

Reconstructing Principles of Islamic Education in Qur'anic Exegesis and Their Application in Modern Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the fundamental principles of Islamic education as derived from Qur'anic exegesis and examines their application within contemporary educational contexts. Using a qualitative literature review approach, the research integrates classical Qur'anic interpretations with recent scholarship in Islamic and educational studies to construct a coherent conceptual framework. The analysis identifies four foundational principles—*tawhīd* (divine unity), universality, balance (*wasathīyyah*), and *rahmah* (compassion)—as central to the Islamic educational worldview. These principles operate simultaneously as epistemological foundations, ethical orientations, and pedagogical guidelines that connect spiritual consciousness, intellectual development, moral cultivation, and social responsibility. The findings demonstrate that when Qur'anic principles are thematically interpreted and systematically embedded within curriculum design and pedagogical practice, Islamic education offers a holistic and adaptive model capable of responding to contemporary educational challenges. This study contributes to the field by articulating an integrative framework that bridges classical Qur'anic foundations with modern educational demands, positioning Islamic education as a transformative and contextually relevant paradigm in plural and dynamic societies.

KEYWORDS: *Islamic education; Qur'anic exegesis; tawhīd; universality; wasathīyyah; rahmah; curriculum integration*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education, as a comprehensive and multidimensional process, finds its primary foundations in the Qur'an, the central text of Islam. Unlike educational models rooted in secular paradigms that separate knowledge from moral and spiritual dimensions, Islamic education integrates these dimensions in a unified vision of human

development. The Qur'an does not merely provide religious doctrines but also outlines principles of learning, moral refinement, and human responsibility that are directly relevant to educational theory and practice. This holistic orientation foregrounds an approach where spiritual formation, intellectual growth, ethical conduct, and social responsibility are interwoven into a coherent educational philosophy (Norlianti, Aliyah & Zainuri, 2023:206).

Central to this vision is the Qur'anic injunction to seek knowledge and cultivate human potential. The opening injunction of the Qur'an's revelation highlights the integrative nature of Islamic education: "*Read in the name of your Lord who created*" — a command that not only initiates literacy but situates learning within an intentional orientation toward God, ethical purpose, and human excellence. This approach contrasts with purely utilitarian educational goals that prioritize measurable competencies over character and spiritual development. Instead, Islamic education asserts that knowledge acquisition must be accompanied by moral and spiritual purpose, thereby shaping learners as individuals who are intellectually competent and ethically rooted.

Contemporary scholarship has emphasized the urgency of aligning Islamic educational principles with modern educational demands without compromising their Qur'anic foundations. In the context of curriculum development, the Qur'an provides normative guidance that should inform both the content and organization of educational programs. This perspective is evident in research that highlights the integration of Qur'anic principles into curriculum frameworks aimed at nurturing balanced human development (Susiyati et al., 2024). The study on *Ulumul Qur'an*-based curriculum management, for example, demonstrates that embedding Qur'anic values in curriculum planning and evaluation not only strengthens character development but also equips students to confront global challenges with a grounded ethical orientation (Susiyati et al., 2024:980).

Furthermore, the Qur'anic worldview emphasizes balance—between spiritual and worldly concerns, between individual integrity and social responsibility—and this balance should reflect in the educational paradigms adopted by modern institutions. The Qur'an teaches that human beings are both creatures of God and agents in the world, charged with stewardship and ethical accountability. Therefore, educational processes must foster intellectual growth while cultivating ethical awareness and social engagement. Research on Islamic religious education curriculum in the Indonesian context confirms that a Qur'an-based curriculum aligns educational practice with both religious authenticity and societal relevance, producing graduates capable of contributing meaningfully to the wider community (Maulana, 2024:255-256).

Integration of Qur'anic values into modern education also requires pedagogical strategies that go beyond rote memorization and ritual practice to encompass reflective inquiry, ethical reasoning, and critical engagement with contemporary issues. Studies on curriculum implementation in Islamic schools show that when Qur'anic values are operationalized through intentional instructional design, they contribute to shaping students' attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes (Suhertini et al.,

2025:3003). This highlights that the principle of *ta'dib* — moral cultivation — is not a peripheral aspect of Islamic education but a core dimension that must be intentionally embedded in curricular and pedagogical choices.

Another important dimension of integrating Qur'anic principles with modern education is the need for thematic and contextual interpretation (*tafsir mawdu'i*). This approach involves identifying themes related to education, ethics, knowledge, and human purpose within Qur'anic discourse and applying these insights to contemporary educational challenges. Empirical research on thematic Qur'anic curriculum design demonstrates that such interpretive frameworks can help educational institutions produce curricula that are both deeply rooted in revelation and therefore relevant to the lived realities of students (Sadiah & Alim, 2025:56). By leveraging thematic interpretation, educators can bridge the gap between timeless ethical values and dynamic educational contexts.

The relevance of Qur'anic principles for modern education becomes even more salient when considering the challenges of social cohesion and ethical governance. In many educational environments today, issues such as intolerance, social fragmentation, and ethical ambiguity are pressing concerns. The Qur'an emphasizes values such as justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and mutual respect, which are foundational for fostering inclusive and peaceful societies. Research analyzing Islamic education from the perspective of religious moderation reveals that when Qur'anic principles of balance and equity are integrated into educational frameworks, they contribute to shaping learners who are not only knowledgeable but also socially responsible and ethically grounded (Hasan & Albab, 2024:598).

Despite the rich potential of Qur'anic educational principles, gaps remain in how these principles are systematically articulated and operationalized within modern educational institutions. Many studies focus on specific aspects of educational practice — such as curriculum content, pedagogical methods, or character development — but fewer have offered comprehensive frameworks that connect the foundational exegesis of the Qur'an with practical applications in contemporary schooling. Addressing this gap is essential for establishing educational systems that are holistic, integrative, and aligned with both divine guidance and modern educational imperatives.

This study aims to contribute to this ongoing discourse by explicating the *fundamental principles of Islamic education* derived from Qur'anic exegesis and analyzing their application within modern educational contexts. By synthesizing insights from established research on curriculum, pedagogy, and ethical formation, this research seeks to formulate an integrated framework that honors the Qur'an's educational vision while addressing the realities of contemporary schooling. Such a framework positions Islamic education not as a relic of tradition but as an adaptive and transformative approach capable of producing individuals who are spiritually enlightened, ethically grounded, intellectually competent, and socially engaged.

In conclusion, the Qur'an provides not only theological precepts but also substantive educational principles that are inherently suited for addressing modern educational challenges. When these principles are interpreted contextually and

implemented through thoughtful curriculum design and pedagogical innovation, they have the potential to enrich educational theory and practice. This approach ensures that Islamic education remains relevant and impactful, fostering learners who embody both religious integrity and modern competencies, capable of contributing positively to a complex and dynamic world.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature review methodology (also referred to as library research) to explore the fundamental principles of Islamic education derived from Qur’anic exegesis and to analyze their application in modern educational contexts. The qualitative literature review method is appropriate for this research because it allows for an in-depth examination of conceptual frameworks, theoretical foundations, and interpretative perspectives found in existing academic literature without engaging in new fieldwork or primary data collection. In this approach, texts such as academic articles, books, reports, and policy documents are systematically selected, critically examined, and synthesized to construct a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Library research as a methodology is characterized by its reliance on written sources and its descriptive-analytic nature, enabling researchers to identify key themes, develop theoretical insights, and interpret complex phenomena within their contextual frameworks. This method has been widely applied in educational research, especially when the objective is to build theoretical foundations, identify knowledge gaps, and formulate a coherent conceptual framework based on existing studies (Abdurrahman, 2024). The stages of this methodology include determining the research focus, searching for relevant literature, analyzing and organizing data, and presenting thematic interpretations that contribute to a systematic narrative. Through this method, the study situates the Qur’anic principles of education within broader educational discourses, thus bridging classical Islamic sources and modern educational theory in a rigorous and academically defensible manner (Jamaluddin, Rahmatullah & Farid, 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Principle of *Tawhīd* and Its Application

The principle of *tawhīd* constitutes the ontological and epistemological foundation of Islamic thought and practice. This principle is clearly articulated in the opening verse of Sūrat al-‘Alaq, which represents the first divine command revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

“Read in the name of your Lord who created.” (Qur’an, al-‘Alaq 96:1)

This verse establishes *tawhīd* as the core axis of human consciousness, knowledge, and action. The command to read (*iqra*) is inseparable from the phrase “in

the name of your Lord,” indicating that all intellectual activity, learning processes, and human endeavors must be oriented toward the recognition of divine unity. Knowledge, therefore, emerges not as a neutral or autonomous pursuit, but as an act grounded in awareness of Allah as the sole Creator and ultimate source of meaning.

Classical exegetes devoted considerable attention to this verse due to its unique position as the first Qur’anic revelation received by the Prophet ﷺ and the first divine message to descend upon humanity. Al-Māturīdī explains that many scholars of *ta’wīl* affirm this verse as part of the first sūrah revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and the initial moment of prophetic revelation. He also notes the existence of alternative scholarly opinions suggesting that another passage may have preceded it. Nevertheless, al-Māturīdī records that the dominant position among exegetes recognizes Sūrat al-‘Alaq as the earliest revealed chapter (al-Māturīdī, 2005: 575).

Abū al-Su‘ūd al-‘Imādī strengthens this view by asserting that the evidence supporting the primacy of this verse is more compelling. He grounds his position in the well-known hadith narrated by al-Zuhrī, which describes the first encounter between the Prophet ﷺ and revelation in the Cave of Ḥirā’. According to this narration, the command *iqra’* marks the initiation of divine guidance and the formal commencement of the prophetic mission (Abū al-Su‘ūd, n.d.: 177). This exegetical consensus reinforces the theological significance of *tawḥīd* as the initial framework through which revelation introduces itself to human reason.

From a conceptual perspective, the principle of *tawḥīd* in this verse integrates three interconnected dimensions: divine lordship (*rubūbiyyah*), epistemic orientation, and ethical responsibility. The reference to Allah as “*your Lord who created*” situates human existence within a purposeful cosmological order governed by a single Creator. Knowledge becomes meaningful only when it aligns with this order, transforming learning into an act of devotion and moral accountability. Contemporary Islamic thought emphasizes that this integration prevents the fragmentation of knowledge and safeguards education from value-neutral abstraction.

In educational application, the principle of *tawḥīd* functions as a unifying paradigm that connects intellectual development with spiritual awareness. Teaching and learning processes shaped by *tawḥīd* encourage learners to perceive coherence between revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry. Recent studies in Islamic pedagogy indicate that a *tawḥīdic* framework fosters holistic cognition, ethical sensitivity, and a sense of transcendental purpose among students, particularly in higher education contexts.

Moreover, the command *iqra’* underscores that the pursuit of knowledge in Islam is inherently active and reflective. It calls for critical engagement, disciplined inquiry, and responsible interpretation, all conducted within the consciousness of divine unity. This orientation challenges secular epistemologies that isolate knowledge from metaphysical grounding, offering an alternative model where intellectual growth remains integrated with moral formation. Current research affirms that such

integration contributes to intellectual integrity and ethical consistency in academic environments.

Thus, the principle of *tawḥīd*, as articulated in the first revealed verse, operates as the cornerstone of Islamic worldview and educational philosophy. It establishes a comprehensive vision in which faith, knowledge, and action converge within the recognition of Allah's oneness, shaping individuals capable of navigating both spiritual and worldly responsibilities with coherence and purpose.

In *Tafsir al-Nukat wa al-'Uyun*, Imam al-Mawardi interprets the opening verse of Surah al-'Alaq as a divine command to begin reading by invoking the name of the Lord who creates. The explicit mention of creation, according to al-Mawardi, directly confronts the Quraysh's devotion to idols that possessed no creative power. Through this attribute, Allah affirms His absolute oneness and majesty, thereby removing confusion and theological ambiguity from their belief system (al-Mawardi, n.d.: 403). The emphasis on Allah as *al-Khāliq* functions as a corrective framework that dismantles idolatry and reorients human consciousness toward the true source of existence and knowledge.

This interpretation implies that Islamic education must be grounded in the reinforcement of *tawḥīd*, asserting that all forms of knowledge, creation, and educational endeavor originate solely from Allah. When the imperative *iqra'* is coupled with the phrase *bi-ismi rabbika alladhi khalaq*, it establishes a monotheistic epistemology that positions *tawḥīd* as the foundational principle of Islamic education. Knowledge acquisition, in this view, is inseparable from divine acknowledgment and theological orientation.

Classical exegetes have given considerable attention to the phrase *bi-ismi rabbika*. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī explains that it carries several interrelated meanings. Grammatically, it may function as a circumstantial qualifier, indicating that the act of recitation should begin with the invocation of Allah's name. It may also denote seeking assistance through Allah's name, suggesting that divine aid is essential in overcoming human limitations in learning. Additionally, the phrase conveys sincerity of intention, meaning that the act of reading is undertaken purely for Allah's sake. Al-Rāzī emphasizes that when an action is dedicated entirely to Allah, it remains protected from satanic influence, as devotion sanctifies human effort and intention (al-Rāzī, 2000: 215).

These layered meanings embedded in *bi-ismi rabbika* articulate core principles of Islamic educational philosophy. Learning is framed as an act rooted in spiritual awareness, where the invocation of Allah's name establishes the orientation of intention and purpose. Contemporary studies on *tawḥīd-based education* affirm that integrating monotheistic consciousness into learning processes strengthens ethical integrity and spiritual resilience among students (Pranoto & Isnawati, 2024: 48). At the same time, the dimension of *isti'ānab* underscores that education transcends purely human effort, requiring reliance on Allah as *al-'Alīm*, the ultimate source of knowledge. Modern Qur'anic education research confirms that recognizing human epistemic limitation fosters humility and dependence on divine guidance in intellectual pursuits.

Moreover, the principle of *ikhlāṣ* embedded in this phrase safeguards education from being reduced to pragmatic or materialistic goals, ensuring that learning remains an act of worship directed toward Allah alone.

Al-Alusi further deepens this understanding by interpreting the mention of divine lordship (*rubbūbiyyah*) as an indication of gradual nurturing and guidance toward human perfection. He relates this process to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, whose reception of revelation elevated him progressively toward the highest levels of moral and intellectual excellence. The pedagogical implication is that divine education operates through sustained guidance, cultivation, and moral refinement rather than instantaneous transformation (al-Alusi, 1995: 401).

In practical terms, a *tawḥīd-centered educational framework* shapes both methodology and relational dynamics within Islamic education. Educators function as *murabbī*, guiding learners to recognize knowledge as a trust from Allah, while students pursue learning with sincere intentions oriented toward divine pleasure. The learning process begins with invoking Allah's name, seeking His assistance, and understanding knowledge as a means of devotion rather than mere worldly gain. Consequently, success in Islamic education is assessed not only through academic outcomes but through the extent to which knowledge brings individuals closer to Allah, cultivates virtuous character, and encourages social responsibility for the collective good of the community. Recent educational studies reaffirm that embedding *tawḥīd* within curriculum design and pedagogical practice significantly enhances moral development and spiritual consciousness among learners.

The universal principle embedded in the Prophetic mission, as articulated in Qur'ān 21:107, provides a fundamental foundation for the development of an inclusive and comprehensive philosophy of Islamic education. This verse affirms that the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ extends to all humanity, positioning education in Islam as a transformative process that nurtures intellectual capacity, moral integrity, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. Consequently, Islamic education is envisioned as an open and accessible system, free from discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, or social status, since access to knowledge is understood as an expression of divine mercy extended to all humankind (Gaffar & Anees, 2025: 137–139).

The universal orientation of Islamic education further necessitates the integration of *rabbānī* (divine) and *insānī* (humanistic) values within its epistemological and pedagogical framework. Education functions as a means of disseminating mercy by cultivating compassion, tolerance, and ethical accountability within society. Within this paradigm, openness to diverse sources of knowledge is encouraged, provided that such engagement remains consistent with the principle of *tawḥīd*. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that this integrative epistemology allows Islamic education to remain firmly grounded in revelation while constructively engaging with global intellectual traditions and plural social realities (Gaffar & Anees, 2025: 140–143). In contemporary studies on the epistemology of Islamic education, *tawḥīd* is affirmed as

a fundamental epistemological foundation that functions not merely as a moral value but as the organizing structure of Islamic knowledge as a whole. All forms of knowledge and learning processes are understood to originate from the awareness that Allah alone is the ultimate source of all truth and learning (tawḥīdī epistemology), thereby rejecting the secular fragmentation of knowledge that disrupts the unity of the Islamic educational worldview (Helmy, Surahman, & Sumarna, 2025).

The Principle of Universal and Its Application

One of the defining characteristics of Islamic teachings is their universal nature, meaning that they apply to all humanity without limitation by space, time, race, or culture. Islam emerged as a comprehensive way of life encompassing creed (*‘aqīdah*), worship (*‘ibādah*), social transactions (*mu‘āmalāt*), and ethics (*akhlāq*), offering guidance for human well-being in both worldly life and the hereafter. This universal principle affirms that Islam is not confined to a particular group or community, but represents a divine message addressed to all humankind as guidance toward truth and collective prosperity.

Allah ﷻ states

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“*And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to all worlds.*” (Qur’an, al-Anbiyā’ 21:107)

This verse affirms that the message of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ possesses a universal scope and conveys mercy to all realms of existence, without restriction to a specific nation, group, or generation. Al-Alusi explains that the phrase “*We have not sent you*” encompasses all forms of divine legislation, rulings, and guidance that function as means for human happiness in this world and the next. The expression “*except as a mercy to all worlds*” constitutes an exclusive purpose clause, indicating that the Prophet’s mission serves no aim other than manifesting mercy for all creation. Al-Alusi further clarifies that this mercy is realized through the revelation conveyed by the Prophet ﷺ, whether by embodying mercy, possessing it, or delivering it through divine guidance to humanity (al-Alusi, 1995: 99).

Similarly, Abu al-Su‘ūd al-‘Imadi emphasizes that everything brought by the Prophet ﷺ constitutes the foundation of happiness in both dimensions of existence—worldly and eternal—and serves as the organizing principle for all human welfare. Those who fail to benefit from this message do so by their own neglect, not because Allah withholds mercy from them, but because they turn away from it through their own volition (Abu al-Su‘ūd, n.d.: 89).

Allah further declares:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“*And We have not sent you except comprehensively to all people as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, but most people do not know.*”

Ibn ‘Ashur interprets this verse as a decisive affirmation that the Prophet’s mission is not limited to the inhabitants of Mecca, the Arab people, or those who encountered him directly. Rather, his message addresses all of humanity across time and space, reinforcing the universality and permanence of Islamic revelation (Ibn ‘Ashur, 1984: 199).

The universal principle embedded in the Prophetic mission, as articulated in Surah al-Anbiyā’ verse 107, provides a crucial foundation for the development of an inclusive and comprehensive Islamic educational philosophy. From an Islamic perspective, education aims not merely at intellectual refinement but also at nurturing moral integrity, spiritual depth, and social responsibility. The universality of the Prophet’s mission implies that education must remain open to all individuals without discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, or social status, while striving to cultivate faithful, knowledgeable, and ethically grounded human beings.

Moreover, the universal dimension of Islamic education highlights the integration of *rabbānī* (divine) and *insānī* (humanistic) values. Education functions as a vehicle for disseminating mercy throughout creation by fostering compassion, tolerance, and social accountability. Within this framework, Islam encourages openness to knowledge and wisdom from diverse sources, provided they do not contradict the principle of *tawḥīd*. Contemporary Islamic education scholarship confirms that this integrative approach allows Islamic pedagogy to remain rooted in revelation while engaging constructively with global intellectual traditions (Hassan & Abdullah, 2023: 214).

This understanding is reinforced by the Prophet’s ﷺ statement (Abu al-Qasim, 1993:107):

بُعِثْتُ إِلَى النَّاسِ كَافَّةً

“I have been sent to all of humanity.”

According to ‘Ali Subhi, this expression signifies the completeness and suitability of Islamic law for all human beings across every generation until the Day of Judgment. Islamic teachings correspond harmoniously with human nature (*fiṭrah*) and rational maturity, addressing both intellect and inner consciousness. Unlike human-made legal systems that require continuous modification, Islamic principles remain relevant due to their alignment with fundamental human needs and moral realities. Islam is therefore not designated for a particular race or civilization, but stands as a universal religion for all humankind (‘Ali Subhi, 2002: 46).

Islamic education’s universal orientation is evidenced in its role in fostering tolerance and openness toward diversity. Research on inclusive Islamic education emphasizes that embedding values such as *rahmatan lil-‘alamin* (mercy to all creation), respect for differences, and intercultural dialogue into educational systems significantly contributes to the development of tolerant attitudes among students in multicultural settings (Hamzah et.al, 2025: 31). Such findings indicate that when curricula and pedagogical practices are grounded in universal Islamic values, educational

environments become inclusive and responsive to diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds, thereby reinforcing social cohesion and ethical development in plural societies.

Moreover, the universal principles inherent in Qur’anic teachings and the prophetic model support the cultivation of mercy-based educational approaches that go beyond doctrinal instruction to encompass humanistic engagement with others. Studies on mercy-based education highlight that the Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ approach to learning and social interaction in plural contexts served as a foundational model for educational harmony, emphasizing compassion, justice, and communal benefit as central to Islamic pedagogy (Arifuddin et al., 2025:43). This reinforces the idea that an inclusive and mercy-oriented Islamic education framework aligns with both divine guidance and the human imperative to contribute meaningfully to global civilization.

The Principle of Balance and Its Application

The principle of *wasathiyah*—balance and moderation—functions not only as a foundation in matters of creed and worship but also as a central pillar of the Islamic educational system. From the Islamic perspective, education is not oriented solely toward intellectual development or the fulfillment of worldly needs. Instead, it aims to form an integrated human personality, maintaining equilibrium between the physical and spiritual dimensions, reason and conscience, and worldly life and the hereafter.

Allah ﷻ states:

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and do not forget your share of the world.” (Qur’an, al-Qasas 28:77)

This verse articulates the principle of balance between worldly engagement and eschatological orientation, which constitutes a defining characteristic of Islamic teaching. Al-Alusi explains that the command *“seek, through what Allah has given you, the abode of the Hereafter”* signifies the obligation to utilize worldly wealth and resources as means for attaining divine pleasure and reward in the hereafter. All worldly blessings, therefore, are to be directed toward ultimate moral and spiritual ends (al-Alusi, n.d.: 318).

Wahbah al-Zuhaili further clarifies that the blessings bestowed by Allah, including wealth and material resources, should be employed in obedience to Allah and in acts that draw one closer to Him. He describes the world as a field for the hereafter, where human actions are cultivated and later harvested in eternal life. At the same time, the phrase *“do not forget your share of the world”* signifies Islam’s recognition of lawful worldly enjoyment, such as food, clothing, shelter, and marriage. This interpretation captures the essence of *wasathiyah*, as Islam neither advocates ascetic withdrawal nor unrestrained materialism, but a measured engagement with worldly life guided by ethical restraint (al-Zuhaili, 1991: 160–161).

Within the educational context, this verse establishes that academic achievement and professional success are not final objectives but instruments for devotion to Allah and service to society. The acknowledgment “do not forget your share of the world” further indicates that Islam values practical skills, technological advancement, and scientific development as integral components of human responsibility and stewardship.

Allah ﷻ also declares:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

“And thus We have made you a balanced community (*ummatan wasaṭan*) so that you may be witnesses over humanity.” (Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2:143)

According to al-Tabari, the term *ummatan wasaṭan* denotes a community that is moderate, just, and exemplary. Linguistically, *wasath* conveys meanings such as “middle,” “best,” and “most noble,” while its interpretive sense (*ta’wīl*) in this verse refers to *al-‘adl* (justice). Al-Tabari explains that the Muslim community occupies a middle position between religious excess and neglect, avoiding the extremes of exaggeration exemplified by those who deified prophets and the negligence of those who distorted revelation and denied divine guidance. This balanced position renders the Muslim community capable of bearing moral testimony over other nations, as justice and equilibrium represent the qualities most beloved to Allah (al-Tabari, n.d.: 141).

Together, these verses affirm that Islam promotes balance across all dimensions of life—between worldly and eternal concerns, spiritual and material pursuits, and individual rights and collective responsibilities. This equilibrium establishes the Muslim community as a moderating force that embodies justice, mercy, and public welfare.

In educational practice, the principle of *wasathiyah* manifests through pedagogical approaches that foster proportional development across all learning domains. Integrative curricula that harmonize religious sciences with empirical and social sciences reflect this balance by presenting knowledge as a unified and coherent system. Holistic teaching methodologies that attend to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions ensure that education addresses the full range of human potential. Contemporary Islamic education studies affirm that integrative and balanced curricula enhance ethical awareness and intellectual coherence among learners.

Research on *Wasathiyatul Islam* in educational frameworks underscores that Islamic moderation (*wasathiyah*) promotes balance, justice, and inclusivity as essential components of a harmonious and moderate society. In educational contexts, these principles are embedded in curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and student–teacher relationships, highlighting that moderation is not only doctrinal but also pedagogical, supporting social cohesion and tolerance in plural settings (Mubin, et.al, 2025:68). Further studies on internalizing *wasathiyah* values in Islamic education show that balanced, integrative learning approaches—such as interactive teaching methods and contextual discussions—can foster cognitive, affective, and behavioral expressions of moderate Islamic values among students, strengthening ethical awareness and resilience against extremism (Rahim, et.al, 2025:125). Furthermore,

wasathiyyah encourages equilibrium between theory and practice, ensuring that knowledge translates into ethical conduct and social contribution. This balance also extends to gender equity and equal access to education, affirming that both men and women possess equal rights to learning and participation in societal advancement. The cultivation of religious moderation (*al-wasathiyyah fi al-din*) within educational settings plays a critical role in preventing extremism, intolerance, and rigid literalism. Recent empirical research indicates that moderation-oriented Islamic education significantly contributes to social harmony and resilience against radical tendencies.

At a broader level, the principle of balance equips Islamic education to remain responsive to contemporary developments without compromising its divine foundations. Scientific and technological progress may be embraced when aligned with *tamhīd* and oriented toward public benefit. In this way, Islamic education transcends the mere transmission of information and cultivates individuals who are intellectually capable, morally grounded, and socially responsible. The principle of *wasathiyyah* thus gives rise to an educational paradigm that nurtures harmony between worldly engagement and spiritual accountability, enabling human beings to fulfill their role as ethical agents and contributors to global civilization.

The Principle of Rahmah (Compassion)

One of the most fundamental principles of Islamic teaching is *rahmah*—compassion and mercy—which constitutes the core of the prophetic mission of Muhammad ﷺ. Islam does not merely promote justice and balance; it embeds *rahmah* as a moral and spiritual foundation governing the relationship between human beings and Allah, among fellow humans, and with all creation. In this sense, *rahmah* represents a comprehensive ethical orientation that permeates belief, conduct, and social interaction.

Terminologically, *rahmah* denotes gentleness of the heart that necessitates the manifestation of benevolent action toward the recipient of mercy. At times, the term refers to tenderness alone, while in other contexts it signifies the bestowal of goodness even without emotional softness (al-Fairuzabadi, 1996: 53). Al-Jurjani defines *rahmah* as the will to confer goodness upon others, emphasizing its volitional and active dimension (al-Jurjani, 1983: 110). Accordingly, *rahmah* transcends mere sentiment; it embodies a conscious intention and commitment to produce benefit, protection, and reform. It is an empathetic disposition that materializes in concrete actions aimed at human and universal well-being.

Allah ﷻ declares:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَنْتَ لَهُمْ

“And We have not sent you [O Muhammad] except as a mercy to all worlds.” (Qur’an, al-Anbiyā’ 21:107)

Ibn ‘Ashur explains that the term *rahmah* in this verse functions grammatically as a *ḥāl*, describing the state and essence of the Messenger ﷺ himself. This

construction indicates that *rahmah* is an intrinsic attribute of the Prophet's being, not merely an external quality of the message he conveyed. Consequently, the entirety of the Prophet's existence constitutes mercy; his actions, words, and teachings consistently embody compassion and benefit for all creation (Ibn 'Ashur, 1984: 164).

This understanding is reinforced by the Prophet's ﷺ statement: "O people, I am nothing but a gifted mercy." The hadith affirms that the Prophet ﷺ represents a divinely bestowed gift of compassion to the universe (al-Darimi, 2000: 166). Al-Thaibi interprets this expression by explaining that the Prophet ﷺ himself is mercy presented by Allah to all creation; those who accept this divine gift attain success and salvation, whereas those who reject it suffer loss by their own choice. He further clarifies that *rahmah* here conveys gentleness, compassion, and profound concern, particularly toward the believers, as an essential characteristic of the Prophet ﷺ (al-Thaibi, 1997: 3700; 3684).

According to Ibn 'Ashur, the concept of *rahmah* manifests in the Prophetic mission through two primary dimensions: mercy embodied in the personality of the Prophet ﷺ and mercy embedded within his law (*shari'ah*). The first dimension is reflected in the Prophet's ﷺ purified soul and virtuous character, which were adorned with compassion by divine design. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Tahir al-Qaysi al-Isybili aptly describes this reality by stating that Allah adorned Muhammad ﷺ with the ornament of mercy; his existence, attributes, and moral conduct were all expressions of mercy toward creation (al-Zurqani, 1996: 293). This intrinsic harmony between the Prophet's compassionate nature and the revealed law underscores that the *shari'ah* itself is fundamentally grounded in mercy.

This divine nurturing of compassion is further affirmed by Allah's statement: "It is by mercy from Allah that you were gentle with them" (Qur'an, Āl 'Imrān 3:159). Ibn 'Ashur interprets this verse as evidence that the Prophet's gentleness resulted from mercy that Allah implanted within his soul and natural disposition, enabling him to engage humanity with kindness and patience (Ibn 'Ashur, 1984: 99). Likewise, the Prophet ﷺ explicitly rejected invoking curses upon his enemies, stating that he was not sent as one who condemns, but as a bearer of mercy—a principle that epitomizes the ethical orientation of Islam (Muslim, 1955: 2006).

The second manifestation of *rahmah* lies within the Prophetic law itself, as Islamic legislation consistently incorporates compassion, facilitation, and consideration of human welfare. Ibn 'Ashur emphasizes that the *shari'ah* of Muhammad ﷺ is imbued with mercy in its objectives, rulings, and ethical guidance, ensuring that divine law serves the interests of humanity rather than imposing undue hardship (Ibn 'Ashur, 1984: 167).

In practical educational contexts, the principle of *rahmah* assumes tangible form across multiple dimensions. In the educator's disposition, compassion emerges through warm interpersonal relationships with learners, the rejection of harshness and coercion, the frequent use of encouragement, and exemplary moral conduct. A teacher guided by *rahmah* educates not solely through instruction but through ethical modeling

and sincerity. Within the learning process, *rahmah* is reflected in dialogical and empathetic pedagogies, adaptive teaching methods that consider learners' capacities and circumstances, and the integration of compassionate values across moral, social, and spiritual curricula. Contemporary research in Islamic education confirms that compassion-based pedagogy enhances emotional well-being, moral development, and intrinsic motivation among students.

Islamic education scholarship underscores that *rahmah* (compassion) functions as a central pedagogical value that shapes not only interpersonal relations between educators and learners but also informs the design of inclusive learning environments and ethical assessment practices. For instance, research analyzing Qur'anic conceptions of compassion reveals that *rahmah* encompasses humane communication, responsiveness to learners' needs, and empathetic yet firm teaching attitudes — all of which have direct implications for classroom practices that emphasize emotional well-being, moral development, and learner engagement (Rahardja, Supriadi & Surahman, 2025).

Moreover, the role of compassion (*rahmah*) as a moral foundation in Islamic education is corroborated by empirical studies showing that the implementation of values such as compassion (*rahmah*) in character education significantly enhances tolerance and prosocial attitudes among learners. Research involving Islamic school students demonstrates that incorporating *rahmah* into educational activities and school culture has a positive effect on cultivating attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect, which are essential for building inclusive and socially responsible learners (Adyatiya, 2025).

At a broader level, *rahmah* positions Islamic education as a transformative force aimed at producing individuals who embody empathy, justice, and social responsibility. By embedding compassion as a guiding principle, Islamic education fulfills its role as a manifestation of Islam's universal mission as *rahmatan li al-'alamīn*, cultivating human beings who contribute positively to societal harmony and global well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Qur'an provides a comprehensive and coherent foundation for Islamic education through principles that shape its epistemological orientation, ethical structure, and pedagogical direction. The principle of *tawhīd* establishes the unity of knowledge and purpose by grounding all educational activity in divine consciousness, while the principle of universality affirms Islamic education as an inclusive system oriented toward the well-being of humanity as a whole. Together, these principles frame education as an integrated process that links intellectual inquiry with moral responsibility and social accountability.

The principles of balance (*wasathiyah*) and *rahmah* further reinforce this framework by ensuring equilibrium between spiritual and worldly dimensions and by embedding compassion as a central educational value. *Wasathiyah* guides curriculum and pedagogy toward proportional development across cognitive, affective, and practical domains, while *rahmah* informs humane educational relationships, inclusive

learning environments, and ethical engagement with diversity. These principles collectively prevent reductionist approaches to education and support the formation of individuals characterized by intellectual coherence, ethical awareness, and social commitment.

By synthesizing Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary educational research, this study highlights the capacity of Islamic education to engage constructively with modern challenges while remaining firmly rooted in its revelatory foundations. An educational framework grounded in *tawhīd*, universality, balance, and compassion positions Islamic education as a dynamic and integrative system capable of nurturing spiritually grounded, ethically responsible, and socially engaged learners. This confirms the enduring relevance of Qur'anic educational principles for advancing educational theory and practice in an increasingly complex global context.

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