

THE OBJECTIVES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE QUR'AN: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SURAH AL-'ALAQ AND SURAH LUQMAN

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the need to re-examine the aims of Islamic education derived directly from the Qur'an, especially in response to the tendency of modern education to emphasize cognitive aspects rather than the integration of spiritual and moral values. This research aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize the objectives of Islamic education based on Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman using a thematic approach. The study employs a qualitative method with library research, examining primary sources such as Qur'anic verses and classical as well as contemporary tafsir, alongside secondary sources from recent scholarly literature. The findings indicate that Surah Al-'Alaq emphasizes the epistemological dimension of education through the importance of reading, understanding, and acknowledging God as the source of knowledge. Meanwhile, Surah Luqman highlights ethical and moral dimensions, including monotheism, gratitude, proper conduct, and social responsibility. The integration of both surahs presents a holistic framework of Islamic educational goals, balancing intellectual development and character formation. This study holds significant implications for the development of Islamic educational curricula and pedagogical practices to ensure they remain relevant, comprehensive, and oriented toward nurturing individuals who are both knowledgeable and virtuous.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Qur'an, Surah Al-'Alaq, Surah Luqman, Thematic Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Education from an Islamic perspective represents an approach that does not merely focus on the transmission of knowledge, but also emphasises character formation, the strengthening of moral conduct (akhlak), and the development of intellectual capacity. The Qur'an provides essential guidance regarding the aims of education, which are integrated with the values of tawhid and morality. In this regard, Qur'anic verses that recount commands to seek knowledge and offer educational guidance are highly relevant within the context of Islamic education.

One of the crucial aspects of Islamic education is moral cultivation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), through the educational methods he employed, sought to shape Muslim individuals who are pious, patient, and possess noble character, as discussed in research examining his educational period in Makkah (Ifendi, 2021). In this context, education serves as a means of character development that is expected to have a positive impact on both individuals and society.

With regard to the objectives of education, the Qur'an and Hadith underscore the importance of character education. Several studies indicate that character education in Islam aims to instil noble values from an early age, either through direct instruction or exemplary conduct (Wibowo & Hidayat, 2022). These values are highly relevant to the

moral challenges faced by contemporary society and may serve as a foundation for reforming character education based on Islamic teachings (Sholihah & Maulida, 2020).

Surah Al-'Alaq (verses 1–5) is often regarded as the initial revelation that inaugurated the process of prophetic education through the command “iqrā” (“read”) and the symbolism of the pen as an instrument of knowledge. These verses emphasise the importance of reading, writing, and comprehension as the foundational elements in the formation of knowledgeable individuals who are devoted and submissive to their Creator. In contemporary scholarship, many researchers argue that the epistemological and spiritual dimensions of the command to learn in these verses are highly significant, establishing a close relationship between education and devotion to Allah (Salsabila et al., 2023). In this context, Islamic education is not solely concerned with cognitive aspects, but also with the development of the soul and character (Azizan, 2023).

By contrast, Surah Luqman, particularly verses 12–19, presents a more practical model of education through advice and the cultivation of values such as obedience to Allah, gratitude, proper conduct towards parents, and social piety. The educational framework depicted in these verses highlights the importance of character education and transformative moral upbringing (Irsal et al., 2025). Contemporary studies reveal that the verses of Surah Luqman are frequently used as references in the development of family education models as well as in the formation of children's moral character and ethical values (Bai, 2023).

However, challenges frequently arise in the implementation of Islamic educational principles within modern educational institutions. Many curricula and teaching practices place greater emphasis on cognitive aspects, while the integration of tawhidic, moral, and Qur'anic pedagogical dimensions is often neglected. Field-based research indicates a significant gap between the values articulated in the Qur'an and actual teaching practices in madrasahs and public schools (Khasanah & Mazida, 2021). This situation highlights an urgent need for a comprehensive and thematic interpretation capable of linking the texts of Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman with educational objectives that are relevant in the contemporary era.

This condition necessitates the development of curricula that are able to integrate moral and spiritual values into every aspect of the educational process. By drawing upon Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman, educators are expected to adopt a holistic and comprehensive approach, realising educational objectives that are not only academically proficient but also strong in moral conduct and character (akhlaq) (Farhan et al., 2023). A review of the literature reveals that, although numerous studies have examined Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman separately focusing on reading values, epistemology, and symbolism in Surah Al-'Alaq, as well as character education and moral exhortation in Surah Luqman there remains a notable lack of systematic comparative studies that integrate both chapters. This gap constitutes the primary motivation for investigating the objectives of Islamic education in an integrated manner, an approach that remains relatively underexplored. Such an investigation is crucial, given the persistent divide between Islamic educational theory and its practical implementation in educational settings

(Fajarrini & Umam, 2023).

Within a thematic analytical approach, the potential integration between epistemological aspects (knowledge and learning methods) and value-based dimensions (akhlaq and moral exhortation) should be explored more deeply in order to formulate applicable objectives of Islamic education. By conducting a thematic and comparative analysis, researchers can extract categories of educational objectives from these texts and synthesise them into a more comprehensive conceptual framework (Anshari & Widyantoro, 2020). This effort is considered particularly urgent given the absence of an applicable framework of Islamic educational objectives suitable for the context of modern education (Anshari & Widyantoro, 2020).

These two chapters contain integrable values: Surah Al-'Alaq emphasises the importance of learning methods through reading and comprehension, whereas Surah Luqman provides guidance for character formation and moral development by offering relevant counsel for individual growth (Fawaid & Hasanah, 2022). However, despite the existence of several studies addressing character education and the application of values derived from Surah Luqman, much of the existing research remains largely descriptive and does not fully exploit the potential synthesis between cognitive dimensions and ethical character development as integral components of broader educational objectives.

In light of the identified research gap, this study is expected to contribute to the formulation of more integrated educational objectives that are aligned with the idiosyncratic needs of contemporary Islamic education. The study adopts a thematic-comparative approach, combining Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman to construct a more holistic and applicable framework for Islamic educational objectives. By emphasising the values embedded in both chapters, the study aims to generate a set of normative-operational educational objectives that may serve as references for curriculum development and pedagogical strategies across various educational levels, ranging from the family to formal educational institutions (Anshari & Widyantoro, 2020). This thematic-comparative method, combined with contemporary Qur'anic exegesis and literature analysis, offers an effective means of bridging textual awareness with broader educational practice.

Accordingly, the findings of this study are expected to address the challenges of modern Islamic education by providing a strong textual and conceptual foundation for more cohesive and applicable educational policies, as well as by formulating concrete recommendations for educators and policymakers. Emphasising applicability across multiple educational levels is anticipated to enhance the impact of the study's findings, contributing to the development of an educational model that is not only academically oriented but also deeply rooted in moral conduct (akhlaq) and spirituality, in alignment with the holistic objectives of Islamic education (Mujayyanah et al., 2021).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method, focusing on the systematic identification, in-depth reading, and critical analysis of relevant written sources. This approach is selected because the study aims to examine the concept of

Islamic educational objectives from a textual–normative perspective based on two Qur'anic chapters. Consequently, the data are conceptual in nature and do not require the collection of field data. Qualitative research enables the researcher to gain a deep and contextual understanding of the meanings, values, and messages embedded within the Qur'anic texts.

The primary data sources of this study are the Qur'an, particularly Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman, as well as classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegeses (tafsir), including Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab, Tafsir al-Maraghi, and Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir. In addition, contemporary scholarly sources are utilised, such as journal articles, academic books, and research findings from the past five years that address Islamic education, Qur'anic-based educational objectives, thematic analysis, and exegetical studies. The use of both primary and secondary sources aims to enrich the understanding of the textual and contextual meanings of the verses under examination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study on Surah Al-'Alaq (verses 1–5) indicate the presence of three main concepts related to the objectives of Islamic education: (1) the command to read, (2) the recognition of God as the source of knowledge, and (3) the importance of instruments for the transmission of knowledge through the pen. These three concepts emphasise that education from an Islamic perspective is rooted in purposeful intellectual activity grounded in spiritual awareness. The verses encourage individuals to initiate the learning process with the awareness that all knowledge ultimately originates from revelation (Hasyim & Nashrullah, 2025).

A textual analysis of Surah Al-'Alaq reveals that the objectives of Islamic education include the formation of knowledgeable individuals (al-'ilm) who possess the capacity to read both the revealed text and the surrounding reality. The emphasis on the command "iqrā'" provides a clear epistemological foundation, indicating that education should develop literacy, observation, and reasoning skills. Accordingly, education does not merely produce individuals capable of mastering information, but also integrates knowledge with faith, treating them as an inseparable whole (Permata et al., 2024).

By contrast, in Surah Luqman (verses 12–19), the study finds that educational themes centre on character and ethical formation, encompassing the values of tawhid, gratitude, filial piety, moral responsibility, and self-restraint. Luqman's counsel to his son portrays education as a transformative process that instils fundamental values from an early stage. This demonstrates that the objectives of Islamic education are holistic in nature, encompassing cognitive, spiritual, and moral dimensions (Hardiansyah et al., 2023).

These findings further demonstrate a continuity between the epistemic values emphasised in Surah Al-'Alaq and the moral values articulated in Surah Luqman. Together, both chapters reflect comprehensive objectives of Islamic education: fostering intellectual competence while simultaneously nurturing ethical and moral consciousness. This reinforces the initial understanding that Islamic education is inherently integrative and affirms that the dimensions of knowledge and akhlaq are inseparable (Falah et al., 2022). Through a thematic approach, four main categories of Islamic educational objectives can

be derived from the two chapters: (1) the development of intellectual potential; (2) the cultivation of God-consciousness; (3) the formation of character and moral conduct (akhlaq); and (4) the strengthening of social responsibility. These categories emerge in both classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegesis, indicating coherence between the Qur'anic text and the universal values of Islamic education (Hajar, 2025). By integrating these analyses, the present study is expected to provide more applicable guidance for curriculum development and educational methods that are aligned with the current needs of Islamic education, thereby bridging the gap between text and educational practice (Irsal et al., 2025).

The findings further indicate that the educational methods applied in Surah Al-'Alaq (verses 1–5) and Surah Luqman are dialogical and gradual in nature. Surah Al-'Alaq employs a direct instructional approach, in which the command “iqrā” (“read”) emphasises reading activity as the key to acquiring knowledge (Rahimi, 2022). In contrast, Surah Luqman utilises persuasive counsel grounded in exemplary conduct, reflecting a more adaptive and contextual educational method aimed at achieving the intended objectives.

These findings suggest that Islamic education applies flexible and contextual methods in accordance with educational goals and learning targets, particularly in shaping individuals who possess self-awareness and civility (adab) (Setiyawan & Fauziyah, 2023). This is reflected in the orientation of the verses, which highlight a harmonious relationship between reason, the heart, and behaviour. Consequently, the objectives of Islamic education are integrative in nature, encompassing spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions (Cahyaningtyas, 2022).

Overall, the results confirm the unity of the educational message conveyed in Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman. Although the two chapters originate from different contextual backgrounds, together they form a more holistic framework for the objectives of Islamic education. Surah Al-'Alaq provides an epistemological foundation for education, emphasising the importance of reading, writing, and understanding knowledge as divine revelation (Peribadi, 2023). Conversely, Surah Luqman places greater emphasis on ethics and character formation, which are expected to be internalised by individuals from an early age (Zuroidah, 2023).

These two chapters complement one another in establishing a normative foundation for the formulation of contemporary Islamic educational objectives. By integrating cognitive and ethical dimensions, Islamic education can function not only to enhance intellectual intelligence but also to cultivate moral conduct and character in accordance with religious teachings (Kurniawan et al., 2021). Accordingly, this study makes a significant contribution by further exploring the educational values embedded in the Qur'an and demonstrating how these values may be applied within the context of modern education (Asroriah et al., 2023).

IMPLICATIONS

This study has both theoretical and practical implications for the development of Islamic education. Theoretically, the findings affirm that the objectives of Islamic

education should be understood through the integration of the epistemological dimension of Surah Al-'Alaq and the moral-ethical dimension of Surah Luqman. These findings enrich scholarly discourse by offering a more comprehensive conceptual framework for the orientation of Islamic education, which extends beyond a sole focus on cognitive aspects to include character formation and spirituality. Practically, this study provides direction for the development of Islamic education curricula that are more integrative in nature, balancing the enhancement of literacy, critical thinking skills, and the cultivation of moral conduct (akhlaq) and social ethics. Curricula and learning strategies may be designed to combine instructional and reflective methods, as exemplified in the two chapters examined. In this way, educators can design learning experiences that emphasise not only academic achievement but also the development of self-awareness, moral integrity, and social responsibility.

Furthermore, this study contributes to Islamic education policymakers. The holistic framework of educational objectives derived from the findings may serve as a foundation for the formulation of policies and educational programmes that are more responsive to the needs of modern society. The integration of Qur'anic values into educational policy holds the potential to shape a Muslim generation that is not only intellectually accomplished but also morally and spiritually mature.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman provide complementary foundations for the formulation of Islamic educational objectives. Surah Al-'Alaq emphasises the epistemological dimension, highlighting the importance of reading, understanding, and recognising God as the ultimate source of knowledge, while Surah Luqman foregrounds character formation through the cultivation of the values of tawhid, gratitude, proper conduct (adab), and moral responsibility. The integration of these two chapters yields a holistic conception of Islamic education, aimed at shaping individuals who are both knowledgeable and of noble character.

The findings further demonstrate that Islamic education cannot be separated from intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions. Education should be directed towards the integrated development of critical thinking abilities, emotional intelligence, and ethical awareness. Accordingly, the objectives of Islamic education extend beyond producing individuals who are academically competent to fostering human beings who are civilised, faithful, and capable of making positive contributions to society.

This study also underscores the urgency of developing Islamic education curricula and pedagogical approaches that are oriented towards the integration of knowledge and moral conduct. By adopting the values articulated in Surah Al-'Alaq and Surah Luqman, Islamic education can become more adaptive to the challenges of the modern era without losing its spiritual identity. Overall, this study provides a strong textual and conceptual foundation for the development of Islamic education that is more comprehensive, relevant, and applicable.

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