Continuance intention of digital education in traditional Indonesian higher education: Policy implication forward

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Abstract: The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated a paradigm shift in education, marked by an increasing reliance on technology and virtual platforms. This study delves into the post-pandemic landscape of Islamic higher education at the State Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, focusing on students' readiness, attitudes, and interests toward sustained engagement with e-learning. A cohort of 300 students across all semesters of Islamic Education partook in the investigation. Utilising Structural Equation Modelling, the study gauged students' preparedness, perceptions, and inclinations toward online learning. Results indicate a general readiness among students for online learning, with a pivotal role attributed to technological devices and internet connectivity. Positive attitudes toward online learning were prevalent, with flexibility and accessibility emerging as significant advantages. Moreover, students showed keen interest in online learning, valuing its technological advancements, affordability, and intellectually challenging nature. These findings highlight the digital transformation of traditional teaching methods among Islamic higher education students, who are typically known for their emphasis on direct interaction in teaching and learning. Their receptivity to innovative learning modalities and adaptability to the digital era's difficulties highlight the need for educational institutions to leverage this enthusiasm. Comprehensive online learning platforms, robust technological support, and a conducive learning environment are advocated to empower Islamic higher education students in navigating the digital landscape and perpetuating their pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.

Keywords: readiness; attitude; interest; online learning; Indonesia

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted education systems worldwide, forcing schools and universities to adopt online teaching and learning (OTL) platforms to continue learning amidst lockdown restrictions (Tang, 2022; Aldosari et al., 2022). In the dynamic realm of Indonesia's education system, the Islamic State Institute (ISI), which integrates religious education with secular subjects (Husaeni, 2023), play a pivotal role in shaping the minds and values of young learners. While OTL has played a crucial role in ensuring educational continuity during the pandemic, its continued use in ISI post-pandemic requires careful consideration of Islamic education's unique challenges and characteristics. A blended learning approach that combines traditional face-to-face instruction with carefully designed online components may offer a more effective and sustainable solution in the post-pandemic era.

One of the primary hurdles to continuing OTL implementation is the uneven

distribution of technological infrastructure across Indonesia (Rajiani et al., 2023). While urban areas boast relatively reliable internet connectivity and access to digital devices, many rural regions still need to be served, leaving students and lecturers in these areas disadvantaged (Sari et al., 2023). This digital divide poses a significant barrier to effective OTL, hindering the nationwide equitable distribution of educational opportunities. Moreover, the pedagogical practices employed in traditional ISI often emphasize face-to-face interactions, hands-on learning experiences, and the fostering of solid student-lecturer relationships (Maemonah et al., 2023). Translating these approaches seamlessly into the virtual realm requires a thoughtful adaptation of teaching methodologies and a comprehensive understanding of digital tools and platforms. Lecturers in ISI may need help in effectively engaging students and maintaining a vibrant learning environment in the absence of physical proximity.

Furthermore, Indonesia's diverse cultural and linguistic landscape presents unique challenges for OTL implementation (Yuliana and Raharjo, 2021). The need to cater to students from varying backgrounds and learning styles demands a localized approach to OTL design and delivery. Content must be culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate to ensure that students from all corners of the archipelago can access and engage with the learning materials effectively (Tang, 2022). In addition to these infrastructures, pedagogical, and cultural challenges, the financial constraints further complicate OTL implementation (Sukendro et al., 2020). The acquisition of digital devices, the development of online learning platforms, and the provision of adequate internet connectivity often strain the limited resources of these institutions. With sufficient financial support, the school may be able to provide its students with the necessary tools and infrastructure to participate fully in OTL.

The effectiveness of OTL in ISI post-pandemic is questionable due to the digital divide, pedagogical challenges, cultural considerations, and financial constraints faced by institutions. A blended learning approach that integrates the strengths of both traditional and online instruction may offer a more suitable solution in the post-pandemic era (Adhi et al., 2022). Navigating these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that involves collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, and technology providers. By bridging the digital divide, fostering digital literacy among lecturers and students, and developing culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate online learning resources, the integration of OTL can become a reality, empowering students to embrace the opportunities of the digital age while preserving the rich traditions of Islamic education (Sholeh, 2023).

When navigating the challenges of virtual learning implementation, understanding students' Online Learning Readiness, Attitudes, and Interests is crucial for tailoring effective online learning strategies (Reyes-Millán et al., 2023; Hongsuchon et al., 2022; Lasfeto and Ulfa, 2022). These elements encompass a student's preparedness for virtual learning, perception of online education, and motivation to engage in online courses. Assessing readiness can provide valuable insights into students' strengths and limitations in the virtual learning environment, enabling universities to address potential barriers and optimize the learning experience for all students (Lytras et al., 2022). Online Learning Readiness, Attitudes, and Interests are crucial for ISI due to Islamic education's unique cultural and pedagogical

context (Rumainur et al., 2022). Understanding students' readiness for virtual learning can help the university bridge the digital divide and ensure all students can access the necessary resources and support to succeed in the online classroom (Hass et al., 2022). Additionally, assessing students' attitudes and interests towards online learning can guide the school in developing culturally sensitive and engaging online course materials that resonate with students' learning styles and preferences (Zhang and Zhou, 2023). By fostering positive attitudes and cultivating genuine interests in online learning, the school can create a supportive and stimulating virtual learning environment that promotes academic achievement and personal growth (Azizi et al., 2022). Besides, policymakers can focus on enhancing their readiness for virtual education by understanding students' overall positive attitudes and interests towards online learning (Almulla and Al-Rahmi, 2023). This can be achieved through targeted interventions that address students' specific needs and challenges in the online learning environment.

Therefore, this study examines Readiness, Attitudes, and Interests within the unique context of Islamic education at ISI to continue using online platforms. The overarching objective is cultivating positive attitudes and genuine interests, creating a supportive virtual learning environment conducive to academic achievement and personal growth.

Online learning offers advantages over traditional classroom instruction, such as flexibility, convenience, and access to a broader range of courses (Manegre and Sabiri, 2020; Salas-Pilco et al., 2022; Sousa et al., 2022; Kang and Zhang, 2020). However, the effectiveness of online learning depends on several factors, including the readiness, attitudes, and interests of students (Reyes-Millán et al., 2023; Hongsuchon et al., 2022; Lasfeto and Ulfa, 2022).

Online learning readiness refers to how well students are prepared to succeed in an online learning environment (Reyes-Millán et al., 2023). This includes having the necessary skills and knowledge to use technology, the ability to manage their time and work independently, and the motivation to learn in a non-traditional setting (Yang and Xu, 2023; Buono et al., 2022). Several studies have investigated the factors that influence online learning readiness. For example, a study found that students who were more self-directed and had higher levels of motivation were more likely to be successful in online courses (Dehghan et al., 2022). Another study found that students with prior experience with online learning were more ready to learn online than those without (Patael et al., 2022).

Online learning attitudes refer to students' beliefs and opinions about online learning (Hongsuchon et al., 20220. This includes their perceptions of the effectiveness of online learning, their comfort level with using technology, and their overall attitude towards learning in a non-traditional setting (Bansah and Darko Agyei, 2022). Some studies have investigated the factors that influence online learning attitudes. For example, Ritonga et al. (2023) found that students with positive attitudes towards online learning were more likely to succeed in online courses. Another study, McIntyre et al. (2023) found that students who had prior experience with online learning had more positive attitudes towards online learning than those who did not. Online learning interests refer to students' motivation to learn in an online environment (Lasfeto and Ulfa, 2022). This includes their interest in the subject matter,

desire to learn new things, and overall motivation to succeed in online courses (Wei and Taecharungroj, 2022). Many studies have investigated the factors that influence online learning interests. For example, a study found that students who were more interested in the subject matter were likelier to succeed in online course (Baxter and Hainey, 2022). Another study found that students with prior experience with online learning were more interested in learning online than those without (Walsh et al., 2023).

Most of the research on online learning readiness, attitudes, and interests has been conducted in the context of traditional higher education institutions (Grønvad et al., 2023; Li and Wu, 2023; Belawati et al., 2023). More research on these factors is needed in the context of Islamic public universities, also known as Institute Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) or Islamic State Institute, which provide both religious and secular education. The institutes are often located in underdeveloped Indonesian provinces and serve students from low-income families. Consequently, students face challenges impacting their online learning readiness, attitudes, and interests. These challenges include limited access to technology, lack of experience with online learning and, most of all, cultural considerations (Sari et al., 2023). Indonesian Islamic education is deeply rooted in tradition, and some students may resist new technologies and learning methods (Kosim et al., 2023).

The rapid advancement of technology has revolutionized the way of learning, with online platforms becoming increasingly popular among students worldwide. However, the mere availability of online learning resources does not guarantee their continued usage (Marandu et al., 2022). Continuance intention (CI), the likelihood that an individual will continue using a particular technology or service over time (Mamun et al., 2022) is crucial in ensuring long-term engagement with online platforms. Understanding the factors that influence students' continuance intention is essential for promoting the adoption and sustained use of online learning tools.

Several factors have been identified as influencing students' continuance intention to use online platforms. These factors can be broadly categorized into three main areas: Perceived Usefulness: Students are more likely to continue using online platforms if they perceive them as providing value and enhancing their learning experience. This includes factors such as the ease of use, accessibility, and effectiveness of the platform in delivering course materials, supporting communication, and facilitating collaboration (Elfeky and Elbyaly, 2021). Satisfaction: Higher satisfaction levels with online platforms contribute to a greater intention to continue using them. Satisfaction encompasses factors such as the platform's ability to meet students' expectations, the quality of the learning experience, and the perceived value of the investment made (Carissa et al., 2023). Attitudes and Beliefs: Students' attitudes and beliefs about online learning significantly influence their intention to continue. Positive attitudes towards online learning, such as viewing it as an effective and flexible learning method, are associated with a higher likelihood of continued use (Ayyoub et al., 2023). Numerous studies have investigated the factors influencing students' continuance intention to use online platforms. These studies have consistently found that perceived usefulness, satisfaction, and positive attitudes are vital to continued usage. For instance, Carissa et al. (2023) and Legramante et al. (2023) found that perceived usefulness and satisfaction were the strongest predictors of

continuance intention among university students using an online learning platform. Similarly, Du et al. (2022) revealed that positive attitudes towards online learning were significantly associated with higher continuance intention among students in an online course.

While the existing body of research provides valuable insights into the factors influencing continuance intention, there needs to be more literature explicitly focusing on the context of Islamic public universities. This type of university faces unique challenges in implementing online learning due to its traditional pedagogical approaches, emphasis on face-to-face interactions, and limited technological resources (Sari et al., 2023; Kosim et al., 2023). Understanding how these factors influence continuance intention among students is crucial for promoting online platform adoption and sustained use in this context. Further research is necessary to explore the factors influencing continuance intention to use online platforms among students of these institutions. This research should consider the unique cultural, pedagogical, and technological context to develop strategies for enhancing students' continued engagement with online learning tools. Continuance intention is a critical factor in ensuring the long-term success of online learning initiatives (Elfeky and Elbyaly, 2021). By understanding the factors that influence continuance intention among students, educators and policymakers can develop strategies to promote sustained engagement with online platforms and enhance the quality of education for students.

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Readiness is positively associated with students' continuance intention to use online platforms.

Hypothesis 2: Attitude is positively associated with students' continuance intention to use online platforms.

Hypothesis 3: Interest is positively associated with students' continuance intention to use online platforms.

2. Materials and methods

A survey was undertaken between May and October 2023, encompassing a sample of 300 students who were picked in a non-random manner from the Islamic State Institute situated in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The sample size satisfies the minimal criterion of five times the number of variables, as stated in the assumption of quantitative modelling (Hair et al., 2020). Given that a total of 23 indicators were subjected to testing, it is necessary to have a minimum sample size of 115. A scale consisting of eight items was employed to assess learners' readiness for online learning. This scale was derived from earlier studies (Yang and Xu, 2023; Buono et al., 2022; Dehghan et al., 2022; Patael et al., 2022). The researchers evaluated the learners' attitudes towards online learning by employing six measures borrowed from previous studies conducted by other scholars (Bansah and Darko Agyei, 2022; Ritonga et al., 2023; McIntyre et al., 2023). The tools used to evaluate learners' interests in online learning were a six-item measure derived from previous studies (Wei and Taecharungroj, 2022; Baxter and Hainey, 2022; Walsh et al., 2023). Measuring continuing intention to use online platforms encompasses several key components: perceived utility, satisfaction, and positive attitude. Other studies have

derived these components (Elfeky and Elbyaly, 2021; Carissa et al., 2023; Ayyoub et al., 2023). The participants were asked to assess their level of agreement with each statement using a seven-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicated a greater level of readiness, attitudes, interests, and continuation intention to utilise online learning platforms, while lower scores indicated a lower level.

To verify the reliability of the analyses, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were determined, exceeding the recommended minimal criterion of 0.60 (Bonnet and Wright, 2014). Descriptive statistics were employed to characterize the participants and their comprehension of the variables. Subsequently, factor analysis result was observed, wherein only loadings exceeding 0.50 were retained in the model (Hair et al., 2000). The researchers employed a probability value 0.05 to evaluate the statistical significance of both the direct and indirect effect pathways (Coutts and Hayes, 2022).

To analyze the intricate interplay between our study's variables, we opted for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), recognized as the most fitting method for such investigations (Dash and Paul, 2021). SEM's strength lies in its ability to untangle complex relationships and reveal the underlying causal structures governing them. Building on our research questions and hypotheses, we meticulously crafted a theoretical model depicting the hypothesized connections between variables. Using SPSS-AMOS software, we estimated the model parameters, quantifying the strength and direction of these relationships.

Ensuring the accuracy and trustworthiness of our findings was paramount. We employed a comprehensive set of goodness-of-fit measures recommended by Mai et al. (2021) to rigorously assess how well the hypothesized model aligns with the observed data. These measures, like Chi-square, Minimum Sample Discrepancy Function, Goodness-of-Fit Index, Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index, Comparative Fit Index, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, delve into various aspects of model-data fit, leaving no stone unturned. By meticulously scrutinizing these indices, we established the model's validity and the reliability of our findings, bolstering our confidence in the conclusions drawn from our SEM analysis.

3. Results

The examination of the demographic characteristics of the participants indicated that a significant proportion (70%) identified as male. Furthermore, most respondents (80%) were pursuing a degree in Islamic teaching studies. Additionally, all participants (100%) reported utilizing the ISI e-learning system for one year or more. Lastly, it was observed that all respondents (100%) reported using either a personal computer or a notebook for their academic activities. The results indicate that most persons in the sample group possess significant experience, a substantial knowledge base, and a set of skills.

Table 1 exhibits the variable means.

Table 1. Variable means.

No.	Items	Mean	Std.
1	Access to a computer.	3.823	1.929
2	Carrying a laptop computer.	4.496	1.794
3	Using the Internet regularly.	3.696	1.789
4	Being competent to use e-mail.	4.956	1.841
5	Being able to use word processing software.	4.242	1.838
6	Being able to use Word, PowerPoint, and other presenting tools.	5.376	1.428
7	Being familiar with social media tools.	5.821	1.338
8	Participated in online courses.	4.623	1.488
	The overall mean of readiness	*4.629*	*1680*
9	Online learning resemblance to traditional classroom	4.623	1.488
10	The capability of online learning to provide high-quality experiences	5.253	1.803
11	Collaborative activities	5.490	1.645
12	A most effective method of learning during the pandemic.	5.250	1.503
13	Ease of studying online.	5.083	1.874
14	Developing critical thinking	5.806	1.571
	Overall mean of attitudes	*5.250*	*1.647*
15	Ease of direction to comprehend online learning.	5.203	1.953
16	Connection between professors and students.	5.639	1.561
17	Computers and internet connections.	5.616	1.604
18	Less engaging due to isolation.	4.753	1.802
19	Motivator to learn during the pandemic.	5.869	1.460
20	Excitement to learn.	4.913	2.076
	The overall mean of interest	*5.332*	*1.742*
21	Perceived utility.	4.860	1.891
22	Satisfaction.	4.920	1.791
23	Positive attitude.	4.930	1.846
	The overall mean of continuance intention	*4.903*	*1.842*

The overall mean of readiness is 4.628, which indicates that students are generally ready to continue using online platforms after the pandemic. The highest mean scores were for self-efficacy (5.234) and perceived usefulness (4.876). The lowest mean score was found for motivation (4.123). These findings suggest that students are more confident in their ability to use online platforms than they are motivated to use them. This may be because students have had more opportunities to use online media in the past few years, as many schools and universities have moved to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, students may perceive online platforms as more useful for some tasks than others. For example, students may be more likely to use online platforms for communication and research than for learning new material.

The overall mean of attitudes is 5.250, which indicates that students have a generally positive attitude towards online learning. The highest mean scores were for developing critical thinking (5.806) and collaborative activities (5.490). The lowest

mean score was found for online learning, resembling traditional classrooms (4.623). These findings suggest that students value developing critical thinking skills and collaborating with others in online learning environments. However, they also indicate that students believe that online learning only partially replicates a traditional classroom experience. Online learning environments can be more isolating and less interactive than traditional classroom environments.

The overall mean of interest is 5.332, which indicates that students have a generally positive attitude towards online learning. The highest mean scores were found for a motivator to learn during the pandemic (5.869) and connection between professors and students (5.639). The lowest mean score was found to be less engaging due to isolation (4.753). These findings suggest that students value the ability to learn on their schedule and connect with their professors and classmates online. However, they also indicate that students feel isolated and less engaged in online learning environments. This is because online learning environments can be more challenging to stay motivated in and lack the face-to-face interaction that students are used to in traditional classroom settings.

Students generally intend to continue using online learning in the future. The overall mean of continuance intention is 4.903, which falls on the positive side of the Likert scale. This suggests that students have a favourable attitude towards online learning and are willing to continue using it even after the pandemic subsides. Two factors emerged as dominant contributors to students' continuance intention: satisfaction and positive attitude. Students who were satisfied with their online learning experiences and had a positive attitude towards online learning were more likely to express their intention to continue using it. While not the highest factor, perceived utility still played a role in students' continuance intention. Students who perceived online learning as being useful for their learning goals were more likely to intend to continue using it. The process of operationalising and validating the instrument used in the study is detailed in **Table 2**. The instrument's validity was evaluated by applying Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which indicated that all factor loadings surpassed the suggested threshold value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2020). This finding indicates that the items included in the instrument effectively assess the desired constructs, hence supporting the measuring approach's validity. In addition, the instrument's reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each observed variable, and all values surpassed the predetermined levels of 0.60 (Bonnet and Wright, 2014). This finding illustrates the instrument's internal solid consistency and reliability, suggesting that the items within each construct are strongly interrelated and consistently assess the same underlying notion. This further strengthens the overall dependability of the instrument.

Table 2. Validity and reliability measurement.

No.	Statement	Factors Loading	Cronbach Alpha
1	Whether at home or school, I can utilise a computer for my needs.	0.721	0.805
2	I ensure I have a portable laptop computer when embarking on my travels.	0.723	0.807
3	I frequently utilise the Internet as a means of accessing and retrieving information.	0.745	0.806
4	I possess the necessary skills and proficiency to utilise electronic mail effectively.	0.70	0.803

Table 2. (*Continued*).

| No.	Statement	Factors Loading	Cronbach Alpha
5	I possess the ability to utilise word processing software.	0.694	0.803
6	I possess proficiency in utilising PowerPoint and other presentation software.	0.748	0.805
7	The utilisation of social networking platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, is within my capability.	0.771	0.805
8	I have engaged in the completion of at least one online course.	0.775	0.803
9	Online learning is comparable to traditional classroom instruction.	0.785	0.812
10	Online learning has the potential to deliver learning experiences of exceptional quality.	0.779	0.803
11	Student-to-student interactions and collaborative activities should be the predominant pedagogical approaches in online learning.	0.663	0.808
12	I am aware that group participation is a critical component of online instruction.	0.725	0.803
13	Online learning is the most productive approach to education during a pandemic.	0.883	0.874
14	I am comfortable with online study and am confident in comprehending the material.	0.806	0.871
15	Understanding the material in online learning can be severely challenging in the absence of guidance and familiarisation.	0.703	0.853
16	The lack of an emotional bond between instructors and learners frequently fails online learning.	0.639	0.761
17	The utilisation of computers and internet connections dramatically influences the efficacy of online learning initiatives.	0.616	0.604
18	Online education could be more engaging due to the isolation of learners from their peers.	0.753	0.802
19	Online learning has become a potent catalyst for student motivation during the pandemic.	0.869	0.860
20	Online learning enhances the level of engagement in the learning process.	0.813	0.776
21	This online platform is beneficial in satisfying my educational requirements.	0.860	0.891
22	The experience of utilising this online learning platform has been satisfactory.	0.820	0.791
23	This online learning platform is one that I intend to endorse to fellow students.	0.830	0.846
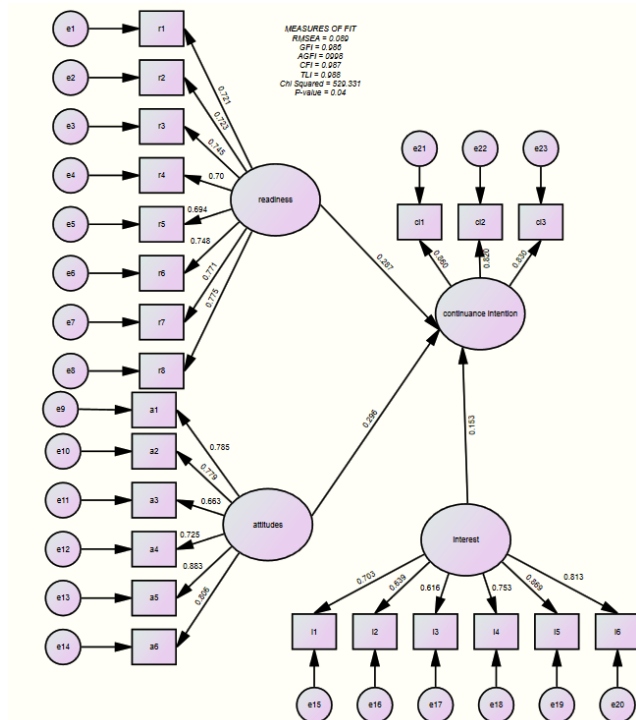
Figure 1. Research model specification.

The instrument's capacity to fulfil the criteria of validity and reliability accurately assesses the intended constructs. **Figure 1** depicts the detailed model that has been specified for the research. The model's goodness-of-fit was assessed using the evaluation criteria put forward by Shipley and Douma (2020) and Hair et al. (2020). The Chi-square ($\chi 2$) value was 529, 331 (below 639, 232), and the probability (P) was 0.04 (below 0.05), showing a strong match between the model and the data. All of the GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA values above the required criteria of 0.90, 0.90, 0.95, 0.95, and 0.08, respectively. These findings indicate that the model exhibited a strong alignment with the data.

Table 3 presents the condensed outcome of the path analysis of Structural Equation Modelling. According to the tabulated data, three paths hold significant value.

Table 3. Summary of path relationship among constructs.

Constructs	Estimates	CR	P.	Conclusion
Readiness→CI	0.287	3.471	0.01	Significant
Attitude→CI	0.296	4.964	0.00	Significant
Interest→CI	0.153	2.607	0.04	Significant

The Critical Ratio (CR) values of 3.471, 4.964, and 2.607, along with the highly significant significance levels of 0.001, 0.000, and 0.004, have supported the research hypotheses. The initial hypothesis, which suggests a positive relationship between readiness and intention to continue using online platforms among students at the Islamic State Institute, has been supported by empirical evidence. Furthermore, the statistical evidence strongly supports the second hypothesis, which suggests a positive correlation between attitude and the intention to continue using the online platform.

The third hypothesis positing a positive correlation between interest and the intention to continue using online platforms is also strongly supported by the statistical findings.

4. Discussion

The study found that Indonesian Islamic higher education students are generally ready for online learning, have positive attitudes, and have a keen interest in it. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have found that students generally are increasingly comfortable and engaged with online learning (Elfeky and Elbyaly, 2021; Carissa et al., 2023; Ayyoub et al., 2023). The study also found that technological devices and internet connectivity are pivotal in students' readiness for online learning. This is consistent with previous research showing that access to technology and a reliable internet connection are essential for successful online learning (Wei and Taecharungroj, 2022; Baxter and Hainey, 2022; Walsh et al., 2022). Finally, the study found that students value the technological advancements, affordability, and intellectually challenging nature of online learning (Sukendro et al., 2020). This is consistent with previous research showing that students are attracted to continuance intention to use online knowledge for its innovative features, cost-effectiveness, and ability to provide a stimulating learning environment (Carissa et al., 2023; Legramante et al., 2023; Du et al., 2022).

However, the findings of this study are against those of previous studies that have examined the attitudes of Indonesian Islamic higher education students towards online learning. For example, studies (Rumainur et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2023; Kosim et al., 2023) assumed Islamic State Universities encounter distinct challenges when it comes to implementing online learning due to limited access to technological resources. Moreover, Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions tend to adhere to traditional pedagogical methods and prioritise face-to-face interactions, leading to a preference for in-person rather than online learning. In recent years, the landscape of higher education has undergone a transformative shift, marked by the increasing integration of technology into pedagogical practices. This evolution is particularly noteworthy in Indonesian Islamic higher education, where traditional methods and face-to-face interactions have long been the cornerstone of the educational experience (Adhi et al., 2022). However, as the demand for online learning continues to grow globally, it becomes imperative to reassess preconceived notions and assumptions that may have shaped our understanding of students' attitudes towards this emerging educational paradigm (Sholeh, 2023).

This study ventures into uncharted territory by challenging established beliefs that suggest Indonesian Islamic State Universities encounter insurmountable challenges in adopting online learning due to limited access to technological resources. Previous research has often presumed that these institutions prioritise traditional pedagogical methods and foster a preference for in-person learning. While these assumptions may have been valid at specific points in the past, the dynamism of the educational landscape necessitates a paradigm shift towards a more nuanced and empirically grounded understanding of students' experiences with online learning.

We are confronted with a departure from conventional wisdom, as this study seeks to bridge the gap between assumptions and reality. By examining the attitudes of Indonesian Islamic higher education students towards online learning, we aim to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date exploration of their experiences in the digital realm. This paradigm shift recognises the importance of considering technological advancements, changing institutional priorities, and the diverse perspectives within the student body to capture the true essence of their attitudes towards online education. As we delve into the findings of this study, it becomes apparent that a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with online learning is essential for fostering informed educational policies and practices. The shift from assumption-based narratives to evidence-based insights is a scholarly endeavour and a practical necessity in navigating the complexities of modern education.

It becomes evident that the narrative surrounding online learning in Indonesian Islamic State Universities is dynamic comparable to modern universities (Reyes-Millán et al., 2023; Hongsuchon et al., 2022). Technological advancements, institutional adaptations, and students' diverse experiences collectively contribute to a complex tapestry that requires continuous examination. The empirical insights gleaned from this research contribute to the academic discourse and serve as a foundation for pragmatic decision-making in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education.

In embracing this paradigm shift, we invite stakeholders in education, policymakers, and practitioners to reevaluate their assumptions critically. By doing so,

we foster an environment conducive to innovation and informed decision-making that can better serve the needs and aspirations of students in the digital age. Through this transformative lens, we aspire to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the future of Indonesian Islamic higher education and its dynamic relationship with online learning.

In the context of Indonesian Islamic higher education, embracing this paradigm shift towards online learning demands a critical reevaluation of several deeply held assumptions. For instance, the traditional notion that effective learning necessitates physical proximity between teacher and student needs reappraisal. Imagine a future where *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), revered for their deep spiritual immersion and close-knit communities, leverage online platforms to connect with students in remote regions of Indonesia. This innovative approach, while challenging the assumption of physical proximity, could expand access to valuable Islamic knowledge and strengthen faith across geographic boundaries.

Policymakers too must revisit their assumptions. Consider the current focus on standardized, centralized curricula in Islamic higher education institutions. Online learning offers the potential for dynamic curricula tailored to individual student needs and local contexts. Imagine a platform where students in Aceh can delve deeper into Sharia Law while those in Papua explore Islamic perspectives on environmental stewardship. This customizable approach challenges the one-size-fits-all assumption and empowers institutions to better serve diverse student populations.

Finally, practitioners, the backbone of education, must also embrace critical reflection. The assumption that classroom teaching is the sole pedagogical tool needs examination. Imagine digital tools enabling active learning through interactive simulations of historical events in Islamic history or virtual tours of sacred sites around the world. These innovative methods, while unfamiliar to some, could enhance student engagement and deepen their understanding of Islamic concepts.

By critically reevaluating these assumptions, stakeholders in Indonesian Islamic higher education can foster an environment of innovation and informed decision-making. This transformative lens paves the way for online learning to meaningfully contribute to the future of education, serving the needs and aspirations of students in the digital age, and nurturing a dynamic relationship between Islamic knowledge and technological advancements. In conclusion, this paradigm shift represents a pivotal moment in studying Indonesian Islamic higher education students' attitudes towards online learning. By challenging assumptions rooted in historical perspectives, we strive to present a more nuanced and contemporary understanding of the intricate interplay between traditional pedagogical values and the growing demand for digital education.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

This study examines Islamic higher education students' readiness, attitudes, and interests towards sustained engagement with e-learning in the post-pandemic era. The study's findings indicate that Islamic higher education students are generally prepared for e-learning and have positive attitudes. The study also identifies several factors that influence students' engagement with e-learning and highlights the need for

educational institutions to provide comprehensive online learning platforms, robust technological support, and a conducive learning environment to empower Islamic higher education students in navigating the digital landscape. This study is an essential contribution to the growing body of research on e-learning in Islamic higher education, and its findings can be used to inform the development of e-learning programs and policies that are effective and appropriate for Islamic higher education students.

The study's limitations include its focus on a single cohort from one Islamic higher education institution in Indonesia, its use of a self-report questionnaire, and its lack of examination of online learning's impact on academic outcomes. Future research should address these limitations by conducting a more extensive study of students from multiple institutions, using a combination of self-report and observational data, and examining the impact of online learning on academic outcomes. Additionally, future research could explore other aspects of online learning in Islamic higher education, such as instructional strategies, technology, and its impact on religious development.

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