



RECONSTRUCTING EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN THE QUR'ANIC STORY OF PROPHET ADAM: A THEMATIC EXEGESIS FOR CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract:

This study aims to reconstruct the educational values embedded in the Qur'anic story of Prophet Adam through a thematic exegesis approach and to examine their relevance to contemporary Islamic education. Using qualitative library research with tafsir maudhu'i as the primary analytical framework, the study analyzes key Qur'anic passages related to Adam's narrative, particularly in Surah Al-Baqarah, Al-A'raf, and Taha. The findings reveal five principal educational values: knowledge as the basis of human dignity, moral responsibility, reflective learning through repentance, leadership through the concept of khalifah, and dialogical pedagogy. These findings are then contextualized within contemporary educational theories, including constructivism, character education, transformative learning, and student-centered pedagogy. The study concludes that the Adamic narrative provides a holistic pedagogical paradigm integrating intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. The novelty of this article lies in repositioning the story of Prophet Adam from a theological narrative into a foundational educational framework for contemporary Islamic education.

Keywords: Qur'anic pedagogy, Prophet Adam, thematic exegesis, Islamic education

INTRODUCTION

Education in Islam is fundamentally rooted in the Qur'an as the primary source of knowledge, ethics, and human formation. Beyond its normative and theological functions, the Qur'an also presents a rich pedagogical framework through its narratives of prophets and previous communities. These narratives are not merely historical accounts, but serve as moral-educational texts that guide the formation of human character, spirituality, and intellectual consciousness. Within this framework, the story of Prophet Adam occupies a foundational position, as it represents the earliest Qur'anic narrative concerning human creation, divine instruction, moral responsibility, and the beginning of human civilization.

The Qur'anic story of Prophet Adam, particularly in Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 30-39, Surah Al-A'raf (7): 11-27, and Surah Taha (20): 115-123, offers profound educational values that remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education. The narrative encompasses several central pedagogical dimensions, including the transmission of knowledge through the teaching of names (ta'lim al-asma'), the formation of moral consciousness through divine command and prohibition, the cultivation of reflective learning through error and repentance, and the establishment of human dignity through the concept of khalifah (vicegerency). These elements indicate that the story of Adam is not solely a theological narrative of creation, but also a foundational educational discourse on how human beings learn, make moral choices, and develop spiritually.

In the context of contemporary education, the urgency of revisiting Qur'anic educational narratives has become increasingly significant. Educational institutions

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today face multidimensional challenges, including moral degradation, declining spiritual sensitivity, individualism, and the weakening of character formation among learners. These challenges demand a reconstruction of educational values that is not only theoretically robust but also rooted in authentic Islamic sources. Recent studies have emphasized that Qur'anic values remain highly relevant in addressing crises of morality and character in modern society. For instance, studies on Qur'anic character education demonstrate that values such as responsibility, honesty, discipline, compassion, and spiritual awareness can serve as an epistemological basis for contemporary educational development (Abdillah et al., 2025).

Previous scholarly works have extensively discussed character education from the perspective of the Qur'an and prophetic traditions. Several studies highlight the transformative role of Qur'anic values in building learners' moral integrity and social responsibility (Farich Alfani et al., n.d.). However, existing literature tends to focus on general concepts of character education, theological discussions, or educational values derived from other prophetic stories such as Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Musa, or Luqman (Garriga et al., 2019). Research specifically dedicated to reconstructing educational values embedded in the story of Prophet Adam through a thematic exegetical approach remains relatively limited.

This gap is particularly important because the narrative of Prophet Adam contains the earliest Qur'anic educational model concerning the relationship between knowledge, ethics, freedom, and accountability. The verse describing Allah's teaching of names to Adam (QS. Al-Baqarah: 31) reflects an epistemological foundation of education in Islam, where knowledge is presented as a divine trust and the basis of human superiority. Similarly, Adam's experience of temptation, error, and repentance offers a reflective educational model that aligns with contemporary theories of transformative and reflective learning. In this sense, the Adamic narrative provides a holistic framework integrating cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions of education.

Therefore, this study seeks to reconstruct the educational values embedded in the Qur'anic story of Prophet Adam through a thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu'i*) approach and to examine its relevance for contemporary Islamic education. This reconstruction is expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse of Qur'anic pedagogy and practically to the development of value-based Islamic education curricula, particularly in the domains of character education, moral formation, and spiritual pedagogy.

RESEARCH METHODS

1. Types of research

This study employed a qualitative library research design grounded in the interpretive tradition of Islamic scholarship and contemporary educational inquiry. Library research was selected because the primary focus of this article is the reconstruction of educational values embedded in the Qur'anic narrative of Prophet Adam through a systematic textual and thematic analysis of scriptural sources and relevant scholarly literature. In qualitative inquiry, library-based studies are particularly appropriate for exploring conceptual, philosophical, and normative dimensions of a phenomenon, especially when the object of analysis is textual and meaning-centered rather than empirical field data.

Methodologically, this research adopted the **thematic exegesis approach** (*tafsīr mawdū'ī / tafsīr maudhu'ī*), which enables a comprehensive interpretation of Qur'anic verses based on a specific theme. The thematic method is considered one of the most systematic approaches in Qur'anic studies because it allows the researcher to collect, classify, and interpret verses related to a single concept in an integrated manner. This approach has been widely recognized as effective for reconstructing Qur'anic concepts in response to contemporary intellectual and educational issues (Ardiansyah Lubis, 2024).

The choice of thematic exegesis was based on the objective of this study, namely to reconstruct the educational values contained in the story of Prophet Adam and to contextualize them within contemporary Islamic education. Unlike the *taḥlīlī* (verse-by-verse) approach, thematic exegesis provides a more holistic understanding by synthesizing dispersed verses across different surahs into a coherent conceptual framework. This methodological orientation is highly relevant for educational studies that seek to derive theoretical constructs from scriptural texts (Helmy, n.d.).

Primary data in this research was obtained directly by visiting the research object, namely the Sunan Kalijaga Mosque, which is located in Kalikajar Kulon Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency using observational data collection techniques and interviews with informants, namely the mosque takmir administrator, digital content management section (mosque social media admin), as well as congregation or local residents. Secondary data in this research is in the form of mosque profile documents, empowerment activity reports, archives of digital da'wah content (social media), as well as data from local village heads regarding environmental conditions and demographics of the Kalikajar Kulon Village population.

The primary data were derived from Qur'anic verses narrating the story of Prophet Adam, particularly:

- Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 30–39
- Qur'an Surah Al-A'rāf (7): 11–27
- Qur'an Surah Ṭāhā (20): 115–123

These verses were selected because they contain the most complete narrative sequence regarding Adam's creation, divine instruction, dialogue with angels, temptation, transgression, repentance, and human vicegerency.

Secondary data included:

- classical and contemporary exegetical works
- books and journal articles on Islamic education
- studies on character education and prophetic pedagogy
- methodological literature on thematic exegesis

Key exegetical references used in this study include works by classical and modern mufasssīrūn such as Ibn Kathir, Al-Tabari, and M. Quraish Shihab.

2. Data collection technique

The data collection process followed the standard procedure of *tafsīr maudhu'ī*.

First, all Qur'anic verses directly related to the story of Prophet Adam were identified and compiled from various surahs. Second, the verses were grouped according to thematic clusters relevant to educational discourse, such as:

- knowledge and intellectual development

- moral responsibility
- obedience and prohibition
- repentance and reflective learning
- human dignity and leadership

Third, supporting exegetical interpretations from authoritative tafsir literature were collected to strengthen semantic and contextual understanding.

This stepwise procedure is consistent with the methodological framework of thematic exegesis that emphasizes verse collection, classification, contextual interpretation, and conceptual synthesis (Ardiansyah Lubis, 2024).

3. Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis employed qualitative thematic content analysis integrated with thematic exegesis.

The analysis was conducted in four stages:

a. Verse Identification and Classification

All verses concerning Prophet Adam were systematically classified based on educational themes.

b. Semantic and Contextual Interpretation

Each verse was interpreted through:

- linguistic meaning
- exegetical context
- intertextual relation with other verses
- pedagogical implications

This stage also considered the *asbāb al-nuzūl* and broader theological meanings when relevant.

c. Thematic Reconstruction

The identified values were reconstructed into broader educational categories, including:

- epistemological values
- moral-ethical values
- spiritual values
- socio-pedagogical values

d. Contextualization to Contemporary Islamic Education

The final stage involved connecting the extracted values to contemporary educational issues such as:

- character education
- spiritual pedagogy
- learner autonomy
- reflective learning
- curriculum development in Islamic education

This stage is crucial because the purpose of thematic exegesis is not merely descriptive interpretation but also contextual application to contemporary realities (Fadly & Kustati, n.d.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic exegesis of the Qur'anic narrative of Prophet Adam reveals that the story contains a comprehensive framework of educational values relevant to contemporary Islamic education. The findings are organized into five major pedagogical themes: epistemological values, moral responsibility, reflective-spiritual learning, human dignity and leadership, and dialogical pedagogy.

1. *The Epistemological Value of Knowledge and Intellectual Formation*

The first and most prominent educational value identified in the story of Prophet Adam is the primacy of knowledge as the foundation of human excellence. This is explicitly reflected in the verse describing Allah's instruction to Adam:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

"And He taught Adam the names of all things..."

(Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah 2:31)

This verse demonstrates that the first educational act in human history, according to the Qur'anic narrative, is teaching (*ta'lim*). Knowledge is presented not merely as information acquisition but as the essential marker of human dignity and capability. Adam's superiority over the angels in this context lies not in physical creation, but in cognitive and epistemological endowment.

From an educational perspective, this finding affirms that Islamic education is fundamentally knowledge-centered, where intellectual development serves as the basis for moral and civilizational advancement. The concept of *ta'lim al-asma'* can be interpreted as the development of conceptual understanding, language competence, classification ability, and reflective cognition. This aligns with recent studies emphasizing that Qur'anic educational values place knowledge as the epistemological core of human formation (Ratnasari, 2022).

This finding is highly relevant to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in strengthening critical thinking, literacy, and integrative knowledge systems in madrasah and higher education.

2. *The Value of Moral Responsibility and Ethical Obedience*

The second major finding concerns the value of moral responsibility. The narrative of divine prohibition regarding the forbidden tree reflects the ethical dimension of education. Adam was not only given knowledge, but also moral boundaries. This indicates that Islamic education is not purely cognitive, but integrally linked to ethical consciousness and normative discipline. The prohibition symbolizes:

- awareness of limits
- obedience to divine guidance
- responsibility for choices

This finding suggests that moral education in Islam must be constructed through an understanding of freedom with accountability. Learners are not merely trained to know what is right, but also to internalize the consequences of moral decisions. This educational value is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary character

education, where discipline, responsibility, and ethical decision-making are essential competencies (Rahmani, 2026).

3. *Reflective Learning through Error and Repentance*

A highly significant finding from the Adamic narrative is the pedagogical role of error and repentance. After committing the transgression, Adam and Hawwa declare:

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا

"Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves..."

This verse demonstrates that failure is not the end of the educational process; rather, it becomes an opportunity for self-reflection and transformation. From a pedagogical standpoint, this reflects transformative and reflective learning theory, where mistakes function as critical moments of self-awareness and moral growth. The educational values found in this section include:

- self-evaluation
- reflective consciousness
- humility
- willingness to improve
- spiritual recovery

This is highly relevant for contemporary education, especially in approaches emphasizing growth mindset, reflective practice, and socio-emotional learning. The Qur'anic story thus offers a spiritual pedagogy in which mistakes are transformed into opportunities for deeper learning and character refinement (Rahmani, 2026).

4. *Human Dignity and the Educational Meaning of Khalifah*

Another major finding is the concept of human beings as *khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth. The declaration in Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2):30 positions Adam as the first symbol of human leadership, stewardship, and civilizational responsibility. This value contains profound implications for Islamic education, particularly in forming learners who possess:

- leadership capacity
- social responsibility
- ecological awareness
- ethical citizenship

Education in this perspective is not limited to personal piety, but extends toward societal transformation and responsible participation in public life. This aligns with contemporary Islamic education paradigms that emphasize the formation of holistic human beings who integrate spiritual, intellectual, and social competencies (Sholihah & Maulida, 2020).

5. *Dialogical Pedagogy as an Educational Method*

The final finding concerns the pedagogical method embedded in the narrative structure itself. The story of Adam is highly dialogical:

- dialogue between Allah and the angels
- dialogue between Allah and Adam
- dialogue involving Iblis

- Adam's supplication after error

This dialogical structure indicates that the Qur'anic model of education values interaction, questioning, and reflective communication. From a pedagogical standpoint, this supports the application of:

- dialogic learning
- inquiry-based education
- critical discussion
- reflective conversation

Thus, the Adamic narrative does not only contain educational values in substance, but also models an educational methodology. This finding strongly supports student-centered learning models in contemporary Islamic education (Hasanah, n.d.).

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Qur'anic story of Prophet Adam offers a comprehensive pedagogical framework that is highly relevant to contemporary Islamic education. The five thematic values identified—knowledge, moral responsibility, reflective repentance, human vicegerency, and dialogical learning—collectively construct a holistic educational paradigm integrating cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social dimensions.

This section discusses these findings in relation to contemporary educational theories and the article's scholarly contribution.

1. *Epistemological Reconstruction: Knowledge as the Foundation of Human Formation*

The finding on *ta'lim al-asma'* confirms that the first educational process in the Qur'anic narrative is epistemological in nature. This strongly resonates with contemporary constructivist theories, which view knowledge as the central medium for human cognitive development. In constructivist pedagogy, learning is understood as an active process of meaning-making rather than passive information reception. The teaching of names to Adam symbolically reflects conceptual categorization, linguistic formation, and intellectual consciousness. This is aligned with constructivist learning theory as articulated by Piaget and Vygotsky, where knowledge construction becomes the basis of human agency and problem-solving capacity.

In the context of Islamic education, this finding reinforces the need to move beyond rote memorization toward:

- critical literacy
- conceptual reasoning
- reflective inquiry
- integrative thinking

This relevance becomes increasingly urgent in the era of digital education and knowledge disruption. Contemporary Islamic education must harmonize revealed knowledge with higher-order thinking skills and intellectual resilience (Velly et al., 2025). Thus, the Adamic narrative provides a foundational Qur'anic epistemology for curriculum development in Islamic education.

2. *Moral Responsibility and Contemporary Character Education*

The second finding regarding ethical obedience and responsibility strongly supports contemporary character education theory. Modern educational discourse increasingly emphasizes that academic excellence without moral formation is

insufficient. This is especially relevant in Islamic education, where the purpose of learning is not merely cognitive mastery but *insān kāmil* formation. The Qur'anic prohibition given to Adam reflects what contemporary moral education scholars describe as ethical agency – the ability to make morally responsible choices within freedom.

This is parallel to current character education models that emphasize:

- responsibility
- self-discipline
- integrity
- ethical judgment

The relevance of this finding is particularly strong in the Indonesian educational context, where character education remains a major national agenda in both schools and madrasahs. Recent studies in Islamic pedagogy also confirm that character formation must integrate spiritual values with active pedagogical strategies. Hence, the Adamic story enriches contemporary theories by providing a Qur'anic basis for moral agency and disciplined freedom.

3. *Reflective Repentance and Transformative Learning Theory*

One of the most significant theoretical contributions of this study lies in the interpretation of Adam's repentance as a model of transformative learning. In contemporary educational theory, transformative learning emphasizes the role of critical reflection in reshaping beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

Adam's acknowledgment of error and subsequent repentance reflects precisely this pedagogical process:

- recognition of failure
- reflective awareness
- reconstruction of self-understanding
- moral transformation

This finding closely aligns with Mezirow's theory of transformative learning, where disorienting experiences become catalysts for deeper personal change. In Islamic educational philosophy, this adds a spiritual dimension to reflective pedagogy by integrating:

- self-muhasabah
- repentance
- moral growth
- spiritual resilience

This is particularly relevant for modern pedagogical concerns related to socio-emotional learning and student wellbeing (Husni et al., 2025). The novelty here is that the Qur'anic narrative offers an earlier and more spiritually integrated model of reflective learning than many contemporary secular theories.

4. *Khalifah and Humanistic-Social Education*

The concept of Adam as *khalifah* substantially supports contemporary humanistic and socially conscious education. Modern education increasingly moves toward preparing students as responsible global citizens, capable of leadership, ethical participation, and social transformation. The Qur'anic concept of *khalifah* extends this idea by positioning human beings as:

- leaders
- trustees
- moral agents
- civilizational actors

This strongly resonates with humanistic education theory, particularly the development of the whole person. The relevance of this finding is especially significant for Islamic education in responding to globalization, technological shifts, and moral crises. Recent literature highlights that contemporary Islamic education must integrate spiritual formation with civic and social consciousness (Husni et al., 2025). Therefore, the Adamic narrative offers a Qur'anic-humanistic framework for leadership education.

5. *Dialogical Pedagogy and Student-Centered Learning*

The dialogical structure found in the Adamic narrative is highly relevant to student-centered learning and dialogic pedagogy. Contemporary educational theories emphasize that learning is most effective when students actively participate in dialogue, questioning, and reflective communication. The multiple dialogues in the Adam story illustrate a pedagogical model based on:

- inquiry
- interaction
- reflective response
- meaning negotiation

This aligns with dialogic pedagogy and sociocultural learning theory, especially Vygotskian perspectives on learning through social interaction and scaffolding (Beale, 2025). For Islamic education, this finding challenges teacher-centered traditions and supports more interactive pedagogical models.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is that the revitalization of Islamic ecotheological values in the digital era has changed mosques from just places of prayer to "Ecological Command Centers". Digitalization has been proven to accelerate the spread of environmental awareness and make it easier to manage mosque resources more transparently and efficiently.

This study concludes that the Qur'anic story of Prophet Adam contains a comprehensive and integrative framework of educational values that remains highly relevant to contemporary Islamic education. Through a thematic exegetical approach, five principal educational values were identified: epistemological formation through knowledge, moral responsibility, reflective learning through repentance, human leadership as khalifah, and dialogical pedagogy.

First, the concept of *ta'lim al-asma'* establishes knowledge as the foundational basis of human dignity and intellectual superiority. This confirms that Islamic education is inherently knowledge-centered and oriented toward the development of critical, conceptual, and reflective thinking. *Second*, the narrative of divine prohibition and Adam's moral choice highlights the centrality of ethical responsibility in education. This finding strengthens the discourse of character education by positioning freedom within the framework of accountability and moral consciousness. *Third*, Adam's repentance after error demonstrates that failure is not a terminal point

but an educational process of self-reflection, transformation, and spiritual growth. This provides a strong Qur'anic basis for reflective and transformative learning theories. *Fourth*, the concept of *khalifah* expands the educational horizon from individual piety toward leadership, stewardship, and social responsibility. This reinforces the humanistic and civilizational orientation of Islamic education. *Finally*, the dialogical structure of the Adamic narrative offers a pedagogical model that supports student-centered, inquiry-based, and dialogic learning approaches.

Overall, this study affirms that the story of Prophet Adam should not be understood solely as a theological account of human origins, but as a foundational pedagogical paradigm for contemporary Islamic education.

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