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ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

The article concentrates on studying Islamic digital practices in the field of education and training, including in English-language publications on the topic of digitalization of religious education in the ScienceDirect (Elsevier) database. The purpose of the article is to study the possible ways and prospects for the use of digital practices in the field of religious education. The formulation of questions actualizes the problem of models of Islamic education. The problematic review is based on the application of a bibliometric analysis of scientific articles on the digitalization of Islamic education, a quantitative and qualitative description, and a comparison of the studied practices in order to obtain a picture of trends in the perspectives of the horizon of understanding in the field of religious education. It is shown that Islamic educational and teaching practices are being transformed under the influence of innovative changes. Despite the fact that there are theoretical and methodological differences in theological and Islamic approaches to learning, both educational models use information technology in religious education and teaching practices. Digital Islamic education is rapidly developing, reflecting actual changes in the laws of the education system.

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1. Introduction

Religion, science, and education are multifaceted phenomena, they are the object of poly- and interdisciplinary research. Even though religion is the only area where rational-analytical activity, which is obligatory for science, causes a tense attitude, in the modern sciences of religion, a process akin to convergence is observed, according to Smirnov (2015). Such a contemporary research area, in which secular and confessional approaches reveal their search productivity, is the digitalization of education. The article will not address the issues discussed in the higher education system, related not only to the fact that students have unlimited access to growing Internet resources, the availability of online inquiry, discussion, production, collaboration, and acquisition of content but also to the actual digital competence of students, where the theoretical basis of higher education is still the ideas of D. Dewey, L. Vygotsky, J. Bruner (Dzyaloshinskiy, 2020).

The study is related to the consideration of possible ways and prospects for the application of digitalization in the field of religion. The central thesis is the statement of Smirnov (2015): “information technologies in religious practices contribute to the restructuring of religious life in accordance with the changes in the modern world <...> digitalization encourages religious organizations to technological innovations” (p. 264). His statement refers not to the sacred entities, but to the strategies and tactics of the behavior of people for whom these entities have one meaning or another.

The need for Islamic professional and educational education today is obvious not only in connection with the proactive radicalization of Islamic consciousness in society but also with the process of the need to reconstruct and represent the scientific potential in Islamic culture, contributing to the dialogue of secular and religious, scientific and theological, tolerance and multiculturalism, which determined the development of a multicultural space both in the Middle Ages and in the 21st century (Bizhanova, 2017).

2. Problem Statement

Much attention is given to the following questions: will religious norms remain unchanged in the digital space, will the essence of faith itself be distorted, and how real is the project of "the phenomenon of the university and the university temple as a single space for the formation of the personality of a modern person", will religious communities freed and customized, transferring religious values through an independent information educational space.

Islamic education is carried out in the context of post-modernization processes, taking into account the peculiarities of religious traditions and culture and the madhhab. And if in the countries of the Islamic world Islamic education is an integral part of the general educational process, which not only develops Islamic theoretical discourse but also praxis, especially in such universities as al-Azhar, Cairo, Tehran, etc. In post-secular societies, Islamic education is presented as a general educational-cultural course in the field of Islam and Islamic tradition. It remains a debatable question whether only such a minimum of knowledge is enough to integrate religious education into the general educational process of a post-secular society (Bizhanova, 2017). The return of religion at a new level to the public sphere in secular

societies, including education, is associated with the problem of religious education, which is also changing, including digital ones.

3. Research Questions

Fundamental changes in Islamic education under the influence of innovations occur at the level of world education models. Further, regional education models join the dynamics of change. This leads to transformations in the Islamic tradition of training.

Islamic education and teaching traditions in Islamic studies as a concept of development of the ultimate meanings of education are open to modern practices of mastering knowledge. New programs are being developed that are focused on the inclusion of a secular component and distance Islamic online education, using general scientific methodology, and the principles of Islamic rationalism.

In the study and teaching of religion in the theological model of education, representatives of Qur'anic, Kalam, and Fiqh develop the theological approach (such as Zahiri, Batiniyya, and Esoteric interpretation of the Quran) to studying the Holy Scriptures.

Islamic theological education and Islamic education as a concept for the development of higher meanings of education have conceptual theoretical and methodological differences. However, both educational models use information technology in religious education and teaching practices. It follows from this that the problem of studying and applying digital technologies in the Islamic education tradition, both at the level of the secular and the level of the canonical approach, is a rapidly developing and promising area of research.

To confirm this statement, it is necessary to turn to an issue paper using a bibliometric analysis of scientific articles on the digitalization of Islamic education in the English-language database of the information platform.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to study the possible ways and prospects for the use of digital practices in the field of religious education. The formulation of questions actualizes the problem of models of Islamic education.

5. Research Methods

To study the most promising areas of research in the field of religious education and training in the context of digitalization, a bibliometric analysis of scientific literature is used. Bibliometric methods, based on the scope of application, are divided into general, special, and combined. The structure of general bibliometric methods includes statistical, thesaurus, and slang methods, the method of counting the number of publications, citation index, and content analysis.

The methodology of the study is based on the application of the method of counting the number of publications (the number of articles), the slang method, which shows the frequency (the basic unit of measurement) of the use of words in a specific corpus of texts and, in part, content analysis. Statistical

processing of texts was carried out manually. The ideas of researchers were also taken into account, including Budantsev (2020).

The work plan of the study included the following steps:

1. Search for data on scientific publications in the period from 01/01/2017 to 12/01/2021, registered in the electronic database ScienceDirect of the information platform of the Elsevier publishing house, in the section “Social and Human Sciences”, subsection “Social Sciences”. The ScienceDirect database is a multidisciplinary information platform of Elsevier publishing house for students, teachers, and scientists, containing more than 25% of all world publications, providing access to more than 13 million publications published in 2500 scientific journals and 35 thousand books (Wikipedia). The unit of analysis is the number of citations. Peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters (including open access content) were searched for keywords, author name, and journal-title.

2. Preliminary treatment of the data: 1) grouping by research topics, 2) formation of a list of popular publications, 3) topics of the most cited publications.

3. Comparison and analysis of the obtained results.

The strategy for selecting research articles in the ScienceDirect electronic database was defined as Select fetching to extract related entities by type (Table 01).

Table 1. Sampling strategy

Parameter	Meaning
What to search	Digitalization of Islamic education
Where to search	In the title of the article, in keywords, in the abstract
Publication type	Articles, book chapters, reviews, and theses of the conference
Filters	Search for special characters, namely, plurals and spelling variants are included
Period	From 1998 to 2021.

6. Findings

The search query resulted in 3386 publications (as of December 1, 2021), the total number includes publications (Table 02):

Table 2. Comparative characteristics of publications by years, type, and subject

Years (number of publications)	Article type (number of publications)	Subjects of publications
2021 (705)	Review articles (215)	
2020 (488)	Scientific articles (2193)	
2019 (286)	Encyclopedia (overview) (86)	Digital Divide
2018 (219)	Chapters in books (247)	Digital Gap
2017 (189)	Theses of the conferences (169)	Distance Learning
2016 (171)	Book reviews (10)	Remote Learning During COVID-19 (Covidian Education)
2015 (203)	Case reports (3)	Muslim Women and Digital Media
2014 (132)	Conference Information (8)	Digital Technologies in Education
2005 (48)	Correspondence (4)	Digital Knowledge Management
2004 (35)	Articles with data (2)	
2003 (33)	Discussion (10)	

2002 (11)	Editions (23)
2001 (20)	Fixes (1)
2000 (6)	Mini-reviews (6)
1999 (5)	News (8)
1998 (28)	Patent Reports (1)
	Practical guide (2)
	Short messages (25)
	Other (373)

The sampling data showed that according to studies of the problems of digitalization of Islamic education in the period from 1998 to 2021, the most common types of publications were scientific articles (64.7 %), to a lesser extent, chapters in books (7.3 %), review articles (6.4 %), theses of the conferences (4.9 %) and others (16.7 %), which is clearly shown in the diagram (Figure 01).

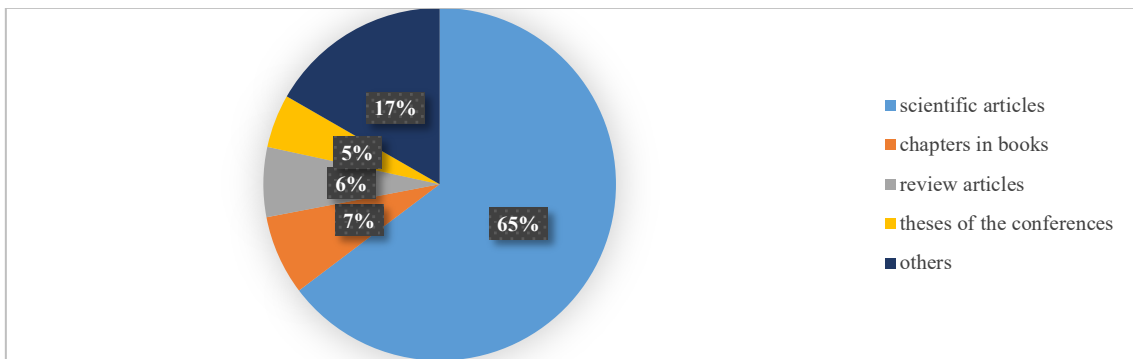


Figure 1. Types of publications in the ScienceDirect database on the digitalization of Islamic education

The analysis of the obtained data showed that the total number of publications on the issues under study is increasing. The graph shows a dynamic picture of the growth of publications in the period from 2017 to 2021, in which the increase of scientific articles exceeds other types of publication activity (Figure 02):

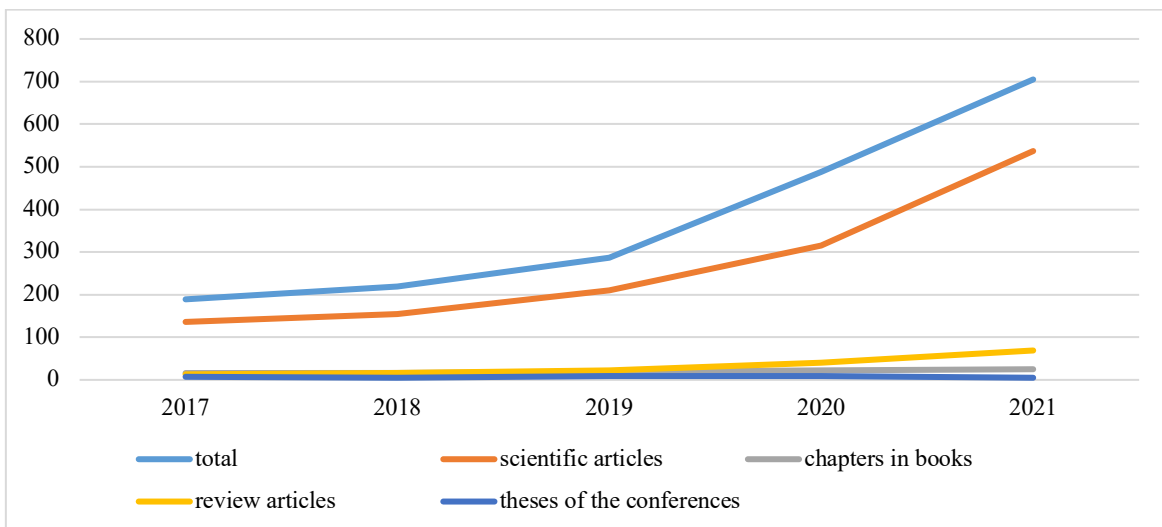


Figure 2. Dynamic picture of the growth of publications in the period from 2017 to 2021

For each year there is a percentage by types of publications and key themes. The most popular thematic areas of publications by citation or reader activity were (percentages): “Digital Divide. Digital Gap” (37 %), “Distance Learning. Remote Learning During COVID-19 (Covidian Education)” (33 %), “Digital Technologies in Education” (18 %), “Muslim Women and Digital Media” (8 %), “Digital Knowledge Management” (4 %). The cumulative indicator of publications on digital practices in education and training amounted to 63 % of the total number of publications on the digitalization of Islam.

One can observe on specific examples what problems exist in the application of digital practices in the field of religious education and Islamic education based on the material of English-language publications.

First of all, attention is drawn to the problem of improving the experience of teaching the Quran and Islamic education using a digital stimulator (Alsharbi et al., 2018), digital methods of teaching Islam in the educational process of the Academy of Islamic Studies of the University of Malaya, which play a positive role both in pedagogy and in a religious sense (Mohd, 2015). The cultural framework of Arab education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is formulated as “Covidian education” in comparison with pre-Covidian education, the problems are labeled as digital problems of “Covidian school graduates” (Abdulrahman et al., 2021).

A special place in the research analysis is occupied by the problem of women's use of digital tools in Islamic education. In this regard, experts explore the use of the term “Muslim women” as an act of supranational identification with Muslims in the context of the rapidly expanding digital Muslim space (Warren, 2018). According to experts, online education models are effective in a gender context in connection with opening women's access to education, socialization, and integration. However, such education requires the application of competencies related to many factors: ethnic, traditions, regional, etc. It is also necessary to regulate adaptation mechanisms since Islamic education must be modeled taking into account the formation of tolerant attitudes in the Islamic consciousness.

Digital practices are studied, among other things, on the models of creating knowledge management in higher education institutions, including the Islamic Azad University, in the aspect of relations between organizational culture, information technology, organizational structure, and human resources (Batoilmohammadi, 2011).

The problem of the caste gap in digital technologies has a significant impact on the scope of digital practices in Islamic education. For example, a similar trend exists in India (Vaidehi et al., 2021), where there is a large digital divide of the first and second levels between disadvantaged caste groups and other people, rooted in the historical socio-economic deprivation of disadvantaged caste groups in terms of their religious affiliation. The closely related study “From Digital Divide to Digital Inclusion” (Jamil, 2021) draws attention to the study of various problems underlying the structure of the digital divide in Pakistan as well.

Thus, the scientific articles presented in the review reflect the nature of the topics of publications and general trends in the dynamics of the problems of digital Islamic education, taking into account the changing conditions of social reality.

7. Conclusion

The results of a study of a review of English-language publications on the topic of digitalization of religious education in the period from 1998 to 2021 on the basis of the ScienceDirect database of the information platform of the Elsevier publishing house using bibliometric methods showed that the problem of digitalization of Islamic education requires further serious research. The use of digital technologies in the education field contributes to the transformation of traditional religious values, acting as a catalyst for the dynamics of change in the field of education. Theological and Islamic approaches to learning under the influence of the use of information technologies in religious education and teaching practices will inevitably transform into open systems, which will lead to a revision of conceptual theoretical and methodological differences, to a new Islamic discourse in the field of education.

In the face of lack of trust, virtually uncontrolled technological development, and fierce competition, innovative ideas are needed that can create alternative solutions and forms of life, including discussions about the future of Islamic education. The core of discussions is ethics and morality as areas of intersection of science, religion, and digitalization, reflecting the crisis of modern society.

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