

Intellectual Islamic Education in Perspective: A Philosophical Analysis of Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi's Thought

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ABSTRACT

*Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi is recognized as a top-tier international scholar whose intellectual spectrum is both comprehensive and original. One of his notable contributions worthy of scholarly examination is his concept of Islamic education viewed through the lens of educational philosophy. This study aims to analyze Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education and its contextualization within the perspective of educational philosophy. The research is categorized as library research with a non-interactive qualitative approach (a figure study). It focuses on Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education from the perspective of philosophy. The study employs philosophical theories—ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Data were collected using documentation techniques. The primary source of data is the textual documents written by Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi, particularly his work *Al-Rasul wa al-'Ilm*, which discusses Islamic education. The study applies a descriptive-analytical method, including semantic and synthetic analysis. The research finds that the contextualization of Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education aligns with the current context of (Islamic) educational thought. Ontologically, Islamic education is not based on absurd or doctrinal ideas but is grounded in the rational teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Epistemologically, it is developed through scientific methods rather than unverifiable dogmas. Axiologically, Sheikh Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education serves as a problem solver in addressing issues within Islamic education by introducing the idea of Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah al-Fikriyah (intellectual Islamic education).*

Keywords: Islamic Education, Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi, Contextualization, Philosophy of Education

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic education is confronted by multidimensional challenges that cannot be adequately addressed through normative religious instruction alone. One of these challenges is the persistence of radical and exclusivist religious orientations among young people. Sirry's recent investigation of Indonesian secondary schools and universities demonstrates that educational environments can become important sites for the formation and transmission of religious intolerance and radical attitudes when religious learning does not sufficiently promote critical inquiry, openness, and constructive engagement with diversity.¹ This condition requires Islamic education to move beyond doctrinal transmission by strengthening moderation, intellectual openness, and learners' capacity to engage critically with different religious and social perspectives.

Islamic education is also experiencing technological disruption that has transformed the production, distribution, and acquisition of knowledge. Digital platforms and artificial intelligence have expanded access to educational resources and created new possibilities for personalized and collaborative learning. Nevertheless, the educational benefits of technology are neither automatic nor neutral. The 2023 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes that technology can improve access, inclusion, and educational quality, but it is inappropriate or unregulated use can also intensify inequality, weaken human interaction, expose learners to unreliable information, and subordinate educational interests to commercial and technological imperatives.² Consequently, Islamic education needs a philosophical and ethical framework that enables learners to use technology critically without losing the human, spiritual, and moral purposes of education.

Technological disruption is closely connected to the emergence of a post-truth information environment in which objective evidence frequently competes with emotional appeals, personal beliefs, group identities, and algorithmically amplified misinformation. Chinn, Barzilai, and Duncan argue that education in a post-truth world must strengthen learners' epistemic agency—that is, their ability to evaluate sources, assess evidence, justify knowledge claims, and participate responsibly in the construction of knowledge.³ Research on digital misinformation further demonstrates that individuals require specific cognitive and digital competencies to recognize unreliable information and resist manipulation in online environments. For Islamic education, this challenge is particularly significant because religious narratives circulated through digital media may be accepted on the basis of authority, popularity, or emotional resonance without adequate textual, contextual, and scientific verification.

Another critical concern is the continuing weakness of scientific literacy. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 show that Indonesian students

¹ Mun'im Sirry, *Youth, Education, and Islamic Radicalism: Religious Intolerance in Contemporary Indonesia*. (University of Notre Dame Press., 2024), p. 67.

² Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education—A Tool on Whose Terms?* (UNESCO publishing, 2023), doi:<https://doi.org/10.54676/UZQV8501>.

³ Clark A. Chinn, Sarit Barzilai, and Ravit Golan Duncan, 'Education for a "Post-Truth" World: New Directions for Research and Practice', *Educational Researcher*, 50.1 (2021), pp. 51–60, doi:<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20940683>.

obtained an average science score of 383, substantially below the OECD average. The results also indicate that only a limited proportion of Indonesian learners reached the baseline level of scientific proficiency required to identify scientific explanations, interpret basic data, and determine whether conclusions are supported by available evidence.⁴ Although PISA does not specifically assess students in Islamic educational institutions, these national findings provide an important indication of the broader difficulties faced by Indonesian education in developing evidence-based reasoning and scientific inquiry.

Taken together, radical and exclusivist religious orientations, technological disruption, post-truth epistemic conditions, and weak scientific literacy reveal a fundamental philosophical problem in contemporary Islamic education: how should knowledge, truth, humanity, and educational values be understood and integrated within an Islamic worldview? Addressing this problem requires an educational philosophy that neither isolates religious knowledge from rational and scientific inquiry nor accepts modern science and technology without ethical and theological consideration. Therefore, reconstructing an Islamic educational philosophy with clear ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations has become increasingly important.

Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi (1926–2022) is widely recognized as a modern Muslim scholar of international stature. He can be categorized as an independent Muslim intellectual whose thoughts were not co-opted by any particular Islamic school of thought. However, Qaradhawi never declared himself as a scholar free from any madhhab (Islamic school of jurisprudence). Some of the Islamic intellectuals who influenced his thinking include Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, Sheikh al-Bakhi al-Khauili, Muhammad Abdullah Darraz, and Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut. Meanwhile, one of the scholars who most profoundly shaped his Islamic thought was Sheikh Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the transnational Islamic movement *Ikhwanul Muslimun*, established in Egypt on March 22, 1928.⁵

In addition to Al-Banna, another scholar who influenced his thinking was Sheikh Al-Battah, a graduate of Al-Azhar University, Egypt. Al-Battah was a fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) scholar who first introduced Qaradhawi to fiqh, especially the Maliki school. Al-Battah also played a significant role in encouraging Qaradhawi to pursue his studies at Al-Azhar University. From Al-Battah, Qaradhawi learned the communal way of life, especially in Islamic missionary activities (da'wah).⁶

Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi was a highly prolific scholar. He expressed his thoughts not only through books but also through articles published in journals and magazines, papers presented in seminars, and oral lectures delivered regularly. His scholarly works span various fields of Islamic studies, totaling in the hundreds.⁷ Nevertheless, the significance of Qaradhawi's scholarship should not be determined merely by his intellectual reputation or the number of his publications.

⁴ OECD, *PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education* (OECD Publishing, 2023), doi:<https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en>.

⁵ Adik Hermawan, 'I'jaz Al-Quran Dalam Pemikiran Yusuf Al-Qardhawi', *Jurnal Madaniyah*, 2.11 (2016), pp. 201–9 (p. 207).

⁶ M Khalilurrahman, 'Guru Umat Islam Pada Masanya', *Jurisdictie: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syariah*, 1.2 (2010), pp. 81–85 (p. 82).

⁷ Panji Adam, 'Pemikiran Ekonomi Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi', *Islamic Banking: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pengembangan Perbankan Syariah*, 6.1 (2020), pp. 81–100 (p. 86).

His ideas need to be critically examined in relation to contemporary educational problems, including the fragmentation of religious and scientific knowledge, the tension between textual authority and rational inquiry, and the need for an ethically grounded response to technological development.

From this perspective, Qaradhawi's educational thought is relevant not simply because he was an influential Muslim scholar but because his works provide a framework for examining the relationship among revelation, reason, empirical observation, knowledge, and moral responsibility. Such a framework may offer a philosophical basis for Islamic education in responding to radical and exclusivist religious orientations, technological disruption, post-truth culture, and weak scientific literacy. However, its contemporary relevance cannot be assumed normatively; it must be examined systematically and critically through the fundamental dimensions of educational philosophy.

According to the researcher, Qaradhawi's thought is particularly intriguing when examined from the perspective of educational philosophy. History has recorded his name in golden ink as a scholar whose ideas are essential for the development of Islamic thought and culture. However, most Muslims have yet to fully grasp his ideas in the realm of Islamic education, even though he presented a concept of Islamic education in his scholarly works that the researcher finds to be both authoritative and original. These works become increasingly important when studied in depth and contextualized in contemporary life.

Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education can be explored through his book *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm*, which discusses several important educational themes such as the position of knowledge and scholars according to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Prophet and experimentation, the nature of knowledge and scholars, learning and its ethics, and the foundational framework of teaching methods.⁸ Rather than approaching this work solely as a collection of religious teachings, the present study treats *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm* as a philosophical text whose educational propositions can be reconstructed through ontological, epistemological, and axiological analysis.

Ontologically, the analysis concerns Qaradhawi's understanding of human beings, knowledge, reality, and the ultimate purpose of education. Epistemologically, it examines the relationship among revelation, reason, experience, observation, and experimentation as sources and methods of knowledge. Axiologically, it investigates the values, ethical orientations, and educational purposes that should guide the acquisition, development, and application of knowledge.

This research applies philosophical theories of education, including ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations. Philosophy means "love of wisdom".⁹ Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1977) stated that education is an effort to cultivate character, which includes inner strength, intellect, and physical abilities.¹⁰ Philosophy of education attempts to answer

⁸ Syaikh Yusuf Qaradhawi, *Rasulullah & Science: Ilmu, Belajar, & Pengajaran Dari Sudut Pandang Rasulullah (As Sunnah)*, Trans. Amir Hamzah Fachrudin, Maburur Buang Tarmudzi, and Zainal Arif Fachrudin R.M. (Firdaus Pressindo, 2015).

⁹ Poedjawijatna, *Pembimbing Ke Arah Alam Filsafat* (Pustaka Pelajar, 1980), p. 1.

¹⁰ Ki Hadjar Dewantara, *Hal Pendidikan*, in *Karya Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Bagian Pertama Pendidikan* (Majelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa, 1977), p. 14.

fundamental philosophical questions related to education.¹¹

To critically determine the philosophical position of Qaradhawi's educational thought, this study employs selected modern Western educational philosophies as comparative analytical perspectives rather than merely presenting them as isolated theoretical definitions. The idealist philosophy of education views reality as consisting of ideas, thoughts, minds, or souls rather than material things and forces.¹² In education, learners should be given maximal responses as these responses will not vanish entirely.¹³ Realist philosophy sees the main goal of education as preparing individuals for both worldly life and the hereafter by encouraging intellectual balance—not merely adapting to physical or social environments.¹⁴

Existentialist philosophy emphasizes that individuals express their existence with certain sincerity. Educators must provide their students with freedom and experiences that help them discover life's meaning.¹⁵ Meanwhile, progressivism holds that education should not merely transmit knowledge for passive acceptance, but rather stimulate students' thinking through active engagement.¹⁶ Reconstructionism in education believes that education is responsible for creating an ideal social order, and lessons should reflect societal culture.¹⁷

The inclusion of idealism, realism, existentialism, progressivism, and reconstructionism enables this study to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and possible synthesis between modern Western educational philosophies and Qaradhawi's Islamic educational thought. Rather than forcing Qaradhawi's ideas into a particular Western philosophical category, these perspectives are used as comparative lenses for examining how his thought conceptualizes reality and humanity, validates knowledge, and directs education toward particular moral and social purposes.

All human knowledge can be examined through three interrelated philosophical foundations: ontology, epistemology, and axiology.¹⁸ Ontology investigates the nature of being and reality, while epistemology concerns the sources, limits, validity, and methods of acquiring knowledge.¹⁹ Epistemology also connects philosophical assumptions with educational theory and practice.²⁰ Axiology is the branch of philosophy concerned with values, including the ethical purposes and consequences of knowledge.²¹ These three foundations provide the principal analytical framework for mapping Qaradhawi's ideas and comparing them with the assumptions of selected modern Western educational philosophies.

This paper is not the first to explore Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education. Several studies have addressed similar topics. The first was conducted by Samsirin, Syarifah, Nurul Salis

¹¹ Imam Barnadib, *Filsafat Pendidikan Sistem Dan Metode* (Andi Offset, 1988), p. 14.

¹² Juhaya S. Pradja, *Aliran-Aliran Filsafat Dari Rasionalisme Hingga Sekularisme* (Alva Gracia, 1987), p. 37.

¹³ Poedjawijatna, p. 114.

¹⁴ Uyoh Sadulloh, *Pengantar Filsafat Islam* (Alfabeta, 2008), pp. 103, 105.

¹⁵ Sadulloh, p. 139.

¹⁶ Barnadib, pp. 25, 28.

¹⁷ Sadulloh, pp. 171–72.

¹⁸ Jujun S. Suriasumantri, *Filsafat Ilmu Sebuah Pengantar Populer* (Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2005), p. 105.

¹⁹ Ahmad Tafsir, *Filsafat Umum Akal Dan Hati Sejak Thales Sampai Chapra* (PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2001), p. 23.

²⁰ Omar Mohammad Al-Toumy Al-Syaibany, *Falsafah Pendidikan Islam, Trans. Hasan Langgulung* (Bulan Bintang, 1979), p. 259.

²¹ Sadulloh, p. 36.

Alamin, and Alwi Yusron (2023), titled "The Principles of Islamic Education Learning According to Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi and Their Relevance to UNESCO Principles." This study found that Qaradhawi's educational principles practiced by the Prophet align with current character-based learning management in Islamic institutions.²² Although this study established the contemporary relevance of Qaradhawi's ideas, it primarily emphasized their alignment with an international educational framework rather than reconstructing their underlying philosophical foundations.

The second study by M. Taufan Khasani (2015), *The Concept of Prophetic Education Based on Edutainment in the Perspective of Yusuf Qaradhawi*, found that prophetic education provides proportional space for learners, avoiding repression, and aims to liberate them from oppression.²³ Its main emphasis was placed on the prophetic and edutainment dimensions of education rather than on a comparative analysis of Qaradhawi's ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

The third study, by Meri Fitrah and Syamsuar Hamka (2022), *The Educational Thought of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi in the Book Al-'Aql Wa al-'Ilm Fi Al-Qur'an*, concluded that rational education aims to develop intelligent minds and integrate intellect with the heart, producing scholars of both thought and spirituality.²⁴ This research contributed to understanding Qaradhawi's conception of rational education, but its analysis centered on the integration of intellect and spirituality in a different primary text and did not systematically compare his educational philosophy with modern Western philosophical traditions.

The fourth study, by Abdul Azis, Jannatul Husna, and Waharjani (2022), *Prophetic Values on Educator Ethics in Learning According to Yusuf al-Qaradawi*, found that educators must uphold ethical standards to create a conducive classroom environment. Ethical values include careful planning aligned with competencies, a sense of responsibility in educating, and kindness toward students.²⁵ However, the study concentrated on prophetic values and educator ethics and did not examine the broader philosophical structure underlying Qaradhawi's conception of Islamic education.

The review of these studies reveals four dominant orientations in previous research: the alignment of Qaradhawi's ideas with UNESCO principles, the development of prophetic educational models, the integration of intellectual and spiritual education, and the examination of educator ethics. Although these studies have demonstrated the relevance of Qaradhawi's thought to Islamic education, they have not provided a comparative triangulation that simultaneously connects textual interpretation, the three foundations of educational philosophy, and selected modern Western philosophical traditions. Consequently, the ontological, epistemological, and

²² Syarifah Samsirin, Nurul Salis Alamin, and Alwi Yusron, 'Prinsip-Prinsip Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Menurut Syekh Yusuf Al Qardhawi Dan Relevansinya Dengan Prinsip UNESCO', *AL-AFKAR: Journal for Islamic Studies*, 6.4 (2023).

²³ M. Taufan Khasani, 'Konsep Pendidikan Profetik Berbasis Edutainment Perspektif Yusuf Qaradhawi', *Concencia*, XV.2 (2015).

²⁴ Meri Fitrah and Syamsuar Hamka, 'Pemikiran Pendidikan Yusuf Al-Qardhawi Dalam Kitab Al-'Aql Wa Al-'Ilm Fi Al-Qur'an', *Tawazun: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 15.1 (2022).

²⁵ Abdul Azis, Jannatul Husna, and Waharjani, 'Nilai-Nilai Profetik Seputar Etika Pendidik Dalam Pembelajaran Menurut Yusuf Al-Qardhawi', *Ta'allum*, 10.2 (2022).

axiological structure of Qaradhawi's educational thought in *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm* remains insufficiently mapped.

To address this research gap, the present study offers a comparative triangulation of Qaradhawi's educational thought. First, it reconstructs educational concepts directly from *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm*. Second, it maps those concepts across the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of education. Third, it comparatively examines their convergence and divergence with idealism, realism, existentialism, progressivism, and reconstructionism. This triangulated approach constitutes the novelty of the study because it moves beyond admiration for Qaradhawi, thematic description, or claims of general relevance and instead produces a systematic philosophical map of his educational thought.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of Islamic education in Qaradhawi's *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm* and to compare them with selected modern Western educational philosophies. Through this analysis, the study seeks to formulate the distinctive philosophical characteristics and contemporary relevance of Qaradhawi's educational thought for addressing the challenges of Islamic education in an era marked by radical and exclusivist religious orientations, technological disruption, post-truth conditions, and inadequate scientific literacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to examine Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi's concept of Islamic education and contextualize it within the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of educational philosophy. It is qualitative library research using a figure-study approach, which enables the systematic reconstruction of a scholar's concepts, arguments, and intellectual framework.²⁶ A qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on interpreting and understanding ideas rather than measuring them statistically.²⁷ This study focuses specifically on Qaradhawi's Islamic education concept through the lens of educational philosophy. Data were collected using documentation techniques.

Data were collected through documentation, which involves systematically examining written materials relevant to the research questions.²⁸ The primary source was Qaradhawi's *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm*, particularly its discussions of knowledge, scholars, experimentation, learning ethics, and teaching methods. Secondary sources comprised Qaradhawi's other relevant works, previous studies, and literature on educational philosophy.

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the researcher identified passages in *Al-Rasūl wa al-'Ilm* related to education, human beings, knowledge, reason, revelation, experimentation, ethics, and educational purposes. Second, semantic analysis was applied to key concepts such as *'ilm*, *'ulamā'*, *ta'allum*, *ta'līm*, *'aql*, *tajribah*, and *akhlāq*. Each term was examined according to its lexical meaning, textual context, relationship with other concepts, and

²⁶ Arief Furchan and Agus Maimun, *Studi Tokoh: Metode Penelitian Mengenai Tokoh* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2005), p. 15.

²⁷ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan Campuran*, Trans. Achmad Fawaid and Rianayati Kusmini Pancasari (Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), p. 11.

²⁸ Glenn A. Bowen, 'Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method', *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9.2 (2009), pp. 27–40, doi:<https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.

educational implications. This procedure followed Izutsu's semantic approach, which emphasizes the position and interrelationship of key terms within a particular worldview.²⁹

Third, hermeneutic analysis was used to interpret each passage within both its immediate context and the broader structure of Qaradhawi's thought. Following Ricoeur's theory of textual interpretation, the analysis moved between individual passages and the text as a whole to connect Qaradhawi's statements with the Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and educational issues discussed in the book.³⁰ The resulting interpretations were then coded into recurring themes, as qualitative coding helps researchers organize textual data and identify meaningful conceptual patterns.³¹

Fourth, the themes were classified into three philosophical categories: ontology, covering the nature of human beings, knowledge, reality, and education; epistemology, covering the sources and methods of knowledge, including revelation, reason, observation, and experimentation; and axiology, covering educational purposes, ethics, responsibility, and the application of knowledge. A comparative matrix was then used to identify convergence, divergence, and possible synthesis between Qaradhawi's ideas and idealism, realism, existentialism, progressivism, and reconstructionism.³² Finally, an inductive method was employed to synthesize the findings into a comprehensive formulation of Qaradhawi's Islamic educational philosophy.³³ Interpretive consistency was maintained by repeatedly comparing the findings with the original passages and relevant secondary literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Position of Knowledge and Scholars in the Sunnah

Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi asserts that knowledge is fundamentally the foundation of faith and righteous deeds. It holds superiority over worship and jihad, and engaging in scholarly activities is regarded as the most meritorious form of recommended worship. Furthermore, knowledge is highly beneficial in human life. The world would face destruction when knowledge disappears from its surface.³⁴

According to axiology, knowledge is a reality that possesses utility in building worldly life. From the perspective of Islamic education, knowledge has numerous benefits. Through knowledge, humans can understand themselves. Through knowledge as well, humans can know their unseen Lord, who is comprehensible through the power of reason. Knowledge also enables the creation of a well-ordered, peaceful, and civilized society. Scholars are those who possess knowledge, and therefore they hold an exalted status.

²⁹ Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung*, 2nd Edn (Islamic Book Trust, 2002), pp. 1–31.

³⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 25–44.

³¹ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4th Edn (Sage Publications, Inc., 2021), pp. 3–16.

³² Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *No Title* (Sage Publications, Inc., 2020), pp. 105–20.

³³ Moh. Slamet Untung, *Metodologi Penelitian: Teori Dan Praktik Riset Pendidikan Dan Sosial* (Litera, 2019), p. 42.

³⁴ Yusuf Qaradhawi, *Al-Rasul Wa Al-'Ilm* (Dār al-Ṣahwah, 2001), p. 9.

Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi's concept of Islamic education concerning the status of knowledge and scholars remains highly relevant when contextualized within contemporary Islamic education. Knowledge and scholars play a pivotal role in constructing the civilization of a nation. The advancement of any civilization can only be achieved through the mastery of knowledge and the dedication of intellectuals in teaching it. For Qaradawi, knowledge serves as the foundation of both faith and practice.³⁵ Faith cannot be based merely on prejudice, imitation, or irrational assumptions. Likewise, actions must be preceded by an educational process so that they are grounded in correct understanding.³⁶

Ontologically, al-Qaradawi views human beings as intellectual, spiritual, and moral subjects capable of knowing both God and the created world. Epistemologically, knowledge provides a rational foundation for faith and action. Axiologically, knowledge must produce moral conduct and social benefit. Thus, his argument does not merely glorify knowledge but establishes an inseparable relationship among knowledge, faith, action, and civilization.

Knowledge is superior to worship because the benefit of individual worship is generally limited to its practitioner, whereas beneficial knowledge can guide wider society across generations.³⁷ Worship is essentially the practical form of knowledge. However, its benefits are typically confined to the practitioner. A devout worshiper lacking knowledge will not gain full benefit from their worship, let alone positively influence others.

The objective of Islamic education, as generally understood, is one of the key educational factors. From a philosophical perspective, the goal of Islamic education is inseparable from the existence of knowledge itself. It is through knowledge that the objectives of Islamic education can be achieved. Clearly, the supremacy of knowledge over worship can also be observed from the standpoint of educational goals.³⁸

Knowledge is also superior to jihad when jihad is narrowly understood as physical conflict. Al-Qaradawi considers the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge an important form of jihad because it protects society from ignorance and misunderstanding.³⁹ View can be explained through educational theory, particularly in terms of two critical educational components: teachers and students. Both are essential to educational success. Education is essentially a rational interaction between teacher and learner, between the mature and the immature. A teacher acts as a motivator for their students.

This argument is relevant to religious radicalism because al-Qaradawi places knowledge before judgment and action. Religious action undertaken without adequate knowledge can lead to rigid interpretations, accusations of unbelief, and violence. His position therefore represents a knowledge-based and moderate understanding of religion rather than an emotional or literalist approach.

Al-Qaradawi's position is consistent with Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's concept of *ta'dīb*, which emphasizes that education should produce a good and civilized person by placing

³⁵ Yusuf Qaradawi, p. 14.

³⁶ Yusuf Qaradawi, p. 18.

³⁷ Yusuf Qaradawi, pp. 24–25.

³⁸ Yusuf Qaradawi, p. 29.

³⁹ Yusuf Qaradawi, p. 27.

knowledge, the self, and reality in their proper order.⁴⁰ Both thinkers reject the separation of knowledge from morality. However, while al-Attas develops this idea through the metaphysical concept of *adab*, al-Qaradawi derives it more directly from the ethical and educational teachings of the Sunnah.

Al-Qaradawi's understanding also approaches Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's rejection of the dichotomy between religious and modern knowledge. For both thinkers, knowledge constitutes a unity under *tawhīd* and must contribute to the improvement of humanity.⁴¹ Therefore, al-Qaradawi's position can initially be described as integrationist: religious knowledge provides moral direction, while rational and empirical knowledge supports human life and civilization.

2. The Prophet Muhammad and Experimentation

Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1996) discusses the relationship between the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and experimentation, highlighting the epistemological foundations of science from an Islamic perspective.⁴² Examines how human beings acquire knowledge. In the context of empirical sciences—such as natural science, chemistry, biology, astronomy, medicine, and engineering—knowledge is acquired through observation and experimentation.

Observation is one of the essential techniques used in research to gather data by closely examining observable phenomena. The observed objects must be factual and perceivable by the human senses. Any object that cannot be perceived by the senses falls outside the realm of scientific inquiry.

Experimentation, in its simplest form, refers to the act of testing. Experimental research is conducted to investigate causal (cause-and-effect) relationships. In education, it is used to assess the effectiveness of new materials and practices in improving student learning outcomes. Epistemologically, al-Qaradawi (1996) affirms that Islamic teachings—found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah—form a strong scientific basis for the advancement of both religious and non-religious sciences.

He further states that the Qur'an and Sunnah educate and guide Muslims—and humanity more broadly—to adopt scientific thinking as a norm.⁴³ This view aligns closely with the philosophical tradition, which is characterized by critical, analytical, and foundational reflection on both concrete and abstract realities.

Scientific thinking, as taught in the Qur'an and Sunnah, necessitates the development of literacy.⁴⁴ When viewed through the lens of modern Islamic education, al-Qaradawi's emphasis on literacy reflects a progressive vision worthy of appreciation. At a time when many Muslims—especially among the general public—tend to follow religious opinions widely accepted as

⁴⁰ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (BM3 Synergy Corporation, 1999), pp. 22–27.

⁴¹ Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan, 3rd Edn* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989), pp. 9–12.

⁴² Yusuf Qaradhawi, pp. 37–38.

⁴³ Yusuf Qaradhawi, pp. 38–39.

⁴⁴ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 40.

absolute truths without question, the promotion of literacy is crucial. This view resonates with the philosophy of progressivism, which maintains that education must equip learners with the competencies necessary to solve real-world problems.

The Prophet Muhammad exemplified the importance of experimentation in the incident involving date-palm pollination. When the Prophet's initial suggestion concerning pollination did not produce the expected result, he acknowledged that the cultivators possessed greater expertise in their worldly affairs.⁴⁵ This incident demonstrates that not all worldly and technical matters must be determined directly through revelation. Human beings may use reason, observation, professional experience, and experimentation to obtain beneficial knowledge.

Philosophically, the date-palm pollination incident establishes three principles of Islamic scientific epistemology. First, revelation and empirical investigation have different but complementary domains: revelation provides moral and theological direction, while experimentation examines observable and changing realities. Second, human judgments in technical matters are fallible and can be corrected by evidence. Third, expertise has legitimate authority within its appropriate field. Therefore, al-Qaradawi does not present experimentation merely as a teaching method, but as a valid foundation for producing scientific knowledge.

This interpretation also rejects the sacralization of provisional human opinions. A technical claim cannot be considered true solely because it is associated with religious authority; it must be evaluated according to evidence and practical results. Consequently, the pollination incident provides a Prophetic basis for critical inquiry, intellectual humility, and the revision of conclusions when they are contradicted by empirical findings.

Al-Qaradawi's position converges with al-Faruqi's principle of the unity of truth and knowledge. Al-Faruqi argues that valid revelation and verified reality cannot ultimately contradict each other because both originate within God's unified creation.⁴⁶ However, al-Qaradawi explains this unity more practically through the Prophet's recognition of empirical expertise.

Al-Qaradawi's interpretation can also be compared with Fazlur Rahman's double-movement approach. Rahman moves from a particular historical event to its general moral principle and then applies that principle to contemporary circumstances.⁴⁷ Similarly, al-Qaradawi moves from the specific event of date-palm pollination to the general principle that empirical matters require observation and expertise, and then applies it to modern scientific disciplines. Nevertheless, al-Qaradawi retains a more jurisprudential and *wasatiyyah*-oriented approach than Rahman's explicit hermeneutical model. The philosophical significance of the pollination incident can therefore be summarized as follows:

Table 1.
Philosophical Dimensions of Al-Qaradawi's Scientific Epistemology and Their Educational Implications

Analytical	Al-Qaradawi's proposition	Educational implication
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⁴⁵ Yusuf Qaradhawi, pp. 43–44.

⁴⁶ Al-Faruqi, pp. 22–30.

⁴⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 5–7.

dimension		
Ontology	Nature is an ordered and intelligible creation of God	Natural and social realities are legitimate objects of study
Epistemology	Empirical matters require observation, expertise, and experimentation	Learners must test claims and revise conclusions according to evidence
Axiology	Scientific inquiry must produce benefit and remain ethically directed	Science and technology must serve humanity rather than operate without moral limits
Authority	Technical expertise has authority within its appropriate domain	Religious authority should not replace evidence-based professional competence
Human fallibility	Technical judgments may be corrected by experience	Critical revision is a strength of knowledge, not a threat to faith

Islamic education therefore recognizes rational and empirical methods while maintaining revelation as its ethical foundation. Its curriculum should be flexible and responsive to contemporary developments without abandoning Islamic values. Learners should be trained to observe, investigate, test claims, and apply knowledge responsibly.

This case demonstrates that not all worldly matters require divine revelation; rather, human reasoning and knowledge through experimentation are sufficient to achieve beneficial outcomes. It affirms that Islamic education acknowledges the significance of experimentation in the search for truth. A teacher or researcher cannot effectively implement this method without adequate mastery of research methodology.

Islamic education promotes rational and empirical approaches (except for matters explicitly stated in the texts as beyond sensory perception). Consequently, Islamic religious education curricula should be flexible and responsive to students' needs and the challenges of modern times. In this respect, the curriculum should reflect the principles of progressive educational philosophy. A progressive curriculum is adaptable and open-ended, designed to evolve based on learners' needs. It emphasizes life-based experiences and helps students engage with the complexities of their environment.

3. The Nature of Knowledge and Scholars

Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi explains that Islam promotes knowledge, and the highest form of knowledge is that which originates from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The pursuit of such knowledge is boundless. Islam views education not merely as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a transfer of values. A knowledgeable person is expected to reflect the character of their knowledge—being responsible, trustworthy in conveying knowledge, humble, noble, acting according to their knowledge, ambitious in spreading it, and committed to both disseminating and preserving it.⁴⁸

The value of responsibility in scholarship is elaborated by al-Qaradawi in *al-Rasūl wa al-*

⁴⁸ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 48.

‘Ilm. Responsibility is not limited to the academic world; it encompasses all aspects of life. Every individual is accountable for their position in life. Scholars, specifically, are responsible for preserving and advancing their knowledge, ensuring it does not become stagnant. They are obligated to teach it to others, apply it for the benefit of humanity, and prepare future scholars to inherit it. Above all, a scholar's activities must be grounded in sincerity for the sake of Allah.⁴⁹

These educational responsibilities are carried out through Islamic education, which encompasses teaching, research, and community service. This aligns with the current concept of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education in Indonesia.

Trustworthiness (*amānah*) is another essential scholarly character. It reflects one's faith and integrity. Scholarly trust includes objectivity, refraining from claiming others' works as one's own, and acknowledging sources—manifested in the Islamic tradition of *sanad* (chain of knowledge transmission). Such objectivity helps prevent academic dishonesty and plagiarism.⁵⁰

Another key trait is the maintenance of scholarly competence, defined by a scholar's mastery of their field. This competence is a trust that must be upheld. As commonly stated in academia, "One may be wrong in science, but never dishonest." Admitting ignorance is a virtue when one truly does not know.⁵¹

Humility (*tawāḍuʿ*) is also vital. It elevates scholars because they recognize the reality that no one can master all knowledge. This is exemplified even by great philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, al-Fārābī, al-Kindī, and al-Ghazālī.

Another character emphasized by al-Qaradawi is consistent application of knowledge. A scholar must live according to their knowledge; otherwise, they risk harming both themselves and society. This danger was noted by Shaykh al-Zarnūjī in *Taʿlīm al-Mutaʿallim Ṭarīq at-Taʿallum*, citing a verse by Imam Burhānuddīn:

"Among the greatest harms is the knowledgeable person whose actions contradict religious knowledge, and even worse is the ignorant person who performs religious acts. Both become a source of *fitnah* (trial) in society, especially for those who follow them".

Finally, scholars must disseminate their knowledge and implement it in society.⁵² They are responsible for cultivating their knowledge, applying it individually and socially, and sharing it widely with the sincere intention of seeking Allah's pleasure. This aligns with the axiological foundation of the philosophy of science—knowledge must serve humanity regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion.

4. Learning and Its Ethics

The next concept of Islamic education from Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi concerns learning and its ethics. The ethics of learning include the discussion of motivation to learn, the knowledge that every Muslim must study, the knowledge whose study is a communal obligation (*fard kifayah*), correcting one's intention, the continuity of learning, patience in facing obstacles in seeking knowledge, respecting teachers, and the etiquette of asking questions. Knowledge never

⁴⁹ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 61.

⁵⁰ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 65.

⁵¹ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 71.

⁵² Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 76.

comes to a person by itself; therefore, it must be sought. To seek knowledge, learning motivation is required.⁵³

This motivation is very important because it is essentially a stimulus, a driving force, or an energy booster for an action or behaviour.⁵⁴ A Muslim must not live in ignorance. He must strive with all his strength to fight the ignorance within himself. This can be done through diligent and patient study.

Although a Muslim is not obliged to study all branches of Islamic knowledge, he is obliged to study the knowledge needed in religious and worldly matters. According to Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, in matters of religious knowledge, it is obligatory to study the Sharia sciences, which are not numerous, encompassing only *tawhid*, *fiqh*, *tasawwuf*, and *adab*.

In addition to the knowledge that is individually obligatory for every Muslim to learn, there is also knowledge that is a communal obligation (*fard kifayah*) for Muslims to learn. According to al-Qaradawi, 'what is meant by *fard kifayah* is everything needed by Muslims in matters of religion or worldly affairs'.⁵⁵ Such knowledge includes mastery of Sharia sciences as well as deeper studies of the natural sciences such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, engineering, physics, biology, and others.

Seeking knowledge requires planning, considering that knowledge is like something very valuable and without a final limit. One such plan is continuity, meaning that the pursuit of knowledge must be continuous, without stopping at a certain point. However, the pursuit must be undertaken step by step, without interruption, until death.

From the perspective of educational philosophy, such a pursuit is called *lifelong education*. A seeker of knowledge will not obtain beneficial knowledge unless he learns from a teacher competent in both intellectual and moral fields. Students must not speak or behave disrespectfully towards their teachers; they must honour them.

Another concept from al-Qaradawi concerns community participation in children's education.⁵⁶ When understood in the context of educational philosophy, this statement emphasises that education and teaching are the right of everyone. Everyone in the world has the right to education suited to his or her own interests and talents. Such a concept is known in educational philosophy as 'education for all', which today has become a global educational trend.

The ethics of educators towards students include treating them gently. Educating gently can be done by providing facilities for students wherever possible and without violating ethics—such as giving tasks that are not burdensome and giving maximum appreciation for those tasks. Providing students with encouraging information is also part of gentle teaching. For example, a teacher may tell students that whoever completes a task well will receive a 'reward'.

Gentle teaching methods can also be realised in the form of suggestions and praise for good things. Suggestion is 'a process in which an individual accepts a way of seeing or a behavioural guide from another person without prior criticism'.⁵⁷ Positive suggestions are very

⁵³ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 85.

⁵⁴ Sarwono, *Psikologi Sosial* (Rajawali Pers, 2012), p. 137.

⁵⁵ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 103.

⁵⁶ Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 113.

⁵⁷ W.A. Gerungan, *Psikologi Sosial* (Refika Aditama, 2004), p. 65.

important in motivating a person to do good, as they can raise one's spirit and influence behaviour.

Education and teaching as a process can run smoothly only when they proceed gradually (*tadarruj*). Something done gradually will feel lighter and less burdensome; likewise, something presented gradually is more easily absorbed and retained in memory. According to educational philosophy, this method was practised by the Prophet Muhammad, as explained in *al-Rasul wa al-'Ilm*.⁵⁸

Practically speaking, one of the benefits of the gradual method is that it makes carrying out the material taught easier and less burdensome, thus motivating students to practise it. This aligns with the idealist school of educational philosophy, which holds that teaching methods should motivate students to think reflectively rather than merely memorising lesson material—they should be led to practise it as well.

In addition to verbal communication, the use of appropriate teaching aids is also needed. Teaching aids are not the same as teaching media, yet their functions are almost identical: both help make teaching more effective and efficient. The Prophet Muhammad used teaching aids to impart Islamic teachings, as explained by al-Qaradawi in *al-Rasul wa al-'Ilm*.

The Prophet used various methods in teaching Islam, including lectures, dialogue, and practical demonstrations. This means that, methodologically, the Prophet laid down the foundations of Islamic education and teaching methods. According to existentialist educational philosophy, there is no single teaching method suitable for all lessons; rather, the teacher must consider and employ various methods that can help students learn.

Table 2.
Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi's Concept of Islamic Education and Its Contextualization in the Perspective of Educational Philosophy

No.	Contextualization Component	Alignment with Educational Philosophy	Description
1	The Status of Knowledge and Scholars according to the Sunnah	Idealism; Realism	The educational curriculum aims to develop learners' rational and moral abilities and their competence for practical life. Educators must master knowledge, teaching skills, and strive sincerely for the success of their students.
2	The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Experiments	Progressivism	Education aims to equip learners with problem-solving competencies. The curriculum is flexible and open, adaptable to needs, and focused on real-life experiences in complex environments.
3	The Character of Knowledge and Scholars	Reconstructionism	Education is responsible for shaping an ideal social order.

⁵⁸ Syaikh Yusuf Qaradhawi, p. 257.

4	Learning and Its Ethics	Idealism; Existentialism	Teaching methods should motivate students to think reflectively, not merely memorize content, and encourage practical application. No single method suits all subjects.
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CONCLUSION

The concept of Islamic education according to Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi emphasizes the integration of knowledge, values, and ethics in the educational process. Education is not merely a matter of transferring knowledge but also involves the transmission of values that shape learners' moral character and responsibility. Islamic scholars and intellectuals are required to uphold responsibility, trustworthiness (*amānah*), humility (*tawāḍu'*), competence, and scientific honesty. They are also obligated to apply and disseminate their knowledge for the benefit of society.

Ethics in learning are also critically emphasized, including learning motivation, sincere intention, patience, respect for teachers, and lifelong learning. Al-Qaradawi further highlights community involvement in education and the use of gentle and gradual teaching methods suited to students' abilities. His interpretation of the date-palm pollination incident also demonstrates that observation, professional expertise, and experimentation constitute legitimate sources of knowledge in empirical matters. Thus, revelation, reason, and experience are not contradictory but operate complementarily within an Islamic scientific epistemology.

These findings demonstrate that Al-Qaradawi's educational philosophy has an integrated ontological, epistemological, and axiological structure. Ontologically, human beings are understood as intellectual, spiritual, and moral subjects; epistemologically, knowledge is obtained through revelation, reason, observation, and experimentation; and axiologically, knowledge must develop ethical character and benefit society. In dialogue with Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dīb*, al-Faruqi's Islamization of Knowledge, and Fazlur Rahman's contextual Islamic modernism, Al-Qaradawi's position can be characterized as integrative *wasatiyyah* modernism with a reconstructionist orientation.

When contextualized within educational philosophy, Al-Qaradawi's ideas share certain orientations with idealism, realism, progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism. However, his thought should not be reduced to these Western categories because its distinctive foundation lies in the integration of revelation, empirical inquiry, moral responsibility, and human welfare. His concept also supports *education for all* and lifelong education as essential efforts to build a knowledgeable and ethical civilization.

Academically, this study contributes a philosophical mapping of Al-Qaradawi's educational thought that extends previous studies focused primarily on prophetic ethics or general educational principles. Practically, it recommends that Islamic educational institutions integrate scientific inquiry, evidence-based reasoning, academic integrity, and moral formation into their curricula and teaching practices. Future research should examine the application of this framework in Islamic schools and universities, compare Al-Qaradawi's thought with other contemporary Muslim educational philosophers, and empirically evaluate its relevance to technological disruption, post-truth challenges, religious radicalism, and scientific literacy.

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