Islamic Education As A Foundation For The Formation Of Civil Society In The Digital Era

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Abstract

Digital transformation is transforming all aspects of life in society, including education. The rapid development of digital technology demands critical thinking and adaptation to Islamic values to avoid moral and spiritual crises. The purpose of this article is to examine the role of Islamic education as a foundation for realizing a civil society in the digital era. The research method used is library research with a conceptual-philosophical approach that examines the ontological, epistemological, and axiological aspects of Islamic education. The results of the study show that Islamic education combines knowledge and faith, the worldly and the hereafter, and the rational and the spiritual, possessing integrative, normative, and transformative characteristics. Islamic education serves as a transfer of knowledge, a process of moral, spiritual, and social development in order to create a civilized human being. Islamic education plays a role in teaching the values of monotheism, social responsibility, justice, and tolerance as the foundation of a civilized life, thus realizing a civilized society. Many challenges are faced, such as moral degradation and the current of globalization. The digital era also provides opportunities for technology-based learning and strengthening da'wah. The integration of science and faith is crucial for Islamic education to be able to create a generation of ulul albab, namely a generation with noble morals, broad knowledge, and able to contribute to the advancement of civilization. Thus, Islamic education is the ideological and moral foundation in order to realize a civilized society that is knowledgeable, faithful, and just in the digital era.

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought changes in all aspects, including the field of education. The development of digital technology invites us to be able to think critically, have digital literacy skills and be able to adapt to the rapid development of the times. These technological advances not only have a positive impact. Various challenges come with the ease of access to information and communication such as disorientation of values, moral degradation, spiritual crisis and individualism in modern society. This makes Islamic

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Education must be able to play a role as a basis for building a civil society that has good morals, spirituality and also intellectuals. Islamic education is based on the teachings of Islam which are sourced from the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as based on ijtihad and human reason. This is in accordance with the opinion of Addul Fattah Jalal quoted by (Dirgahayu et al., 2024) which states that there are two types of Islamic education sources, namely *first* Divine source, which includes the Qur'an, Hadith and the universe. Second, human sources are human ijtihad based on phenomena that arise from the study of divine sources.

Islamic education is not only for the transfer of knowledge, but also functions in character formation, moral development and also in developing the potential of every human being as a whole (kaffah). Islamic education is also oriented and integrated into several aspects, namely the worldly and ukhrawi, rational and spiritual, as well as individual and social. This is what distinguishes Islamic education from the secular education system which only looks at the intellectual aspect without looking at divine values. This can be seen from the concept of civil society conveyed by Songge, 2001:16 in (Asrori, 2015) It is a society that is able to be independent, equal, equal, democratic, just, and uphold human values. This concept is a comprehensive implementation of Islamic education and based on the Islamic history of the ideal society built by the Prophet PBUH in Medina. Education plays a role in the formation of a civil society by instilling the values of monotheism, noble morals and knowledge that are useful for the good of the ummah.

Digital transformation provides a challenge for Islamic education to be able to survive in the midst of globalism, materialism or secularization. Viewed in terms of its positives, digitalization is also able to provide opportunities for Islamic education to expand access through online learning media, social media da'wah and innovations that are in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, the use of technology needs to be directed by values and morals, Islamic ethical principles so as not to be mired in the current of dehumanization and digital hedoism. In Islamic education, it is necessary to integrate Islamic values with technology in order to be able to play a role in shaping the character of the nation that has knowledge, faith and manners. Islamic education in the digital era plays a dual role, namely the first as a fortress for the younger generation in spiritual development and avoiding moral and spiritual crises. Second, as an Islamic learning system that is able to adapt and integrate with modern educational science. Based on this strength,

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Islamic Education is able to survive in digital transformation and continue to build civil society.

Civil society is a society that is able to respect humanity, has a sense of humanism, noble ethics, tolerance, egalitarianism and pluralism (Dirgahayu et al., 2024). Civil society in the modern era is a very important need because modern society that lacks religion will feel restless, in anxiety and confusion. Islamic education is expected to be able to create a society that is expert in using information technology effectively so that noble values such as equality, justice and active participation are achieved. It is necessary for us to analyze more deeply the role of Islamic education as a foundation in the development of civil society in the digital era. This study will focus on a conceptual understanding of the nature and scope of Islamic education based on philosophy from ontological, epistemological, and axiological aspects. The approach used is literature analysis, which is expected to be able to contribute theoretically to strengthening the paradigm of Islamic education so that people who have faith, knowledge and noble character are formed.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library *research method.* According to Zed (2014, p. 1) in library research, library research is not only the first step in preparing a research framework but also utilizes library resources to obtain research data. This method was chosen because the focus of the study is conceptual and theoretical, namely examining in depth various scientific ideas about the nature of Islamic education and its relevance in shaping civil society in the digital era. This literature research is carried out by examining and analyzing various scientific sources including textbooks, national and international journals, proceedings, and other scientific papers relevant to the research topic. The data sources in this study consist of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data are obtained from the main literature that discusses the basic concepts of Islamic education. Meanwhile, secondary data includes scientific articles, research results, and other academic sources that discuss the integration of Islamic education, civil society, and the challenges of the digital age.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Essence of Islamic Education

Education is a combination of two words, namely science and education, each of which has its own meaning and meaning. Science comes from the Arabic word "ilm" which means to understand, know, or understand. According to Ahmad Tafsir (Rusdiana, 2017) Science is human knowledge obtained by researching empirical objects, whether or not a scientific theory is true or not is determined by whether it is logical or not and whether there is empirical evidence. Meanwhile, education is a conscious and planned effort to develop human potential so that they have spiritual strength, personality, intelligence, noble morals and skills needed in life in society, nation and state. Education in Islam is better known as the term at Tarbiyah, Ta'lim or al Ta'dib which has the meaning of the process of guiding, growing and developing human potential so that they become obedient servants of Allah (abdullah) and become caliphs on earth (caliph fil ardh). According to Abuddin Nata in (Siddik, 2016) Islamic education is "an effort to guide, direct, and nurture students that is carried out consciously and planned in order to build a main personality in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings

The essence of Islamic Education is not only focused on the transfer of knowledge, but also must be able to form a complete person and have Islamic values. Islamic education views humans as creatures with three main dimensions in the form of intellect, body and spirit that must develop in a balanced manner. Islamic education not only aims to create intellectually intelligent human beings, but must also be able to form people who have faith, knowledge, noble character and are able to follow the commands of Allah SWT. Based on this view, Nur Uhbiyati in (Dirgahayu et al., 2024) divides the Object of Islamic Education into two categories. The first category is formal objects in the form of educational activities aimed at students in the educational process, the second category is material objects, namely students as creatures that are growing and developing. These two objects are interrelated in order to realize the goal of Islamic education, namely creating human beings who are able to carry out their spiritual, social and intellectual functions in harmony. Islamic Education has distinctive characteristics, namely integrative, normative and transformative. In terms of integrative, it can be seen from the combination of worldly and ukhrawi aspects. Normative because it is based on the Quran and sunnah while transformative because it is oriented to changes in morals, behavior and human civilization. Islamic education does not distinguish between general science and religious

science, because all knowledge is sourced from Allah SWT and is used for the benefit of mankind. According to the view of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in (Iswati, 2017) Islamic education has the goal of instilling manners and guiding humans to be able to know their place in the order of being. Based on the concept of ta'dib which emphasizes the moral and spiritual dimensions in education, a good educational process will create a civilized human being, namely a human being who is able to act based on the values of truth and put things in their place.

Thus, the essence of Islamic education is not only for teaching or transferring knowledge, but also useful as a process of human development to be able to become a person who has knowledge, faith and morals and is useful for his life. Islamic education does not only emphasize cognitive mastery, but also prioritizes the formation of character and personality based on monotheism. This is what makes Islamic Education an educational system that educates the mind and is able to strengthen faith and purify the soul.

2. The Philosophical Foundations of Islamic Education

The philosophical foundation of Islamic education is the basis of thought that is able to explain the essence, source and purpose of education according to the Islamic view. The philosophy of Islamic education is based on the fact that education is a unity between Islamic views and based on monotheism. Educational activities are designed to realize the goal of human creation, namely to become a servant of Allah (Abdullah) and also a leader on earth (caliph fil ardh). Therefore, the philosophical foundation of Islamic education aims to be a guideline in determining the direction and method of education so that it remains in accordance with Islamic values. The foundation of Islamic Education consists of three dimensions, namely, ontological, epistemological and axiological. These three dimensions will make Islamic education have a different direction and meaning from secular education.

Ontological Foundations

The ontological foundation relates to the essence of reality which is the basis of education Islam (Zulfa et al., 2025). Ontological Islamic education has the belief that the source of all forms is Allah SWT who is the creator and ruler of the universe. Humans are creatures created by Allah SWT as objects of education that have the potential for fitrah in believing and doing good. Fitrah in humans needs to be developed through the process of education so that humans are able to achieve moral and spiritual perfection.

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The essence of education in the Islamic view is tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) and tahdzib al-akhlaq (moral construction). Therefore, the ontological basis of Islamic education states that humans are not only rational beings but spiritual beings who have a vertical relationship with Allah SWT and the relationship between fellow humans and the universe horizontally.

Epistemological Foundations

The epistemological foundation is very closely related to the source or way of obtaining Islamic educational knowledge. According to (Albab Ulil, 2021) Epistemology Islam was developed based on the belief of the ummah in the existence and oneness of God contained in the holy book and the guidance of the prophets as its messengers. The source of Islamic epistemology is the Qur'an and Hadith as well as reason. Revelation is the absolute source of truth in guiding man to be able to understand the essence of life. Meanwhile, reason is useful for reasoning, interpreting, and developing knowledge in accordance with revelation.

Axiological Foundation

The axiological foundation is related to the values and goals of Islamic education. Islam teaches that the highest value of education is how to serve Allah SWT. Educational activities always aim to develop noble morals in order to realize the benefits of humanity. Moral values such as justice, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and cooperation are an integral part of the process of Islamic education. Islamic education is not only seen from academic success or worldly achievements, but also the realization of a balance between the happiness of this world and the hereafter. Therefore, Islamic education has a dual function, namely emphasizing the relationship with Allah and also the relationship with fellow humans. This value makes Islamic education have a humanistic and also theocentric nature, which is based on humanity based on divinity. According to (Rusdiana, 2017), Islamic educational values must contain three main elements: (1) moral values, which guide human behavior; (2) the value of benefits, which encourage the welfare of the people; and (3) the value of balance between the interests of this world and the hereafter. Therefore, the axiology of Islamic education serves as a guideline for educators or students to develop moral and responsible science.

These three philosophical foundations show that Islamic education is developed based on the paradigm of monotheism that covers all aspects of life. According to Abdul Halik in (Eyes et al., 2024) The foundation of ontology provides direction to human

beings and their life goals, the foundation of epistemology discusses the way knowledge is obtained and developed, while the foundation of axiology leads so that knowledge can be used for good. Thus, these three philosophical foundations emphasize that Islamic education is not only a learning system, but also a system that fosters human beings to be able to form personalities who have faith, knowledge, and noble morals.

3. Islamic Education and the Formation of Civil Society

Concept *Civil Society* (civil society) according to the Islamic view is an example of an ideal society developed based on faith, justice, and social responsibility (Rudiyanto & Anif, 2024). Historically, this term began with the migration of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to Medina, he succeeded in building a community life that has manners, tolerance, and fairness. Based on a modern view, civil society can be interpreted as a society that upholds democratic values, equality, respect for human rights, and social life based on religious ethics and morality. Islamic education has a fundamental role in shaping civil society because education is the main means to transform values, knowledge, and morals in social life. Education not only aims to educate humans intellectually, but also to build spiritual and moral awareness. Islamic education not only teaches about knowledge, but also how social responsibility is one part of the service to Allah and the relationship between human beings. This is the function of Islamic education as a means of forming *human perfection* civilized civil society.

According to *Abuddin Nata* (2019) deep (Kambali et al., 2019) Islamic education has a function as a medium of socialization about the values that exist in society that are guided by Islamic teachings. Based on this, there are three main domains in the role of Islamic education (Miswanto, 2014). First, to form individuals who have faith and noble character through the internalization of the values of monotheism and manners. Second, fostering community awareness that fosters a sense of togetherness, justice, and concern for others. Third, strengthening the moral foundation of society where Islamic values become a guideline in relationships, organizations, and the state. Islamic education is used by these three fields not only as a tool for teaching but also as a driver of social change towards a civilized society. Islamic education builds civil society by emphasizing a balance between individual freedom and shared responsibility. Every human being has the freedom to develop his potential, but this freedom needs to be based on moral values and applicable sharia law. This concept is different from the concept of civil society in the Western view which applies the concept of individual freedom without clear moral limits.

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Islam regulates freedom by being directed to create *Al-Falah* (happiness in this world and the hereafter), not only based on personal or material interests.

Islamic education also teaches humans to become a social unit that needs each other and also fosters the principle of ukhwah insaniyyah or human brotherhood. The process of Islamic education emphasizes solidarity, empathy and social responsibility, so as to grow collective awareness in realizing a peaceful, prosperous and just society. This concept is appropriately applied in the era of globalization with the increasing nature of individualism and competition without moral value in society. In addition, Islamic education also plays a role in creating a civil society that develops *Moral and spiritual literacy* so that it is able to balance the progress of science and technology based on ethical values (Daryanto & Ernawati, 2024). Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic universities have a role as agents of shaping scientific culture based on faith and morals. For example, Islamic boarding schools that have succeeded in integrating science, spirituality, and social service. This shows that civil society is formed through an education system that is guided by religious values but remains open to the progress of the times.

Islamic education also teaches us to always do good and stay away from evil (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*) as a social mechanism in civil society. The active participation of citizens to maintain rules and morals in a just society and social system is the main basis that we need to develop. Therefore, society is not only an object of development, but also an active subject in building civilization. Islamic education has a strategic role in the development of the Indonesian nation, namely in strengthening the character of the nation based on religious values. Through Islamic education, Pancasila values such as humanity, social justice, and unity can be applied in depth because they are in accordance with Islamic principles and teachings. Therefore, Islamic education is a bridge between religious values and national values in order to form a civil, religious and modern Indonesian society. Islamic education generally has great transformative power for the development of a civil society. Islamic education not only produces knowledgeable human beings, but also instills moral awareness and social responsibility. By strengthening the aspects of faith, science, and morals, it is hoped that Islamic education will be able to create a society that has high manners, justice, and a society that is able to collaborate technological advances with noble spiritual values.

4. Challenges and Opportunities of Islamic Education in the Digital Era

Digital transformation can be seen from the rapid advancement of information and communication technology that has changed almost all aspects of human life, including in the field of education. The existence of digital technology provides various conveniences, such as fast access to information, innovative learning methods, and learning without space and time limits. However, behind this transformation, there are great challenges faced by Islamic education to maintain the existence of Islamic values in the midst of globalization and modernization currents that are secular, materialistic, and hedonistic.

The main challenge of Islamic education in the digital era is the shift in values and moral crisis among the nation's generation (Asriani et al., 2024). Easy access to information is not always in line with adequate moral and spiritual literacy skills. There are still many students who are affected by a global culture that emphasizes a consumptive, individualistic, and permissive lifestyle. So that respect for teachers begins to decrease, weak communication ethics, and the loss of the spirit of learning based on manners and responsibility. This makes Islamic education not only focus on the cognitive aspect, but must also be strengthened by the affective and spiritual dimensions of students. In addition, the challenge faced is the transformation of the role of teachers and Islamic educational institutions (Tahira et al., 2024). In today's digital era, teachers are no longer the only source of knowledge, because the information obtained by students can be from various sources or online platforms. Therefore, teachers to play the role of *facilitator*, *motivator* and *role model* in learning activities. Teachers must have the ability to be digitally literate, and be able to use technology in the teaching process, but still include Islamic ethical values in the use of technology. The role of teachers is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to foster morals and spiritual guidance in the digital era that accelerates the flow of information.

The epistemological challenge in this digital era is the possibility of fragmentation of knowledge due to the separation between religious and general science in the modern education system. Islamic education must review its scientific views in order to be able to combine Islamic ethical values with science or technology. It is necessary to integrate modern education and Islamic values so that technology and science can be used in strengthening faith. This integration is very important so that Islamic education is able to adapt to the times, and remain solid with its spiritual foundation. Despite various challenges, the digital era provides an open opportunity for the development of Islamic

education. One of them is with extensive information from Islamic knowledge sources in digital media. At this time, we can access classical books, tafsir, hadith, and Islamic literature online anywhere and anytime. The reach of da'wah and Islamic learning can be wider, and can encourage the realization of a learning community (*learning society*) based on Islamic values (Wathoni, 2011).

The use of technology in innovation in digital-based learning in Islamic education is an opportunity that we can develop. To increase learning effectiveness, Islamic educational institutions must be able to innovate by using *Learning Management System (LMS)*, interactive videos, and other educational applications. Technology can also invite us to collaborate between regions and countries, so that it will strengthen the connection of Islamic science globally. Social media, podcasts, and YouTube channels as educational means of da'wah can also be used as a form of digital da'wah (*Digital Da'wah*) for millennials and Z generations in a contemporary and more effective manner. In addition, Islamic education also has a great opportunity to instill Islamic digital ethics (*Islamic digital ethics*), which is a set of moral values that guide people in interacting in cyberspace (Setiawan et al., 2025). We must give Islamic values such as honesty, politeness, responsibility and self-control to students so that students are not only able to use technology, but also must be wise and ethical in their use. Digital ethics based on Islamic values is a moral fortress for the younger generation so that they are wise in the use of technology, such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and consumptive behavior on social media.

A collaborative and inclusive Islamic education ecosystem will be able to be formed in the digital era (Ismael & Supratman, 2023). Collaboration between Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, Islamic schools, universities, and community communities can be done more easily by using digital platforms, so as to enable the realization of an education system that is in accordance with the times, but still based on Islamic values. Thus, the opportunities and challenges in the digital era must be understood wisely by the world of Islamic education. Challenges that are often encountered in the form of moral crises, changes in the role of educators, and the rapid flow of information need to be faced by carrying out innovative strategies based on monotheistic values. But behind that, there are opportunities in the form of accessible access to knowledge, digital da'wah, and technological innovations that need to be used in expanding the reach of Islamic education in order to strengthen the character of the Muslim generation. Islamic

education that is able to integrate technology and spirituality makes it a strategic force to form a generation that *human perfection* who have extensive knowledge, noble morals, so they are ready to contribute to building civil society in the digital era.

5. Integration of Science and Faith in Islamic Education

Islamic education has the most basic characteristics, namely its holistic and integrated view of science. Islamic education does not distinguish between religious knowledge (*al-'ulum ad-diniyyah*) and general science (*al-'ulum ad-dunyawiyyah*), because both knowledge comes from Allah SWT. The Western secular paradigm has a different view, which is to clearly separate the spiritual and the rational realms. Islamic education does not accept this separation because they believe that science is, in essence, a way to better know the greatness of Allah and to uphold good values in the people of the earth. The integration of the values of science and faith is an important need in the Islamic education system, especially in the digital era which is full of developments in science, technology and information (Agustini & Sofa, 2024). Islamic education is expected to be able to produce intellectually intelligent human beings, have spiritual awareness and moral responsibility in utilizing science and technology. Faith and science are inseparable, faith shows the direction and meaning of the use of science, while science strengthens faith by giving signs of the greatness of Allah SWT through the phenomena that exist in the universe.

The Qur'an explicitly invites humans to be able to think, study, research, and explore the secrets of Allah's creation contained in each of its verses. Many verses convey *afala tatafakkarun* (don't you think) and *afala tadzakkarun* (don't you take lessons), which affirm that scientific thinking is part of worship. Therefore, the development of science from an Islamic perspective is not an ordinary activity, but is part of the service of the ummah to Allah SWT. Science without faith will lead to intellectual pride and dehumanization, while faith without science will lead to stagnation and narrow fanaticism.

Islamic education has a role as a means of integration through curriculum, methods, and learning orientation. The Islamic education curriculum must be designed in an integrative way, which combines Islamic values with modern science. Every discipline, such as biology, physics, economics, or technology, needs to be aimed at strengthening divine awareness and social responsibility. For example, science learning is not only about explaining the laws of nature empirically, but also needs to instill awareness that phenomena that occur in nature are manifestations of sunnatullah (the law of Allah) that

describes His greatness. The integration of science and faith also requires a change of perspective in the learning process. The role of teachers is not only as a teacher, but also must be able to guide spiritually and instill the values of manners in every learning activity process that they provide. Learning-based *scientific approach* can be expanded into *spiritual-scientific approach*, which is an approach that combines observation, experimentation, and religious reflection (Mukarromah, 2018). Therefore, students not only learn about how to understand natural phenomena, but also be able to find the spiritual meaning behind these phenomena.

Islamic history explains that the integration between science and faith has given birth to a golden age in Islamic civilization in the 8th to 13th centuries AD. Islamic figures at that time, namely *Al-Farabi*, *Ibn Sina*, *Al-Khawarizmi*, and *Ibn Haytham* are examples of scholars and scientists who were able to integrate empirical science with faith values. They have made scientific research a form of worship for the service of Allah SWT. This needs to be redeveloped in the world of modern Islamic education so that a new generation is created who are highly knowledgeable and have noble character. The integration of science and faith in the digital era is a must-do to face the challenges of globalization, materialism, and moral relativism of the nation. Students must have the ability to think critically and digital literacy combined with ethical and spiritual awareness. Technology and science aim to build a human civilization that is just, does not exploit or damage the environment. The integration of science into the framework of faith is able to make Islamic education play a role as a system that is able to combine technological advances with human and divine values.

The integration of science and faith must also be applied into the vision of Islamic education in the future. Islamic education is not only seen as a process of knowledge transfer, but also a process of forming a holistic consciousness between humans and Allah, fellow humans, and the universe. This view explains that the participants of science are not the final goal that will be achieved by students, but are a means to achieve the glory and blessings of life in this world and the hereafter. Thus, Islamic education that integrates science and faith will realize a *generation of ulul albab* — a generation that is able to think rationally and spiritually and is able to master technology by having good manners, and is oriented towards the progress of the world while still prioritizing the goals of the hereafter. This generation will be the nation's hope so that a civil society that has high knowledge, faith and centuries in the digital era is realized.

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CONCLUSION

Islamic education has a strategic position in building a civilization that is knowledgeable, faithful, and civilized through the process of forming a complete human being (insan kamil). Islamic education not only imparts knowledge, but integrates spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions through an ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundation centered on monotheism. With this principle, Islamic education forms individuals who are able to carry out their roles as servants of Allah and prosperous of the earth. In the social context, Islamic education is an instrument for building a civil society that upholds the values of faith, justice, responsibility, and tolerance. These values balance individual freedom with collective ethics, thus making knowledge and morals the pillars of social life.

Entering the digital era, Islamic education faces moral challenges and global information flows, but at the same time has great opportunities to innovate. The integration of faith and science is the key to adaptation, so that Islamic education remains relevant without losing its spiritual identity. Through this integration, Islamic education can give birth to a generation of *ulul albab* who are critical, religious, and have noble character. Thus, Islamic education is not just an academic field, but an ideological and moral foundation that is able to drive social transformation. Through a holistic, integrative, and monotheistic-based approach, Islamic education can become a civilization force that answers the challenges of the times while building a knowledgeable, faithful, and socially just society.

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