

The Islamic Education System during the Era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs: The Foundation of Islamic Civilization Development

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and to examine its contribution to the development of Islamic civilization. Employing a qualitative library research approach, this study analyzes classical Islamic literature, historical records, and contemporary scholarly works concerning educational philosophy, curriculum, educational institutions, teaching methods, educational leadership, and educational policies implemented during the reigns of Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Uthman ibn Affān, and Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib. The findings indicate that Islamic education during this period developed into a systematic educational model characterized by the integration of spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions. Educational institutions such as mosques and kuttāb became centers for knowledge transmission, while the standardization of the Qur'an, expansion of scholarly networks, appointment of teachers, and establishment of educational centers significantly strengthened Islamic intellectual development. Furthermore, each caliph introduced distinctive educational policies that collectively contributed to preserving Islamic teachings and fostering scientific advancement. The study concludes that the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs established the essential educational foundations for the flourishing of Islamic civilization and continues to offer valuable educational principles for contemporary Islamic education.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Rightly Guided Caliphs, Islamic Civilization

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sistem pendidikan Islam pada masa Khulafaur Rasyidin serta mengkaji kontribusinya terhadap perkembangan peradaban Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research), melalui analisis terhadap literatur klasik Islam, catatan sejarah, dan karya-karya ilmiah kontemporer yang membahas filsafat pendidikan, kurikulum, lembaga pendidikan, metode pembelajaran, kepemimpinan pendidikan, serta kebijakan pendidikan yang diterapkan pada masa pemerintahan Abu Bakar al-

Ṣiddīq, Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, Utsman bin Affan, dan Ali bin Abi Ṭalib. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan Islam pada periode tersebut berkembang menjadi suatu sistem pendidikan yang terstruktur dengan karakteristik integrasi dimensi spiritual, intelektual, moral, dan sosial. Lembaga pendidikan seperti masjid dan kuttāb berfungsi sebagai pusat transmisi ilmu pengetahuan, sementara standarisasi Al-Qur'an, perluasan jaringan keilmuan, pengangkatan para guru, serta pendirian pusat-pusat pendidikan memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan terhadap penguatan perkembangan intelektual Islam. Selain itu, setiap khalifah menerapkan kebijakan pendidikan yang khas, yang secara kolektif berperan dalam menjaga kemurnian ajaran Islam sekaligus mendorong kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa sistem pendidikan Islam pada masa Khulafaur Rasyidin telah meletakkan fondasi pendidikan yang kokoh bagi kejayaan peradaban Islam serta tetap menawarkan prinsip-prinsip pendidikan yang relevan bagi pengembangan pendidikan Islam kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Khulafaur Rasyidin, Peradaban Islam.

Introduction

Islamic education has historically functioned as the primary instrument for preserving religious teachings, cultivating moral character, and developing intellectual capacity within Muslim society. Since the revelation of the first Qur'anic verses emphasizing reading and knowledge, education has occupied a central position in the Islamic worldview.¹ Unlike educational traditions that merely prioritize intellectual achievement, Islamic education seeks to integrate faith, knowledge, morality, and social responsibility into a comprehensive framework of human development. The educational philosophy established by Prophet Muhammad created a generation of Muslims whose excellence was reflected in both spiritual devotion and social leadership. Following the Prophet's death, preserving this educational legacy became one of the greatest responsibilities of the emerging Muslim leadership.² Consequently, education became inseparable from the political, social, and religious development of the Islamic state.

The transition of leadership following the death of Prophet Muhammad marked the beginning of a new phase in Islamic educational history. The appointment of Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq as the first caliph ensured the continuity of the prophetic mission through the preservation and dissemination of Islamic knowledge. Although the Muslim community experienced political and military challenges during this period, educational activities continued to receive significant attention from the state. The educational system inherited from the Prophet was maintained while gradually adapting to the changing circumstances of an expanding Islamic society.³ This continuity demonstrates that education was considered a strategic instrument for maintaining religious unity and strengthening social cohesion. Therefore, the

¹ Christopher Melchert, "The Rightly Guided Caliphs: The Range of Views Preserved in Ḥadīth," *Political Quietism in Islam: Sunnī and Shī'ī Practice and Thought*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781838607678.ch-004>.

² I. Wen Su, "The Early Shi'i Kufan Traditionists' Perspective on the Rightly Guided Caliphs," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 141, no. 1 (2021): 27–48, <https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.141.1.0027>.

³ Rauf Abdullah Moh d. Al-Shraiyyeen, "A Reading in the Life of Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari During the Time of the Prophet and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs," *Jordan Journal for History and Archaeology* 16, no. 1 (2022): 50–73, <https://doi.org/10.54134/jjha.16.1.3>.

Rashidun period represents a critical stage in the institutionalization of Islamic education.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Islamic education during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs was its comprehensive orientation toward developing balanced individuals. Educational activities emphasized not only the mastery of Qur'anic knowledge but also the cultivation of ethical values, leadership qualities, and practical skills necessary for governing an expanding civilization. Learning occurred through direct interaction between teachers and students, enabling the transmission of both knowledge and exemplary conduct. The close relationship between educators and learners created an educational environment characterized by sincerity, discipline, and intellectual curiosity. Such educational principles contributed significantly to the formation of competent scholars, judges, administrators, and community leaders.⁴ Consequently, Islamic education became one of the principal driving forces behind the emergence of an advanced Islamic civilization.

The rapid territorial expansion of the Islamic state during the reigns of the Rightly Guided Caliphs created unprecedented educational opportunities and challenges. Newly incorporated regions required qualified educators capable of introducing Islamic beliefs, legal principles, and ethical values to culturally diverse populations. The caliphs responded by dispatching knowledgeable Companions of the Prophet to newly established cities where they served simultaneously as teachers, judges, and community leaders. Educational centers gradually emerged in cities such as Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Fustat, and Jerusalem. These institutions facilitated the dissemination of Islamic knowledge while encouraging intellectual interaction among different communities. Consequently, educational expansion became an integral component of state development and civilizational progress.

Another significant characteristic of this educational period was the central role of mosques and kuttab as educational institutions. The mosque functioned as more than a place of worship; it became the principal institution for religious instruction, scholarly discussion, legal consultation, and community education. Meanwhile, kuttab provided elementary education focusing on literacy, Qur'anic recitation, writing, and the basic principles of Islamic belief and worship.⁵ Together, these institutions created a comprehensive educational structure capable of serving learners from various social and economic backgrounds. Their accessibility contributed to widespread literacy and religious understanding among Muslim communities. The institutional model established during this period later inspired the development of madrasah and higher educational institutions throughout the Islamic world.

The preservation of the Qur'an constituted one of the most remarkable educational achievements during the caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. The martyrdom of numerous Qur'anic memorizers during the Battle of Yamamah raised serious concerns regarding the preservation of the divine revelation. Upon the recommendation of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abu Bakr commissioned Zayd ibn Thābit to compile the Qur'anic manuscripts into a unified collection. This initiative was not

⁴ Elkhailifa Mohamed Omer, "The Ata System: Its Origin, Development and Socio-Economic Impact on the Society of Medina during the Eras of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (11-40ah/632-661ad)," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 15, no. 1 (2020): 109–17, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol15no1.7>.

⁵ Yasser Ahmad Noor, "The Mandate of Mecca in the Era of the Prophecy and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (8-40 AH/ 629-661 AD)," *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 42, no. 3 (2015): 645–62, <https://doi.org/10.12816/0024414>.

merely a political decision but represented a strategic educational policy aimed at safeguarding the authenticity of the primary source of Islamic knowledge. The compilation of the Qur'an subsequently became the cornerstone of Islamic educational activities and facilitated uniformity in teaching throughout the Muslim community. Consequently, the preservation of the Qur'an during this period established a permanent intellectual foundation upon which subsequent generations of Muslim scholarship were built.

Educational development became increasingly systematic during the reign of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, whose administrative reforms significantly influenced the expansion of Islamic learning. Recognizing that newly conquered territories required competent religious leadership, Umar appointed distinguished Companions as teachers and judges in strategic provinces. Educational centers flourished in Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Fustat, and other major cities, transforming these urban centers into hubs of intellectual activity.⁶ The mosque remained the principal educational institution, yet learning gradually became more organized through the establishment of dedicated instructional spaces and structured learning circles. Teachers received financial support from the Bayt al-Māl, demonstrating governmental recognition of education as a public responsibility rather than merely an individual obligation. Such educational policies reveal Umar's vision of integrating governance with educational development to strengthen both religious commitment and administrative effectiveness throughout the Islamic state.

The caliphate of Uthman ibn Affān further strengthened Islamic education through the standardization of the Qur'anic text, an achievement that profoundly influenced the development of Islamic scholarship. As Islam expanded into linguistically diverse regions, differences in Qur'anic recitation began to emerge among Muslim communities. To preserve textual authenticity and educational consistency, Uthman established a committee led by Zayd ibn Thābit to prepare an official version of the Qur'an based on the Quraysh dialect. Copies of the standardized manuscript were distributed to major Islamic provinces, ensuring uniformity in Qur'anic instruction across the expanding empire.⁷ This initiative significantly enhanced the quality of Islamic education by providing a single authoritative textual reference for teachers and students alike. The Uthmanic codification consequently became one of the most enduring educational reforms in the history of Islamic civilization and remains the foundation of Qur'anic education throughout the Muslim world today.

Unlike the relatively stable administrations of his predecessors, the caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib was characterized by significant political conflict and internal divisions. Civil wars, including the Battles of Jamal, Ṣiffīn, and Nahrawān, inevitably affected the pace of educational development because governmental attention became concentrated on restoring political stability. Nevertheless, educational activities did not cease entirely during this turbulent period. Mosques continued to function as centers of learning, while prominent scholars among the Companions

⁶ A. Akrim et al., "Transformation of Islamic Education Curriculum Development Policy in the National Education System," *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences* 17, no. 7 (2022): 2538–52, <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17i7.7685>.

⁷ Umi Yawisah, Agusman Khotibul Umam, and Mahrus Asad, "The Implications of Learning Management System on Education Quality in the New Normal Era: Evidence from Islamic Higher Education," *Www.Jsser.Org Journal of Social Studies Education Research Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2022, no. 13 (2022): 147–69, www.jsser.org.

maintained the transmission of Qur'anic knowledge, Hadith, jurisprudence, and ethical instruction.⁸ Ali himself was renowned for his profound intellectual insight, eloquence, and legal reasoning, qualities that later inspired numerous traditions of Islamic scholarship. His emphasis on wisdom, critical reflection, and justice contributed to the intellectual maturation of early Islamic educational thought despite the political challenges confronting the Muslim community.

Although numerous studies have examined Islamic education during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, most have concentrated primarily on historical narratives or the contributions of individual caliphs. Relatively limited attention has been devoted to analyzing the Islamic education system as an integrated framework encompassing educational philosophy, institutional development, curriculum, leadership, governance, and civilizational transformation. Furthermore, contemporary educational discourse increasingly demands historical models capable of addressing challenges associated with globalization, technological advancement, moral degradation, and educational reform. Therefore, this study seeks to reconstruct the Islamic education system of the Rashidun era from a comprehensive educational perspective rather than merely presenting chronological historical events. The novelty of this research lies in conceptualizing the educational policies of the Rightly Guided Caliphs as the foundational architecture of Islamic civilization and as a continuing source of inspiration for contemporary Islamic educational reform. By integrating historical evidence with educational theory, this study contributes a broader analytical framework that enriches the discourse on Islamic educational history and its relevance to twenty-first-century educational development.

Literature Review

Islamic education is fundamentally rooted in the concept of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib*, which collectively represent the holistic process of nurturing human beings intellectually, spiritually, morally, and socially. Unlike secular educational philosophies that frequently emphasize cognitive development as the principal objective, Islamic education seeks to cultivate balanced individuals who integrate faith (*īmān*), knowledge (*ilm*), righteous action (*'amal ṣāliḥ*), and noble character (*akhlāq*). Classical Muslim scholars such as Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sahnūn, Ibn Jama'ah, Al-Zarnūjī, and Ibn Khaldūn consistently argued that education should produce individuals capable of fulfilling their dual responsibilities as servants of Allah (*'abd Allāh*) and vicegerents on earth (*khalīfatullāh fī al-arḍ*).⁹ Consequently, Islamic educational philosophy extends beyond classroom instruction by emphasizing ethical formation, social responsibility, intellectual excellence, and spiritual purification. This comprehensive educational orientation differentiates Islamic education from many modern educational paradigms that prioritize technical competence while neglecting moral and spiritual development. Therefore, understanding the philosophical foundations of Islamic education is indispensable for analyzing educational practices during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

⁸ Mukhamad Hadi Musolin et al., "Toward an Islamic Education Administration System: A Critical Contribution from Technology Adoption," *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems* 1054 LNNS (2025): 309–23, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-5035-1_23.

⁹ Fereidoun Azizi et al., "Impact of Integration of Medical Education in the Health System of Islamic Republic of Iran," *Strides in Development of Medical Education Journal*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.22062/sdme.2024.92416>.

The Qur'an and the Sunnah constitute the primary epistemological sources of Islamic education and provide the normative framework governing educational objectives, curriculum, instructional methods, and ethical values. Numerous Qur'anic verses encourage reflection, observation, reasoning, and the pursuit of knowledge as acts of worship that strengthen human understanding of divine creation.¹⁰ Likewise, the Prophetic traditions consistently emphasize the virtues of learning, teaching, and transmitting knowledge to future generations. The first revealed command, "Read" (*Iqra'*), symbolizes the centrality of literacy and intellectual inquiry within Islamic civilization. Consequently, knowledge is regarded not merely as an instrument for economic advancement but as a means of attaining closeness to Allah and promoting social justice. This epistemological perspective profoundly influenced the educational policies implemented by the Rightly Guided Caliphs, whose governance consistently integrated religious knowledge with administrative responsibility and public welfare.

The educational system established by Prophet Muhammad in Makkah and Madinah served as the direct prototype for educational development during the Rashidun period. During the Makkan phase, education concentrated primarily on strengthening faith, moral resilience, and spiritual consciousness among early Muslims facing severe persecution. Following the migration to Madinah, educational objectives expanded to include legal instruction, community organization, political leadership, economic ethics, and social cohesion. The Prophet transformed the mosque into an institution that simultaneously functioned as a place of worship, educational center, judicial forum, and community consultation hall. His instructional methodology combined direct teaching, dialogue, demonstration, memorization, mentorship, experiential learning, and exemplary leadership. These educational principles were subsequently preserved and institutionalized by the Rightly Guided Caliphs, ensuring continuity between prophetic education and post-prophetic governance.

The concept of educational continuity occupies a central place in understanding the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Rather than introducing an entirely new educational philosophy, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali focused on preserving, strengthening, and expanding the educational model established by Prophet Muhammad. Their educational reforms reflected adaptive responses to new political, demographic, and cultural realities resulting from the rapid expansion of the Islamic state.¹¹ The establishment of educational centers in newly conquered territories, the appointment of qualified teachers, the standardization of Qur'anic manuscripts, and the encouragement of scholarly mobility collectively demonstrate the institutional maturation of Islamic education. These developments indicate that educational policy during the Rashidun era was characterized by continuity accompanied by contextual innovation rather than abrupt transformation. Such continuity enabled Islamic education to maintain doctrinal authenticity while responding effectively to changing civilizational circumstances.

Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that the educational achievements of the Rightly Guided Caliphs cannot be understood solely through

¹⁰ Nur Hanisfatin Rushami Zien, Nurul Azma Abu Bakar, and Rohaizah Saad, "Unveiling Insights: A Dataset Analysis of Islamic Quality Management Systems in Educational Institutions toward SDG-Aligned Education," *Data in Brief*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2024.110343>.

¹¹ M. Arif Rahman Hakim et al., "The Reconstruction of Blended Learning Teaching Model for Full Online Learning System: A Study on English Education Department in Islamic Universities in Indonesia," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 22, no. 4 (2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.26803/IJLTER.22.4.1>.

political history but must also be interpreted within the broader framework of civilizational development. Education functioned as the principal mechanism through which Islamic beliefs, ethical norms, legal traditions, linguistic unity, and administrative competencies were transmitted across diverse societies. Consequently, the educational institutions established during this period facilitated not only religious instruction but also the emergence of scientific inquiry, judicial administration, public governance, and intellectual exchange.¹² Modern historians argue that the remarkable expansion of Islamic civilization during subsequent Umayyad and Abbasid periods would have been impossible without the educational foundations established by the Rashidun leadership. Therefore, examining the Islamic education system during this formative era provides essential insights into the relationship between education, governance, and sustainable civilizational development. This perspective forms the conceptual foundation for the present study, which reconstructs the Rashidun educational system as an integrated model of Islamic educational excellence rather than merely a historical narrative.

Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq established the initial educational policy that ensured the continuity of the prophetic educational mission after the death of Prophet Muhammad. His leadership emphasized preserving the authenticity of Islamic teachings while maintaining educational stability during a period marked by political uncertainty and the Ridda Wars. Among his most influential educational achievements was the initiation of the compilation of the Qur'an following the martyrdom of numerous Qur'anic memorizers in the Battle of Yamamah. This policy represented a strategic effort to protect the primary source of Islamic education and prevent the loss of revealed knowledge. Beyond preserving the Qur'an, Abu Bakr encouraged the continuation of mosque-based instruction and supported the educational activities of the Prophet's Companions throughout the Muslim community.¹³ His educational philosophy demonstrates that preserving authentic knowledge constitutes the first prerequisite for sustainable educational development and the advancement of civilization.

The educational reforms implemented during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb marked a significant transition from educational preservation toward systematic educational expansion. Umar understood that the rapid territorial growth of the Islamic state required an organized educational infrastructure capable of serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Consequently, he appointed highly qualified Companions as teachers, judges, governors, and religious instructors in newly established provinces. Cities such as Kufa, Basra, Fustat, and Damascus gradually developed into major centers of Islamic scholarship under his administration. Umar also encouraged educational professionalism by providing financial support for teachers through the public treasury, thereby recognizing education as a public responsibility rather than an exclusively private endeavor. These reforms illustrate how educational governance became an integral component of state administration and contributed significantly to the institutionalization of Islamic education.

¹² Zaini Dahlan, Salminawati, and Muhammad Yusuf, "The Development of Islamic Boarding School-Based Higher Education System (Ma'had 'Aly) in Indonesia," *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope* 6, no. 3 (2025): 677–88, <https://doi.org/10.47857/irjms.2025.v06i03.04984>.

¹³ Muhammad Alif Fauzi, Ani Purwanti, and Muh Afif Mahfud, "Power Relations and Sexual Violence in Islamic Boarding School: Assessing Child Protection Systems in Religious Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Revista Direito e Sexualidade* 6, no. 1 (2025): 253–325, <https://doi.org/10.9771/rds.v6i1.66891>.

Uthman ibn Affān contributed profoundly to the standardization and dissemination of Islamic educational resources through the codification of the Qur'anic text. As Islam expanded into regions characterized by different linguistic traditions, variations in Qur'anic recitation threatened educational consistency and communal unity. Uthman therefore commissioned the preparation of an official Qur'anic manuscript based on the Quraysh dialect and distributed authenticated copies throughout the Islamic provinces. This initiative established a unified textual foundation that enabled teachers across different regions to deliver consistent Qur'anic instruction.¹⁴ The standardization of the Mushaf also enhanced the credibility of Islamic scholarship by minimizing textual discrepancies and strengthening the reliability of religious education. Consequently, Uthman's educational policy became one of the most enduring intellectual achievements in Islamic history and continues to shape Qur'anic education throughout the Muslim world.

The educational contribution of Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib is primarily reflected in his emphasis on intellectual reasoning, ethical leadership, and critical inquiry. Although his caliphate was challenged by prolonged political conflict, Ali consistently promoted learning as a means of cultivating justice, wisdom, and moral responsibility. His sermons, legal opinions, and public teachings encouraged Muslims to employ reason in understanding religious texts while maintaining unwavering commitment to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Many classical Muslim scholars regard Ali as one of the earliest proponents of analytical thinking within the Islamic intellectual tradition because of his profound legal reasoning and philosophical insight. His educational perspective demonstrates that genuine scholarship requires the harmonious integration of revelation, rationality, and ethical conduct. This intellectual legacy later influenced the development of Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and philosophical discourse throughout subsequent centuries.

A comparative examination of the educational leadership exercised by the four Rightly Guided Caliphs reveals complementary rather than contrasting educational priorities. Abu Bakr concentrated on preserving the authenticity of revelation and ensuring educational continuity following the Prophet's death. Umar institutionalized educational governance by expanding learning centers, appointing qualified educators, and integrating education into public administration. Uthman strengthened educational unity through the standardization and dissemination of the Qur'anic text, thereby ensuring consistency in religious instruction across the rapidly expanding Islamic world. Ali enriched the intellectual dimension of Islamic education by emphasizing critical reflection, ethical reasoning, and wisdom as essential components of scholarship.¹⁵ Collectively, these educational contributions illustrate that the Rashidun educational system evolved through successive stages of preservation, expansion, standardization, and intellectual maturation, ultimately establishing the educational foundations upon which the flourishing of Islamic civilization was built.

¹⁴ Gorkem Altinors, "The Emergence of Islamic Neoliberalism in Turkish Political Economy: The Governance of Education Systems in Turkey," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 27, no. 5 (2025): 779–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2025.2461973>.

¹⁵ Mukhamad Hadi Musolin, Reda Owis Hassan Serour, and Miftachul Huda, "Developing System for Online Archive Management in Islamic Education: An Empirical Literature Review," *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-00712-4_19.

The institutional structure of Islamic education during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs reflected a community-oriented model that integrated religious life with educational activities. Unlike modern educational systems characterized by formal administrative hierarchies, Islamic education during this period developed through institutions deeply embedded within society.¹⁶ Mosques functioned as the principal educational centers where Muslims gathered not only for worship but also for instruction, scholarly dialogue, legal consultation, and community deliberation. Alongside the mosque, the *kuttab* emerged as an elementary educational institution responsible for teaching literacy, Qur'anic recitation, writing, and the foundations of Islamic belief. Informal learning circles (*halaqah*) also played an essential role in facilitating advanced study under distinguished scholars and Companions of the Prophet. The coexistence of these institutions created an educational ecosystem that was accessible, inclusive, and capable of accommodating learners of different ages, intellectual abilities, and social backgrounds.¹⁷ This institutional diversity significantly contributed to the rapid dissemination of Islamic knowledge throughout the expanding Muslim territories and became the prototype for later Islamic educational institutions such as the *madrasah* and the *jami'ah*.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using the library research approach to investigate the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and its contribution to the development of Islamic civilization. Library research was selected because the subject of investigation concerns historical educational phenomena that require systematic examination of documentary sources rather than empirical field observations. Through this approach, the researcher analyzed various classical Islamic texts, historical documents, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and other relevant academic publications discussing Islamic educational history, educational institutions, curriculum development, educational leadership, and civilizational transformation during the Rashidun period. The library research approach enables comprehensive interpretation of historical evidence by integrating multiple perspectives from classical and contemporary scholarship. Furthermore, this method facilitates critical synthesis among diverse sources to reconstruct the educational system implemented by the four Rightly Guided Caliphs. Consequently, library research is considered the most appropriate methodology for achieving the objectives of the present study.

The primary data sources consisted of classical Islamic references documenting the educational practices implemented during the caliphates of Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Uthman ibn Affān, and Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib. Classical works discussing Islamic educational philosophy, Qur'anic studies, Hadith, Islamic history, and the biographies of the Companions were utilized to establish the historical foundation of the study. Secondary data were obtained from contemporary scholarly publications, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, conference papers, and scientific reports concerning Islamic educational history and

¹⁶ Ahmad Dzulfahmi Muhamad, "The Role of Syeikh Abbas Bakar Rafiee in the Reformation of the Islamic Education System in Madrasah Al-Mashoor Al-Islamiah Pulau Pinang, 1922–1957," *Kajian Malaysia* 41, no. 1 (2023): 189–212, <https://doi.org/10.21315/km2023.41.1.10>.

¹⁷ Ara Hidayat, Elftidawati M. Dhuhan, and Hasbiyallah, "Evaluating the Acceptance and Use of Education Management Information System (EMIS) 4.0 in a Private Islamic Boarding School Based on the Technology Acceptance Model," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2025): 349–62, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i2.150>.

educational management. Particular attention was given to recent publications that discuss the relevance of Rashidun educational principles to contemporary Islamic education. The integration of classical and modern literature enabled the researcher to construct a balanced analytical framework while minimizing historical bias. This combination also strengthened the reliability of interpretations by comparing historical evidence with contemporary academic analyses.

Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation techniques involving identification, selection, classification, and organization of relevant literature. Initially, scholarly materials were collected from academic databases, university libraries, digital repositories, and authoritative Islamic references based on predetermined inclusion criteria. Subsequently, the collected documents were categorized according to major analytical themes, including educational philosophy, educational objectives, educational institutions, curriculum, instructional methods, educational leadership, educational policies, and contributions to Islamic civilization. Each document was critically reviewed to identify conceptual similarities, theoretical differences, and historical evidence relevant to the research objectives. Important findings extracted from each source were then systematically organized into thematic categories to facilitate comparative analysis. This documentation procedure ensured that all collected data directly contributed to answering the research questions while maintaining analytical consistency throughout the study.

The data analysis employed qualitative content analysis combined with thematic analysis to interpret historical and educational information obtained from the selected literature. The analytical process began with repeated reading of the collected documents to gain comprehensive understanding of the educational concepts discussed within each source. Subsequently, relevant information was coded according to predetermined analytical categories, enabling the identification of recurring educational themes across different historical and scholarly works. Comparative analysis was then conducted to examine similarities and differences among educational policies implemented by the four Rightly Guided Caliphs as well as their collective contribution to the advancement of Islamic civilization. The synthesized findings were interpreted through the perspective of contemporary Islamic educational theory in order to demonstrate their continuing relevance to present-day educational development. This analytical strategy facilitated the reconstruction of the Rashidun educational system as an integrated educational model rather than merely a chronological historical narrative.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs evolved into a comprehensive educational framework that successfully integrated religious values, intellectual development, ethical formation, administrative competence, and social responsibility.¹⁸ Rather than functioning merely as an instrument for transmitting religious knowledge, education became the principal mechanism for preserving Islamic identity and strengthening the

¹⁸ Afnan Haj Ali and Ismael Abu-Saad, "Quality of Work Life, Cultural Values, and Islamic Work Ethics: The Case of the Arab Education System in Israel," *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 24, no. 2 (2024): 385–410, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958241256729>.

rapidly expanding Muslim community.¹⁹ The four caliphs implemented complementary educational policies that collectively established a systematic educational tradition capable of supporting both religious continuity and civilizational development. Educational institutions, curriculum, instructional methods, leadership, and governance developed simultaneously in response to the political, social, and cultural changes experienced by the Islamic state. These findings demonstrate that educational development during the Rashidun period was characterized by strategic planning rather than spontaneous historical evolution. Consequently, the educational system established during this era became the cornerstone upon which subsequent Islamic civilization flourished.

The educational philosophy implemented during the Rashidun period was fundamentally derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, emphasizing the harmonious integration of faith, knowledge, righteous action, and noble character. Education was understood as a lifelong obligation intended to cultivate individuals capable of fulfilling their responsibilities toward Allah and society. The educational process sought to develop intellectual competence without separating it from spiritual purification and ethical refinement. Such philosophical orientation ensured that educational activities consistently promoted justice, sincerity, compassion, honesty, and public welfare.²⁰ The holistic nature of this philosophy distinguished Islamic education from educational traditions concerned primarily with technical or vocational competence. Therefore, educational philosophy functioned as the normative foundation guiding all educational policies implemented by the four caliphs.

The objectives of Islamic education during this period extended beyond literacy and religious instruction toward the formation of morally responsible and socially productive individuals. Educational institutions aimed to prepare Muslims who possessed sound religious understanding, intellectual capability, leadership qualities, and practical administrative skills. As the Islamic state expanded geographically, educational objectives also included preparing judges, governors, military commanders, teachers, and public administrators capable of governing newly incorporated territories according to Islamic principles. The educational system therefore supported both personal spiritual development and institutional state-building. This dual orientation contributed significantly to the stability and cohesion of the expanding Muslim civilization. Consequently, education became a strategic instrument for strengthening religious identity while simultaneously promoting effective governance.

The institutional findings reveal that mosques functioned as multifunctional educational centers integrating worship, teaching, judicial consultation, public discussion, and community administration. Alongside the mosque, the kuttab served as the primary institution for elementary education by introducing children to Qur'anic recitation, literacy, writing, and basic religious instruction. Informal halaqah further facilitated advanced learning through direct interaction between scholars and students. These educational institutions operated collaboratively rather than competitively, thereby providing lifelong educational opportunities for diverse

¹⁹ Shima Tabatabai and Nasser Simforoosh, "A Conceptual Framework to Incorporate Fundamental Values in the Health and Medical Education System in Islamic Republic of Iran," *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal* 29, no. 8 (2023): 608–19, <https://doi.org/10.26719/emhj.23.089>.

²⁰ Supriyanto Supriyanto et al., "Ma'had Aly and the Future of Islamic Higher Education: Bridging Tradition and Modernity in Indonesia's Islamic Religious College System," *Kharisma: Jurnal Administrasi Dan Manajemen Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 145–56, <https://doi.org/10.59373/kharisma.v4i2.119>.

segments of society.²¹ Their accessibility contributed significantly to the rapid dissemination of Islamic knowledge across newly conquered territories. As a result, institutional development became one of the principal strengths of the Rashidun educational system.

Another important finding concerns curriculum development, which gradually expanded from basic Qur'anic education to encompass Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic language, history, genealogy, administrative sciences, and practical governance. During the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, educational content increasingly reflected the administrative requirements of an expanding Islamic state. Uthman ibn Affān further strengthened curricular consistency through the standardization of the Qur'anic text, ensuring uniform educational references throughout the Muslim world. Curriculum development therefore responded dynamically to societal transformation while preserving its theological foundations. This balanced approach enabled learners to acquire both religious competence and practical knowledge necessary for public service. Such curricular flexibility significantly contributed to the intellectual resilience of early Islamic civilization.

The findings further indicate that instructional methods emphasized learner engagement through memorization, dialogue, discussion, demonstration, mentoring, observation, repetition, and practical application. Memorization remained essential for preserving the Qur'an and Hadith, yet comprehension and implementation received equal emphasis throughout the learning process.²² Teachers adapted instructional approaches according to learners' intellectual capacities and educational needs, reflecting an early appreciation of learner-centered education. Educational interaction encouraged questioning, reflection, and critical thinking while maintaining respect for revealed knowledge. This pedagogical flexibility facilitated both intellectual development and moral formation among learners. Consequently, teaching methodology became one of the defining characteristics of educational excellence during the Rashidun era.

Leadership constituted another major finding of this study. Each caliph introduced distinctive educational policies corresponding to the challenges of his administration while preserving the prophetic educational tradition. Abu Bakr prioritized preservation of revelation, Umar institutionalized educational administration, Uthman standardized educational resources, and Ali emphasized intellectual reasoning and ethical leadership. These complementary contributions illustrate that educational leadership evolved progressively throughout the Rashidun period rather than remaining static. Government actively supported educational expansion through teacher appointments, establishment of educational centers, and dissemination of scholarly resources.²³ Therefore, educational leadership emerged as a decisive factor in the successful development of Islamic civilization.

²¹ Sara Mazzei, "The Identity Construction in Arab-Islamic Education Systems Into the Experiences of People from Morocco and Syria Living in Europe," *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies* 5, no. 2 (2024): 74–99, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jems.00005>.

²² Yuli Nur Diyanto and Eva Latipah, "The Roles of Educational Stakeholders in the Finnish Education System: Insights for Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 21, no. 2 (2024): 275–86, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v21i2.8182>.

²³ Wahyu Syahputra et al., "Examining the Psychometric Properties of the Prosocial Behavior Scale Using Indonesian Pesantren (Islamic Boarding Education System) Sample," *Jurnal Pengukuran Psikologi Dan Pendidikan Indonesia* 13, no. 2 (2024): 180–98, <https://doi.org/10.15408/jp3i.v13i2.39054>.

The expansion of education beyond the Arabian Peninsula represents another significant finding. Newly established educational centers in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Persia became regional hubs for transmitting Islamic knowledge and cultivating future scholars. Distinguished Companions were dispatched to these provinces to teach the Qur'an, Hadith, jurisprudence, and Arabic language while simultaneously serving as judges and community leaders. Educational expansion facilitated not only religious instruction but also linguistic unity, administrative integration, and social cohesion among culturally diverse populations. The widespread establishment of educational institutions accelerated the diffusion of Islamic civilization throughout the expanding empire. These developments demonstrate that education functioned as an essential instrument of peaceful civilizational integration rather than merely religious propagation.

Finally, this study finds that the educational system established during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs exerted a profound influence upon the subsequent development of Islamic civilization. The educational institutions, curriculum, leadership, ethical values, and scholarly traditions developed during this period provided the intellectual foundations for the remarkable scientific achievements witnessed during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras. The continuity of Qur'anic education, scholarly transmission, institutional learning, and ethical leadership enabled Islamic civilization to become one of the world's leading centers of knowledge for many centuries.²⁴ Furthermore, numerous educational principles established during the Rashidun period remain relevant for addressing contemporary educational challenges concerning character formation, leadership, curriculum integration, and educational governance. Accordingly, the findings confirm that the Rashidun educational system represents not merely a historical phenomenon but an enduring educational model capable of informing contemporary Islamic educational reform.

Table I. Major Findings on the Islamic Education System during the Era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

Educational Dimension	Major Findings	Contribution to Islamic Civilization
Educational Philosophy	Integration of faith, knowledge, ethics, and action	Formation of holistic Muslim personalities
Educational Objectives	Religious, intellectual, moral, and administrative development	Preparation of competent scholars and leaders
Educational Institutions	Mosque, Kuttah, and Halaqah	Expansion of accessible learning systems
Curriculum	Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic, administration, history	Balanced religious and practical education
Teaching Methods	Memorization, dialogue, mentoring, discussion, demonstration	Active and character-oriented learning
Educational Leadership	Educational reforms under the four caliphs	Institutional strengthening of Islamic education

²⁴ Nur Handayani et al., "The Concept of Financial Accountability in Education System: Study on Private Own Islamic Boarding School," *Quality - Access to Success* 23, no. 189 (2022): 48–55, <https://doi.org/10.47750/QAS/23.189.07>.

Educational Dimension	Major Findings	Contribution to Islamic Civilization
Educational Policy	Codification of Qur'an, teacher deployment, educational administration	Standardization and expansion of education
Educational Expansion	New educational centers throughout the Islamic world	Dissemination of Islamic knowledge
Educational Values	Justice, sincerity, trustworthiness, consultation, social responsibility	Formation of ethical civilization
Civilizational Impact	Foundation of scientific and intellectual development	Emergence of classical Islamic civilization

The findings demonstrate that the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs represented a holistic educational model integrating spiritual, intellectual, ethical, social, and administrative dimensions. This holistic orientation corresponds closely with Al-Ghazālī's educational philosophy, which emphasizes that the ultimate objective of education is the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the cultivation of righteous conduct through beneficial knowledge. During the Rashidun period, educational activities consistently linked knowledge with action, ensuring that learning was reflected in moral behavior and public service. Such integration prevented the separation between religious devotion and societal responsibility. The findings therefore indicate that Islamic education functioned as a comprehensive process of human development rather than merely an intellectual enterprise. This perspective remains highly relevant for addressing contemporary educational systems that frequently prioritize academic achievement while neglecting ethical formation.

The integration of revelation and rational inquiry identified in this study also supports the educational philosophy of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who defines Islamic education as the process of instilling *adab* within the learner. The Rashidun educational model demonstrates that knowledge was never transmitted independently from ethical responsibility. Teachers functioned not only as providers of information but also as moral exemplars whose conduct embodied Islamic values. Consequently, the educational relationship became a transformative process aimed at developing disciplined, responsible, and spiritually conscious individuals.²⁵ This educational culture explains why the Companions of the Prophet became successful administrators, scholars, military leaders, judges, and community reformers simultaneously. The findings therefore reinforce Al-Attas' proposition that genuine education must integrate knowledge with ethical civilization.

Another significant finding concerns the institutional role of the mosque as the central educational institution during the Rashidun era. Unlike many contemporary educational institutions characterized by specialization and fragmentation, the mosque simultaneously functioned as a place of worship, educational center, judicial institution, public consultation forum, and social service center. This multifunctional character reflects Hasan Langgulung's view that Islamic education should integrate all dimensions of human life rather than separating

²⁵ Reda Owis Hassan Serour, Mukhamad Hadi Musolin, and Miftachul Huda, "Digital Archive Management System Development in Islamic Education: Critical Review from Recent Literature," *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*, 2026, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-04581-2_20.

religious instruction from social realities. Educational institutions were therefore designed to cultivate intellectual competence alongside civic responsibility and spiritual maturity. Such integration contributed significantly to the emergence of cohesive Muslim communities capable of sustaining rapid civilizational expansion. The findings suggest that contemporary Islamic educational institutions may benefit from strengthening community engagement alongside formal academic instruction.

The curriculum identified in this study illustrates the dynamic nature of Islamic education during the Rashidun period. Although the Qur'an remained the principal educational source, curricular content gradually expanded to include Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic language, administrative sciences, history, and practical governance in response to societal transformation. This curricular flexibility corresponds with Ibn Khaldūn's educational theory, which argues that curriculum should evolve according to the developmental needs of civilization while remaining firmly grounded in religious principles. Rather than viewing religious and practical sciences as contradictory, Rashidun education integrated both within a unified educational framework. Such balance enabled learners to acquire religious understanding together with professional competencies necessary for governing an expanding Islamic state.²⁶ This finding demonstrates that curriculum reform has historically constituted an essential characteristic of Islamic educational development rather than a modern innovation.

The pedagogical approaches employed during the Rashidun period also reveal educational principles that remain compatible with contemporary educational theory. Learning was conducted through dialogue, observation, repetition, mentoring, consultation, memorization, and practical application rather than relying exclusively upon passive instruction. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan emphasizes that effective Islamic education requires exemplary conduct, continuous guidance, habituation, advice, and meaningful interaction between educators and learners. The instructional methods identified in this study closely correspond with these educational principles because they encouraged learners to internalize Islamic values through direct experience and social participation. Educational success was therefore measured not solely by cognitive achievement but also by observable moral transformation. This pedagogical orientation remains highly applicable for contemporary Islamic education seeking to strengthen character formation in addition to academic excellence.

The educational leadership exercised by the four Rightly Guided Caliphs represents another important contribution to Islamic educational thought. Each caliph implemented educational reforms that addressed the unique challenges of his administration while preserving the prophetic educational tradition. Abu Bakr safeguarded the authenticity of revelation through Qur'anic compilation, Umar institutionalized educational governance, Uthman standardized educational resources, and Ali promoted intellectual reasoning and ethical leadership.²⁷ These complementary contributions illustrate that educational leadership should be adaptive without compromising foundational values. Contemporary theories of educational leadership similarly emphasize strategic vision, organizational

²⁶ Lilik Huriyah and Tosti Hsueh Chiang, "Management of Remuneration System Based on Performance for Lecturers and Employees at Islamic Higher Education as Public Service Agency," *Munaddhomah* 6, no. 4 (2025): 555–74, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.1894>.

²⁷ Zulhannan and Umi Musyarrofah, "Education System and Network of Quran Memorization Islamic Boarding Schools in Kudus, Surakarta, and Bogor," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 1 (2024): 301–30, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol23.iss1.art10>.

development, ethical decision-making, and institutional sustainability. Therefore, the Rashidun educational experience offers an enduring leadership model capable of informing educational governance within modern Islamic institutions.

Another important implication concerns the relationship between education and civilizational development. The findings demonstrate that the remarkable scientific, cultural, and administrative achievements of subsequent Islamic civilization were not accidental but were preceded by systematic educational investment during the Rashidun period. Educational institutions successfully produced scholars, judges, administrators, military commanders, and social reformers whose intellectual capacities supported the expansion of Islamic civilization.²⁸ This historical evidence supports the argument advanced by many contemporary Muslim educational scholars that educational quality constitutes the primary determinant of civilizational progress. Consequently, strengthening Islamic education should be regarded as a long-term strategy for sustainable social and national development rather than merely an educational objective. The Rashidun experience illustrates that educational transformation precedes civilizational transformation.

The findings further reveal that educational governance during the Rashidun era emphasized accessibility, equity, and public responsibility. Educational opportunities were not restricted by social class or economic status because mosques and kuttub functioned as community-based institutions open to all members of society. Government actively supported teachers, educational centers, and scholarly activities through administrative policies and public resources. Such educational governance corresponds with contemporary discussions regarding inclusive education and equitable access to quality learning opportunities. Furthermore, the active involvement of government demonstrates that educational advancement requires collaboration between educational institutions, political leadership, and society. These historical experiences remain particularly relevant for contemporary Muslim countries seeking to improve educational quality through integrated policy reforms.

The relevance of the Rashidun educational system extends beyond historical interest because many contemporary educational challenges resemble those confronted during the early expansion of Islam. Globalization, cultural diversity, technological transformation, ethical crises, and social fragmentation require educational models capable of integrating knowledge with morality and public responsibility. The Rashidun educational experience illustrates that sustainable educational reform depends upon coherent educational philosophy, visionary leadership, institutional strength, curriculum relevance, qualified teachers, and ethical values. Rather than merely replicating historical practices, contemporary Islamic education can reinterpret these foundational principles within present social contexts. Such reconstruction enables Islamic educational institutions to preserve their religious identity while responding effectively to modern educational demands.²⁹ Overall, the discussion confirms that the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs constituted a comprehensive educational

²⁸ Ach Khatib et al., "Policy Implementation of Disability Education in Inclusive Schools: A Comparative Case Study of Islamic and Public Education Systems in Indonesia," *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2026.2642328>.

²⁹ Abdul Rasyad et al., "Islamic Education in the Transitional Era: The Educational System of Nahdlatul Wathan in Lombok, Indonesia, 1936-1960," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 8, no. 4 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2026272>.

civilization model whose influence extended far beyond its historical context. Its educational philosophy, institutional development, curriculum, pedagogy, leadership, governance, and ethical orientation collectively established the intellectual foundations of classical Islamic civilization.

The findings indicate that the success of early Islamic civilization cannot be separated from the systematic educational policies implemented during this formative period. Furthermore, reconstructing these educational principles provides valuable theoretical and practical guidance for strengthening Islamic education in the twenty-first century. The Rashidun educational model therefore should not merely be appreciated as an important chapter in Islamic history but should also be recognized as a living educational paradigm capable of inspiring future educational transformation. Consequently, this study contributes to expanding contemporary discourse concerning the reconstruction of Islamic educational systems based upon authentic historical experience while remaining responsive to present and future educational challenges.

The curriculum implemented during the Rashidun period demonstrated a gradual evolution from a primarily religious orientation toward a broader educational framework capable of supporting administrative and societal development. The Qur'an remained the core subject because it served as the principal source of Islamic belief, law, ethics, and worship. However, educational content gradually expanded to include the memorization and interpretation of Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Arabic grammar, Arabic literature, genealogy, history, and practical administrative knowledge required for governing an increasingly complex state. During the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, educational content also reflected the needs of public administration, including legal reasoning and financial management. Uthman ibn Affān's standardization of the Qur'anic text further strengthened curricular consistency by providing a uniform instructional reference across all educational centers. This curricular development illustrates that Islamic education was responsive to changing societal needs while preserving its theological foundations. Consequently, the curriculum became a strategic instrument for simultaneously cultivating religious commitment, intellectual competence, and administrative capability.

The pedagogical methods employed during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs reveal a sophisticated understanding of effective teaching and learning despite the absence of formal educational theories in their modern sense. Instruction frequently relied on direct oral transmission, repetition, memorization, dialogue, questioning, demonstration, practical application, and continuous mentorship. Memorization of the Qur'an remained fundamental, yet learners were also encouraged to understand meanings, reflect upon divine guidance, and apply Islamic teachings within their daily lives.³⁰ The Companions of the Prophet employed contextual explanations that connected revealed knowledge with practical social realities, thereby promoting meaningful learning rather than mechanical memorization. Educational interaction emphasized sincerity, patience, gradual progression, and mutual respect between teachers and students, creating an environment conducive to intellectual and moral development. These pedagogical characteristics demonstrate that Rashidun education embodied many principles recognized in contemporary educational psychology, including active learning,

³⁰ Akrim et al., "Transformation of Islamic Education Curriculum Development Policy in the National Education System."

experiential learning, learner-centered guidance, and character-based instruction. Such methods contributed significantly to producing generations of Muslims distinguished by intellectual excellence, ethical integrity, and social responsibility.

Teachers occupied an exceptionally respected position within the educational system of the Rightly Guided Caliphs because they functioned simultaneously as educators, jurists, spiritual guides, community leaders, and transmitters of prophetic knowledge. Distinguished Companions such as Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Thābit, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, and Abdullah ibn Abbas became leading educational authorities whose influence extended far beyond Madinah. Their instructional responsibilities included teaching the Qur'an, explaining Hadith, issuing legal opinions, mentoring future scholars, and guiding newly converted Muslim communities in different provinces. Students were expected to demonstrate humility, discipline, intellectual curiosity, and ethical conduct while pursuing knowledge, reflecting the Islamic understanding that education transforms both intellect and character.³¹ The educational relationship between teachers and learners therefore represented a process of comprehensive human development rather than the simple transmission of information. This educational culture strengthened scholarly continuity across generations and established an enduring tradition of intellectual mentorship that became one of the defining characteristics of Islamic civilization.

The educational values cultivated during the Rashidun era ultimately became the ethical foundation of Islamic civilization and explain why Islamic scholarship expanded so rapidly in subsequent centuries. Education consistently emphasized sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), justice (*'adl*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), consultation (*shūrā*), compassion (*raḥmah*), discipline, social responsibility, and lifelong learning as inseparable dimensions of personal and communal development. These values were not merely taught theoretically but were embodied by the caliphs, teachers, judges, and scholars whose exemplary conduct reinforced educational effectiveness.³² The integration of knowledge with ethical action enabled Islamic education to produce leaders capable of governing diverse societies while maintaining commitment to religious principles and public welfare. Modern scholars increasingly argue that the remarkable achievements of Islamic civilization during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods cannot be understood independently from the moral and intellectual foundations established during the Rashidun period. Therefore, the educational values institutionalized by the Rightly Guided Caliphs continue to provide an important conceptual framework for reconstructing contemporary Islamic education in response to the ethical and intellectual challenges of the twenty-first century.

Recent discussions on Islamic education have increasingly emphasized the importance of reconstructing classical educational traditions to address the challenges of globalization, technological transformation, and moral decline. Contemporary Islamic educational institutions are expected to produce graduates who possess not only academic competence but also ethical integrity, spiritual maturity, and social responsibility. Scholars have therefore revisited the educational experiences of early Islamic civilization to identify principles that remain applicable in modern educational contexts. The educational system developed during the era of

³¹ Yawisah, Khotibul Umam, and Asad, "The Implications of Learning Management System on Education Quality in the New Normal Era: Evidence from Islamic Higher Education."

³² Musolin et al., "Toward an Islamic Education Administration System: A Critical Contribution from Technology Adoption."

the Rightly Guided Caliphs offers a historically grounded model in which religious commitment, intellectual development, administrative competence, and community service were integrated into a coherent educational philosophy. Rather than separating religious sciences from practical knowledge, Rashidun education encouraged harmony between revelation, reason, and social responsibility.³³ This integrated orientation represents an important conceptual framework for strengthening Islamic education in the twenty-first century and contributes to current debates concerning educational reform in Muslim societies.

Another important issue emerging from contemporary scholarship concerns educational leadership as a determining factor in institutional quality. The leadership demonstrated by the Rightly Guided Caliphs illustrates that educational development depends not solely on curriculum or infrastructure but also on visionary governance capable of nurturing scholarly culture and ethical values. Abu Bakr safeguarded the authenticity of religious knowledge, Umar institutionalized educational administration, Uthman standardized learning resources, and Ali emphasized intellectual reasoning and justice.³⁴ Collectively, these educational policies demonstrate that sustainable educational systems require strategic leadership committed to preserving foundational values while responding to emerging societal needs. Such historical experiences remain highly relevant for modern educational administrators seeking to balance organizational effectiveness with moral and spiritual objectives. Therefore, leadership during the Rashidun period should be interpreted as an educational paradigm rather than merely a political phenomenon.

Modern Islamic education also faces significant challenges associated with the fragmentation of knowledge, commercialization of education, weakening moral values, and limited integration between religious learning and contemporary scientific disciplines. The educational model practiced during the Rashidun era offers an alternative perspective by demonstrating that intellectual advancement should remain inseparable from ethical formation and community welfare. Knowledge was consistently regarded as a trust (*amanah*) requiring responsible application for the benefit of society. Educational institutions therefore functioned not only as centers of learning but also as institutions responsible for cultivating justice, compassion, honesty, and social solidarity. These characteristics provide valuable insights for redesigning Islamic educational curricula capable of addressing contemporary social, technological, and ethical challenges without compromising Islamic identity. Consequently, the Rashidun educational experience possesses enduring theoretical significance for current educational reform initiatives.

Although numerous studies have examined Islamic education during the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the majority have concentrated on descriptive historical narratives, biographies of individual caliphs, or specific educational practices. Only limited attention has been devoted to reconstructing the Rashidun educational system as an integrated framework encompassing educational philosophy, institutional development, curriculum, educational leadership,

³³ Ahmad Bukhori Muslim et al., "Indonesian Pesantren-Affiliated Higher Education: Universal Islamic Values to Develop Locally Engaged but Globally Oriented Multilingual Graduates," *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* 29, no. 1 (2024): 138–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2023.2285633>.

³⁴ Septiani Selly Susanti et al., "Innovative Digital Media in Islamic Religious Education Learning," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 21, no. 1 (2024): 40–59, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v21i1.7553>.

governance, and civilizational transformation.³⁵ Furthermore, previous studies have rarely analyzed the interrelationship between educational policy and the emergence of Islamic civilization from a comprehensive educational perspective. This limitation creates an important opportunity for further investigation that synthesizes historical evidence with contemporary educational theory. Such an approach enables a deeper understanding of how education functioned as the principal mechanism for preserving religious identity while simultaneously fostering scientific advancement and social development. Accordingly, the present study contributes a broader analytical perspective than many previous historical investigations.

Based on the foregoing theoretical discussion, this study conceptualizes the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs as an integrated educational model characterized by four interconnected dimensions: educational philosophy grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, institutional development through mosques and kuttub, educational governance supported by visionary leadership, and educational outcomes reflected in the advancement of Islamic civilization.³⁶ These dimensions collectively explain how education became the principal instrument for cultivating knowledgeable, morally responsible, and socially productive Muslim communities. The conceptual framework also illustrates that educational excellence emerged through the interaction of curriculum, teachers, learners, educational institutions, leadership, and ethical values rather than through isolated educational components.³⁷ Consequently, this study argues that the remarkable achievements of early Islamic civilization cannot be separated from the systematic educational policies implemented during the Rashidun period. Reconstructing this educational system therefore provides valuable theoretical and practical insights for strengthening contemporary Islamic education within an increasingly complex global environment.

³⁵ Azwani Masuwai, Hafizhah Zulkifli, and Mohd Isa Hamzah, "Self-Assessment for Continuous Professional Development: The Perspective of Islamic Education," *Heliyon* 10, no. 19 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e38268>.

³⁶ Glory Islamic et al., "Character Education through Philosophical Values in Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 45, no. 1 (2024): 31–42, <https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2024.45.1.04>.

³⁷ Salami Mahmud et al., "Integrating Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences in Islamic Education: A Systematic Review of Indonesian Practices," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 3 (2024): 1017–50, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1215>.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Islamic education system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs constituted a comprehensive and integrated educational framework that successfully combined spiritual development, intellectual advancement, moral cultivation, social responsibility, and administrative competence. The educational philosophy implemented by Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Uthman ibn Affān, and Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib was firmly grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah while remaining responsive to the evolving political and social circumstances of the expanding Islamic state. Educational institutions such as mosques, kuttab, and halaqah functioned as dynamic centers for knowledge transmission, character formation, and community development. The curriculum evolved from emphasizing Qur'anic learning to incorporating Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic language, history, and administrative sciences, reflecting the educational needs of a growing civilization. Likewise, pedagogical methods based on dialogue, memorization, mentoring, practical application, and exemplary leadership produced generations of Muslims distinguished by intellectual competence and ethical integrity. Collectively, these educational components established the institutional and intellectual foundations that enabled Islamic civilization to flourish during subsequent historical periods.

The findings further demonstrate that the educational success of the Rashidun era cannot be understood solely as a historical achievement but should be recognized as a sustainable educational model with enduring relevance for contemporary Islamic education. The integration of educational philosophy, visionary leadership, curriculum development, institutional management, and ethical values illustrates that educational excellence depends upon the harmonious interaction of all educational elements rather than isolated reforms. This study therefore contributes to the field of Islamic educational history by reconstructing the Rashidun educational system as a civilizational framework that links education with governance, social transformation, and intellectual progress. From a practical perspective, the educational principles established during this period provide valuable guidance for addressing contemporary challenges such as globalization, digital transformation, moral degradation, educational inequality, and the fragmentation of knowledge. Future studies are encouraged to explore comparative analyses between the educational models of the Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, and contemporary Muslim societies to identify the continuity and transformation of Islamic educational thought across different historical contexts. Such investigations will further enrich the discourse on Islamic education and contribute to the development of educational policies capable of preserving Islamic values while responding effectively to the demands of the twenty-first century.

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