

Cognitive Justice in Islamic Education: Decolonizing Pedagogical Practices through Tarbawi Tafsir of QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5

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Abstract

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran tafsir tarbawi dalam upaya dekolonisasi epistemik pendidikan Islam melalui analisis kritis terhadap QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mendekonstruksi kolonisasi sistem pengetahuan yang mengakar pada paradigma pendidikan modern serta mengakomodasi keadilan kognitif dengan mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Qur'ani, kearifan lokal, dan ilmu pengetahuan kontemporer dengan menggunakan kajian tafsir QS. Al-Alaq 1-5 sebagai pisau analisis. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis wacana kritis, mengkaji teks-teks tafsir dan literatur akademik untuk menggali makna mendalam ayat-ayat tersebut dalam upaya dekolonisasi epistemik pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ayat-ayat QS. Al-Alaq 1-5 tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai seruan literasi, melainkan juga sebagai imperatif untuk mengkaji dan merefleksikan realitas melalui lensa tauhid yang holistik. Temuan mengindikasikan bahwa pendekatan tafsir tarbawi mampu menantang dominasi epistemologi Barat dan membuka peluang bagi reformasi kurikulum serta metode pengajaran yang lebih inklusif, interdisipliner, dan berkeadilan kognitif. Implikasi penelitian ini mendorong pengembangan strategi pendidikan yang optimal melalui pemanfaatan teknologi informasi, pelatihan pendidik, dan kolaborasi lintas disiplin guna mewujudkan sistem pendidikan Islam yang merdeka, adil, dan relevan dengan tantangan global.

Keywords: Al-Alaq, Dekolonisasi, Epistemik, Keadilan Kognitif, Tafsir Tarbawi

Abstract

This study examines the role of *tafsir tarbawi* in the epistemic decolonization of Islamic education through a critical analysis of QS. Al-‘Alaq: 1–5. The objective of this research is to deconstruct the colonization of knowledge systems rooted in modern educational paradigms and to accommodate cognitive justice by integrating Qur’anic values, local wisdom, and contemporary scientific knowledge, using QS. Al-‘Alaq: 1–5 as the analytical framework. Employing a qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis, this study explores classical and contemporary *tafsir* texts as well as academic literature to uncover the deeper meanings of these verses in relation to the decolonization of Islamic educational epistemology. The findings reveal that the verses of QS. Al-‘Alaq: 1–5 serve not only as a call to literacy but also as an imperative to critically examine and reflect on reality through a holistic *tawhid*-based lens. The study indicates that the *tafsir tarbawi* approach effectively challenges the dominance of Western epistemology and offers opportunities for curriculum reform and pedagogical methods that are more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and grounded in cognitive justice. The implications of this research support the development of optimized educational strategies through the use of information technology, educator training, and cross-disciplinary collaboration to establish an Islamic education system that is independent, just, and responsive to global challenges..

Keywords: Al-Alaq, Cognitive Justice, Decolonization, Epistemics, Tafsir Tarbawi

INTRODUCTION

Education is a means of awareness of existence, developing and interpreting the existence of "life" in a better direction. (Arizona et al., 2022). Teaching serves as a medium to organize experience and existence, fundamentally articulating Worldview value systems within the scope of cultural or historical settings as different interpretations of how to be human. The most crucial aspect of educational activities is that they serve as a mirror, promoting distinctive and ideal values within a particular society. (Sahin, 2018).

Recently, from the industrial revolution to its heyday, *Artificial Intelligence* has significantly shifted the perception of education, steering it towards a vocational focus in response to the various market needs of industrial capitalism. Indeed, in terms of preparing for work, economic independence, and welfare are very important, but imparting specific knowledge and skills without ignoring the deeper meaning of education is a very narrow epistemic system. (Sahin, 2018).

21st-century Islamic education faces paradoxical challenges: on the one hand, it is required to maintain religious identity; on the other hand, it is forced to adopt global standards dominated by Western epistemology (Davids, 2016). Some believe that the concept of 'Islamic Education' is a prerequisite for dogmatism, which is a misleading and narrow description. They then marginalize Islamic education and believe that the Western-style education system is more advanced, so it often ignores the principle of cognitive justice (*Cognitive Justice*) that guarantees equality of knowledge systems. (Visvanathan, 2005).

This phenomenon reflects the coloniality of knowledge (*Coloniality of Knowledge*), the colonial legacy that places Western secular science as the universal standard. (Quijano, 2000). The Qur'an's first revelation (QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5) offers an alternative revolutionary epistemological paradigm, emphasizing the integration between knowledge and faith (tauhid). However, the reduction in the meaning of Iqra'(read) to mere technical literacy has obscured this verse's decolonial potential. (Sulaiman & Musthofa, 2023).

QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 offers a radical solution. The fifth verse ("*Allama al-insāna ma lam ya'lam*") affirms that knowledge is a universal gift, not a commodity controlled by the colonial regime. However, contemporary interpretations often overlook this dimension. For example, Tafsir Al-Mishbah (Shihab, 2020) emphasizes individual ethics in learning, but fails to relate it to the criticism of the hegemony of the neoliberal curriculum.

Previous research on Tafsir Tarbawi tends to be limited to normative or historical analysis. For example, the Rahayu Subakat (2022) study only analyzed the semiotic structure of QS. Al-Alaq: 1- 5 to realize integrative Islamic education without associating it with issues of decoloniality that are deeply rooted to this day. On the other hand, the study of decolonization of Islamic education (Fataar, 2018) It focuses more on macro policy without analyzing the sacred text, as the research fills a gap in previous studies by providing a comprehensive analysis of the decolonization of the Islamic education system through the interpretation of Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq 1:1-5.

From this landscape emerges a clear research gap: there is a paucity of studies that systematically integrate *tafsir tarbawi* on QS Al-‘Alaq: 1–5 with decolonial theory and the concept of cognitive justice. This is noteworthy because QS Al-‘Alaq: 1–5 contains epistemological resources with transformative potential for challenging Western epistemic dominance and for articulating an alternative, Qur’anically grounded paradigm for Islamic education.

Accordingly, this study advances a novel contribution by using *tafsir tarbawi* of QS Al-‘Alaq: 1–5 as an analytical instrument for the epistemic decolonization of Islamic education. The research not only enriches exegetical discourse with decolonial insights but also synthesizes Qur’anic values with decolonial theory. (Mignolo, 2007) and the notion of cognitive justice (Visvanathan, 2005). Theoretically, the study proposes a holistic, inclusive, and epistemically just paradigm for Islamic pedagogy; practically, it offers curriculum and pedagogical recommendations designed to respond to global challenges while preserving Islamic epistemic identity.

Tafsir Tarbawi, as an interpretive method that focuses on educational principles, becomes a strategic tool to reconstruct a just Islamic pedagogy. This approach not only explores the textual meaning of the verse but also formulates its implications for curriculum development, teaching methods, and educational philosophy. For example, the phrase "bismi rabbika" is interpreted in QS. Al-Alaq: 1 teaches that knowledge must be returned to the Divine purpose (*rabbaniyyah*), not just a tool to achieve a neoliberal competitive advantage.

This research aims to integrate Tafsir Tarbawi with decolonial theory. (Mignolo, 2007) and cognitive justice (Visvanathan, 2005). Namely, the first is deconstructing the colonization of the colonial knowledge system rooted in Islamic education by interpreting the tarbawi QS. Al-Ala1:1-5. Second, cognitive justice can be accommodated through the interpretation of Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the Critical Discourse Analysis method to examine the narrative of decolonization of Islamic education in interpreting QS. Al-Alaq (96:1-5). This approach explored how the concepts of iqra', qalam, and Islamic epistemology are constructed in tafsir literature, cognitive justice theory, and decolonial theory integration between philosophical analysis (Qur'anic epistemology) and social criticism (Western curriculum hegemony) (Eldin, 2015; Visvanathan, 2005).

This type of research is a literature study (library research) that examines contemporary interpretive texts and academic literature indexed by Scopus and Sinta related to interpreting Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5, cognitive justice, and epistemic decolonization. The study also compares Islamic perspectives with global decolonial theories to find common ground in criticizing Western epistemic hegemony.

At the analysis stage, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework was adopted to explore how interpretive discourse shapes and negotiates the constructs of power and legitimacy of knowledge in Islamic education. The application of Fairclough's model allows researchers to explore three layers of discourse: (1) the dimension of the text, focusing on the use of key terms such as "bismi rabbika," "Allama al-insāna," and "qalam"; (2) discursive practices, which reveal the process of production, transmission, and consumption of interpretation in the academic and educational realms; and (3) social practices, in which the discourse of interpretation is articulate in curriculum policies and pedagogical methods that have been colonize by Western epistemology (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011). Open coding techniques are applied to identify initial themes, then shifted to axial coding to formulate more abstract categories, such as "revelation-science integration," "epistemic plurality," and "cognitive justice imperatives" (Visvanathan, 2005).

The validity and credibility of the findings are ensured through the triangulation of sources, which involves comparing classical and contemporary interpretations with decolonial theoretical literature, and the triangulation of methods, specifically combining interpretative text analysis with a review of curriculum theory and policy practice. Furthermore, the member checking process involves consulting draft findings with two experts in interpretation and one decoloniality expert to ensure that the interpretation remains within the framework of the Islamic scientific tradition or the theoretical framework of decolonialism. The workflow from

literature selection and coding to discussion of results is documented in detail, forming an audit trail allowing other researchers to trace and verify the step-by-step research process.

The primary focus of this study is to critically explore the role of *tafsir tarbawi* in dismantling the colonial epistemological structure embedded in modern Islamic education systems. This research investigates explicitly how QS. Al-‘Alaq: 1–5 can be reinterpreted within the framework of cognitive justice and decolonial theory to propose a transformative educational paradigm. The study emphasizes an integrative epistemology that harmonizes Qur’anic values, local wisdom, and contemporary scientific thought to formulate an inclusive and pluralistic model of Islamic pedagogy. This research also seeks to challenge the hegemonic dominance of Western epistemologies by offering an indigenous, faith-based alternative that re-centers Islamic education within a spiritually and epistemically autonomous framework. Furthermore, the research addresses how interpretative discourse influences the formulation of curriculum policies and pedagogical practices, with the ultimate aim of proposing a curriculum model that fosters epistemic plurality, ethical awareness, and critical consciousness among learners in Muslim societies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Efforts to Decolonize Pedagogical Epistemics through Tafsir Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq:1-5

The tafsir tarbawi approach is limited to uncovering the literal meaning of the holy verses and exploring their deep dimensions (Alwizar et al., 2021). The first to fifth verses of Surah Al-Alaq present a message beyond just an encouragement to read. Muhammad Abduh interpreted this verse within the framework of Islamic education reform. In his commentary, he emphasized that Islam never rejects science, but instead encourages the search for knowledge in all aspects of life. He criticized the Islamic education system, which was still lagging due to the limitations of the curriculum that focused solely on religious sciences, neglecting the development of rational and empirical sciences (Abduh & Ridha, 1898). Command *Iqra’* contained in these verses implies a call to open the horizons of knowledge through a holistic and critical understanding, namely by interpreting reality thoroughly through the lens of monotheism, where every aspect of life, both spiritual, social, and scientific, is integrated in one complete frame of thought (Sahed et al., 2018). Thus, *Iqra’* means reading texts mechanically and as a call to criticize and understand existing realities critically. Education must explore the various dimensions of knowledge in an inclusive and interdisciplinary way,

prioritizing the values of cognitive justice that reject the dominance of a single epistemic paradigm (Raihani, 2020).

Sayyid Qutb in *Fi Zhilalil Qur'an* interprets QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 as an intellectual revolution that transformed man from darkness to the light of knowledge. He emphasized that science must have a spiritual dimension and not be separate from Islamic values. Qutb also criticized the colonial education system that distanced Muslims from their scientific sources. His thinking is particularly relevant to epistemic decolonization, as he emphasizes the need to build an Islamic education system based on monotheistic values, rather than simply imitating the often secular Western educational model. (Qutb, 1954).

In the epistemic decolonization discourse, there is a sharp criticism of the colonial education system, prioritizing the separation between religious and general sciences. These systems often result in a hierarchical and exclusive knowledge structure, where knowledge derived from Western traditions is considered superior to local knowledge or Islamic scientific traditions. The overemphasis on these conventional methods results in fragmentation in the development of science, thus hindering the creation of an authentic dialogue between various epistemologies. The Tarbawi interpretation approach plays an important role in breaking down this dichotomy by offering an interpretive framework that is not trapped in the logic of separation but opens up space for plurality and integration of scientific values. As stated by Fataar (2018), educational transformation must be based on efforts to integrate local values marginalized by the dominance of Western epistemology to create a just and cognitively equal education system (Fataar, 2018).

Furthermore, the Tafsir Tarbawi approach invites educators and policymakers to reflect again on the essence of Islamic education. Education is a forum for knowledge transfer and a process of character formation, ethics, and critical awareness that can respond to social and global dynamics (Chanifah et al., 2021). In this case, *Iqra'* is contained in QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 can be understood as a symbol of the liberation of knowledge that concerns all aspects of human life. The message rejects the idea that knowledge is a commodity that can be controlled by one party or can only be accessed by certain circles. Instead, knowledge must be inclusive and accessible to all levels of society without discrimination. Thus, this approach encourages the creation of cognitive justice, a condition in which every form of knowledge derived from Islamic traditions, modern science, or local wisdom is recognized and valued equally.

The theoretical implications of this finding are vast. Theoretically, epistemic decolonization through Tarbawi interpretation paves the way for creating a truly integrative

model of Islamic education. This model no longer prioritizes rigid and separate methodologies but combines various disciplines in one harmonious forum. For example, to develop a curriculum that focuses on cognitive justice, Qur'anic values can be synergized with modern scientific principles and local wisdom that has developed in society. This approach provides a new alternative to Islamic education, where knowledge transfer is viewed as a mechanical process and a means of holistic character building. This view is in line with the thinking conveyed by Coleman and Dionisio (2009), who emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue to overcome the dominance of Western epistemology, as well as with the recommendations of Visvanathan (2005), who calls for curriculum reform based on decolonial principles in order to achieve global equality of knowledge. (Coleman & Dionisio, 2009; Visvanathan, 2005).

Practically, the proposed educational model is based on the interpretation of Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 offers recommendations that apply to educational institutions (Adib, 2022). Educational institutions are expected to enhance academic aspects through conventional methods and integrate learning approaches that emphasize character development, ethics, and critical awareness. A curriculum designed based on this model must create an inclusive educational ecosystem where every student has the same opportunity to access various sources of knowledge. (Shahjahan et al., 2022). This is especially relevant amid globalization, where competition in work and innovation requires critical and adaptive thinking skills. By implementing an educational model based on cognitive justice, educators can form a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also highly social and morally sensitive.

Furthermore, the practical implications of these findings include developing education policies that support the integration of local epistemology into the national education system. Governments and educational institutions must develop strategies that encourage collaboration between disciplines and involve experts from various scientific backgrounds. This effort is important to ensure that the knowledge developed is not confined to a single, exclusive frame of thought. For example, in curriculum development, Qur'anic values can be integrated with modern scientific principles, resulting in an educational approach that is holistic and relevant to the needs of the times. This is also in line with various studies that emphasize the need for educational reform in response to global dynamics and social change, where integrating traditional and modern sciences is one of the keys to achieving cognitive justice (Subakat et al., 2022).

In line with this argument, the epistemic decolonization approach is also relevant in higher education. In many countries, especially in former colonial areas, higher education is still heavily influenced by colonial paradigms that dictate curriculum and teaching methods. Universities must develop an education system that prioritizes international standards and reflects local values and traditions. In this case, applying the principles of tafsir tarbawi can be an effective reform model to rebuild a more pluralistic and inclusive scientific identity. For example, research by Mignolo (2011) and Quijano (2000) has highlighted how the dominance of Western epistemology often ignores the diversity of knowledge rich in local and traditional values. By integrating the principles of cognitive justice, universities can become centers for developing knowledge that are genuinely open to a wide range of perspectives, thus increasing academic competitiveness and strengthening the intellectual independence of the community. (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000).

More profoundly, the epistemic decolonization strategy is proposed through interpreting Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 can catalyze change in the broader social order. Education, as one of the main pillars in the development of society, has an important role in shaping individuals' character and critical consciousness. Thus, the transformation in the education system not only impacts the academic aspect but also has significant social and political implications. This approach can produce individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also highly socially conscious and able to criticize unjust power structures. (Khoirudin, 2017). Thus, the concept of cognitive justice carried out through the interpretation of Tarbawi is not only a theoretical idealism but also a practical demand that can encourage the creation of a more egalitarian and inclusive society.

The first verse of Surah Al-'Alaq presents the inaugural imperative of the Qur'anic revelation: *Iqra'* ("Read!"). However, this command is not isolated; it is qualified by the phrase *bismi rabbika* ("in the name of your Lord"), indicating that reading is not epistemologically neutral but grounded in a transcendent source. Epistemically, this is a fundamental critique of the modern Western scientific paradigm that claims value-neutral objectivity through positivistic methodology. In colonial and postcolonial education systems, literacy is often conceived as a technical and secular enterprise, divorced from spirituality. This verse subverts that dichotomy. As interpreted by Sayyid Qutb, the command *Iqra'* is a call for the simultaneous development of spiritual and intellectual consciousness. (Qutb, 1954).

From a pedagogical-epistemic standpoint, this verse affirms that knowledge is not merely the result of empirical observation but is intrinsically linked to divine guidance. This

marks the beginning of epistemic decolonization, the rejection of the Western scientific narrative as the singular legitimate form of knowledge. Islamic education, through a *tafsir tarbawi* (educational exegesis) of this verse, must reposition learning as a theocentric engagement with reality. *Iqra* is thus not a passive or mechanistic activity but a transformative method for reading and critically interpreting the world.

The second verse, “Who created man from a clinging substance (*‘alaq*),” introduces the ontological basis of Islamic epistemology. In both classical and contemporary *tafsir*, the word *‘alaq* is interpreted not only as a biological reference but as a symbol of human limitation and ontological humility. (Adib, 2022). This verse articulates a core epistemological ethic: knowledge must begin with acknowledging human finitude.

From a decolonial perspective, this verse challenges the ontological superiority often assumed in colonial knowledge structures, where Western civilizations and their epistemologies are positioned as inherently superior. By emphasizing the shared origin of all human beings, the verse calls for an educational system that is participatory, inclusive, and epistemically egalitarian. This disrupts hierarchical and exclusionary models of knowledge production perpetuated by colonial education.

The third verse reiterates the command *Iqra*’ but now qualifies it with *wa rabbukal-akram* (“and your Lord is Most Generous”), introducing the concept of knowledge as a divine gift. Unlike colonial paradigms where knowledge functions as a means of domination and control, rendering the knowledgeable as superior, this verse frames knowledge as an expression of divine generosity.

Within the *tafsir tarbawi* framework, this verse critiques transactional and technocratic models of education that view students as passive recipients of pre-packaged knowledge, echoing Freire’s “banking model” of education. The Qur’an instead calls for liberatory pedagogy, one that affirms human dignity and facilitates personal transformation. Learning is not the hoarding of information but a divinely empowered journey towards justice and wisdom.

The fourth verse introduces the *qalam* (pen) as a medium of instruction. Historically, in Islamic civilization, the *qalam* symbolizes not just a writing instrument but the authority of knowledge itself. In a decolonial epistemology, *qalam* can be interpreted as representing the material and symbolic instruments of knowledge production. Colonial systems monopolized these tools through curricula, language policies, and research methodologies that marginalized local epistemologies.

By ascribing *qalam* as part of the divine act of teaching, the verse restores its epistemic dignity. In the *tafsir tarbawi* approach, *qalam* becomes a metaphor for reclaiming the means of knowledge dissemination. This includes digitizing classical texts, promoting multilingual scholarly outputs, and reconfiguring curriculum designs to reflect indigenous, Islamic, and scientific worldviews alike. In today's context, *qalam* may include digital platforms and open-access archives that democratize knowledge production and access.

The fifth verse concludes the passage with a powerful epistemological declaration: "He taught man what he did not know." This verse emphasizes that knowledge is progressive, relational, and revealed. The Islamic epistemic tradition is thus not closed or elitist, but open to ongoing discovery through divine guidance, rational reflection, and empirical inquiry.

This verse is foundational to a decolonial pedagogy. Education must not merely transmit information but must serve as a vehicle for societal transformation. Within a *tafsir tarbawi* lens, this means that curriculum and pedagogy must equip learners to become agents of justice, grounded in the unity of knowledge and action (*tawhīd*). Hence, learning is not an end in itself but a means to cultivate ethical leadership, social responsibility, and spiritual consciousness.

In the global context, the demand for the decolonization of education has become part of an increasingly intense debate. Several international studies, such as those conducted by Gearon (2021) and Ntloedibe (2025), have emphasized that curriculum reform should be based on principles that respect the plurality of knowledge and accommodate a wide range of scientific traditions. This approach is relevant to Islamic education and can be applied in various education systems grappling with colonial legacies. (Gearon et al., 2021). For example, in countries in Africa and Asia, where colonial influence is still strong, efforts to integrate local epistemology in the educational curriculum have shown positive results in improving the quality of learning and encouraging intellectual innovation. (Ntloedibe, 2025). Thus, the educational model developed through the *tafsir tarbawi* QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 offers a new paradigm that can be broadly adapted to achieve cognitive justice globally.

Furthermore, this approach also invites researchers and educational practitioners to conduct intensive cross-disciplinary dialogues. This dialogue is essential to dismantle the power structure in the production and distribution of knowledge that specific epistemologies have dominated. For example, the decolonial framework of thought proposed by Mignolo (2007) underlines the importance of "pluriversity" in creating a monolithic knowledge system open to different forms of knowledge. Thus, the integration of Qur'anic values, modern science, and local wisdom is not only a theoretical aspiration but also the foundation for developing

innovative teaching methods that respond to the needs of society. If encouraged, this dialogue can lead to new pedagogical models that focus not only on academic achievement but also on character building and enhancing students' critical awareness. (Mignolo, 2007).

Overall, this study's findings emphasize epistemic decolonization through interpreting Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 is a strategic approach that can revolutionize the paradigm of Islamic education. By rejecting the dominance of a single epistemology and prioritizing a plurality of knowledge, this approach paves the way for creating an education system that is more equitable, inclusive, and responsive to the challenges of the times. The proposed educational model offers a theoretical contribution to scientific development and provides practical recommendations that can be implemented by educational institutions, from elementary to higher education. (Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019).

By implementing this model, educators can design a curriculum that prioritizes knowledge transfer while developing critical thinking skills, creativity, and sensitivity to social contexts. This is an important step in realizing cognitive justice, where every form of knowledge is recognized and valued equally. Thus, Islamic education is no longer a rigid and compartmentalized space but a dynamic forum that can respond to the needs of the times and accommodate diverse perspectives to create a more just and prosperous society. (R'boul, 2021).

Finally, the narrative of this discussion invites stakeholders in the field of education to reflect deeply on the existing educational structure and paradigm. The systemic change needed cannot be achieved instantly but requires continuous efforts from all elements of society, including the government, educational institutions, and local communities. In this context, the principle of epistemic decolonization is applied through the interpretation of Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 is a strategic foothold to change the education paradigm, emphasizing that knowledge is a universal right that must be accessible and utilized by all levels of society without exception.

Thus, this research contributes to the theoretical realm and offers a vision of pedagogical reform that can be implemented practically. This reform is expected to create a genuinely inclusive educational ecosystem, where Qur'anic values, modern science, and local wisdom are brought together to produce a critical, creative, and socially sensitive generation. If widely adopted, this new paradigm can potentially overhaul the educational order trapped in colonial legacy and pave the way for a more holistic and cognitively equitable knowledge system.

In closing, it is important to emphasize that epistemic decolonization through the tafsir tarbawi approach is not just an academic discourse but a strategic imperative to realize an independent, fair, and relevant education to today's global challenges. By harmoniously

integrating various dimensions of knowledge, Islamic education can be transformed into a space that supports character development, intellectual innovation, and community empowerment. Ultimately, this effort will create an education system that upholds Islamic values, competes globally, and respects the diversity and plurality of knowledge.

References such as those put forward by Rahayu (2022), Fataar (2018), Coleman & Dionisio (2009), Adams (2021), Quijano (2000), and Mignolo (2007) provide a solid basis for supporting this new paradigm. By referring to these works, educational reform based on cognitive justice can serve as a model to address the challenges faced by the modern education system. Through the integration of local values, scientific principles, and authentic Islamic heritage, education will not only raise the degree of knowledge but also form the nation's character that is ethical and critical of all forms of domination.

Overall, the epistemic decolonization approach through the interpretation of Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 offers an educational paradigm that overcomes the limitations of conventional models and provides space for creating comprehensive cognitive justice. This model accommodates a diversity of knowledge and demands structural changes in how we view, structure, and implement educational curriculum. Thus, this inclusive and holistic vision of education becomes a strategic foundation for creating profound and sustainable social transformation, while encouraging the development of a more equitable and knowledgeable society.

Thus, this narrative emphasizes epistemic decolonization through interpreting Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 is a crucial step to overcome the colonial legacy in the Islamic education system. This transformation is expected not only to improve the quality of learning but also to inspire pedagogical innovations that address the challenges of the times, ultimately producing an intelligent, critical, and highly civilized next generation.

Towards Cognitive Justice in Islamic Education through Tafsir Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5

The concept of cognitive justice is an effort to recognize and appreciate the diversity of knowledge sources in an education system. According to Visvanathan (2005), colonial legacies have oppressed and ignored local epistemology through a process called "knowledge coloniality." This dominance of Western epistemology results in an exclusive knowledge structure, in which non-Western scientific values and traditions are often underestimated. In this case, Tafsir Tarbawi offers an alternative approach that prioritizes Qur'anic values and accommodates scientific methods and local wisdom to build an inclusive knowledge system.

This approach calls for a global education system recognizing epistemological plurality as a source of intellectual property. (Visvanathan, 2005).

In the context of Islamic education, QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 represents literacy instruction and symbolizes knowledge liberation. The first to fifth verses convey a profound message: knowledge is a universal gift that must be equally accessible to all levels of society. The Tarbawi interpretation that deconstructs the meaning of the verse teaches that Iqra' is a call to open intellectual horizons through a holistic approach, which integrates spiritual, cognitive, and practical aspects. Thus, Tarbawi's interpretation serves as a method of interpreting texts and a strategic tool in dismantling epistemological limitations that hinder the creation of cognitive justice. (Visvanathan, 2005).

According to Alwizar et al. (2021), the tafsir tarbawi approach has been identified as an innovative method that can revolutionize the Islamic education system. Through this approach, knowledge is no longer seen as a privilege of a particular group, but rather as a collective asset that must be accessed and developed by the entire society. In this case, cognitive justice is achieved when all forms of knowledge derived from the Qur'anic tradition, modern science, or local wisdom are recognized and valued equally. This concept challenges the hierarchical structure in education that has long been rooted in the colonial legacy. (Alwizar et al., 2021).

Implementing tafsir tarbawi to accommodate cognitive justice in Islamic education involves several strategic steps. First, the QS interpretation process. Al-Alaq: 1-5 should be in-depth and involve various disciplines. Interpreters examine the text literally and consider the historical, social, and cultural context from which the verse is derived. Thus, Tarbawi Tafsir can reveal the deep dimensions hidden behind the words of Iqra, thus opening up space for integrating multidimensional knowledge.

Second, integrating monotheistic values in the educational framework is essential. The value of monotheism, as a principle of God's oneness, emphasizes that all forms of knowledge come from one common source. By adopting this principle, educators can reject the separation between religious science and general science, which has been dividing intellectual resources. This approach encourages plurality in knowledge development, resulting in a fair and inclusive education system. In this case, the research shows that integrating monotheistic values with scientific approaches and local wisdom can create an educational model responsive to the needs of the times, overcoming the dominance of a single epistemology. (Bahri, 2025).

Third, applying information technology in learning is important in realizing cognitive justice. Digital technology allows for the widespread and equitable dissemination of

information, thereby removing geographical and accessibility barriers. Through digital learning platforms, materials that contain the values of Tarbawi interpretation can be integrated into the curriculum interactively. This supports the realization of an inclusive educational environment, where every student has an equal opportunity to access knowledge from various sources. Adams (2021) shows that using Artificial Intelligence technology (*AI*) in education can strengthen interdisciplinary dialogue and support the creation of cognitive justice through cross-sectoral collaboration, which ultimately helps to overcome the epistemological biases entrenched in the education system. (Adams, 2021).

Fourth, building dialogue between epistemologies is crucial in accommodating cognitive justice. In many education systems, there is a split between traditional approaches that focus on Islamic values and modern approaches that prioritize Western scientific methods. Constructive dialogue between the two approaches can create space for the productive exchange of ideas and the development of a holistic education model. Educators, researchers, and policymakers can share perspectives and experiences through discussion forums, seminars, and research collaborations, resulting in a more comprehensive framework for integrating various knowledge sources. This kind of dialogue is one of the effective strategies to overcome structural barriers in the education system. It can be used as a basis for formulating a curriculum that is more inclusive and responsive to cultural diversity. (Nurdin, 2020).

One of the main challenges in realizing cognitive justice through Tarbawi interpretation is the need for curriculum reform that accommodates the plurality of knowledge. Traditional curriculum tends to be sectoral and is based on the separation between religious and secular sciences. The tafsir tarbawi approach challenges this paradigm by emphasizing that education must cover all dimensions of human life, both spiritual, intellectual, and social. In designing an integrative curriculum, Qur'anic values must be synergized with modern scientific principles and local wisdom, resulting in a holistic learning model.

A cognitive justice-based approach to the curriculum requires educators to focus on knowledge transfer, character development, and critical awareness. For example, in Islamic education courses, in addition to studying religious texts, students must also be invited to analyze and criticize the relevance of these values in the context of contemporary life. This approach allows for the integration of traditional values and modern needs, resulting in graduates who are not only academically competent but also have high social care and critical thinking skills. Studies by Subakat et al. (2022) show that educational models integrating

various dimensions of knowledge can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes, as they feel the material learned is relevant to their daily lives. (Subakat et al., 2022).

In addition, teaching methods must also be adapted to this new paradigm. Active learning approaches, group discussions, and case studies are some methods that can support the creation of cognitive justice in the educational process. By actively involving students, educators not only make them recipients of information but also engage them as critical knowledge producers. These interactive methods can open up space for dialogue between epistemologies, where each student can express their views and perspectives. This aligns with the recommendations of Coleman and Dionisio (2009), who emphasize the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration in overcoming the dominance of a single epistemology. (Coleman & Dionisio, 2009).

Although the tafsir tarbawi approach in accommodating cognitive justice offers excellent potential to reform the education system, its implementation is inseparable from various challenges. One of the main challenges is the resistance of established and rigid educational structures, where the colonial paradigm is still powerful. Many educational institutions and educators are still bound to traditional learning models that prioritize Western knowledge exclusively. This paradigm shift requires time, resources, and high commitment from all parties involved.

To address these challenges, implementation strategies must be comprehensively designed. First, it is necessary to provide training and mentoring for educators so that they understand the concepts of Tarbawi interpretation and cognitive justice in depth. This training must include both theoretical and practical aspects, enabling educators to develop an integrative curriculum and apply innovative teaching methods. Second, educational institutions must develop partnerships with research institutions, local communities, and the private sector to support educational reform programs. This collaboration can generate the resources and innovations needed to create an inclusive and responsive educational model for global dynamics.

Third, information technology must be optimized as a supporting tool in the learning process. Digital platforms, e-learning, artificial intelligence (*AI*), and interactive learning applications can help disseminate learning materials that integrate the values of Tarbawi interpretation. Thus, geographical and accessibility barriers can be minimized so that all students have the same opportunity to access various sources of knowledge. Fourth, government policies and education regulations must align with the epistemic decolonization

vision. The government should formulate a national strategy to support the integration of local values and epistemological plurality in the educational curriculum and incentivize educational institutions that adopt inclusive learning models.

The application of cognitive justice through the interpretation of Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 has implications far beyond the academic realm. At the social level, transforming the education system that prioritizes the plurality of knowledge can trigger broader cultural change. (Berglund & Gent, 2019; Sri Bulan & Yunus Abu Bakar, 2017). When society is invited to appreciate various forms of knowledge, stereotypes and biases that have long been rooted due to the dominance of specific epistemologies can be eroded. This will result in a more tolerant, inclusive, and critical society of the existing power structure. This transformation of educational culture, in turn, contributes to forming a national character that is ethical, innovative, and adaptive to the changing times.

In the global context, educational models based on cognitive justice can inspire education system reform in postcolonial countries. Many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America face similar challenges, where colonial legacies still influence knowledge structures and teaching methods. By adopting a Tarbawi interpretation approach, these countries can integrate local values into their educational curricula, creating an education system more relevant to their respective cultural and historical contexts. This aligns with the spirit of epistemic decolonization that has been encouraged by thinkers such as Mignolo (2007) and Quijano (2000), who emphasize the importance of expressing and valuing the plurality of knowledge in the global system. (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000).

Within the evaluation framework, it is important to measure how the implementation of tafsir tarbawi to accommodate cognitive justice can lead to significant changes in the education system. This evaluation includes an analysis of increased student access and participation, improvements in teaching methods, and changes in attitudes and behaviors that indicate increased critical awareness and social sensitivity. Longitudinal studies and participatory-based research are urgently needed to document the long-term impact of these education reforms.

Based on this analysis, several recommendations can be proposed. First, educational institutions must integrate formative and summative evaluations that include cognitive justice in each learning stage. Second, collaboration between academics, education practitioners, and local communities must be strengthened to produce applied research supporting inclusive curricula development. Third, policymakers must establish national standards that encourage

learning models integrating the values of Tarbawi interpretation and cognitive justice, and provide adequate resources for their implementation.

Overall, there was a discussion on accommodating cognitive justice through the Tafsir Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 offers a new paradigm in Islamic education that rejects the dominance of a single epistemology and opens up space for the holistic integration of various sources of knowledge. This approach emphasizes that education should serve as a vehicle for intellectual liberation, enabling individuals to access, develop, and appreciate knowledge from various traditions, thereby fostering an inclusive and cognitively equitable educational ecosystem.

The proposed education model is expected to significantly contribute to transforming the education system, which is trapped in colonial structures, through curriculum reform, innovative teaching methods, and information technology. Thus, Islamic education will improve academic quality and form the character of the next generation, who are critical, creative, and socially conscious.

CONCLUSION

Tafsir Tarbawi QS. Al-Alaq: 1-5 opens up new horizons in understanding Islamic education as an effort to decolonize epistemologies. These verses contain a call for literacy and invite us to study and reflect on reality through the lens of holistic monotheism. The Tarbawi interpretation approach demonstrates that knowledge should not be divided into spiritual and empirical dimensions, thereby challenging the dominance of the Western knowledge paradigm that dictates the modern education system. The study results indicate that integrating Qur'anic values with local wisdom and modern science has the potential to reform the education system to be more inclusive, equitable, and transformational.

First, the verse *Iqra' bismi rabbika* (96:1) positions literacy not merely as a technical skill but as an act of epistemic liberation that unites spiritual and intellectual dimensions, thereby challenging the purported neutrality of Western knowledge. Second, *khalaqal-insāna min 'alaq* (96:2) affirms human ontological humility, providing the foundation for an inclusive and egalitarian curriculum. Third, the reiteration *Iqra' wa rabbukal-akram* (96:3) frames knowledge as a divine gift, critiquing the “banking” model of education and advocating for a liberatory pedagogy that fosters intellectual autonomy. Fourth, *alladhī 'allama bil-qalam* (96:4) elevates the role of the instrument from the classical pen to modern digital platforms as a

medium of cognitive justice that must be reclaimed from colonial domination. Fifth, *'allama al-insāna mā lam ya 'lam* (96:5) articulates a progressive, participatory epistemology in which knowledge is a collective process oriented toward social transformation.

Based on these findings, the following strategic recommendations are proposed: (1) design an integrative curriculum that synergizes Qur'anic values, contemporary scientific knowledge, and local wisdom; (2) develop open-access digital platforms to democratize access to classical texts; (3) implement decolonial-oriented teacher training emphasizing critical pedagogy and cognitive justice; and (4) enact national education policies that prioritize epistemic plurality.

Thus, the *tafsir tarbawi* of QS Al-'Alaq: 1–5 not only provides the theoretical foundation for epistemic decolonization but also outlines concrete implementation steps to realize an Islamic education system that is autonomous, just, inclusive, and responsive to global challenges. Future research should include empirical field studies to test the effectiveness of the proposed curriculum model and to evaluate its socio-pedagogical impact longitudinally.

Based on these findings, the advice covers several strategic aspects. Curriculum reform must be directed to accommodate a learning approach that integrates the principles of Tarbawi interpretation and cognitive justice, so that education focuses not only on information transfer alone, but also on character formation and critical awareness. Intensive training for educators is an important step so that interdisciplinary teaching methods can be applied effectively. In addition, collaboration between academics, education practitioners, and local communities must be strengthened to produce applied research supporting education reform. Optimizing information technology is also suggested to maximize equitable access to knowledge, while formulating education policies that support epistemological plurality must be a priority for the government. These efforts, if implemented comprehensively, are expected to create an Islamic education system that is not only academically superior but also forms a generation that is critical, creative, and sensitive to social dynamics.

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