

# Chapter 10

## Adapting to Change in Education: How Islamic Centres in Singapore Promote Religiosity With the Help of Technology

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter reports on how private Islamic centres in Singapore promote religious education with the help of technology. This research study relies on the method of content analysis of textbooks used in the Islamic centres. Two research findings are noted in this chapter. First, the Islamic textbooks incorporate various technological tools and resources to impart religiosity in students. Secondly, technology has its limitations in engendering religiosity through effective teacher guidance and moral development. A major implication of this study is that educational changes in Islamic education need to be underpinned and mediated by an Islamic worldview on knowledge, education and morals.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Adapting to change in education is a necessity in today's highly complex, volatile and digital world. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that educational institutions around the globe need to improve and update their curriculum and pedagogy so that their students can “thrive in and shape their future” (OECD, n.d., para. 1). Pertinently, technology skills are among the critical characteristics in learning content and experiences identified by the World Economic Forum (2020) for the fourth industrial revolution. The International Bureau of Education-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (IBE-UNESCO) defines 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies as “the knowledge, skills and attitudes citizens need to be able to fully participate in and contribute to the knowledge society due to changes in society, and more particularly, to the *rapid development of technology and its impact on the way people live, work and learn*” (IBE-UNESCO, (2019, para. 1, italics added).

### Religious Education and Digitalisation

Like their secular counterparts, religious institutions need to explore the utilisation of technology to support the inculcation of religious knowledge and values in the learners. Religious education remains paramount in a world marked by what Bachmann-Medick (2016a) calls a ‘religious turn’. The term ‘religious turn’ denotes a resurgence of religiosity – strong religious belief and feeling – in many areas of human life. Pointing out that this religious turn is more closely associated with Islam than with any other religion, Panjwani and Moulin-Stožek (2017) aver:

*By using religious identity to interpret and classify the diverse group of people who are now increasingly called ‘Muslims’, religion supplants the prior categorisations of ethnicity, race, or nationality. This trend, it has been argued, does not just concern how Muslims are classified, but is part of a process of ‘religification’ taking place in the self-understanding and self-definition of Muslims themselves related to the increased likelihood of others to confer that religious identity upon them (Panjwani, 2004, p. 519).*

A prominent manifestation of globalisation and modernisation is digitalisation. The fourth industrial revolution has accentuated human capital development which highlights the cultivation of generic competences such as critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving. High on the agenda of many learning institutions is “the shaping of forms of dispositional and cognitive capabilities of social actors – in particular ‘the ability to profit from continuous pedagogic reformations’, complying as and when required” (Tsatsaroni & Evans, 2014, p. 170). Digitalisation requires

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