since, in the past, assigning values or disciplining students was supposed to be the sole responsibility of religion or moral education teachers (Hashim, 2014). According to Ahmad (1998), this approach ensures that a person develops not only academically, but also in respect of moral values, life skills, and mental and physical health (Ahmad, 1998).

Curriculum reform emphasizes the integration of science and Islam and character education. In addition, another important component in curriculum reform is the reform of learning strategies that emphasize student-centered learning, student-active learning, and authentic learning. This policy is intended to improve the curriculum that was previously very content-oriented, which is more oriented towards achieving the cognitive aspects, and less emphasis on affective and psychomotor aspects. As part of this curriculum reform, learning activities are created to specifically promote involvement and verbal communication through oral and auditory communication skills, reading and comprehension, experience-based writing, and the real-world application of the topics taught. This curriculum reform also emphasizes the need for learning to be acquired during numerous authentic learning experiences to foster problem-solving and creative thinking skills (Ahmad, 1998; Neo, 2012).

Implementation of Science and Islam Integration in the Curriculum

Malaysian national education aims to develop each person's potential in an integrated and comprehensive way to produce academically, emotionally, spiritually, and physically healthy and harmonious human beings, founded on faith and obedience to God. Such efforts are designed to create informed, competent, moral, responsible, and capable Malaysians who can attain their own well-being while also promoting harmony and prosperity within their families, communities, and nation (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. ix; Manaf et al., 2017; Lubis & Sanjaya, 2022).

To realize the above goals, one of the government's policies is to continue to strive to realize the integration of science and Islam at various levels of educational institutions,

ranging from kindergartens, elementary schools, to universities (Hamid, 2017; Wirian et al., 2024). Curriculum integration is an approach in which Islamic and general sciences are taught comprehensively and integratively within a single educational institution. The aim is to eliminate the dichotomy of knowledge, namely the separation between religious sciences that are considered "sacred" and general sciences that are considered "secular" (Hasan & Osama, 2016; Subayil, 2020). In this view, all knowledge basically comes from Allah SWT and can complement each other to build a better civilization (Anas et. Al, 2013). Curriculum integration realizes holistic education that includes the development of the mind, body, and spirit, and forms a generation that can contribute to the field of modern science without losing its Islamic identity (Daud, 2003). The policy of integrating science and Islam is manifested in various forms of educational programs that combine religious science with general science systematically and holistically through Sekolah Kebangsaan Agama (SKA), Madrasah, Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR), and Islamic Higher Education. Sekolah Kebangsaan Agama (SKA) is a clear example of the implementation of curriculum integration at the primary and secondary education levels, implementing the KBSR and KBSM (Yaacob & Embong, 2008).

These educational institutions impart moral values, theoretical information, and practical expertise to their students (Noraini & Langgulung, 2008). They are taught a combination of general subjects such as Math, Science, and English alongside religious subjects such as Aqidah, Fiqh, and Tafsir. This approach aims to create graduates who not only have a strong religious foundation but also master academic knowledge. Madrasahs and Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) also play an important role in the realization of science and Islam integration. In these institutions, religious sciences such as Tafsir, Hadith, and Sharia are predominantly taught. However, to prepare students for the era of globalization, general subjects such as Mathematics, Information Technology, and English are also given (Kadir, 1994). In addition, in national schools, Islamic Education replaces Islamic Religious Studies to reflect a broader curriculum. Muslim learners in non-Islamic schools have the choice to enroll in fundamental religious courses like Quran-Hadis Education, Tasawwur Islam (Islamic Worldview), as well as Islamic sharia education (BPI, 2009).

As the number of slots for modern sciences increased, the amount of time allotted for the formal teaching of religious sciences was explicitly decreased. The government, through the Ministry of Education, expanded its control over the discourse and content of Islamic education by publishing a handbook to ensure that schools solely used handbooks authored by writers chosen by the Ministry. The integration of religious and secular sciences in the secondary level Islamic education curriculum allows school graduates to pursue further education in social science and science programs outside of the official Islamic study scope. As a result, graduates of Islamic studies programs nowadays are more prepared to compete for professional jobs in contemporary employment sectors (Hamid, 2017). Meanwhile, at the tertiary level, International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) and Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) are among the institutions that have successfully integrated the Islamic curriculum with modern sciences (Sirat, 2008) as explained in the separate subtitle of this article.

As per Rashed & Radzi's (2023) research, the integration of science and Islam in the Islamic school curriculum substantially contributes to the achievement of Malaysia's national education goal of producing graduates who are balanced in their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, as well as creating a generation of Muslims who are able to compete at the global level without losing Islamic values. This confirms the views of Muslim intellectuals such as Azra (2003), Al-Attas (1993), Daud (2003a), and Ulwan (1981), that the integration of science and Islam in the curriculum is an

important necessity for the comprehensive development of potential, creating an education that forms intellectually, morally, and spiritually whole individuals, as well as maintaining the relevance of Ithe religious education to the challenges of the modern era without losing its identity.

Emphasis on Character Education

In addition to positive impacts, globalization brings negative impacts in the form of moral problems such as moral decadence, misuse of technology, and identity crisis. As a result of the societal changes brought about by Malaysia's rapid economic growth, character education has become a required lesson to anticipate social change (Donesia, et.al., 2023) and a solution in forming a generation with integrity (Agboola, 2012; Pala, 2023). Character education is a system of helping students develop their moral principles, which include aspects of self-awareness, knowledge, and readiness to act in relation to one's religion, community, environment, and country as a whole (Agung, 2011: 395).

The strategic policy of Islamic education in Malaysia places strengthening character education as an essential element in producing a generation that is morally upright, civilized, and honourable. The Malaysian Education Act 1996 (Act 550) is the primary legislation governing the education system in Malaysia. While this law does not specifically address character education, it mandates the Malaysian Ministry of Education to design and implement a curriculum that includes moral education and personality formation (Laws of Malaysia, Act 550, Education Act 1996). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has also formulated an education policy in line with the country's Education Philosophy, which emphasizes not only academic achievement but also the development of a balanced and harmonious individual on all levels—intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual. This philosophy provides the foundation for character education implementation in Malaysia at all educational levels (Ministry of Education, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2013).

Implementation strategies for character education in the educational system of Malaysia include integration into the curriculum, by including character values in subjects, especially Islamic education and textbooks in both Lower and Secondary Schools (Mahanani, 2022; Hassan, 2024; Wirian et.al., 2024). Another strategy is through the development of Islamic value-founded character education modules to help teachers teach Islamic values in real-life contexts such as morals towards God (worship, obedience, gratitude); morals towards humans (honesty, compassion, tolerance, humility, respect), and morals towards the environment (care for nature) (Alhassan, 2023: Eissa & Khalid, 2019, Ahmad, 1998). Character education programs through religious schools such as Royal Assistance Religious Schools and Religious High Schools also play a big role in shaping students' characters (Donesia, et.al, 2023). In addition, the government provides a Teacher Professionalism program to improve teachers' competence in teaching character values (Mohamed, 2015; Jamil et.al, 2024). In short, Malaysia aims to develop a new generation with a solid moral, spiritual, and intellectual foundation to handle the challenges of globalization by taking a comprehensive approach that includes integrating character education into the curriculum, preparing Islamic value-founded character education modules, strengthening character education in religious schools, and enhancing teacher professionalism in teaching character values (Suhid, 2018).

Teacher Professionalism Development

One of the main goals of Malaysian Islamic education policy is to raise the standard of education to address the challenges of globalization (Aida Suraya, 2001; Suhid, 2018). The MEB 2013-2025 has established several explicit policies and goals that must be met in 13 years in terms of equity, quality, including improving the quality of Islamic education and ensuring its continued r applicability and competitiveness in the global

marketplace. (Ministry of Education, 2013; Hamid, 2017). These policies involve aspects of improving teacher professionalism (Jamil et al, 2024).

According to international studies, educator competence is the most essential school-based element affecting student learning outcomes. A system's quality cannot exceed that of its teachers (Rice, 2003; Jentsch & Koning, 2022). Correspondingly, teachers are critical to realizing Malaysia's educational goals in developing human resources, especially in addressing the challenges of globalization.

The demand for teacher professional advancement in Malaysia was acknowledged by an ad hoc committee formed by the Education Ministry as early as 1995. The committee's recommendations included encouraging teachers to take in-service courses, conducting continuing education, offering study abroad opportunities to gain knowledge of the most recent advancements in education, inducting teachers into new roles and responsibilities, offering management courses to teachers promoted to principals, and providing teacher professional development centers that are strategically located, fully funded, staffed, and equipped with modern technology (Ali, 2002; Jamil et al., 2024).

Even though the Malaysian educational system has many excellent teachers, according to a 2011 AKEPT research, just 50% of lessons were taught effectively. This indicates that classes follow a more passive, lecture-based approach of information delivery and do not sufficiently engage students. Instead of emphasizing higher-order thinking skills, these lessons aim to achieve a superficial comprehension of the material. This statistic is particularly problematic, given that 60% of current teachers are predicted to remain teaching in 20 years.

The Malaysian government's policy and strategy in this regard is the development of teacher professionalism, which is an effort to continuously improve the competence and quality of teachers in order to provide the best education for students. This process involves various activities that aim to update teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in performing their roles as educators (Jentsch & Koning, 2022). Among the Malaysian government's policies is to develop Teacher Education Institutes and establish teacher training centers. The Ministry of Education's teacher education division initiated pre-service and continuous in-service training for elementary, secondary, technical, and vocational school teachers –including those teaching Islamic education (Ministry of Education, 2013; Hamid, 2017; Said et al, 2022; Jamil et.al, 2024). The training aims to improve their pedagogical abilities and religious knowledge, as well as skills in applying relevant technologies and learning models in the teaching process (Jamil et.al, 2024). Given the rapidly changing educational landscape in the 21st century, the Malaysian government also requires teachers to adopt innovative pedagogies in place of conventional approaches (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Innovative pedagogies include project-based learning, experiential learning, collaborative learning, and technology integration. By encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, innovative pedagogy preserves strong Islamic values and identity while preparing students for the challenges of globalization (Chandraja et al., 2024). Teachers, by applying innovative learning models and supported by relevant technological tools, can make learning effective and memorable (Prakash, 2024).

Information & Communication Technology Integration in Education

The integration of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in the learning process is crucial to improve the accessibility, dynamics, proactivity, and

effectiveness of education, including Islamic education (Kamaruddin, 2021). ICT-oriented integration helps educators in meeting international demands to use technology-based teaching and learning resources and facilities in place of conventional teaching methods.

ICT is regarded among the most important elements in Malaysia's transformation towards future development (Ghavifekr & Wan Rosdy, 2015). The Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of ICT-based instruction in its Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (Ministry of Education, 2013). For this reason, the government launched several programs such as the digitization of the Malaysian education system, the Frog Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and the Smart Schools program (Zainal & Zainuddin, 2020). Frog VLE is a learning management system that has been adopted by the Malaysian government for 10,000 government-sponsored schools across the country.

Teachers were initially less enthusiastic about this ambitious idea, which connected each school into a single internet platform, even if it had come at a high financial cost to the nation. In 2013, the Auditor General released a report exposing inadequate use of ICT in educational institutions. The teacher acknowledged the advantages and strengths of the e-learning strategy for enhancing the educational system. However, they seem to have similar challenges and limitations, such as a lack of IT expertise and insufficient technical support, which hinders the academic environment from fully supporting IT development (Cheok & Wong, 2016).

As a solution, the government has launched several programs to encourage wider ICT usage and dissemination in order to improve educational capacity. Among these measures are creating a favorable atmosphere for ICT development, offering incentives for automation and computerization, establishing venture capital funds, and enhancing education and training programs.

Additionally, the ICT-enabled Smart School is the driving force behind this change. By installing computer labs in hundreds of schools, the Ministry of Education is also addressing the digital gap that occurs in various regions, in addition to the Smart School project. Teachers, administrators, and other school employees are being trained as part of other ICT-related projects. Before being implemented in all of the nation's schools, innovative projects such as e-learning and the utilization of electronic books are also tested for viability. In addition, non-governmental groups play a significant role in initiatives to bring ICT into classrooms. (Mae Foong-2002).

The policy of implementing educational technology in Malaysia is a response to the demands of the digital age and globalization. Technology is not only considered a learning aid but also a tool to enhance the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of Islamic education. This policy aims to maintain Islamic education’s relevance and competitiveness at the global level.

Improving the Quality of Leadership and School Management

In Malaysia, school leadership is an important element of the education reform strategy with an ambitious target to place the country among the top three countries in the international index (The Ministry of Education, 2013). This is most evident through two government policies. First, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025 places a strong emphasis on leadership in order to guarantee that each school has a capable leader who can produce high-quality graduates. The blueprint emphasizes eschewing administrative leadership in favor of a transformational approach, namely instructional and distributed leadership. However, this is hard to do in a highly centralized system like Malaysia, where administrative leadership is common (Bush & Mooi Ng, 2022).

International research and literature provide compelling evidence of the instructional and distributed leadership models' positive impacts (Bush et al. 2022). However, in Donnie Adams et al's (2018) research on the practice of some core functions of instructional leadership implemented by principals in Malaysia under the directives of the Ministry of Education, there is little evidence to support its efficacy in a centralized context such as Malaysia. The study discovered a conflict between the contextual realities and the desired practices of an instructional leader that limits these practices in Malaysian schools. Whereas Distributed Leadership is the second favorite model recommended by the Malaysian Education Blueprint. Tony Bush and Mooi Ng's study (2022) noted that the Ministry intends to move towards a distributed leadership model where effective, high-quality school leadership permeates throughout the organization in all schools. While this study reports on the benefits of distributed leadership globally, it cautions that evidence of its effectiveness is still limited for centralized contexts, such as Malaysia.

The government has implemented several initiatives to enhance school leadership. First, it required new principals to take the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL). Second, it launched and continues to support the National Center for School Leadership, Institut Aminuddin Baki (IAB), which is responsible for designing and implementing national school leadership programs, including the NPQEL (Bush, 2022). In addition, in line with the rapid development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, school leaders are required to seize the opportunity to transform by integrating technology in leadership styles (Ministry of Education, 2013). Yusof's (2019) research shows that some principals apply digital leadership, especially in communication and school climate, such as virtual meetings, virtual discussions, virtual information sharing, online file sharing, virtual communication, virtual teaching and learning supervision, virtual student performance monitoring, and virtual promotion.

Development of Islamic Higher Education

One of the innovative policies in Malaysian Islamic education was the founding of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in 1983. Different from other Islamic institutions that only focus on religious sciences, IIUM successfully integrates the Islamic curriculum with modern sciences to create competent and professional Muslims who are both well-versed in their fields and possess virtual Muslim morals (Abdallah et al, 2011). IIUM offers study programs in medicine, law, economics, and technology that are integrated with Islamic principles. For example, medical students also study medical ethics from an Islamic perspective, while law students are taught Islamic legal concepts along with International Law. In addition to the prerequisites for each college, the education program features a distinctive integrated curricular structure that makes four Islamic science subjects mandatory for all students to take: Ethics, Islamic Worldview, Methods of Da'wah and Islam, Fiqh for Daily Life, and Knowledge and Civilization. Islamic studies majors whose Islamic studies courses are mostly in Arabic are required to take a minor in English-taught social sciences. Students on this campus are therefore required to speak Arabic and English fluently (Hashim, 2018). In order to improve graduates' employability, university programs in Islamic studies also become multidisciplinary.

In addition to IIUM, the government also in 1998 established and funded Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIMas a worldwide reference for integrating the sciences of naqli and 'aqli to produce scientists in diverse scientific disciplines while preserving their religious beliefs. Using Arabic and English as well as the national language, USIM adopts a balanced approach between the physical and spiritual or ethical aspects, not only in the academic programs offered, but also widely practiced throughout the university, including the administrative and management levels. USIM has gained

international recognition for its new form of Islamic education that not only develops religious sciences but integrates them with science. At the time of its inauguration, USIM was proud of having 405 international students enrolled in its postgraduate programs, with the majority being Middle Easterners who were first-time Arabic speakers (Ismail, 2009). USIM presents itself as a contemporary, integrated institution, instead of portraying itself as a conventional religious university. In keeping with the government's aggressive efforts to position Malaysia as a center for international education (MOHE, 2007), more and more Muslim students are increasingly selecting Malaysia as their top choice for postsecondary education in professional fields such as science, technology, particularly in the wake of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) (Sirat, 2008). These two universities' educational programs have the potential to generate a new generation of multilingual Muslim professionals. This increases the graduates' employability and versatility outside of Islamic issues (Hashim, 2018).

Conclusion

This study presents the evolution of education policy in general and Malaysian Islamic education in particular in its efforts to respond to the challenges of globalization and maintain its relevance. It is clear that there are several policies in the framework of reforming the education system These include changing the national education objectives to be more holistic in nature, encompassing the development of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects; reforming the curriculum to emphasize the integration of science and Islam; focusing on character education and helping teachers become more professional; integrating ICT into education; improving the quality of school leadership; and developing Islamic higher education. Thus, the goal of producing professionals who are balanced and religious in a positive sense can eventually be accomplished, particularly when addressing the difficulties posed by globalization.

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