



# Integration of Traditional and Modern Islamic Educational Thought in Contemporary Islamic Education

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## Abstract

Islamic education faces challenges in bridging the dichotomy between traditional approaches oriented toward moral and spiritual formation and modern approaches emphasizing rationality and adaptation to social change. This study aims to comparatively analyze traditional Islamic educational thought as represented by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, and modern Islamic educational thought as represented by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman, while exploring their relevance to the development of contemporary Islamic education. This study employed a qualitative approach using conceptual and comparative content analysis of the major works of these scholars. The findings reveal that the traditional paradigm emphasizes the cultivation of *adab*, spiritual development, and the formation of the *insan kamil* (the complete human being), whereas the modern paradigm highlights rationality, contextual reinterpretation, and the integration of knowledge. The study further demonstrates that these two paradigms are not inherently contradictory but rather complementary in constructing a holistic framework for Islamic education. Their synthesis results in an integrative approach that combines spiritual formation with methodological flexibility to address the challenges of education in the digital era. This approach is particularly relevant for the development of integrated curricula, the utilization of educational technology while preserving Islamic values, and the holistic character development of learners. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on Islamic educational philosophy, while practically providing a conceptual foundation for the development of more adaptive and sustainable Islamic educational policies and practices.

## Article Information:

Received February 10, 2026

Revised March 18, 2026

Accepted April 10, 2026

**Keywords:** *Islamic educational thought, traditional Islamic education, modern Islamic education, integrative approach, contemporary Islamic education*

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education, as an educational system that has developed over more than fourteen centuries, continues to face the challenge of preserving its epistemological identity while adapting to the demands of changing times (Habibi, 2024; Hunzai & Aman, 2024). In the era of globalization, digitalization, and modernization, Islamic education is required not only to transmit religious values but also to equip learners

**How to cite:** Hamid, M., Husein, A. M. T., Aksan, S. M., Alhadar, M. (2026). Integration of Traditional and Modern Islamic Educational Thought in Contemporary Islamic Education. *Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1), 436-451.

**E-ISSN:** 2827-9573

**Published by:** The Institute for Research and Community Service



with the capacity to respond constructively to developments in science, technology, and social transformation (Budianti et al., 2024). The strategic role of Islamic education is particularly evident in Indonesia, where Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren, madrasahs, and integrated Islamic schools, serve millions of students and contribute significantly to the intellectual and moral development of Muslim youth (Susanti et al., 2025). Nevertheless, this quantitative growth has not always been accompanied by the ability of Islamic educational institutions to address contemporary challenges while maintaining their philosophical foundations and core values.

These challenges become increasingly complex when viewed in relation to the moral issues faced by younger generations. Various studies have highlighted the growing concerns regarding violence, drug abuse, and other forms of deviant behavior among adolescents, indicating that educational institutions continue to face difficulties in effectively nurturing students' character and moral awareness (Budianti et al., 2024). This condition reflects a gap between the ideals of Islamic education, which emphasize moral formation and character development, and the social realities encountered by learners in their daily lives. Consequently, there is a need to revisit the philosophical foundations of Islamic education in order to address contemporary moral challenges while remaining responsive to ongoing social transformations.

Within this context, the relationship between tradition and modernity has become a central issue in the discourse of Islamic education. Traditional Islamic educational thought emphasizes moral cultivation, spiritual development, and the formation of individuals grounded in Islamic values. This paradigm is represented by the educational philosophies of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, whose ideas have significantly influenced the foundations of classical Islamic education (Madhar, 2024; Falah, 2018; Madhar, 2024). Conversely, modern Islamic educational thought seeks to respond to scientific advancement and social change through more rational, contextual, and adaptive approaches (Hunzai & Aman, 2024). The works of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman represent influential efforts to reform Islamic education through the integration of knowledge and the contextual reinterpretation of Islamic teachings (Sahidin, 2024).

Numerous studies have examined various dimensions of Islamic educational thought. Adona et al. (2025) integrated the developmental psychology of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun into a spiritual-pragmatic pedagogical model. While their study contributes significantly to pedagogical development, it focuses primarily on psychological dimensions and does not extensively discuss curricular implications. Similarly, Sahidin (2024) compared the educational thought of Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman, highlighting substantial epistemological differences between the two scholars. However, the study did not develop a conceptual framework capable of integrating both approaches into a practical and applicable educational model.

Other studies have approached the issue from different perspectives. Kemala et al. (2025) examined traditional and modern approaches in Islamic educational management. Although their research provides valuable insights into institutional governance and administration, it pays limited attention to the philosophical and pedagogical dimensions that constitute the foundation of Islamic education. Likewise, Susanti et al. (2025) investigated the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia from the perspectives of policy and implementation. While their study offers a comprehensive overview of educational change at the macro level, it does not critically analyze the philosophical assumptions underlying such transformations. Bahdar (2023), meanwhile, proposed a shift from the paradigms of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib toward tazkirah–tanzirah. Nevertheless, the study remains primarily critical of previous paradigms and does not systematically explain how Islamic intellectual traditions may be integrated with the demands of modernity.

Several studies have specifically examined the educational thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun in contemporary contexts. Khumaidah (2020) compared the educational philosophies of both scholars and explored their relevance to Indonesian education. Rosyida (2020) analyzed Ibn Khaldun's educational philosophy in relation to the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, while Saputra et al. (2022) discussed the relevance of Al-Ghazali's and Ibn Khaldun's educational concepts in the digital era. More recently, Onilivia et al. (2025) reviewed Al-Ghazali's educational thought and its relevance to contemporary Islamic education through a literature review of Scopus-indexed publications. Basori et al. (2025) further examined the dialectics of conservatism, rationalism, and pragmatism in Islamic educational philosophy through the perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun. Although these studies enrich the discussion of classical Islamic educational thought, they remain largely confined to individual or paired analyses and do not systematically compare traditional and modern paradigms within a unified analytical framework.

Based on the existing literature, three major research gaps can be identified. First, there is a lack of studies that simultaneously examine the educational thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun as representatives of the traditional paradigm alongside Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman as representatives of the modern paradigm within an equivalent comparative framework. Second, limited efforts have been made to bridge the epistemological divide between traditional and modern paradigms through an integrative and applicable conceptual framework for contemporary Islamic education. Third, the relevance of Al-Attas's concept of *adab* and Fazlur Rahman's *double movement* methodology in addressing the challenges of digitalization, globalization, and educational transformation remains insufficiently explored.

Accordingly, this study examines the educational thought of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Attas, and Fazlur Rahman to explore the intersections and distinctions between traditional and modern Islamic educational paradigms. It further aims to formulate an integrative perspective that can serve as a conceptual foundation for contemporary Islamic education in addressing the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and moral development.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research with content analysis approach to examine traditional and modern Islamic educational thought. The analysis combined content analysis, conceptual analysis, and comparative analysis to explore the educational ideas of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, and Fazlur Rahman Naeem et al., (2023). This approach was selected because the object of the study consists of documented intellectual works, making textual sources the primary basis of analysis rather than field observations or experimental data (Elo et al., 2014; Engkizar et al., 2026; Kalla et al., 2023; Özden, 2024).

The primary sources comprised the major works of the four scholars under investigation, including *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *Mizān al-'Amal*, and *Ayyuha al-Walad* by Al-Ghazali; *Muqaddimah* by Ibn Khaldun; *The Concept of Education in Islam* and *Islam and Secularism* by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas; and *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* as well as *Revival and Reform in Islam* by Fazlur Rahman. Secondary sources consisted of scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2016 and 2026 that discuss the educational thought of these scholars. Priority was given to publications indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and nationally accredited journals relevant to Islamic education studies (Mayring, 2015; Rahmadi, 2022; Renz et al., 2018).

Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, key educational concepts were identified from the primary texts. Second, these concepts were categorized

according to major dimensions of Islamic education, including educational objectives, curriculum, pedagogical methods, and epistemological foundations. Third, a comparative analysis was carried out to identify similarities and differences between traditional and modern paradigms. Finally, a conceptual synthesis was developed to formulate an integrative perspective on Islamic education and to assess its relevance to contemporary educational challenges (Eltoukhi et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2026).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Traditional Islamic Educational Thought: The Perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun

#### Al-Ghazali's Educational Thought: Spiritual Cultivation toward the *Insan Kamil*

Al-Ghazali's educational thought (1058–1111 CE) cannot be separated from the framework of spiritual psychology that he developed. For Al-Ghazali, human nature consists of the soul (*nafs*), which possesses the potential to attain perfection through processes of purification (*tazkiyah*) and spiritual illumination (*tajallī*). Within this framework, education is understood as a systematic process of guidance aimed at actualizing human spiritual potential so that individuals may attain knowledge of God (*ma'rifatullah*), the highest purpose of human existence.

The key concepts in Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy are *ta'lim* (instruction), *tarbiyah* (nurturing and development), and *ta'dīb* (the cultivation of proper conduct and ethics). However, Al-Ghazali places particular emphasis on *tarbiyah*, which encompasses the holistic development of the human being, including the physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. The ultimate objective of education, according to Al-Ghazali, is teleological and theocentric in nature, namely, attaining closeness to Allah. This objective is hierarchical, beginning with worldly well-being, progressing toward eternal happiness in the hereafter, and culminating in divine pleasure (Agus, 2018; Arifin, 2018; Madhar, 2024).

In terms of curriculum, Al-Ghazali classifies knowledge into two categories: *fard 'ayn* (individual obligation) and *fard kifayah* (collective obligation). The former includes knowledge related to faith, worship, and morality, which every Muslim is required to master. The latter encompasses medicine, mathematics, and various other disciplines necessary for the welfare of society. This classification demonstrates that Al-Ghazali did not reject rational or worldly sciences, provided that they were pursued within the framework of fulfilling collective societal needs (Hasballah et al., 2021; Hidayatullah, 2018; Taja et al., 2022).

Al-Ghazali's instructional approach reflects the principle of gradual learning (*tadarruj*), which takes into account the psychological development of learners. He proposes a staged educational process consisting of habituation (*tabsin*) during early childhood, conceptual instruction (*ta'lim*) during adolescence, and spiritual purification (*tazkiyah*) during adulthood when spiritual maturity has been attained. This developmental orientation illustrates Al-Ghazali's advanced pedagogical awareness for his time.

The strength of Al-Ghazali's educational thought lies in its robust integration of spiritual and moral dimensions within the educational process. He demonstrated that education should not be reduced merely to the acquisition of cognitive knowledge. Nevertheless, criticisms have emerged regarding his strong inclination toward Sufism, which may have contributed to the relative neglect of the social and pragmatic dimensions of education. Fazlur Rahman, among others, argues that the dominance of spiritual concerns in post-Ghazalian Islamic intellectual traditions contributed to a diminished emphasis on scientific and technological development (Akhmansyah, 2015; Busroli, 2019; Sumiarti et al., 2021; Zamhariroh et al., 2024).

#### Ibn Khaldun's Educational Thought: Education as a Sociological and

## Pragmatic Process

In contrast to Al-Ghazali's spiritual-psychological orientation, Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406 CE) developed his educational ideas from sociological and historical perspectives. In his *Muqaddimah*, he introduced the concept of *'umran* (civilization) as an analytical framework for understanding social dynamics, including educational institutions. For Ibn Khaldun, education cannot be separated from the social and economic structures within which it operates.

A central concept in Ibn Khaldun's thought is the distinction between *al-'aql al-mabsus* (empirical reason) and *al-'aql al-mujarrab* (experiential reason). According to him, knowledge is acquired through two primary channels: systematic instruction (*ta'lim*) and practical social experience (*tajribah*). This emphasis on experience distinguishes Ibn Khaldun from many earlier educational thinkers who tended to prioritize theoretical and spiritual dimensions of learning (PS & Aliah, 2021; Rahmawanti & Nurzaelani, 2021).

The principle of *tadarruj* (gradual progression) represents one of Ibn Khaldun's most significant contributions to educational thought. He argues that learning materials should be presented progressively according to learners' intellectual capacities. Introducing overly complex material at an early stage may hinder rather than facilitate understanding. This principle bears conceptual similarities to contemporary educational theories that emphasize scaffolding and developmental learning processes.

According to Ibn Khaldun, educational curricula should reflect societal needs and the demands of the times. He criticized educational systems that relied excessively on rote memorization of classical texts without fostering deeper comprehension and practical application. As an alternative, he advocated the use of *takbruj* (critical analysis) and *istinbath* (deductive reasoning) as central learning approaches. These methods encourage learners not merely to receive information but also to process, analyze, and develop knowledge independently (Bensaid & Machouche, 2017; Redondo & Puelles, 2017).

The primary strength of Ibn Khaldun's educational philosophy lies in its sociological realism, which connects education to broader social realities. He viewed education not as an isolated activity but as a process that both influences and is influenced by social structures. Nevertheless, critics have noted that his approach pays relatively limited attention to the spiritual and transcendental dimensions of education. Its strong pragmatic orientation may risk reducing education to a mechanism of social adaptation rather than a means of spiritual development.

**Table 1. Comparison of the Educational Thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun**

| Aspect                   | Al-Ghazali  | Ibn Khaldun   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Philosophical Foundation | Spiritual psychology  | Historical sociology  |
| Educational Objective    | <i>Ma'rifatullah</i> (knowledge of God)                                   | Development of civilization ( <i>'umran</i> )               |
| View of Human Nature     | Spiritual being with divine potential                                     | Social being shaped by environmental influences             |
| Curriculum               | <i>Fard 'ayn</i> and <i>fard kifayah</i> knowledge                        | Based on social needs and practical relevance               |
| Teaching Method          | Gradual learning ( <i>tadarruj</i> ), habituation, spiritual purification | Empirical, experiential, and critical-analytical approaches |
| Strengths                | Strong integration of spiritual and moral dimensions                      | Social realism and contextual relevance                     |
| Limitations              | Limited attention to pragmatic concerns                                   | Limited emphasis on transcendental dimensions               |

## Modern Islamic Educational Thought: The Perspectives of Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman

## **Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: Islamization of Knowledge and the Concept of *Adab***

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas is widely recognized as one of the most influential contemporary Muslim educational thinkers. His intellectual concern emerged from observing the growing phenomenon of secularization within the Muslim world, where knowledge became increasingly detached from religious and moral values. According to Al-Attas, the primary crisis facing contemporary Muslim societies is neither economic nor political; rather, it is an epistemological crisis rooted in the loss of *adab* (Islam, 2024; Mahmudin et al., 2021; Siregar & Siregar, 2018).

The concept of *adab* constitutes the core of Al-Attas's educational philosophy. He defines *adab* as the recognition and acknowledgment that knowledge and existence are hierarchically structured according to their respective degrees and capacities, as well as the recognition of one's proper place in relation to God, oneself, and society. Within this framework, education (*ta'dib*) is not merely the transmission of knowledge (*ta'lim*) or the nurturing of human nature (*tarbiyah*), but rather a process of instilling *adab* in learners.

Al-Attas's epistemology is built upon a critique of the dichotomy of knowledge inherited from Western modernity. He argues that the separation between religious and secular sciences is an artificial construct that was unknown in the classical Islamic intellectual tradition. As an alternative, he proposes the concept of the Islamization of knowledge, which involves liberating knowledge from secular interpretations, assumptions, and paradigms and subsequently reconstructing it within the framework of the Islamic worldview.

According to Al-Attas, the ultimate goal of education is to produce the "good man," namely, an individual who recognizes his proper place within the order of existence (Auni & Hermanto, 2020; Tety & Mahasri, 2017). This objective is holistic in nature, encompassing cognitive dimensions (knowledge of reality), affective dimensions (internalization of values), and behavioral dimensions (appropriate conduct). Educational institutions, therefore, should serve as environments in which the process of *ta'dib* is consistently cultivated, not only within classrooms but throughout all aspects of institutional life (Ismaiza et al., 2025)

The strength of Al-Attas's educational thought lies in its ability to identify the root causes of the contemporary Muslim predicament, namely, the epistemological crisis and the loss of *adab*. His proposed solution, the Islamization of knowledge, provides a clear direction for efforts to decolonize knowledge within Muslim societies. Nevertheless, critics argue that the concept of Islamization remains overly abstract and difficult to operationalize within educational curricula and classroom practices. Furthermore, his approach has occasionally been criticized for adopting an overly defensive stance toward modernity, thereby limiting opportunities for critical engagement with contemporary Western thought (Ghorbani, 2015).

### **Fazlur Rahman: Double Movement and Contextual Reinterpretation**

Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988) offers a distinct perspective within the discourse of modern Islamic education. Unlike Al-Attas, who emphasizes the Islamization of knowledge, Rahman focuses on developing a methodology for reinterpreting Islamic teachings in ways that respond effectively to the challenges of modernity. For Rahman, the fundamental problem facing Muslim societies is methodological: how the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah can be understood and applied in contexts that differ significantly from the historical circumstances in which they originally emerged (Engkizar et al., 2024; Habibi, 2023; Ridwan et al., 2022; Surya Arfan et al., 2025).

The central concept in Rahman's thought is the theory of *double movement*. The first movement proceeds from contemporary reality to the historical context of Quranic revelation by examining the socio-historical circumstances of a given verse,

the moral principles underlying it, and the ethical objectives it seeks to achieve. The second movement returns to the present by applying those moral principles to contemporary situations. Through this method, Rahman seeks to bridge the gap between text and context, tradition and modernity.

In the field of education, Rahman criticizes Islamic educational systems that are trapped between two opposing extremes: rigid traditionalism and secular modernism. Traditionalism, in his view, is characterized by the reproduction of classical texts without adequate contextual understanding, whereas secular modernism neglects the Islamic intellectual heritage altogether. As an alternative, he advocates an educational model grounded in critical reasoning and moral vision, enabling learners to internalize Quranic values while simultaneously developing the analytical capacity to engage with contemporary realities (Celine et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2025; Sugiara et al., 2025).

Rahman further argues that educational curricula should be interdisciplinary and integrative. He rejects the separation between religious and secular sciences, maintaining that such a distinction is foreign to the Quranic worldview and contradicts the principle of *tawhid*, which affirms the unity of reality. Consequently, he proposes a curriculum that positions the Quran as a source of values and inspiration for all fields of knowledge while preserving the methodological integrity of each discipline.

The principal strength of Rahman's thought lies in the practical applicability of his double movement methodology to curriculum development and instructional design. His contextual approach creates space for innovation and adaptation without undermining the authority of the sacred texts. Nevertheless, critics from traditionalist circles contend that his approach is excessively liberal and risks compromising the authenticity of Islamic teachings. Others argue that Rahman places excessive confidence in human reason to discern the moral intent of the Quran while paying insufficient attention to the spiritual and intuitive dimensions of textual understanding.

### **Comparative Analysis: Convergences and Paradigmatic Differences**

Having examined the educational thought of each scholar, this section undertakes a comparative analysis to identify both the common ground and the fundamental differences between traditional Islamic educational thought, represented by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, and modern Islamic educational thought, represented by Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman.

#### **Paradigmatic Convergences**

First, all four scholars agree that Islamic education must be grounded in *tawhid* as a worldview that integrates all dimensions of human life. Al-Ghazali expresses this through the concept of *ma'rifatullah* as the ultimate objective of education (Nugraha Putra, 2023; Syaffutra et al., 2025). Although Ibn Khaldun adopts a more sociological perspective, he nevertheless regards Islamic law as the normative framework governing social dynamics (Bensaid & Machouche, 2017; Redondo & Puelles, 2017). Al-Attas explicitly formulates the Islamic worldview as the foundation of the Islamization of knowledge, while Fazlur Rahman consistently positions the Quran as the primary source of moral and ethical guidance (Alhattab & Jamil, 2024; Islam, 2024; Mahmudin et al., 2021).

Second, all four scholars reject reductionist conceptions of education that limit its purpose to cognitive achievement or technical competence alone. Al-Ghazali and Al-Attas emphasize the formation of character through *adab* and moral cultivation, whereas Ibn Khaldun and Fazlur Rahman stress the development of critical reasoning and social consciousness. Despite their differing emphases, all agree that education must address the totality of human development.

Third, all four scholars acknowledge the importance of context in educational implementation. Al-Ghazali differentiates educational methods according to developmental stages; Ibn Khaldun relates education to social structures and historical conditions; Al-Attas critiques secularization as a product of a specific historical context; and Fazlur Rahman places contextualization at the center of his methodological framework (Akhtar et al., 2023; Fuadi, 2024; Ibad et al., 2025; Masnila & Sassi, 2025).

### Fundamental Paradigmatic Differences

The most significant difference between traditional and modern approaches lies in their understanding of the relationship between revelation and reason. In traditional Islamic thought, particularly in Al-Ghazali's framework, revelation occupies the highest epistemic authority, while reason functions as a means of understanding and defending revealed truth. In contrast, modern thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman view revelation and reason as engaged in a dynamic and dialectical relationship, wherein reason not only interprets revelation but also reassesses inherited understandings and contextualizes them for contemporary circumstances.

A second difference concerns attitudes toward modernity. Traditional approaches tend to adopt a defensive or apologetic stance, viewing modernity primarily as a threat to the authenticity of Islamic teachings. By contrast, modern approaches especially that of Fazlur Rahman regard modernity as a challenge that must be engaged creatively rather than rejected outright. Al-Attas occupies an intermediate position, acknowledging the problems associated with modernity, particularly secularization, while refraining from dismissing all aspects of modern intellectual development.

A third difference pertains to methods of textual interpretation. Traditional approaches generally rely on *bayani* (textual-linguistic analysis) and *ta'lili* (causal reasoning), both of which remain largely text-centered. Modern approaches, particularly Rahman's, employ hermeneutical and historical-critical methods that treat the socio-historical context of revelation as an integral component of interpretation.

**Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Modern Islamic Educational Approaches**

| Aspect                           | Traditional Approach   | Modern Approach   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Source of Authority</b>       | Revelation as the ultimate authority; reason as an interpretive tool | Dialectical relationship between revelation and reason        |
| <b>Attitude toward Modernity</b> | Defensive-apologetic; modernity viewed as a threat                   | Creative-responsive; modernity viewed as a challenge          |
| <b>Interpretive Method</b>       | <i>Bayani</i> (textual analysis), <i>ta'lili</i> (causal reasoning)  | Hermeneutical, historical-critical, and contextual approaches |
| <b>Primary Focus</b>             | Spiritual and moral formation  | Contextual reinterpretation and adaptation                    |
| <b>Key Concepts</b>              | <i>Tarbiyah</i> , <i>ta'dib</i> , <i>tazkiyah</i>                    | Double movement, Islamization of knowledge                    |
| <b>Potential Risks</b>           | Stagnation and rigidity  | Loss of identity and relativism                               |

### Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education

Having examined the strengths and limitations of each educational approach, this section explores the relevance of traditional and modern Islamic educational thought within the context of contemporary Islamic education, which is characterized by three major phenomena: educational digitalization, globalization, and the moral challenges confronting younger generations.

### Relevance in the Context of Educational Digitalization

The digitalization of education presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education. On the one hand, digital technologies provide unprecedented access to Islamic sources of knowledge that were previously difficult to obtain. Students can now access Quranic commentaries, collections of Hadith, and classical scholarly works with only a few clicks (Engkizar et al., 2025; Engkizar, Jaafar, Hamzah, Syafril, Oktavia, et al., 2026; Putri et al., 2025; Rosyadi & Athari, 2025). On the other hand, digitalization also introduces challenges, including the proliferation of unverified information, superficial religious understanding, and the weakening of traditional scholarly authority.

In this context, Al-Attas's concept of *adab* remains highly relevant. The erosion of *adab* in the acquisition and consumption of religious knowledge has contributed to the spread of hate speech, unqualified interpretations of religious texts, and extremist attitudes on social media platforms. From Al-Attas's perspective, Islamic education should restore the ethics of knowledge-seeking, including digital ethics, by cultivating learners' ability to verify information, respect scholarly authority, and employ technology responsibly and constructively.

Fazlur Rahman's emphasis on critical reasoning is equally relevant in responding to the challenges of digitalization. In an era where information including religious information is readily accessible, the ability to evaluate, verify, and critically assess information has become an essential educational competency. The double movement methodology encourages learners neither to accept inherited interpretations uncritically nor to reject them outright; rather, it trains them to examine the historical context of religious teachings and assess their relevance to contemporary circumstances.

Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun's understanding of the relationship between education and social structures reminds us that digitalization is not a value-neutral phenomenon. Digital platforms, algorithms, and social media ecosystems are constructed upon particular assumptions about human behavior and knowledge. Consequently, Islamic education should critically engage with these assumptions rather than adopting digital technologies unreflectively (Akem et al., 2025; Rambe et al., 2025). Ibn Khaldun's concept of *'umran* (civilization) suggests that technological development should serve the broader objectives of civilization rather than becoming an end in itself.

**Table 3. Relevance of Islamic Educational Thought in the Context of Digitalization**

| Scholar       | Key Concept                  | Relevance to Educational Digitalization                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|
| Al-Ghazali    | <i>Tazkiyat al-nafs</i>      | Spiritual purification as a moral filter for digital content consumption   |
| Ibn Khaldun   | <i>'Umran</i> (civilization) | Technology should serve civilizational development rather than dominate it |
| Al-Attas      | <i>Adab</i>                  | Digital ethics as an integral component of ethical knowledge acquisition   |
| Fazlur Rahman | Double movement              | Critical reasoning for evaluating and verifying online information         |

#### Relevance in the Context of Globalization

Globalization has placed Muslim societies in an unprecedented situation of intensive interaction with diverse cultures, religions, and value systems. While globalization creates opportunities for constructive intercultural and interreligious dialogue, it also generates concerns regarding the preservation of identity and, in some cases, stimulates exclusivist or fundamentalist reactions toward pluralism.

Al-Ghazali's hierarchical conception of educational objectives is particularly relevant in this context. According to his perspective, the ultimate goal of education is *ma'rifatullah* (knowledge of God), yet this objective cannot be attained without

acquiring the worldly knowledge necessary for human welfare. This principle suggests that Muslims should remain open to beneficial knowledge regardless of its origin, provided that it is approached within a *tawhidic* framework. Such a perspective offers a theological foundation for constructive engagement with globalization.

Similarly, Fazlur Rahman's approach to contextual reinterpretation provides an important framework for developing inclusive theological perspectives that acknowledge diversity. Through the double movement methodology, learners are encouraged to distinguish between the universal principles of the Quran such as justice, compassion, and human equality and their historically specific forms of implementation. This distinction enables Islamic education to promote respect for diversity while maintaining commitment to core religious principles.

Al-Attas's concept of *adab* is likewise relevant for fostering global ethical awareness. As the recognition of the proper place of all things within the order of existence, *adab* encourages respect for differences and diversity. Individuals who possess *adab* are less likely to impose their beliefs upon others, denigrate the symbols of other faiths, or engage in hostile forms of interaction (Aryanti et al., 2022; Feuillebois-Pierunek, 2017; Hajar et al., 2023; Jamian & Radzi, 2013). Instead, they are encouraged to seek common ground within a shared framework of human dignity. This perspective provides a valuable foundation for inclusive and tolerant Islamic education in an increasingly interconnected world.

### **Relevance in Addressing the Moral Challenges of Younger Generations**

One of the most significant moral challenges facing younger generations today is the declining influence of traditional moral authorities such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders alongside the growing influence of peer groups and social media. Under such conditions, educational institutions can no longer rely exclusively on authoritarian or indoctrinative approaches; more participatory and dialogical models of moral education are required.

Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (spiritual purification) remains highly relevant, although it requires contextual reinterpretation. Spiritual purification should not be understood solely as an individual devotional practice but also as a process of cultivating critical awareness of the negative influences present within social and digital environments. Contemporary Islamic education may therefore contribute to the development of programs that encourage responsible digital engagement, including limiting exposure to harmful content while promoting meaningful interaction with educational and ethically constructive materials.

Fazlur Rahman's emphasis on critical and moral education offers a practical pedagogical framework for addressing contemporary moral issues. Within this model, learners are not merely instructed about moral values; rather, they are encouraged to analyze real-life moral dilemmas, consider alternative courses of action and their consequences, and make responsible ethical decisions. Such an approach is arguably more effective than simply transmitting lists of moral values to be memorized.

At the same time, Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dib* reminds educators that moral formation cannot be separated from intellectual development. Knowledge that is detached from ethical responsibility may become socially harmful rather than beneficial (Ahmed, 2018; Islam, 2024; Yanti & Hayani, 2023). Consequently, contemporary Islamic education should reject the dichotomy between cognitive and affective development. Ethical awareness should be integrated into all areas of learning, including scientific and technological disciplines, thereby fostering the holistic development of learners.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that traditional and modern Islamic educational thought represent two complementary paradigms rather than mutually exclusive

approaches. Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun emphasize the spiritual, moral, and civilizational dimensions of education through the concepts of *tazkiyah*, *ma'rifatullah*, *tadarruj*, and *'umran*, whereas Al-Attas and Fazlur Rahman focus on epistemological renewal through the concepts of *adab*, Islamization of knowledge, and *double movement*. Although differing in their perspectives on the relationship between revelation and reason, their responses to modernity, and their methods of interpretation, all four thinkers share a commitment to *tawhid* as the foundation of holistic human development. The findings indicate that contemporary Islamic education cannot rely solely on either traditional or modern approaches; instead, it requires an integrative framework that combines the spiritual and ethical strengths of traditional thought with the contextual, critical, and adaptive orientation of modern Islamic educational philosophy. Such integration provides a relevant foundation for addressing contemporary challenges, including digital transformation, globalization, and the moral complexities faced by younger generations. Therefore, this study contributes to the discourse of Islamic educational philosophy by proposing a conceptual synthesis that bridges the long-standing dichotomy between traditional and modern paradigms and offers a foundation for the development of more holistic and context-responsive Islamic education.

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Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education

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