

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN BUILDING THE CIVILISATION OF THE UMMAH THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF NORMATIVE-DOCTRINAL AND EMPIRICAL APPROACHES

Agung Nugroho

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin
agungnugroho@uin-antasari.ac.id

Husnul Yaqin

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin
husnulyaqin@uin-antasari.ac.id

Hamdan

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin
hamdan@uin-antasari.ac.id

Hidayat Ma'ruf

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin
hidayatmrf@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse Islamic educational strategies for building a civilised society through a normative-doctrinal approach based on the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as an empirical examination of the dynamics of the digital age. The issues addressed include the moral crisis, disinformation, and the secularisation of knowledge, which highlight the weak integration of knowledge, faith, and ethics within the education system. This study employs a qualitative approach using library *research*, with data sources comprising the Qur'an, Hadith, and relevant scholarly literature. Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis, whilst data analysis utilised *content analysis* with a dialectical approach to examine the relationship between normative ideals and empirical reality. The research findings indicate that an effective Islamic educational strategy must be built integrally through three main pillars: strengthening Tawhid as a foundation of values; developing critical reasoning based on *tabayyun* and *'aql* as epistemological instruments; and strengthening digital ethics as a practical manifestation in social life. The integration of these three aspects not only addresses the challenges of the digital age but also reinforces the role of Islamic education as a civilisational instrument in shaping individuals who are religious, critical, and of good moral character.

Keywords: Islamic education; Islamic civilisation; Tawhid; Tabayyun; Digital ethics; The digital age.

A. Introduction

From the perspective of the philosophy of education, education serves a fundamental function as a means of shaping the whole person, encompassing intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions. In the context of Islamic education, this function is directed not only towards the development of individual potential, but also towards the formation of a community based on divine values. The Qur'an and Hadith, as normative sources, affirm that the aim of education is to produce people who are faithful, knowledgeable and of noble character, so that they are capable of fulfilling their role as vicegerents on earth. Thus, Islamic education holds a strategic position in building a civilisation that is not only materially advanced, but also morally and spiritually civilised.

However, in today's world, particularly in the digital age, these functions face increasingly complex challenges. Rapid technological development has not only brought progress but has also given rise to various empirical problems, such as a moral crisis, disinformation, the misuse of technology, and the weakening of spiritual values in social life. This situation highlights an imbalance between the advancement of knowledge and character development, meaning that education has not yet been fully able to fulfil its role as a guardian of values and a shaper of character.

This issue is closely linked to weaknesses in the epistemological framework of Islamic education, which still tends to be fragmented and dichotomous. The separation between religious studies and general studies hinders the development of an integrated education system, with the result that Islamic education often remains confined to a normative-textual approach and is insufficiently responsive to empirical realities. Consequently, the ability of the education system to nurture a generation that is both religious and critical and adaptable is limited.

In this context, there is a gap between the normative ideal of holistic Islamic education and the reality of educational practice, which remains fragmented. This gap highlights the need to reconstruct Islamic educational strategies that not only emphasise normative aspects but also simultaneously integrate epistemological approaches and empirical realities.

In light of this, this study aims to analyse strategies for Islamic education in building a civilised society through an integrative approach that combines the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, strengthens scientific epistemology, and responds to the challenges of the digital age. This strategy is directed at strengthening the function of education as a means of shaping well-rounded individuals—who are faithful, think critically, and possess good character—so

that they are able to contribute to building a civilised, adaptive, and welfare-oriented civilisation for the Muslim community.

B. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of *library research*. Data sources include the Qur'an, the Hadith, and academic literature relevant to Islamic education and the development of civilisation. Data collection was carried out through documentary study, whilst data analysis employed *content analysis* with a dialectical approach to examine the relationship between normative ideals and empirical reality, and to formulate reconstructive strategies for Islamic education.

This approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to examine in depth the concept of Islamic education from a normative and theoretical perspective, and to relate it to the empirical dynamics unfolding in the digital age. Consequently, this study is not merely descriptive, but also analytical and constructive in formulating Islamic educational strategies that are relevant, integrative and practical in building the civilisation of the Muslim community.

C. Discussion

1. The Normative Ideals of Islamic Education in Building the Civilisation of the Ummah

Etymologically, the term 'civilisation' is linked to the word '*adab*', which in Arabic conveys the meanings of politeness, morality, refinement of character, and behaviour that reflects moral nobility. In the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), civilisation is understood as the level of material and spiritual progress of a society, reflected in its intelligence, culture, social order, and the quality of its language. Therefore, civilisation not only indicates material and intellectual progress, but also describes the moral and cultural qualities that develop within a society. In a broader sense, civilisation is often equated with the term '*tamadun*', which refers to a way of life characterised by the development of knowledge, culture, social values, and a civilised way of life. Thus, civilisation is essentially a manifestation of human progress that is measured not only through physical and technological aspects, but also through the quality of ethics, morals, and values that form the basis of communal life.¹

¹ Usman Syihab, *Building Civilisation through Religion* (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 2010), p. 77; Editorial Team of the Ministry of Education and Culture Dictionary, *The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1989), p. 5.

From an Islamic perspective, the concept of civilisation refers not only to social and cultural progress, but also to humanity's commitment to the values of tawhid. Consequently, the measure of a civilisation's progress is determined not only by advances in science and technology, but also by society's ability to realise justice, noble character, and the common good in accordance with divine guidance. It is within this context that Islamic education plays a strategic role as the primary instrument in shaping individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and civilised, serving as the foundation for the development of the ummah's civilisation.

The importance of moral character as the foundation of civilisation is also emphasised in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him:

“I have been sent only to perfect good character.”

"Verily, I have been sent to perfect good character."²

This hadith indicates that the mission of prophethood is not only oriented towards the cultivation of faith and worship, but also towards the formation of moral character as the foundation of individual and societal life. Thus, the development of a civilisation, from an Islamic perspective, is essentially a process of building individuals of noble character, for the quality of a civilisation is largely determined by the moral quality of the people who constitute it.

Based on this definition, it is clear that the essence of civilisation lies not only in the advancement of science, technology and culture, but also in the qualities of the human beings who are the agents of that civilisation. From an Islamic perspective, these qualities are closely linked to the cultivation of adab, namely the ability to place everything in its proper place in accordance with the values of truth and divinity. Therefore, any discussion of the civilisation of the ummah cannot be separated from the concept of Islamic education, which is oriented towards the formation of civilised human beings. It is within this context that Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's thoughts on *ta'dib* become relevant for explaining the relationship between education and the development of civilisation.

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *ta'dib* is derived from meaning the unique cultivation of human beings as rational and moral beings. *Ta'dib* is not merely as a process of teaching, but as a process of instilling

² HR. Al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* no. 273, Ahmad, *Musnad Ahmad* II/381, and al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak* II/613 from Abu Hurairah r.a.; authenticated by Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani in *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Shahihah*, no. 45.

comprehensive discipline, encompassing the body, the spirit. This affirms the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place for every thing within the order of existence, whether in the physical, intellectual, or spiritual.³ Thus, of *ta'dīb* not only affirms the epistemological of Islamic but also its ethical and civilisational, because the quality of civilisation is largely by how knowledge is understood, practised, and directed in human life.

Furthermore, the concept of *adab* in Al-Attas's view entails the recognition that knowledge and reality are arranged hierarchically according to their levels (*marātib*) and degrees (*darajāt*). Thus, Islamic aims not only to transmit knowledge, but also to shape individuals capable of placing everything in its proper perspective in accordance with the order of truth.

In this context, Islamic is normatively towards the formation of civilised human beings (*insān adabī*) who possess a balance between physical, potential. Therefore, the concept of *ta'dīb* serves as the primary for building the civilisation of the Muslim community, as civilisation is, in essence, a manifestation of the quality of human in both individual social life.

This concept of *ta'dīb* is in line with the thinking of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who regarded education as a means of drawing closer to Allah and a path to true happiness in this world and the hereafter. Education, according to Al-Ghazali, aims to purify the soul and cultivate noble character, by developing the potential of the human mind and soul in a balanced manner. Thus, education not only serves to develop intellectual intelligence, but also to strengthen humanity's role as stewards of the earth.⁴

Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the balance between reason and the soul demonstrates that Islamic education is not solely focused on the acquisition of knowledge, but also on character building and spiritual awareness. This balance is crucial because a civilisation built without a moral foundation will lose its way and risk a moral crisis. Therefore, education focused on moral development not only impacts the individual but also serves as the foundation for building a civilised and just society.

In the subsequent development of Islamic educational thought, the focus has not merely remained on the cultivation of individual moral character, but has also shifted to how education can address the structural and epistemological challenges facing the Muslim community, particularly in

³Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Development of Islamic Educational Philosophy*, trans. Haidar Baqir, 4th ed., (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), p. 222.

⁴Ary Antony Putra, "The Concept of Islamic Religious Education from the Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali", *Al-Thariqah Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 2016, pp. 42–56.

relation to the dichotomy of knowledge. It is in this context that Fazlur Rahman's thought becomes relevant for examination.

Fazlur Rahman's thinking reinforces the urgency of integration in Islamic education by rejecting the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge. In his view, education must be capable of developing the whole person, so that the knowledge acquired becomes an integral part of a creative personality oriented towards the common good, justice and social order. Within this framework, education emphasises not only cognitive aspects but also moral, affective, and practical dimensions, as Islamic education is, by its very nature, always bound to the values of right and wrong. Therefore, Rahman asserts that the integration of knowledge is a necessity, for knowledge is fundamentally one and indivisible; thus, education must be designed holistically by combining religious knowledge as a foundation and general knowledge as the development of civilisation.⁵

The idea of integrating these disciplines does not remain merely at a conceptual level, but is also relevant to the historical reality of Islamic civilisation. In this regard, Ibn Khaldun's thought provides an important foundation regarding the close relationship between education and the dynamics of civilisation.

Within Ibn Khaldun's framework of thought, education is positioned as a structural element that is inseparable from the concept of civilisation (*'umrān*). The survival and progress of a society are largely determined by the intellectual and ethical qualities of the individuals who comprise it; consequently, education serves as a strategic foundation for social development. In this context, education is not merely understood as a process of knowledge transmission—whether of a *naqliyah* or *aqliyah* nature—but is further directed towards the formation of *malakah*, namely the ' ' or scientific abilities that are deeply rooted and internalised within the human being. The formation of this *malakah* proceeds hand in hand with the strengthening of moral character, thereby producing individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess integrity in social life and civilisation.⁶

From these considerations, it is evident that Islamic education within a normative-doctrinal framework is not merely oriented towards the transfer of knowledge, but is fundamentally concerned with the formation of civilised individuals possessing moral integrity, spiritual depth, and integrated

⁵Parisaktiana Fathonah, "Fazlur Rahman's Educational Thought and Its Contribution to the Development of Islamic Educational Theory", *Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, Vol. XV, No. 1, June 2018, DOI: 10.14421/jpai.2018.151-05.

⁶Sumiati, S., Muhammad, D. H., & Susandi, A., "Character Education on Children's Discipline from Islamic and Western Perspectives", *Al-Muaddib: Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2022, pp. 10–28, <https://doi.org/10.46773/muaddib.v4i1.187>

intellectual capacity. The concepts of *ta'dib*, moral cultivation, the integration of knowledge, and the development of *malakah* demonstrate that Islamic education is inherently oriented towards civilisation. Thus, the ideal of Islamic education has indeed provided a solid conceptual foundation for building the civilisation of the ummah. However, this ideal still requires critical analysis when confronted with the empirical reality of contemporary Islamic education, which often reveals a gap between values and practice.

2. The Empirical Reality of Contemporary Islamic Education

In the contemporary context, Islamic education faces various issues that highlight a gap between normative ideals and practical realities on the ground. One fundamental problem that has emerged is the tendency to reduce the meaning of Islamic education to a purely cognitive aspect—namely, as a process of transferring religious knowledge—without accompanying efforts to internalise values and foster moral awareness among learners.

As pointed out by M. Amin Abdullah, this situation indicates that religious education has hitherto been more focused on theoretical issues, and has therefore not yet been able to transform knowledge into meaningful values that are internalised by learners.⁷ Consequently, Islamic education has not yet fully functioned as a force for shaping character and civilisation, but tends to remain at a symbolic and formalistic level.

This tendency to reduce Islamic education to its cognitive aspects is further reinforced by the view of Azyumardi Azra, who argues that current Islamic educational practices still prioritise memorisation over the development of logical and critical thinking skills. This situation results in students developing a mindset that tends to be dogmatic and lacks reflection, meaning that the potential of reason—as the primary tool for understanding reality—is not developed to its full potential.⁸

Another issue of no less critical importance is the emergence of dichotomies and dualism within the Islamic education system, which draws a clear distinction between religious studies and general studies. This situation not only leads to the fragmentation of knowledge but also gives rise to an epistemological divide that contributes to the decline of the Muslim community.⁹

⁷ Muhaimin, *Paradigms of Islamic Education (Efforts to Enhance the Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education in Schools)*, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2002), p. 90.

⁸ Dela Mala Nuryanti, "The Concept of Islamic Education from Azyumardi Azra's Perspective", *AT-Tajdid: Journal of Islamic Education and Thought*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January–June 2025, pp. 144–157, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24127/att.v9i1.4033>

⁹ Dita Damayanti, "A Critique of the Dichotomy of Knowledge in Islam: An Attempt to Harmonise Religious and Secular Knowledge in the Modern Era", *Lentera*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June–December 2024, pp. 181–197.

This dichotomy means that Islamic educational institutions tend to be strong in terms of morals and values, yet weak in the mastery of empirical knowledge, whilst general educational institutions excel in science and technology but are lacking in spiritual and religious dimensions. Consequently, Islamic education loses its balance between values and rationality, making it difficult for it to function as an integrative force in building a holistic civilisation.¹⁰

In addition to methodological limitations, the challenges facing Islamic education are becoming increasingly complex with the advent of digital transformation. The implementation of technology in Islamic education still faces various structural obstacles, such as limited infrastructure, unequal access to technology, and resistance within environments that tend to be conservative towards change.¹¹ These limitations are evident in the sub-optimal availability of internet networks, digital devices, and the capacity of human resources to integrate technology with the values of Islamic education. Consequently, the use of technology has not yet been fully able to improve the quality of learning; indeed, it has the potential to widen the educational gap if not managed in an adaptive and contextual manner.

3. The Dialectic of Normative Ideality and Empirical Reality

In an effort to bridge the gap between the normative ideals and the empirical reality of Islamic education, Amin Abdullah proposes an integration-interconnection approach as a comprehensive epistemological framework. This approach does not merely juxtapose religious studies and general studies structurally, but rather establishes interconnected scholarly relationships through methodological and ontological interactions. Thus, integration is not understood as an administrative merger within the curriculum, but as a fundamental transformation in the way of interdisciplinary scientific thinking. In this sense, ' ' integration demands an awareness that all disciplines are, in essence, interconnected, and therefore cannot be understood in isolation or in a fragmented manner within exclusive scientific spheres.¹²

However, in empirical reality, Islamic education still faces a fundamental problem in the form of a weak epistemological framework that is partial and non-integrative. This is reflected in the rigid separation between the sciences of *al-shari'ah* and the *non-shari'ah* sciences, which ultimately gives rise to a

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Miratu Khasanah, "Challenges in the Application of Digital Technology in Islamic Education: Utilising Innovation to Improve the Quality of Learning", *Leader: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, Vol. 2, No. 2, November 2024, pp. 282–289, DOI: 10.32939/ljmpi.v2i2.4240.

¹² M. Amin Abdullah, *The Transformation of IAIN Sunan Kalijaga into UIN Sunan Kalijaga* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006).

dichotomous polarisation of knowledge. Within this framework of thought, religious studies are positioned as the sole source of absolute truth, whilst other disciplines are regarded as supplementary or even of lesser importance. This rigid perspective, as criticised by Abdullah, not only restricts the scope of scholarship but also hinders the development of Islamic studies in responding to the ever-evolving complexities of social, cultural and technological issues.¹³

Furthermore, this epistemological dichotomy has an impact on the perspective towards the educational process, which tends to be textual, normative and lacking in context. Islamic education is more often practised as a process of knowledge transmission focused on mastering subject matter, rather than as a process of fostering critical and reflective awareness. Consequently, learners are not encouraged to understand the relationship between religious texts and the realities of life, meaning that the normative values contained within Islamic teachings are not optimally actualised in social life. In this context, the dialectic between text and context becomes weak, causing education to lose its transformative power as a force for social change.

The integration-interconnection approach proposed by Abdullah is essentially an attempt to overcome this impasse by encouraging a shift in the scientific paradigm from an exclusive ‘single entity’ model and fragmented ‘isolated entities’ towards ‘interconnected entities’ characterised by dialogue and collaboration. Within this paradigm, each academic discipline is recognised as having its limitations; consequently, openness is required to interact with one another and utilise interdisciplinary approaches in understanding reality. Thus, Islamic education becomes not merely a space for the reproduction of knowledge, but also a dynamic and productive arena for scholarly dialogue.¹⁴

Furthermore, Abdullah also emphasised that the reconstruction of Islamic education must be directed towards a shift from the mere transmission of knowledge to *a transformation of consciousness*. Education is no longer understood as a process of transferring information from teacher to learner—
—but rather as a process of fostering critical, integrative and contextual ways of thinking. In this regard, teachers play a strategic role as epistemological catalysts capable of driving a paradigm shift in students’ thinking. Teachers are not merely tasked with delivering content, but also with guiding students to connect normative values with the empirical realities they face.

¹³ M. Amin Abdullah, “The Indonesian Vision of Hermeneutic Islamic Thought Renewal”, *Epistema*, No. 02, 1999, p. 3.

¹⁴ M. Amin Abdullah, *Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, & Transdisciplinary: Methods of Religious Studies & Islamic Studies in the Contemporary Era* (Yogyakarta: IB Pustaka, 2020).

Therefore, the success of integration and interconnection is largely determined by the extent to which Islamic education is able to foster a new epistemological awareness—one that is no longer trapped within the dichotomy of knowledge, but is capable of integrating various academic disciplines within a single, coherent framework. Without reform at this epistemological level, the integration of knowledge will remain merely a normative discourse with no practical implications in the world of education.

Thus, the dialectic between the normative ideals and the empirical realities of Islamic education essentially demonstrates that the main problem faced lies not merely in the curriculum or teaching methods, but more fundamentally in the perspective on knowledge itself. Therefore, the reconstruction of Islamic education must begin with the reform of epistemology as its primary foundation, so that it is capable of dynamically integrating revelatory values with social realities. Through this approach, Islamic education is expected not only to preserve the authenticity of normative values, but also to act as a transformative force in building an integrative, adaptive and sustainable civilisation for the Muslim community.

4. Reconstructing Islamic Educational Strategies in Building the Civilisation of the Ummah

Based on the preceding discussion, it is clear that Islamic education faces a tension between the normative ideals derived from the Qur'an and Hadith and the empirical reality of educational practice, which has not yet fully reflected its integrative and transformative nature. Normatively, Islamic education possesses a comprehensive vision of shaping individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and of noble character as the primary foundation for the development of civilisation. The principle of balance between the spiritual and intellectual dimensions is reflected in Surah Al-Qasas verse 77, which emphasises the importance of an orientation towards the hereafter without neglecting worldly life.

However, at the empirical level, educational practice still tends to be fragmented and unresponsive to the dynamics of the times. This situation not only reflects practical issues but also indicates weaknesses in the epistemological framework of Islamic education, which has not yet been able to fully integrate revelation with social reality. In this context, M. Amin Abdullah's thinking on the integration-interconnection approach becomes relevant as a foundation for reconstructing a more holistic and contextual scientific paradigm.

On this basis, the reconstruction of Islamic educational strategies is imperative as an effort to bridge the gap between normative values and the empirical reality of the ' '. The strategies developed are not only rooted in revelatory values but are also designed to address contemporary challenges through an integrative, transformative, and adaptive approach. Consequently, the subsequent discussion focuses on formulating Islamic educational strategies that are not merely conceptual but also operational in building a religious, critical, and competitive community.

a) Reorientation of Digital-Based Integrative-Transformative Learning and Revelatory Values

The reconstruction of Islamic educational strategies in building the civilisation of the Muslim community in the contemporary era demands the integration of normative values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith with developments in digital technology as an unavoidable empirical reality. Normatively, Islam places the activities of reading, thinking, and developing knowledge as the main foundations of civilisation, as reflected in Surah Al-'Ala verses 1–5, which emphasise the importance of the epistemological process in building human consciousness. This principle indicates that Islamic education is dynamic and open to the development of instruments of knowledge, including digital technology as a medium of learning.

In an empirical context, the digital transformation—marked by advancements in artificial *intelligence* (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and online learning platforms—has transformed the way people acquire and manage knowledge. Education is no longer merely a space for the transfer of knowledge, but has become a means of integration between humans and technology in solving problems and generating new knowledge. However, digitalisation also presents challenges, such as the potential displacement of human roles by technology and the increasing demand for digital skills within the education sector.¹⁵

From an epistemological perspective, the integration-interconnection approach developed by M. Amin Abdullah serves as a crucial foundation for formulating this strategy. The development of knowledge cannot be carried out in a partial and dichotomous manner, but must be built within a scientific network that is interconnected both methodologically and ontologically. Within this framework, digital technology is not positioned as a threat, but as

¹⁵ Sabaruddin, "Indonesian Education in the Face of the 4.0 Era," *Journal of Educational Development: Foundations and Applications*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2022), pp. 43–49, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v10i1.29347>.

an epistemic instrument capable of expanding the way in which humans understand revelation and reality in an integrative manner.

In light of this, the concept of *Digital-Integrative Learning* based on revelatory values constitutes a relevant and transformative strategy in Islamic education. In practical terms, this strategy is implemented through: (1) strengthening digital literacy grounded in Islamic values by instilling the principles of *tabayyun*, honesty (*ṣidq*), and responsibility (*amanah*) in the use of information; (2) contextual ‘ ’ learning based on digital issues, such as media ethics and artificial intelligence, integrated with Qur’anic values, for example the prohibition of backbiting and slander in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 12; and (3) the utilisation of digital learning platforms as a medium for collaboration and critical analysis through a *problem-based learning* approach.

Furthermore, this strategy emphasises that technology is instrumental in nature, whilst humans remain the primary agents in moral and intellectual decision-making. Teachers act as *epistemic guides*, steering learners towards a balanced integration of revelation, reason and the digital reality. Thus, Islamic education is not only adaptive to technological developments, but is also capable of guiding their use within a framework of divine values and the common good of the community.

b) The integration of religious and general knowledge as the foundation of a holistic education system.

The integration of religious and general knowledge in Islamic education needs to be reconstructed through an *Interconnected Knowledge Learning* approach based on revelatory values, which does not merely combine these two fields of knowledge but builds an interconnected network of knowledge for understanding reality. Normatively, the Qur’an does not distinguish between religious and general knowledge, but rather encourages humanity to study the verses of Allah, whether textual (*qauliyah*) or empirical (*kauniyah*). This affirms that all knowledge essentially originates from Allah and is directed towards the welfare of humanity.

From an epistemological perspective, this approach is in line with M. Amin Abdullah’s concept of integration and interconnection as a means of overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge in Islamic education. Islamic scholarship must not be limited to normative-theological aspects, but must be capable of addressing contemporary empirical issues such as technological disruption, social inequality, and environmental crises. Therefore, a renewal of

the approach to Islamic scholarship is required to make it more contextual, multidisciplinary, and relevant to the developments of the times.¹⁶

In practical terms, *Interconnected Knowledge Learning* based on revelatory values can be realised through a thematic-integrative learning design that links normative principles, scientific analysis and social realities. For example, in the theme of the environment, learners not only study ecological concepts but also examine the role of humans as *khalifah fil ardh*, analyse environmental degradation through scientific data, and formulate solutions based on Islamic values. A similar approach can be applied to issues of the digital economy, where the principle of justice in Islam is integrated with an understanding of financial technology (*fintech*) systems and their ethical implications.

Furthermore, a digital *problem-based learning* model can be used to reinforce this integration by presenting real-world cases—such as the spread of misinformation or algorithmic bias—which are analysed through the lens of the Qur’an and Hadith, critical thinking, and digital literacy. In this context, technology serves as an epistemic medium that broadens ways of thinking, whilst the values of revelation provide the normative foundation for determining how it is utilised.

Thus, *Interconnected Knowledge Learning* based on revelatory values not only eliminates the dichotomy of knowledge but also fosters an integrative, contextual and solution-oriented way of thinking. This strategy reinforces the position of Islamic education as a system capable of bridging revelation and reality, and of nurturing a generation that is religious, critical and adaptable in facing the challenges of modern civilisation.

c) **Strengthening Tawhid, Digital Ethics, and Critical Thinking in the Formation of Civilised Individuals**

1. Internalising the Value of Tawhid as the Foundation of Digital Consciousness

Tawhid is the cornerstone of Islamic education; it is understood not only as a theological affirmation of the oneness of Allah, but also as an epistemological paradigm that shapes humanity’s perspective on knowledge, life and civilisation. Within this framework, Tawhid places Allah at the centre of orientation (*a theocentric worldview*), so that all human activities, including the processes of education and the development of knowledge, are directed as a form of devotion to Him.

¹⁶ Abdullah Diu, “M. Amin Abdullah’s Thoughts on Islamic Education in an Integration-Interconnection Approach,” *Al-Jauhari Scientific Journal (JIAJ)*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (2018), pp. 1–15.

Normatively, the Qur'an affirms that the primary mission of the prophets is to instil monotheism as the foundation of human life, as Allah states in Surah al-Nahl (16): 36 regarding the command to worship Allah and shun the taghut. This affirmation demonstrates that tawhid is not merely a doctrinal teaching, but constitutes a universal foundation for building a way of life oriented towards divine values. From the perspective of classical exegesis, Ibn Kathir asserts that the entire prophetic message centres on the reinforcement of tawhid and the rejection of all forms of shirk, thereby making tawhid the normative foundation for the formation of both the individual and society.¹⁷ Contemporary thought has subsequently developed the concept of tawhid into the realm of education as an epistemological foundation. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas asserts that education in Islam must be oriented towards the formation of a cultured human being (*insan adabi*), that is, a person capable of applying knowledge in accordance with the essence and purpose of its creation. Within this framework, tawhid serves as the principle integrating knowledge, faith, and ethics, ensuring that education does not become ensnared in secularisation, which separates knowledge from spiritual values.¹⁸

The integration of the principle of tawhid into education brings about a fundamental transformation: the realisation that knowledge is not merely a tool for mastering the world, but a means of drawing closer to Allah and bringing about the common good. Thus, education based on tawhid not only shapes individuals who are religiously observant, but also fosters people who possess a sense of propriety, moral responsibility and a civilisational outlook.

In the context of the digital age, the internalisation of Tawhid holds strategic relevance as the foundation of consciousness in the use of technology. Tawhid functions as a normative compass that guides humanity so that they do not become trapped in the destructive use of technology, such as the spread of hoaxes, the manipulation of information, or the misuse of digital media. Thus, tawhid functions not only as a theological principle, but also as an ethical and epistemological foundation in shaping civilised individuals capable of integrating faith, knowledge, and technology in a balanced manner.

2. The Development of Critical Thinking Based on *Tabayyun* and 'Aql

The transformation of Islamic education in *the digital age* demands the strengthening of cognitive capacities that are not merely technological, but also epistemological and ethical. Islamic education must not merely adapt to the use of technology, but must remain focused on shaping individuals who are

¹⁷ Ismā'il ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1998), 4:596.

¹⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, trans. Saiful Muzani (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), p. 86.

knowledgeable, possess good character, and have spiritual awareness. Within this framework, technology is positioned as a medium for learning, whilst critical thinking serves as the primary tool for filtering and interpreting information.

The development of critical thinking in Islamic education is based on two main principles: *tabayyun* as a mechanism for verifying information, and *'aql* as a rational instrument for understanding the truth. Normatively, the principle of *tabayyun* is affirmed in Surah al-Hujurat, verse 6, which commands the verification of all information, whilst the optimisation of the function of reason (*'aql*) is affirmed in Surah Yunus, verse 100, as the basis for understanding the truth. This demonstrates that Islam integrates revelation and reason into a single epistemological unity.

The principle of *tabayyun* is also reinforced by a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

“It is enough of a lie for a person to narrate everything he hears.”

"A person is considered a liar if they repeat everything they hear."

This hadith demonstrates that Islam teaches a critical and cautious approach to both receiving and conveying information. Not all information received can be immediately trusted and disseminated without verification. In the context of a digital society, the message of this hadith is highly relevant because the rapid flow of information is often accompanied by the spread of hoaxes, disinformation, and the manipulation of information. Therefore, *tabayyun* is not only a religious moral teaching, but also serves as an epistemological foundation for building a responsible and truth-oriented culture of digital literacy.

The values embodied in these verses of the Qur'an and hadiths demonstrate that critical thinking, caution and the verification of information are an integral part of the Islamic scholarly tradition. These principles are not only relevant in the context of society during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), but also hold ever-greater significance in navigating the complexities of the information flow in today's digital age.

In an empirical context, the proliferation of disinformation, hoaxes and the manipulation of information in the digital sphere highlights the urgent need to strengthen this values-based critical thinking. Mawardi Siregar emphasises that *tabayyun* is a principle of information validation that demands caution and precision in determining the truth, making it a relevant foundation for fostering critical awareness in the digital age.

In practical terms, the development of critical thinking is achieved through two main strategies. Firstly, the strengthening of digital literacy based on *tabayyun*, which involves encouraging learners to systematically verify information by tracing sources, comparing references and analysing context. This can be implemented through case-study-based learning, such as analysing viral news or debunking hoaxes, so that learners are not merely consumers of information, but also active and critical participants.¹⁹ This principle is particularly relevant in addressing empirical challenges, namely the prevalence of disinformation, hoaxes, and information manipulation in the digital age.

Secondly, the development of epistemic resilience as an internal capacity to uphold truth through the integration of rationality and normative values. This resilience encompasses the ability to filter out manipulative information, avoid bias, and construct arguments grounded in data and values. In practice, this can be fostered through a culture of reflective thinking, scholarly dialogue, and argument-based learning.

Furthermore, critical thinking in Islamic education does not develop freely and without direction, but is bound by the values of *tawhid* and *akhlak*. This integration ensures that the ability to think not only yields intellectual intelligence, but also fosters moral integrity in how one engages with information.

Thus, the development of critical thinking based on *tabayyun* and *'aql* is a fundamental strategy in building the civilisation of the *ummah*. Critical thinking integrated with divine values not only produces intelligent individuals, but also enables them to uphold the truth and reject falsehood in an increasingly complex social life.

3. Strengthening Digital Ethics in the Development of a Civilisation for the Ummah.

In building a civilised society, Islamic education must not only focus on strengthening faith and developing critical thinking, but must also emphasise the cultivation of moral character as a concrete manifestation of these values in social life. A robust civilisation is not solely underpinned by scientific progress, but also by the moral quality of the individuals who utilise it.

Normatively, the Qur'an has provided universal moral principles that remain relevant in various contexts, including the use of digital technology. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and the prohibition against slander and injustice form the ethical foundation for guiding human behaviour in the digital

¹⁹ Mawardi Siregar, "A Thematic Exegesis on Information Selection", *Al-Tibyan*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 2017), p. 152.

sphere. This demonstrates that revelation is not merely transcendent, but also possesses transformative power in responding to the dynamics of modern life.²⁰

However, in empirical reality, the development of digital technology is often accompanied by moral degradation, such as the prevalence of *cyberbullying*, the spread of hate speech, and the misuse of digital media. This phenomenon reflects a disintegration between knowledge and values, where technological progress is not balanced by the strengthening of moral character. From an Islamic educational perspective, this situation is closely linked to a weakening of the awareness of *tawhid*, so that knowledge is no longer positioned as a means of devotion, but rather as an instrument of pragmatic interests.²¹

Within a philosophical framework, thinkers such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina emphasised that knowledge must be integrated with faith and ethics so as not to lose its way. Knowledge divorced from divine values has the potential to cause harm, both at the individual and societal levels. Therefore, strengthening digital ethics is a strategic step towards restoring the balance between the cognitive, spiritual and moral dimensions of modern human life.

The importance of ethics as a measure of human quality is also emphasised by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his saying:

إِنَّ خَيْرَكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا

"Verily, the best of you are those with the noblest character."

This hadith indicates that a person's nobility, from an Islamic perspective, is not determined solely by their level of knowledge, social status or technological proficiency, but rather by the quality of their character. In the context of the digital age, the message of this hadith is highly relevant because the success of education is not only measured by learners' ability to access and manage information, but also by their ability to use technology responsibly, ethically, and for the benefit of others.

In practical terms, strengthening digital ethics can be achieved by internalising Islamic ethical values in the use of technology, such as cultivating a mindset of verification, observing digital communication etiquette, and being mindful of moral responsibility in all online activities. Furthermore, the use of digital media should be directed towards serving as an educational tool for

²⁰ Iwani Fatimah Nurlala, Abubakar Achmad, and Ilyas Hamka, "Digital Morality in Education: Integrating Qur'anic Values in the Technological Age," *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches* 4, no. 6 (2024): 551–565.

²¹ Fitri Lailatul Rossa and Auliya Ridwan, "Ethical Education in the Digital Age: The Influence of Islamic Content on Instagram on the Character Formation of Adolescents from a Social Perspective," *Social Studies in Education* 02, no. 02 (2024): 157–72.

character building, rather than merely a space for expression devoid of moral boundaries.

Thus, digital ethics serves as a concrete manifestation of the integration of tawhid and critical thinking in social life. Tawhid provides a moral compass, critical thinking serves as a tool for understanding reality, whilst digital ethics ensures that all human activities remain within ethical and divine boundaries.

The integration of these three aspects underscores that Islamic education constitutes a comprehensive system for building civilisation. Education does not merely produce intellectually capable individuals, but also fosters people of faith, critical thinking, and moral integrity. In this context, Islamic education plays a strategic role in addressing the moral crisis and the secularisation of knowledge in the digital age, whilst steering technological development towards the greater good of the community.²²

D. Conclusion

Based on the discussion as a whole, it can be affirmed that Islamic education plays a strategic role in building the civilisation of the Muslim community through an integrative approach that combines normative values with empirical realities. The Qur'an and Hadith not only provide a theological foundation but also offer an adaptive conceptual framework for responding to the changing dynamics of the times, including the complex challenges of the digital age.

Within this framework, Islamic education must be understood as a holistic system that integrates tawhid as a foundation of values, critical reasoning based on *tabayyun* and *'aql* as epistemological tools, and digital ethics as a practical manifestation in social life. The integration of these three aspects forms an educational framework that fosters not only intellectual intelligence, but also spiritual awareness and moral responsibility.

The contemporary reality, characterised by moral crises, disinformation and the secularisation of science, demonstrates that Islamic education can no longer be focused solely on the transfer of knowledge, but must move towards a transformational paradigm. Education must be directed towards simultaneously integrating knowledge, faith, and ethics, so as to produce a generation that is not only adaptable to technological developments, but also possesses the capacity to control and direct them within the framework of divine values and the common good.

²² Mgr Sinomba Rambe, Waharjani, and Djamaluddin Perawironegoro, "The Importance of Moral Education in the Life of the Islamic Community," *Tadarus Tarbawy* 5, no. 1 (2023): 37–48.

Islamic education thus occupies a central position as an instrument of civilisation that not only shapes individuals but also determines the direction of societal development. From this perspective, the success of Islamic education is not measured solely by the acquisition of knowledge, but by its ability to produce civilised individuals of integrity who are guided by divine values as the foundation for the development of a sustainable civilisation.

REFERENCES

- Al-Bukhari, Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ismail. *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.
- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. (1994). *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Development of Islamic Educational Philosophy* (Trans. Haidar Baqir, 4th ed.). Bandung: Mizan.
- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. (1995). *Islam and the Philosophy of Science* (Trans. Saiful Muzani). Bandung: Mizan.
- Abdullah, M. Amin. (1999). The Indonesian Vision of Hermeneutic Islamic Thought Renewal. *Epistema*, No. 02.
- Abdullah, M. Amin. (2006). *The Transformation of IAIN Sunan Kalijaga into UIN Sunan Kalijaga*. Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga.
- Abdullah, M. Amin. (2020). *Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, & Transdisciplinary: Methods of Religious Studies & Islamic Studies in the Contemporary Era*. Yogyakarta: IB Pustaka.
- Diu, Abdullah. (2018). M. Amin Abdullah's Thoughts on Islamic Education in an Integration-Interconnection Approach. *Al-Jauhari Scientific Journal (JIAJ)*, 3(1), 1–15.
- Damayanti, Dita. (2024). A Critique of the Dichotomy of Knowledge in Islam: An Effort to Harmonise Religious and Secular Knowledge in the Modern Era. *Lentera*, 6(2), 181–197.
- Fathonah, Parisaktiana. (2018). Fazlur Rahman's Educational Thought and Its Contribution to the Development of Islamic Educational Theory. *Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2018.151-05>
- Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar. (1998). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Khasanah, Miratu. (2024). Challenges in the Application of Digital Technology in Islamic Education: Utilising Innovation to Improve the Quality of Learning. *Leader: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 2(2), 282–289. <https://doi.org/10.32939/ljmpi.v2i2.4240>
- Muhaimin. (2002). *The Paradigm of Islamic Education (Efforts to Make Islamic Religious Education in Schools More Effective)*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nurlala, Iwani Fatimah, Achmad, Abubakar, & Hamka, Ilyas. (2024). Digital Morality in Education: Integrating Qur'anic Values in the Era of

- Technology. *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches*, 4(6), 551–565.
- Nuryanti, Dela Mala. (2025). The Concept of Islamic Education from the Perspective of Azyumardi Azra. *AT-Tajdid: Journal of Islamic Education and Thought*, 9(1), 144–157. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24127/att.v9i1.4033>
- Putra, Ary Antony. (2016). The Concept of Islamic Religious Education from the Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali. *Al-Thariqah Journal*, 1(1), 42–56.
- Rambe, Mgr Sinomba, Waharjani, & Perawironegoro, Djameluddin. (2023). The Importance of Moral Education in the Life of the Islamic Community. *Tadarus Tarbawy*, 5(1), 37–48.
- Rossa, Fitri Lailatul, & Ridwan, Auliya. (2024). Moral Education in the Digital Age: The Influence of Islamic Content on Instagram on the Character Formation of Adolescents from a Social Perspective. *Social Studies in Education*, 2(2), 157–172.
- Sabaruddin. (2022). Indonesian Education in the Face of the 4.0 Era. *Journal of Educational Development: Foundations and Applications*, 10(1), 43–49. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v10i1.29347>
- Siregar, Mawardi. (2017). A Thematic Interpretation of Information Selection. *Al-Tibyan*, 2(1), 152.
- Sumiati, S., Muhammad, D. H., & Susandi, A. (2022). Character Education on Children's Discipline from Islamic and Western Perspectives. *Al-Muaddib: Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 10–28. <https://doi.org/10.46773/muaddib.v4i1.187>
- Syihab, Usman. *Building Civilisation through Religion*. Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 2010.