

Reconstruction of the Islamic Education Paradigm; Fazlur Rahman's Thought Inovation

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Abstract

Reconstructing the paradigm of Islamic education has become an urgent necessity in response to the dynamic development of knowledge and the challenges of modernization. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following the PRISMA guidelines. Data were collected from Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. The selection process included identification, screening, Eligibility assessment, and synthesis of relevant findings examines Fazlur Rahman's alternative ideas as an effort to renew Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman proposes three innovative main approaches: the Islamization of modern secular education as an effort to integrate Islamic values into the contemporary education system; the simplification of the traditional syllabus to align learning materials with current needs; and the integration of classical branches of knowledge with modern sciences to create a holistic and relevant curriculum. This study emphasizes that these three approaches not only have the potential to overcome the stagnation of Islamic education but also open space for educational transformation that can compete globally without losing its Islamic identity. The findings are expected to serve as a conceptual foundation for educators and policymakers in formulating progressive and adaptive strategies for renewing Islamic education.

Keyword; *Reconstruction, Islamic of Education Paradigm, Fazlur Rahman's Thought*

Abstrak

Rekonstruksi paradigma pendidikan Islam menjadi kebutuhan mendesak dalam menghadapi dinamika perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dan tantangan modernisasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis (Systematic Literature Review/SLR) dengan mengikuti pedoman PRISMA. Data dikumpulkan dari artikel jurnal terindeks Scopus yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2020 hingga 2025. Fazlur Rahman menawarkan tiga pendekatan utama yang inovatif, yaitu pengislaman pendidikan sekuler modern sebagai upaya integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam sistem pendidikan kontemporer, penyederhanaan silabus tradisional untuk menyesuaikan materi pembelajaran

dengan kebutuhan zaman, serta penggabungan cabang-cabang ilmu pengetahuan lama dengan ilmu pengetahuan modern guna menciptakan kurikulum yang holistik dan relevan. Kajian ini menegaskan bahwa ketiga pendekatan tersebut tidak hanya berpotensi mengatasi stagnasi pendidikan Islam, tetapi juga membuka ruang bagi transformasi pendidikan yang mampu bersaing secara global tanpa kehilangan identitas keislamannya. Temuan penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi pijakan konseptual bagi para pendidik dan pembuat kebijakan dalam merumuskan strategi pembaharuan pendidikan Islam yang progresif dan adaptif.

Kata Kunci: *Rekonstruksi, Paradigma Pendidikan Islam, dan Fazlur Rahman.*

A. Introduction

Islamic education is a fundamental aspect of Muslim community development, serving not only as a process of knowledge transfer but also as a means of shaping character, morals, and spirituality (Asror et al., 2023). It plays a crucial role in nurturing individuals who can contribute positively to society by internalizing ethical values alongside academic knowledge. As society progresses and faces new socio-cultural dynamics, the demands placed on Islamic education evolve as well (Novita & Bakar, 2021). The paradigm of Islamic education is confronted with multiple challenges that require thoughtful renewal and reconstruction to ensure it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of modern, diverse communities. (Mudiono & Mudzakkir, 2025) Traditionally, the Islamic education system has emphasized a textual and rote-learning approach, focusing primarily on memorizing religious texts and doctrines. While this method has preserved important knowledge across generations, it often struggles to address the complex realities of the contemporary world. Issues such as globalization have introduced a wider variety of cultural perspectives, technologies are rapidly reshaping economies and communication, and social changes are redefining values and expectations (Waroh et al., 2023). These factors create a pressing need for an Islamic education paradigm that is flexible, integrative, and forward-looking. (Maky & Khojir, 2021)

Reforming this paradigm involves incorporating contemporary insights while maintaining core Islamic principles. It calls for curricula that balance religious teachings with scientific inquiry and critical thinking (Abu Bakar, 2016). Educators are challenged to develop methodologies that go beyond memorization, fostering analytical skills, ethical reasoning, and spiritual growth simultaneously. This transformation aims to prepare Muslim learners not only to succeed academically but also to engage meaningfully with the broader global community while upholding their religious identity. Ultimately, the evolution of Islamic education must harmonize tradition and modernity to

address the multifaceted challenges of today's world effectively.(Le & Nguyen, 2024)

Entering the 18th century, the Islamic world faced intense pressure due to the widespread penetration of Western culture and thought, which compelled Muslims to realize their relative backwardness compared to Western advancements. This realization triggered various reform initiatives in the 20th century addressing nearly all aspects of life, including education. Fazlur Rahman highlighted that despite numerous reform efforts, Islamic education still faces critical challenges(Bakar, 2014). A key problem is that current educational goals often lack clear, positive, and achievable targets. Islamic education traditionally emphasizes the afterlife and tends to resist change, limiting its relevance to contemporary issues.(Zahra et al., 2024)

Islamic education also struggles to maintain the purity of its traditional moral values amid the pervasive influence and potential distortion from Western ideas through various academic disciplines.(Yarun et al., 2023) This challenge underlines the necessity for a comprehensive approach that enables Islamic education to adapt to modern realities without losing its identity. Fazlur Rahman's vision calls for reforming curricula to integrate general and religious knowledge, fostering critical thinking and creativity, and enhancing teacher capacity to meet modern educational demands. Such transformation aims to produce well-rounded individuals capable of engaging with the global community while upholding their Islamic identity.(Rahman, 2024)

Overall, Fazlur Rahman's critique and reform proposals underscore the importance of overcoming the stagnation in Islamic education by addressing its epistemological and methodological crises. His approach supports a progressive and adaptive Islamic education model that integrates moral education with modern scientific advancements, breaking down the traditional dichotomy and fostering a holistic educational system. This vision aligns with contemporary educational reforms that emphasize thematic, integrative, and student-centered learning approaches to prepare Muslims for the complexities of the modern world

In this context, Fazlur Rahman's thought emerges as an alternative idea that offers a new paradigm in Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman, a modern Islamic thinker known for his hermeneutic and reformist approach, emphasizes the importance of integrating reason and revelation, as well as the need for a contextual understanding of Islamic teachings(Bakar, 2023). He criticizes rigid and dogmatic approaches in Islamic education, which tend to place sacred texts as the sole source of truth without considering social context and the development of scientific knowledge. Therefore, Fazlur Rahman proposes a reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm that is more dynamic, inclusive, and humanistic.(Bakar, 2015)

The reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm according to Fazlur Rahman is not merely a change in teaching methods, but a fundamental transformation in the way education itself is perceived (Kholidin & Kodriyah, 2025). This new paradigm positions Islamic education as a process of intellectual and spiritual liberation that prioritizes critical thinking, social awareness, and the development of humanistic values.(Fitriani et al., 2025) Fazlur Rahman asserts that Islamic education must be able to build a balanced moral and intellectual consciousness, so that learners do not merely become memorizers of texts, but are also capable of understanding the meaning and relevance of Islamic teachings in real life.(Fitriani et al., 2025)

One important aspect of Fazlur Rahman's thought is his emphasis on the concept of *ijtihad* as a dynamic and contextual method of interpretation(Herwati, 2022). *Ijtihad* enables Muslims to interpret religious teachings in accordance with the changing times and diverse socio-cultural conditions. In Islamic education, this implies that the curriculum and teaching methods must be designed to accommodate change and innovation without abandoning the fundamental values of Islam.(Wardana & Maula, 2023) Thus, reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm according to Fazlur Rahman opens space for dialogue between tradition and modernity, between text and context, and between religion and science.

Fazlur Rahman advocates for *ijtihad* as a tool to bridge the gap between the immutable religious texts and the evolving contemporary world, ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant and adaptable. He stresses that education should not be confined to rigid, literal interpretations but should involve critical engagement with modern knowledge and realities.(Saihu, 2020) This approach also calls for curricular reforms that integrate religious and secular sciences, encouraging students to think critically and apply moral principles in varied contexts. By doing so, Islamic education can nurture individuals who are both spiritually grounded and intellectually equipped to face modern challenges.

His concept challenges Islamic educational institutions to move beyond defensive attitudes towards change and instead embrace innovation while safeguarding Islamic identity. The education system should foster not only religious knowledge but also creativity, critical thinking, and social responsibility(Herwati et al., 2023). This integrated and adaptive educational paradigm reflects Fazlur Rahman's vision of a continuous *ijtihad* that balances heritage with progress, faith with reason, and tradition with contextual realities.(Waroh et al., 2023) Overall, Fazlur Rahman's emphasis on *ijtihad* as a dynamic interpretative method highlights the necessity for Islamic education to evolve thoughtfully. Such evolution facilitates a meaningful dialogue between enduring Islamic principles and the demands of contemporary

society, ensuring education fulfills its role in the holistic development of Muslim individuals and communities.

Basically, there were three main methods of educational reform at that time: islamizing modern secular education, streamlining the traditional syllabus, and integrating old knowledge with modern science (Herwati, 2024). However, the idea of integration and merging of knowledge was difficult to find in learning practices, where old and modern sciences were generally placed side by side without true unification. This issue was exacerbated by limited book collections in libraries, resulting in suboptimal learning despite students having interest and talent, as well as a lack of creative and integrated professional teachers.

Fazlur Rahman emphasized these reform approaches but also highlighted challenges in their practical implementation, such as the gap between theory and practice and the need for systemic improvements in curriculum and teaching methods. He advocated for an education system that blends religious and contemporary knowledge meaningfully, supported by qualified educators and adequate resources to realize a holistic Islamic education. This comprehensive integration and improvement are crucial to overcoming stagnation and ensuring Islamic education remains relevant and effective in the modern world.(Zahra et al., 2024)

Seeing this condition, Rahman proposed several solutions. To understand how these solutions are applied, it is important to study Fazlur Rahman's ideas regarding the problems of modern Islamic education, including the background of his thoughts and the methods he offers to overcome current challenges in Islamic education(Marasabessy, 2025). The three reform approaches are: first, islamizing modern secular education by incorporating Islamic values into the existing. Western education system to shape an Islamic character and enable modern experts to work with an Islamic perspective; second, streamlining the traditional syllabus by removing unnecessary material and focusing on hadith, Arabic language, and Qur'anic exegesis; third, merging the branches of old and new knowledge by extending study time to align with modern curricula. In Indonesia, efforts to blend these approaches have begun, especially at the academic level, aiming to integrate general knowledge and religious knowledge.(Permata et al., 2025)

Fazlur Rahman emphasizes that these methods are not merely additive but require thoughtful integration that harmonizes faith and reason, preserving Islamic identity while embracing modern knowledge (Safari et al., 2025). This approach seeks to overcome the classical dichotomy between religious and secular sciences, enabling Islamic education to be dynamic, relevant, and competitive in the contemporary world. These reform strategies are crucial for addressing systemic weaknesses identified in Islamic education, such as curriculum rigidity and lack of qualified teachers and learning resources. Effectively

implementing these solutions can enhance learning outcomes and support the development of well-rounded, competent Muslim graduates.(Jannah, 2024)

B. Method

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method was employed to analyze the Reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm and the innovative thought of Fazlur Rahman. This research process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, which consists of four main stages: Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion, designed to ensure transparency, structure, and accountability. During the Identification and Screening stages, the study utilized nine keywords to search for articles indexed in Scopus, published between 2020 and 2025, yielding a total of 272 articles. Subsequently, through the application of strict inclusion and exclusion criteria including a focus on peer-reviewed journal articles, and topical relevance the number of literature items deemed eligible for the final analysis was reduced to 24 highly relevant articles.

C. Result and Discussion

1. The Scientific Background of Fazlur Rahman

Fazlur Rahman's scholarly genealogy illustrates a rich and complex intellectual journey, rooted in a strong family tradition of traditional Islamic education while also shaped by modern Western education. He was born on September 21, 1919, in the Hazara region, which at that time was part of the British colony and is now within Pakistan. He was born into a devout Hanafi family, known as the most rational Sunni school of thought. His father, Maulana Shihabuddin, was a prominent scholar who graduated from the prestigious Deoband Seminary and taught at renowned traditional madrasas in the Indian subcontinent. His father was not only a devout scholar but was also open to modern knowledge, a factor that greatly influenced Fazlur Rahman's worldview.(Rahman, 2024)

Since early childhood, Fazlur Rahman received an in-depth religious education from his father, which included memorizing the Qur'an, the study of hadith, jurisprudence (fiqh), dialectical theology (kalām), Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), logic, and philosophy. This strict and disciplined traditional education equipped him with a strong understanding of classical Islamic sciences. However, unlike many traditional scholars, Fazlur Rahman also demonstrated a critical and skeptical attitude towards much of the inherited knowledge, opening himself to more rational and scientific modern thought.(Rahman, 1990)

After completing his early education within his family, Fazlur Rahman continued his formal studies by earning a Master's degree in Arabic literature from Punjab University in 1942. He did not stop there; he went on to pursue doctoral studies and obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy from

the University of Oxford in 1951. At Oxford, Fazlur Rahman also studied various foreign languages such as English, Latin, Greek, Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and Urdu, which broadened his intellectual horizons and enabled him to read primary sources in multiple languages.(Aziz, 2019)

Fazlur Rahman's academic career spanned various international universities, including Durham University in England and the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Canada. In 1961, he returned to Pakistan and led the Institute of Islamic Research in Karachi, which aimed to develop Islamic thought relevant to the modern era. The Pakistani government also appointed him as a member of the Islamic Ideology Advisory Council, tasked with reviewing and designing contemporary Islamic laws in accordance with societal developments.

Fazlur Rahman's scientific thought represents a synthesis of tradition and modernity, rejecting the dichotomy between religious sciences and the general sciences. According to him, the fundamental problem of contemporary Islamic education is ideological namely, its inability to systematically and cohesively integrate religious knowledge with modern sciences (Fahmi, 2014). Therefore, he emphasizes the importance of an integrative paradigm capable of producing Muslim scholars who possess a holistic worldview and are able to adapt to the advancements of the times.

Fazlur Rahman is highly critical of Islamic educational methods that are trapped in conservatism and narrow textualism. He encourages Islamic education not to focus solely on memorizing classical texts, but also to open space for contextual understanding and the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings in accordance with contemporary needs. The Qur'anic interpretive method he developed emphasizes historical context and moral objectives, distancing itself from rigid literal interpretations.(Khairana et al., 2024)

As a scholar proficient in multiple languages and disciplines, Rahman sought to bridge the gap between classical Islamic tradition and modern Western thought, particularly in philosophy and the social sciences. He believed that this integration of knowledge is essential for creating an Islamic educational system that is dynamic, relevant, and capable of confronting the challenges of globalization and scientific advancement.(Harmathilda et al., 2024)

In the context of education, Fazlur Rahman formulated a curriculum framework that integrates Islamic values with modern sciences, emphasizing the development of good character and ethics as well as comprehensive intellectual growth. He viewed Islamic education as a transformative process that not only teaches religious knowledge but also equips students with the ability to think critically and analytically.(Suryadi, 2020)

Fazlur Rahman's intellectual genealogy also shows that the influence of his family, his rigorous traditional education, and his openness to modern knowledge created a solid foundation for his contributions to the reform of Islamic education and contemporary Islamic thought. Amid the challenges of modernity and secularization, his ideas remain relevant as an alternative educational paradigm that prioritizes the integration of knowledge and spirituality. (Hamsah & Nurchamidah, 2019)

The development of Fazlur Rahman's thought and works can be divided into three main phases: the formative period, the developmental period, and the maturity period. In the formative period, Rahman produced three significant intellectual works. The first was *Avicenna's Psychology*, which discussed Ibn Sina's ideas in the *al-Najat*. The second, *Avicenna's De Anima*, was an edition of the psychological section of *al-Shifa'*. The third, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy*, was an original work by Rahman that drew attention to the lack of interest among modern Muslim scholars in prophetic doctrine. (Umair & Said, 2023)

The second phase, the developmental period, was marked by significant changes in his thinking. Unlike the initial phase, Rahman began to engage intensively in efforts to reinterpret Islam in response to the challenges and needs of contemporary Muslim society, particularly in Pakistan. This shift was influenced by sharp controversies among modernist, traditionalist, and fundamentalist groups in Pakistan, each competing to define the country's Islamic identity. Additionally, Rahman's experiences in the West and his positions as Director of the Institute of Islamic Research and a member of the Islamic Ideology Council in Pakistan provided him with a deep perspective on the challenges of modern Islam.

The maturity period began when Rahman moved to Chicago in 1970, where his works encompassed nearly all aspects of normative and historical Islamic studies. During this period, he completed several major books, such as *Philosophy of Mulla Sadra Shirazi*, an in-depth study of the great Islamic philosopher Mulla Sadra, in which Rahman explored the complexity and originality of Mulla Sadra's philosophy despite the contradictions in his attempt to reconcile Aristotelian tradition with Ibn Arabi's thought. Another work, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, discusses eight central themes of the Qur'an, ranging from the concepts of God, humanity, and the universe to prophethood, revelation, and Muslim society. Another significant work is *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, a critical study based on research conducted at the University of Chicago and funded by the Ford Foundation, which examines the intellectual and educational history of Islam from the classical period to the present. (Muttaqin, 2013)

These three periods illustrate the intellectual evolution of Fazlur Rahman, from historical-philosophical studies to deep normative

interpretation, ultimately becoming a neo-modernist figure vocal in renewing Islamic thought to make it relevant to the challenges of modernity. Through his works, Rahman made significant contributions to developing new methodologies for Islamic interpretation that balance tradition with contemporary context, as well as establishing an integrative and progressive paradigm for Islamic education.

Thus, Fazlur Rahman was not only a traditional Islamic scholar who inherited religious knowledge from his family, but also a modern intellectual who brought the Islamic scholarly tradition into the realm of global dialogue and progressive reform. This intellectual genealogy explains how traditional roots and modern branches merged in his works and ideas, which have had a wide-ranging influence in the modern Islamic world.

Thoughts and Renewal in Contemporary Islamic Education

Fazlur Rahman, a Pakistani Muslim intellectual widely recognized among Western and Eastern scholars for his progressive ideas, delivered sharp criticism of Islamic education. In his view, the strategy of Islamic education has not been genuinely directed toward constructive goals but has tended to be defensive, merely attempting to protect the mindset of Muslims from the destructive influence of Western ideas that enter through various scientific disciplines, particularly those that have the potential to undermine Islamic moral standards.

Upon closer examination, Rahman's criticism of Islamic education indicates that the educational sphere is experiencing a serious crisis caused by a paradigmatic error in the structure of educational sciences. This paradigmatic mistake has given rise to both philosophical and empirical biases within Islamic education. This fundamental error is reflected in the perspective that places human beings merely as objects of education and views them in a mechanistic way, whereas humans should be positioned as dynamic subjects of education.

This situation leads to the assumption that education only needs to address the cognitive or intellectual domain, without giving sufficient attention to the moral dimension. Moreover, in the tradition of Western philosophy, spirituality is often reduced to mere rationality or intellectuality, so that education is identified solely with the development of reason or intellect. As a result, education frequently produces individuals who are intellectually intelligent but barren of moral values.

Currently, Islamic education faces challenges that are far more complex than those during the early spread of Islam. These challenges arise from the diversity of human aspirations and ideals, which are increasingly varied and often hold dual values, as well as from the growing complexity of life demands. In addition, there is a psychological burden felt by Muslims

in confronting Western influences, which throughout history have been seen as rivals rather than enemies (Dinata et al., 2023). These difficulties are further exacerbated by the psychological position of Muslims today, who find themselves on the losing side, in contrast to the classical Muslim community, which was then dominant and powerful.

According to Syed Ali Ashraf, this phenomenon has encouraged the rise of pressure groups that quickly seized power from those more inclined toward religious thought. As a result, clear tensions and conflicts emerged between secular groups and religious groups. This confrontation has appeared openly in several countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia. (Hamsah & Nurchamidah, 2019)

The current phenomenon has caused Islamic education to often be misdirected, failing to pursue constructive and progressive goals. Islamic education tends to focus solely on the afterlife and adopts a defensive stance. As noted by Fazlur Rahman and cited by Nurcholish Majid, the prevailing strategy of Islamic education today is primarily aimed at protecting the minds of Muslims from Western ideas considered potentially harmful, especially those that could undermine Islamic moral standards (Denny, 1991). This has resulted in Islamic education being more reactive than proactive in responding to the developments of the modern era.

In such a state of spiritual anxiety, Islamic education worldwide tends to adopt a mechanistic and rigid approach. This has given rise to groups that reject modernity and anything associated with the West, with some even prohibiting the mastery of foreign knowledge and technology. If this situation continues, it has the potential to cause overall decline among Muslims (Shalehah et al., 2025). Therefore, Fazlur Rahman proposes that the goals of Islamic education, which currently focus on the afterlife and adopt a defensive stance, must be urgently reformed. Islamic education should be designed to develop human potential holistically, integrating both worldly life and the afterlife based on the teachings of the Qur'an.

Rahman emphasizes that the purpose of education according to the Qur'an is to develop the core potential of human beings so that the knowledge acquired can integrate with an individual's creative personality. In other words, Islamic education is not only about textual knowledge but must also cultivate creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills in students so that they can face the challenges of modern life. Such a transformation is crucial for maintaining the relevance of Islamic education amid the rapid social, cultural, and technological changes of today. (Sulistiyani et al., 2024)

In addition, Islamic education faces major challenges in the modern era, marked by globalization, advances in information technology, shifts in social values, identity crises, and declining morality. These challenges require Islamic educational institutions to adapt quickly and innovatively,

integrating Islamic values with advancements in science and technology, while also developing students' character to be resilient and competitive (Yarun et al., 2023). Appropriate strategies include strengthening curricula to be responsive to contemporary developments, improving the quality of human resources among educators with Islamic character, and utilizing technology as an effective and efficient educational tool.

By adopting an educational paradigm that balances worldly life and the hereafter, and by integrating Islamic values with advancements in technology and knowledge, Islamic education can become a force capable of preparing future generations who are not only spiritually strong but also competent in facing global challenges. This approach requires a shift in paradigm from defensive education to positive, progressive education that is oriented toward the holistic development of human beings in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an. (Novita & Bakar, 2021)

Second, the psychological burden faced by Muslims in confronting the West must be addressed immediately. Fazlur Rahman suggests conducting an in-depth, comprehensive, and systematic study of Islam that examines the development of various Islamic disciplines—such as theology, law, ethics, hadith, social sciences, and philosophy—using the Qur'an as the primary standard (Yarun et al., 2023). According to Rahman, the historical development of Islamic disciplines has provided continuity in the intellectual and spiritual growth of Muslim societies. With this approach, it is hoped that the psychological burden experienced by Muslims due to tensions with Western civilization can be minimized. This critical and historical study is essential for reaffirming the identity of Islamic scholarship while building the community's confidence in facing global challenges, enabling Muslims to stand firmly on an epistemological foundation without being trapped in fear or feelings of inferiority toward Western influence. This approach is key to revitalizing modern Islamic thought. (Dinata et al., 2023)

The negative attitude of Muslims toward knowledge needs to be changed immediately. Fazlur Rahman argues that knowledge itself is not wrong; what is wrong is the way it is used. For example, the knowledge of the atom was discovered by Western scientists, but before its nuclear energy was utilized for peaceful purposes such as electricity generation, it was instead used to create weapons of mass destruction like the atomic bomb. Even today, the production and race for such weapons continue, while scientists search for ways to control them. Rahman also emphasizes that in the Qur'an, the term *al-'ilm* (knowledge) encompasses all types of knowledge. For instance, the knowledge taught to Prophet David about making armor is also considered knowledge. Even magic (*sihr*), although considered bad in practice, is categorized as knowledge because it provides certain insights, even though it is often misused for negative purposes, such

as separating married couples. Thus, knowledge can be neutral and must be understood in the context of how its ethics and morals are applied in human life. (Bakar, 2025)

The issue of dualism or division in the education system has become a significant problem in almost all Muslim-majority countries. According to Syed Ali Ashraf, this dualism is not only about differences in the external structure of education, but also concerns fundamental differences in the approach to educational goals. Traditional Islamic education is based on values derived from the Qur'an, with its primary aim being the creation of individuals who are obedient to God and strive to implement His commands as taught in the holy book. In the traditional view, all phenomena in nature and life are understood as part of God's power and must be respected (Abu Bakar, 2024).

In contrast, the modern education system, although not explicitly denying the existence of God, tends not to involve God in its explanations of the origins of the universe or the phenomena encountered in daily human life. Modern education emphasizes a scientific and empirical approach that is detached from religious context. These differences in goals and understanding create tension and division within the education systems of Muslim countries, resulting in a misalignment between religious values and modern scientific knowledge. Therefore, the need to integrate both systems and eliminate this dichotomy becomes crucial to building a more holistic and comprehensive education system that can respond to contemporary challenges without neglecting Islamic values. (Fathonah, 2018)

In addressing the issue of the dichotomy in Islamic education systems, Fazlur Rahman proposed a solution by emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive and organized integration between religious knowledge and general knowledge. According to him, knowledge is inherently unified and cannot be separated into two independent parts. Therefore, Islamic curricula and syllabi should include general sciences such as social sciences, natural sciences, and history alongside religious sciences such as fiqh, kalam, tafsir, and hadith (Bakar et al., 2024). This integrative approach aims to eliminate the division between religious and worldly knowledge, which has long been an obstacle in the Islamic education systems of many Muslim countries. In this way, Islamic education can produce graduates who not only have a deep understanding of religious teachings but also possess broad knowledge of the contemporary world. This is highly relevant in today's modern era, where the development of science and technology is progressing rapidly. Integration is not merely about adding more material but about building a holistic and balanced education system grounded in Islamic values while remaining responsive to the needs of the modern world. This concept supports the formation of

individuals who are not only faithful but also possess complete intellectual capabilities to actively contribute to global society

During the Islamic Golden Age, the integration of knowledge advocated by Fazlur Rahman was once implemented comprehensively and in a balanced manner. Worldly sciences aimed at achieving material well-being and religious sciences supporting happiness in the hereafter were studied simultaneously (Sya'bani et al., 2020). This integralistic approach viewed the functional relationship between general and religious knowledge as complementary, making them inseparable. This model successfully produced outstanding scholars with broad and creative thinking, such as Ibn Sina, who mastered psychology, medicine, and religious sciences, and Ibn Rushd, who excelled in Islamic law, mathematics, physics, astronomy, logic, and philosophy.

Hasan Langgulang explains that the balance between general and religious knowledge in the Islamic education curriculum led to the development of specialized fields of study according to historical periods and levels of education. At that time, educational institutions such as mosques and *houses of wisdom* (universities) became centers for the development of knowledge with a comprehensive and in-depth scope (Umair & Said, 2023). This educational model reflects a holistic learning tradition that prioritized not only spiritual aspects but also the intellectual and social dimensions of the Muslim community as a whole.

This approach is relevant as a reference for the reform of contemporary Islamic education, enabling it to respond to the challenges of the times and strengthen human resources comprehensively. By adopting this integrative approach, Islamic education can cultivate individuals who are both faithful and competent in various fields of knowledge, while also capable of making positive contributions to modern society. (Suryadi, 2020)

According to Fazlur Rahman, knowledge is essentially a unified whole that originates from Allah SWT, as explained in the Qur'an. He acknowledges that all knowledge comes from Allah, some of which is revealed directly to chosen individuals through the Qur'anic verses (*ayat-ayat Qur'aniyah*), while other knowledge is acquired by humans through exploration and understanding of the universe (*ayat-ayat Kauniyah*) using the senses, reason, and heart. Knowledge that is revealed possesses absolute and definitive truth because it comes directly from the divine source, whereas knowledge acquired through human observation and experience does not have absolute truth; it is relative and can change according to context and scientific developments (Maky & Khojir, 2021).

From this perspective, Rahman emphasizes the importance of balancing revealed knowledge and natural knowledge in Islamic education to achieve a comprehensive understanding of truth. He also asserts that

knowledge does not belong to any particular culture or religion, but is universal and must be used responsibly according to Islamic moral principles so that its benefits can be felt by all humanity. This view teaches that modern knowledge should not be rejected but integrated with Islamic values and perspectives based on the Qur'an as the primary source of truth.(Suryadi, 2020)

Modern Islamic Education Trough Double Movement According to Fazlur Rahman

In discussions about Islamic education, the main focus remains on the role of students as the primary subjects. However, the world of Islamic education in many Muslim countries still faces a major challenge in the form of a dichotomy between religious sciences and general sciences (Farida, 2024). This separation has not been successfully addressed in various Islamic educational institutions, resulting in a negative impact on the intellectual quality of students (Badriyah & Suwandi, 2024). This deficiency has given rise to a phenomenon of divided personalities, where an individual may be very devout in worship and observance of religious teachings, yet at the same time engage in negative behaviors such as corruption, oppression, or other unethical actions. This condition highlights an imbalance between spirituality and the social-life aspects that should ideally be integrated.

Ironically, this dichotomy in the education system has also resulted in a lack of graduates who truly possess a deep spiritual and intellectual commitment to Islamic teachings. Many of them only function as technical managers of religious matters without fully understanding or internalizing the essence of the faith. This limits their ability to address the challenges of the times in a comprehensive and innovative manner.

This fundamental problem calls for a reform of the education system that organically and comprehensively integrates religious knowledge and general knowledge. Fazlur Rahman's thought is highly relevant here, as he advocates for eliminating the dichotomy and reorganizing the Islamic education curriculum to cultivate well-rounded Muslim individuals those who are knowledgeable, critical, and spiritually grounded. In this way, Islamic education can equip students not only with religious knowledge in a textual sense but also with sufficient mastery of worldly knowledge, enabling them to play an active and responsible role in society. In conclusion, the success of Islamic education largely depends on how well the division of knowledge is addressed and how a balanced modern curriculum is developed. The students produced will become individuals who are harmoniously balanced between intellect and spirituality, capable of facing the complexities of the world with integrity and strong Islamic values.(Muttaqin, 2013)

According to Fazlur Rahman, several important efforts must be undertaken to address the current issues in Islamic education. One of the main steps is to teach the Qur'an to students using methods that allow the Qur'an to serve not only as a source of moral inspiration but also as the primary reference for resolving various complex problems in daily life. Rahman emphasizes the importance of using a systematic approach in understanding and interpreting the Qur'an so that the teachings of the holy book can be effectively applied in a modern context.(Aziz, 2019)

Rahman proposes an interpretive method known as the "double movement," which consists of two hermeneutical steps. The first step requires understanding the historical and social context at the time the Qur'an was revealed. This aims to capture the original intent of the revelation according to the situation and conditions of society at that time, thereby avoiding misinterpretations that are overly textual and rigid. This process allows for a deep understanding of the verses in accordance with their socio-historical background.(Rahman, 2024)

The second step is to apply that understanding to contemporary situations and realities. Rahman believes that the fundamental values contained in the Qur'an are universal and can be actualized in various social, cultural, and political contexts today. In this way, Islamic education can address contemporary challenges in a relevant and responsive manner without losing its spiritual and moral foundations.(Wahdah, 2021) The concept of the double movement helps avoid stagnant interpretations that focus solely on the literal aspects of the text, which are incapable of addressing the needs of the times. Through this approach, students do not merely memorize and recite texts, but are trained to understand, analyze, and apply Islamic values critically and creatively in modern life. Rahman's approach aims to cultivate a generation of Muslims who are not only ritually observant but also competent and capable(Khairana et al., 2024)

According to Fazlur Rahman, several important steps need to be taken to address the current challenges in Islamic education. The first step is to teach the Qur'an to students using methods that allow the holy book to serve not only as a source of moral inspiration but also as the primary reference for solving increasingly complex everyday problems. Rahman introduced a systematic method for understanding and interpreting the Qur'an known as the "double movement."(Wardana & Maula, 2023)

This method consists of two main movements. The first movement is understanding the historical and social context in which the Qur'an was revealed, with the aim of grasping the original intent of the revelation in the situation and conditions of society at that time. At this stage, Rahman systematically combines the juridical perspectives of Malik and Shatibi, emphasizing the importance of viewing the Qur'an as a coherent and

cohesive teaching, rather than merely a collection of separate texts.(Sumantri, 2013)

The second movement is the application of the values and fundamental principles contained in the revelation to contemporary social, cultural, and political contexts. In this way, the teachings of the Qur'an are universal and can remain relevant across different eras and conditions. This approach allows Islamic education not only to preserve temporal texts but also to meet the needs of the community in the modern era in an adaptive and progressive manner.

Rahman also observed that finding educators capable of applying this method in current Islamic educational institutions is very challenging. The lack of professional teachers who are creative, integrated, and able to interpret classical texts in contemporary language constitutes a major obstacle. This has resulted in stagnation in Islamic education and a lack of innovation in developing education that responds to the complexities of the modern world.(Umair & Said, 2023)

Thus, the double movement concept introduced by Rahman underscores the importance of a dual hermeneutical approach as the foundation for reforming Islamic education, so that the teachings and values of the Qur'an can remain vibrant and effectively address contemporary life challenges in a holistic and dynamic manner. Implementing this concept requires curriculum reform, teacher training, and a deep understanding of the integration of Qur'anic values with modern knowledge, in order to achieve advanced and relevant Islamic education.(Zuraya, 2013)

Fazlur Rahman put forward several important ideas to address the shortage of qualified educators in Islamic education. First, he emphasized the importance of recruiting and preparing students who not only possess exceptional talent and abilities but also have a strong commitment to Islam. Students with such character and commitment should be nurtured seriously and provided with adequate incentives to support the development of their intellectual careers (Afandi & Cahyadi, 2025). According to Rahman, without these efforts, it is impossible to produce high-quality and professional educators in the field of Islamic education. This is because, at present, most students entering religious education are typically those who have failed to pursue careers in other fields considered more profitable. Rahman viewed this issue as a major challenge faced by almost all Muslim countries. Therefore, the development of qualified educators must become a top priority in the reform of Islamic education, so that the educational process can be effective and produce a generation that not only masters religious knowledge textually but is also able to integrate religious values with modern knowledge. This approach is expected to address the fragmentation in education and cultivate teachers who are creative and

open-minded, capable of transferring Islamic knowledge and values into the context of modern life.(Marasabessy, 2025)

Second, Rahman proposed a second step in addressing the challenges of Islamic education, which is to appoint graduates of madrasahs who possess relatively good intelligence, as well as employ modern scholars who have earned doctoral degrees from Western universities. These scholars, who currently hold positions in higher academic institutions, can be appointed as professors in fields such as Arabic, Persian, and Islamic history. In this way, they can bring a broader and deeper perspective to the development of Islamic studies. This approach not only relies on traditional graduates but also utilizes modern academic knowledge and methodology, which can enhance the Islamic education system. It is expected to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity and strengthen the quality of education through comprehensive knowledge that is relevant to contemporary needs.

Third, in addressing the shortage of qualified educators, Rahman proposed several innovative strategies aimed at systematically overcoming these obstacles. First, he emphasized the importance of recruiting and preparing students who have the best potential and talent, as well as demonstrating a strong commitment to Islam. These selected students should receive special guidance and adequate incentives to ensure they are motivated and able to develop optimally, both academically and spiritually (Jamilah & Missouri, 2025). This effort is crucial because the lack of qualified human resources, especially in Islamic educational institutions, is often a key factor in the failure to produce professional and creative educators.

According to Rahman, if these strategic steps are not promptly implemented, the presence of qualified educators will remain difficult to achieve, resulting in low-quality teaching and minimal innovation in the Islamic education system. Beyond that, another major challenge is the high number of graduates who lack competence and commitment to the sustainable development of Islamic education (Umam, 2020). He argued that the success of Islamic education largely depends on the institution's commitment to rigorous selection and intensive training of talented and high-integrity prospective educators. Through this approach, it is hoped that a generation of educators will emerge who not only master religious knowledge textually but also possess pedagogical and innovative skills, enabling them to embrace a better and more relevant future for Islamic education.

The development of educators' competencies must be accompanied by reforms in the curriculum and teaching methods that can integrate Islamic knowledge and modern sciences in a balanced and harmonious

manner, thereby creating an inspiring learning environment capable of producing graduates who are competent and morally upright (Le & Nguyen, 2024). This overall strategy represents a systematic and integral effort to build professional, innovative educators who can respond to contemporary challenges and advance Islamic education sustainably.

Fourth, Rahman proposed that some madrasah graduates who possess English language skills should receive further training in modern research techniques to enhance their competencies. At the same time, he also encouraged university graduates, particularly those from fields such as philosophy and social sciences, to learn Arabic and deepen their knowledge of classical Islamic disciplines like Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence (Rahman, 2024). This approach reflects Rahman's desire to provide a comprehensive and integrated education to both groups so that they can complement each other.

Through this effort, Rahman aimed to develop educators who are creative, skilled, and strongly committed to Islamic teachings. Training madrasah graduates in contemporary research methods would equip them with deeper and more relevant scientific understanding to meet the challenges of the modern era. Meanwhile, enriching university graduates with Arabic language proficiency and classical Islamic knowledge would strengthen their spiritual and intellectual foundations (Asror et al., 2023). The integration of these two groups would create a generation of educators capable not only of delivering religious teachings deeply but also of bridging the gap between Islamic tradition and modern knowledge.

Thus, this idea is part of Rahman's strategy to advance Islamic education that is more adaptive and responsive to global needs as well as the development of knowledge. This integrated approach is expected to produce educators who are more professional and capable of innovating in developing Islamic education that aligns with contemporary contexts, while simultaneously preserving Islamic values.

Fifth, Rahman emphasizes the importance of enhancing educators' creativity in producing innovative Islamic works with clear objectives. These works should not be limited to writings on history, philosophy, or the arts but must be directed back to Islamic thought as their central focus (El Widad & Abu Bakar, 2021). He believes that educators should not only contribute academically but also actively engage in deep and serious research in the field of Islamic studies. It is essential for educators to publish their research as a tangible contribution to the development of knowledge and religious understanding. Rahman also argues that proper recognition and incentives, such as salary increases, should be provided to educators who produce high-quality works. Such rewards would motivate educators to continue creating and developing research that enriches the Islamic intellectual

tradition. This approach aims to cultivate a productive, creative academic culture oriented toward the advancement of Islamic education.

Teachers' creativity in this area not only produces high-quality intellectual works but also adds value to lessons and teaching methods. Educators who are active in research and scholarly writing can create more dynamic and inspiring learning experiences, thereby enhancing both the quality of education and students' character. Therefore, the development and strengthening of a research culture, as well as the production of scholarly works, must become an integral part of an educator's duties in Islamic educational institutions, ensuring the continuity and renewal of an educational system capable of responding to the challenges of the modern era.

D. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the reconstruction of Islamic education according to Fazlur Rahman faces several major challenges. As solutions, Rahman proposes three key efforts: orienting the goals of Islamic education toward a balance between worldly life and the hereafter based on the Qur'an; eliminating the psychological burden experienced by Muslims in facing the West; and removing negative attitudes toward knowledge. The dichotomy in the education system, which results in low-quality students and the emergence of fragmented individuals, must also be addressed through four measures: first, teaching the Qur'an and employing systematic methods of interpretation so that the Qur'an becomes the primary source for solving everyday problems; second, teaching Islamic disciplines in a historical, critical, and comprehensive manner to integrate these sciences into a coherent Islamic framework; third, intensifying mastery of foreign languages such as Arabic and English; and fourth, fostering an attitude of tolerance toward differing opinions. These efforts are crucial to creating an Islamic education system that is harmonious, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of the times.

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