The Imperative of Integrating Knowledge and Adab in Reconstructing Islamic Education in the Digital Era: A Study of Al-Attas's Thought

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Abstract. *In the digital era, Islamic education faces significant challenges, particularly in maintaining the harmony between knowledge and adab (ethical conduct). These challenges materialize in the form of moral disconnection among students, digital distractions that weaken focus, and the commodification of knowledge driven by market interests. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas identifies the erosion of adab as the root crisis in Islamic education. This study aims to explore al-Attas's concepts of knowledge and adab, examining their relevance in reimagining Islamic education amid digital transformation. Relying on a library research method, the study employs philosophical exegesis and textual hermeneutics to critically analyze al-Attas's seminal works, especially Islam and Secularism and The Concept of Education in Islam. Key concepts such as the loss of adab, confusion of knowledge, and the Islamic worldview are discussed as foundations for an integrated educational model. The findings emphasize that the principle of ta'dib which integrates intellectual, moral, and spiritual development is crucial for addressing contemporary issues. This research contributes a contemporary reinterpretation of ta'dib, offering both theoretical insights and practical applications for Islamic education in the digital context. Proposed strategies include ethical digital literacy, value-based teacher training, and curriculum design grounded in Islamic metaphysics. The study advocates that technology must serve to reinforce the Islamic worldview rather than secularize it. Ultimately, this work proposes a framework that reconnects knowledge with adab, ensuring Islamic education remains morally grounded and intellectually relevant in the face of digital challenges.*

Keywords. *Adab; Digital Era; Knowledge; Islamic Education; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas.*

Abstrak. Di era digital, pendidikan Islam menghadapi tantangan serius, terutama dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara ilmu pengetahuan dan adab (etika). Tantangan ini tampak dalam bentuk keterputusan moral di kalangan peserta didik, gangguan digital yang mengurangi fokus belajar, serta komodifikasi ilmu yang mengarah pada orientasi pasar. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas menilai bahwa akar krisis pendidikan Islam terletak pada hilangnya adab. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji konsep ilmu dan adab menurut al-Attas serta relevansinya dalam merekonstruksi pendidikan Islam di tengah transformasi digital. Melalui metode studi pustaka dengan pendekatan eksegesis filosofis dan hermeneutika tekstual, kajian ini menganalisis karya-karya utama al-Attas, khususnya *Islam and Secularism* dan *The Concept of Education in Islam*. Konsep-konsep kunci seperti kehilangan adab, kekacauan ilmu, dan pandangan dunia Islam dibahas sebagai dasar model pendidikan integratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa prinsip *ta'dib* yang mencakup pengembangan intelektual, moral, dan spiritual sangat penting untuk menjawab tantangan kontemporer. Penelitian ini menawarkan reinterpretasi *ta'dib* yang kontekstual dengan era digital, serta implikasi praktisnya dalam pendidikan Islam, termasuk literasi digital berbasis etika, pelatihan guru berlandaskan nilai Islam, dan desain kurikulum yang bersumber dari metafisika Islam. Teknologi harus menjadi sarana untuk memperkuat pandangan dunia Islam, bukan alat sekularisasi ilmu. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka pendidikan yang mengintegrasikan ilmu dan adab agar pendidikan Islam tetap relevan secara intelektual dan kokoh secara moral di tengah era digital.

Kata kunci. Adab; Era Digital; Ilmu; Pendidikan Islam; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in the digital era faces significant challenges in preserving sacred values and proper conduct (adab). In Islam, *'ilm* (knowledge) and adab (ethical discipline) are two fundamental pillars that complement each other *'ilm* provides understanding and awareness, while *adab* serves as the moral foundation for applying that knowledge. Within Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's framework, these concepts are further integrated through *ta'dib*, which denotes the holistic process of cultivating intellectual, moral, and spiritual refinement. This interconnected triad forms the philosophical foundation of Islamic education, emphasizing not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the development of character and ethical conduct. Clarifying these relationships is essential to comprehending the study's focus and its broader implications in contemporary educational contexts. Amid the rapid advancement of modern technology, the relevance of this concept becomes increasingly urgent, as learning processes and Islamic educational values are highly susceptible to external influences. Therefore, the integration of knowledge and adab is a pressing necessity that must not be overlooked in the current Islamic education system (Mulya & Hanifah, 2025).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas is widely recognized as a prominent thinker and reformist in the field of Islamic education through his innovative ideas. He is not only an intellectual deeply concerned with the state of education and the challenges faced by the Muslim ummah, but also a scholar well-versed in various fields of knowledge. Al-Attas is regarded as a pioneer of the concept of the Islamization of knowledge, which has significantly influenced many other thinkers. He developed a systematic approach to Islamizing knowledge and implemented it through educational curricula designed for Muslim communities. However, Al-Attas's thought on the Islamization of knowledge in the context of Islamic education has also faced criticism and challenges, particularly from scholars rooted in Western intellectual traditions. Nonetheless, Al-Attas has been recognized as one of the most influential Islamic education thinkers globally and is considered a reformer in the field. The diverse responses to his ideas both supportive and critical have only increased the scholarly interest in his work and reaffirmed its importance for further exploration (Al-attas, 2021).

Al-Attas strongly emphasizes the integration of knowledge and adab in Islamic education. For him, *adab* is a crucial element that forms the spiritual and moral foundation of individuals through the educational process. In line with the need to reconstruct Islamic education in the digital era, several studies have examined the use of technology in learning, the transformation of curricula toward digitalization, and the impact of globalization on Islamic values (Ahmad, 2021). However, there remains a gap in research that specifically highlights the integration of *'ilm* and *adab* as the epistemological foundation of Islamic education, particularly from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Most existing studies tend to focus on the technical aspects of digitalization in Islamic education without delving deeper into how values of *adab* can be meaningfully integrated into the process. Meanwhile, research on Al-Attas's thought often centers on the idea of Islamization of knowledge but still lacks practical application in addressing the concrete challenges faced by Islamic education during this digital transformation (Sagala et al., 2024).

Recent studies have increasingly stressed the importance of implementing *adab* in digital-based Islamic education. For instance, research by Mulya and Hanifah (2025) at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor demonstrates that integrating values of *adab* into

digital learning systems is essential for balancing technological progress with students' character development (Mulya & Hanifah, 2025). Similarly, Rahmadi and Camilia (2022) emphasize that *adab* plays a crucial role in fostering meaningful digital learning rooted in humanitarian and spiritual values, particularly in building a digital ecosystem grounded in Islamic spirituality (Rahmadi & Camilia, n.d.).

On a conceptual level, Rahimi (2024) underscores the urgency of reviving *ta'dib* as a guiding framework for contemporary Islamic education, combining knowledge, morality, and spiritual values to offer a comprehensive paradigm in response to modern challenges In alignment with this, Sundari (2024) addresses the need for character cultivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to mitigate the behavioral consequences of unregulated social media exposure among students (Sundari et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Nafisah (2023) offers a more theoretical lens by discussing Al-Attas's perspective on Islamic education, particularly the integration of *'ilm* (knowledge), *ta'lim* (instruction), and *tarbiyah* (character formation) under the broader concept of *ta'dib* aimed at nurturing the ideal human being (*insān kāmil*) who is virtuous, faithful, and God-conscious (Nafisah et al., 2023).

Despite the valuable insights these studies offer, they tend to remain fragmented and do not fully engage with Al-Attas's philosophical framework in a systematic manner. Few have critically examined the epistemological foundations or metaphysical assumptions underlying the integration of *'ilm* and *adab* in the digital age. This study seeks to fill that gap by providing a deeper philosophical synthesis of Al-Attas's key concepts and assessing their practical relevance in reconstructing Islamic education amidst digital transformation.

For example, various studies addressing the concept of *ta'dib* as understood by Al-Attas do emphasize the urgency of *adab* in Islamic education, yet they rarely link it explicitly to the challenges posed by the digital era(Islam et al., 2024). Furthermore, discussions on Al-Attas's thought tend to remain within the philosophical domain, with limited inquiry into how *adab* might be operationalized within contemporary technological and educational frameworks. This reveals a significant gap in the literature namely, the lack of integrative frameworks that bridge Al-Attas's metaphysical concepts with the pragmatic demands of digital pedagogy (Siregar et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by critically analyzing Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dib* and exploring its relevance and practical applicability in addressing ethical, cognitive, and pedagogical challenges in digital-based Islamic education. By grounding the analysis in Al-Attas's seminal works such as *The Concept of Education in Islam* and *Islam and Secularism*, this study not only reinterprets his philosophical insights but also proposes a context-sensitive model of Islamic education that integrates intellectual formation with ethical and spiritual development in the digital age(Rahman et al., 2024).

The integration of knowledge and *adab* from Al-Attas's perspective and by reconstructing Therefore, this study aims to fill the identified research gap by critically examining the integration of knowledge ('ilm) and moral conduct (adab) from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. This research addresses the lack of scholarly attention to this integration within the context of digital Islamic education, which is often dominated by technocratic or cognitive-oriented paradigms(Mulya & Hanifah, 2025). By reconstructing Al-Attas's concept of ta'dīb as a holistic educational framework, the study offers an alternative model that integrates spiritual, ethical, and intellectual dimensions as a response to the challenges of digitalization. a model of

Islamic education that aligns with digital technological advancements while remaining rooted in the core principles of Islamic teachings.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a library research method within a qualitative framework, specifically adopting a philosophical-textual and conceptual analysis approach. This method is deemed appropriate for critically examining the works of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, as it enables an in-depth interpretation of his epistemological and educational thought. The critical-hermeneutic lens further supports the exploration of underlying meanings, values, and principles embedded in his conception of knowledge and adab, which are essential for reconstructing Islamic education in the digital era.The selection of this method is based on the primary objective of the study, which is to analyze the concepts of *'ilm* (knowledge) and *adab* (proper conduct) in the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and their relevance in reformulating Islamic education in the digital era. The data used in this study is divided into two types: primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources include the major works of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas that specifically address the concepts of *'ilm* and *adab*, such as *Islam and Secularism* (Al-Attas, 1978), *The Concept of Education in Islam* (Al-Attas, 1980), along with other relevant writings. Meanwhile, secondary sources consist of various literatures discussing Islamic education, philosophy of knowledge, as well as academic studies that examine Al-Attas's thought within contemporary contexts (Hassan, 2010; Wan Daud, 2013).

The data collection process in this study was conducted by thoroughly examining various key texts, aiming to explore Al-Attas's perspective on knowledge and adab and their application in Islamic education during the digital age. Data analysis was carried out using a critical-hermeneutic approach, which focuses on interpreting and deeply analyzing texts to uncover their meaning and assess their relevance in the context of contemporary Islamic education.

The data analysis in this study follows a philosophical-hermeneutic framework consisting of three interrelated stages. First, data reduction was carried out through a careful selection and classification of key texts by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and relevant scholarly literature, focusing specifically on the concepts of *'ilm* and *adab*. Second, data presentation involved a critical-interpretive exposition of these concepts, in which thematic patterns were identified and contextualized within the contemporary challenges of Islamic education in the digital age. Third, conclusion drawing was conducted through philosophical reflection aimed at formulating normative implications for reconstructing an Islamic education paradigm rooted in the integration of knowledge and adab. Throughout this process, key ideas were analyzed hermeneutically to uncover their deeper meanings and to articulate their relevance to current educational discourse.

To ensure the validity of this conceptual-philosophical research, the study employed interpretive plausibility and conceptual coherence as key validation strategies. Through a hermeneutic reading of Al-Attas's primary works, supported by relevant academic literature, the study critically analyzed and contextualized his ideas to maintain textual consistency and theoretical rigor within the discourse of Islamic education in the digital era. Through this approach, the study is expected to contribute conceptually to the re-design of an Islamic education system grounded in the values of *'ilm* and adab, as proposed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. This study recognizes that interpretive philosophical research is inherently limited by the subjectivity of the

researcher's perspective and the interpretative nature of textual analysis. Although efforts were made to ensure conceptual coherence and textual consistency, the conclusions drawn remain open to alternative interpretations. Acknowledging these limitations enhances the transparency and credibility of the research process.

C. RESULT AND DICUSSION
Biography of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas was born on September 5, 1931, in West Java, Indonesia. His father, Syed Ali ibn Abdullah al-Attas, was a prominent figure among the Syed family, while his mother, Syarifah Raguan Al-Idrus, descended from Sundanese nobility in Sukaparna (Mujiburrohman and M. Erlin Susri, 2022). His lineage can be traced back to the Ba'Alawi family in Hadramaut, which is connected by kinship to Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The first five years of his life were crucial for character formation, shaped by the religious guidance of his parents. They provided him with a strong foundation in Islamic education from an early age. At the age of five, al-Attas moved with his parents to Malaysia, where he began his formal education at Ngee Heng Primary School and continued there until the age of ten. However, due to the unfavorable conditions brought about by the Japanese occupation of Malaysia, his family returned to Indonesia. He continued his education at Urwah al-Wusqa School in Sukabumi for five years, where he began to deepen his understanding of Islamic traditions. It was during this period that he developed a more intensive engagement with Islamic spirituality, especially through the Naqshbandi Sufi order, which was flourishing in Sukabumi at the time.

Motivated by a spiritual drive to put his knowledge into action, he later joined the royal military upon returning to Malaysia, in support of the struggle against Japanese colonial rule. Al-Attas excelled in the military and was selected for advanced military training. He studied at several military academies in the United Kingdom, including one of its most prestigious institutions.

After Malaysia gained independence in 1957, al-Attas resigned from military service and began to focus on developing his intellectual pursuits. He enrolled at the University of Malaya for two years, and due to his intelligence and dedication to learning, he was granted a scholarship by the Malaysian government to continue his studies at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Canada. In a relatively short time, by 1962, he earned his Master's degree with a thesis titled *Raniry and Wujudiyah of 17th Century Aceh*. The thesis reflected al-Attas' deep interest in the Sufi practices that had developed in both Indonesia and Malaysia, emphasizing that the Islamization of the region was not a result of Dutch colonial influence but rather the sincere efforts of local Muslims to deepen and broaden their intellectual horizons.

Following this, al-Attas pursued his doctoral studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. There, he met Martin Lings, a British scholar who had a significant impact on al-Attas' methodological approach, though not necessarily on his ideas. Under Lings' supervision, al-Attas completed his doctoral dissertation titled *The Mysticism of Hamzah Pansuri* between 1963 and 1965 (Al-attas, 2021).

Al-Attas began his academic career at the Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, where he served from 1966 to 1970. During this time, he emphasized the importance of studying Malay intellectual traditions. In 1977, he presented a paper titled *Preliminary Thoughts on the Nature of Knowledge and the Definition and Aims of Education* at the First World Conference on Islamic Education in Makkah al-Mukarramah. His confident oration was well-received, and his ideas were

acknowledged by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In recognition of his brilliant thought, the OIC entrusted him with the establishment of an international university in Malaysia in 1984.

Al-Attas also actively participated in various international academic forums, including: the International Congress of Medieval Philosophy; the International Congress of the VII Centenary of St. Thomas Aquinas; the International Congress of the VII Centenary of St. Bonaventure da Bognoregio; the Malaysian delegation to the International Congress on the Millenary of Al-Biruni; as well as serving as the Principal Consultant and Sectional Chairman for Education at the World of Islam Festival Congress. His name is listed in *Marquis Who's Who in the World* for the years 1974/1975 and 1976/1977. Besides being an intellectual, he was also a poet and an artist, particularly skilled in calligraphy and sculpture. He mastered several languages, including English, Arabic, Latin, German, Spanish, and Malay.

On November 22, 1988, Malaysia's Minister of Education at the time, Anwar Ibrahimalso the President of the International Islamic University appointed al-Attas as a professor in the field of Islamic thought and civilization, as well as the Rector of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). With all his achievements and contributions, al-Attas is recognized as a contemporary intellectual whose ideas have enlightened the development of Islam amid the tides of globalization (Akal & Hati, 2010).

The Concept of Knowledge in Islam According to Al-Attas

There are several terms commonly used in the context of knowledge, such as *scientific knowledge*, *knowledge*, and *science*. These terms are often regarded as synonymous and are used interchangeably in academic discourse, without necessarily being tied to specific connotations or epistemological frameworks. However, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas provides a distinctive classification that differentiates between types of knowledge based on metaphysical and spiritual considerations. According to al-Attas, knowledge can be broadly divided into two types, although they are interconnected and form a unified whole. First, knowledge that is divinely bestowed (*ladunni*), given by Allah SWT as a gift to humanity. Second, knowledge that is acquired through human effort via the faculties of reason, physical senses, observation, investigation, and research (Al-faruqi & Al-attas, 2017).

This conception aligns with the Islamic worldview in which knowledge is not neutral or value-free; rather, it must be integrated with faith and ethics. The learning process, as part of the broader quest for knowledge, is inherently tied to the spiritual objective of education: to nurture individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also morally upright (Muhammad et al., 2023). Education, in this view, is not merely about transferring information but about shaping human character ensuring that knowledge is applied wisely and responsibly (Sundari et al., 2024). The cultivation of *adab* (etiquette or proper conduct) is essential in this process, as it enhances both the intellectual quality and the ethical application of knowledge in daily life. The deeper the internalization of *adab*, the more meaningful and beneficial the knowledge becomes both personally and socially (K. M. Ilmu et al., 2024)

In the Islamic tradition, knowledge is regarded as a primary means of drawing closer to Allah SWT. Numerous prophetic traditions emphasize the importance of pursuing knowledge. For instance, the hadith: "Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim" (HR. Ibn Majah), underscores both the personal and social dimensions of knowledge (Wahab, 2017). A knowledgeable person is expected to serve as a role model

and contribute positively to society but only if their knowledge is accompanied by proper *adab*.

Islamic education, therefore, demands more than just academic performance; it requires the development of noble character. A seeker of knowledge must embody humility (*tawadhu'*), patience, and consistently implement the knowledge they acquire. This notion is closely related to the Qur'anic perspective in Surah Al-Mujadilah verse 11, which connects the elevation of ranks with both knowledge and faith. In many classical sources, *adab* is defined as proper behavior in the context of learning especially in one's interaction with teachers, peers, and knowledge itself. Imam al-Ghazali, in *Ihya Ulumuddin*, asserts that *adab* is the very foundation of the pursuit of knowledge (K. M. Ilmu et al., 2024). Without *adab*, knowledge can be misused or even become destructive.

When compared with other major educational thinkers, al-Attas's emphasis on metaphysical grounding and ethical orientation stands in stark contrast to Western models such as John Dewey's pragmatism, which promotes experiential learning and problem-solving without necessarily referencing spiritual values. Similarly, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy encourages learners to challenge oppression and promote liberation through education, emphasizing socio-political awareness over metaphysical alignment. Meanwhile, classical Islamic thinkers such as al-Ghazali also emphasized the integration of knowledge and ethics, but often with a stronger focus on personal piety and mystical refinement. Compared to Ibn Sina, who adopted more of a rationalist and Aristotelian approach to knowledge, al-Attas insists on the spiritual authority of revelation as the ultimate epistemic criterion.

Thus, al-Attas's contribution lies in his insistence on harmonizing intellectual pursuits with spiritual discipline, positioning knowledge not as a neutral tool but as something that must be cultivated through *adab* to serve both individual perfection and societal well-being. This provides an alternative epistemological model that critiques both secular-modern and reductionist religious interpretations, offering instead a holistic paradigm rooted in the Islamic worldview.

The Concept of Adab in Islam According to al-Attas

In the view of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the main concept that holds great importance in Islamic education is adab and ta'dīb. He explains that the term *adab* comes from a tradition unique to Islam and is difficult to translate precisely into other languages. In linguistic terms, *adab* carries meanings related to education, and its usage is solely intended for human beings. According to al-Attas, *adab* is not merely about ethics in interpersonal relationships but also includes the proper attitude towards everything, placing each thing in its rightful position. Therefore, *adab* is closely tied to fundamental elements in the Islamic worldview, such as the relationship with God, knowledge, the universe, revelation, the Prophet, and the meaning of happiness(Jali & W, 2024). In al-Attas' view, the term *ta'dīb* is simply defined as the process of instilling and internalizing the values of *adab* into the human being, particularly in the context of education. Thus, *adab* is the core or central element that must be ingrained in the process of Islamic education (Al-Daghistani, 2022; Hidayatullah & Arif, 2022; Kosim et al., 2020; McLarney, 2016; Noaparast, 2012; Robert, 2018; Sassi, 2020)

Al-Attas further explains that *adab* is a *maṣyhad*, which represents justice manifested through wisdom. This reflects the recognition of various levels or hierarchies in all things, including existence, knowledge, and actions, all of which must be approached according to their proper place and position (Al-Daghistani, 2022).

Furthermore, adab is also understood as discipline for the body, mind, and soul. Al-Attas defines adab more broadly as the awareness and recognition of the reality that knowledge and all things in this world possess structure and levels. Every individual has a specific position in relation to this reality, based on their physical and spiritual abilities (Ahmad, 2021).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas considers the term *ta'dīb* to be the most appropriate term to represent education in Islam, more so than *tarbiyah* or *ta'līm*. He believes that the concept of *ta'dīb* encompasses key elements such as knowledge (*'ilm*), the teaching process (*ta'līm*), and the formation of good character and upbringing (*tarbiyah*). Therefore, there is no need to separate these three terms as though they exist independently in describing Islamic education, since they are all integrally combined within the concept of *ta'dīb* (Pengetahuan et al., 2015). *Ta'dīb* etymologically comes from the root word *addaba*, meaning to provide education. *Ta'dīb* can be understood as the process of internalizing and instilling the values of *adab* within an individual. According to al-Attas, *ta'dīb* is the core or main value that needs to be instilled in the Islamic education system. Meanwhile, the word *adab*, derived from *ta'dīb*, is interpreted as a reflection of justice through wisdom (Nafisah et al., 2023)

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas further states that the root problem of the ummah today is the loss of *adab*. This is because *adab* reflects a person's values, which are visible through their behavior and actions, including politeness and ethics that are in accordance with religious teachings. *Adab* and education are inseparable; education without *adab* will obscure the true meaning of knowledge and distance it from the principles of true Islamic education (A. Ilmu & Positif, 1993).

According to the Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), *adab* is defined as polite behavior, refined manners, and actions that reflect good morals. A person who possesses *adab* is one who has refined speech, polite behavior, and noble character. Thus, when a person is well-mannered, they are able to place the knowledge they have acquired in its rightful context and use it appropriately, while respecting knowledge by both learning and teaching it. Upholding *adab* in education aligns with al-Attas' thought, which emphasizes the importance of forming a *insan kamil* (perfect human) through the cultivation of *adab* in every individual (Nafisah et al., 2023).

The educational paradigm proposed by al-Attas focuses on the moral and transcendental (affective) dimensions, though it also accommodates cognitive (logic and sensory-based) and psychomotor (sensory experience-based) aspects. Muhaimin states that this approach is in line with the goals of Islamic education, which emphasize religious moral and spiritual values. In the framework of Islamic educational taxonomy, there is a transcendental aspect, which refers to the domain of faith, in addition to the three other domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, as introduced by B.S. Bloom (McLarney, 2016). The domain of faith plays a central role in Islamic education, because Islamic teachings are not limited to rational matters but also encompass those that transcend human reason. Therefore, understanding Islamic teachings must be based on faith derived from revelation, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. The domain of faith becomes the central axis that shapes the life stance, value system, and behavior of students. In relation to this concept, the Prophet Muhammad SAW has provided very comprehensive explanations of Islamic teachings, including those on *adab*. He taught *adab* in all aspects of life, even addressing seemingly trivial matters such as the proper way to relieve oneself (Al-Daghistani, 2022; Hidayatullah & Arif, 2022; Kosim et al., 2020; McLarney, 2016; Noaparast, 2012; Robert, 2018; Sassi, 2020).

Adab and good character are part of righteous deeds that strengthen faith and hold great weight in the scale of deeds.(Farihin, 2023) Those who possess good character are deeply loved by the Prophet Muhammad, and having noble character is one of the reasons a person can enter Paradise. The early scholars always guided their children to understand and practice adab before pursuing knowledge. This is in line with the words of Imam Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH), who said, "They did not send their children to seek knowledge before they studied adab and worshiped for 20 years." Abdullah Ibn Mubarak (d. 181 AH) also emphasized the same point, stating, "I studied adab for 30 years. They studied adab before seeking knowledge." He also said, "Adab is a third of knowledge." Imam Muhammad bin Sirin (d. 110 AH) said, "They (the early generations) studied the Prophet's guidance (on adab) just as they studied knowledge." Meanwhile, Imam Abdullah Ibn Mubarak expressed his view, saying, "Makhlad bin al-Husayn (d. 191 AH) said to us: 'We need *adab* more than a large collection of Hadith'(Jali & W, 2024).

The Urgency of Integrating Knowledge and Adab in the Reconstruction of Islamic Education

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping the character of a generation that is both knowledgeable and virtuous. In Islam, knowledge and adab (etiquette or moral conduct) are two fundamental elements that complement each other. Knowledge provides insight and understanding, while adab serves as the moral foundation for applying that knowledge. This concept is increasingly relevant in the face of modern challenges, especially in the digital era, where technological advancements can influence the learning process and the values embedded in Islamic education (Hakim & Aly, 2023). Therefore, the integration of knowledge and adab is an urgency that cannot be ignored in contemporary education systems.

The definition of ethics or adab in the context of Islamic education refers to attitudes and manners that demonstrate respect for knowledge, teachers, and the learning environment.(Rizki et al., 2024) Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasizes that the root problem of the Muslim community today is the "loss of adab," which refers to the disappearance of moral values that are the foundation for the blessings of knowledge. From this perspective, education that lacks adab loses its true essence as a means to form a insan kamil (perfect human being) (Ahmad, 2021). Ideal Islamic education must be able to instill adab while simultaneously transferring knowledge holistically (Muslih et al., 2022)

In Islamic education, knowledge and adab must be integrated because they complement each other. Knowledge without adab can lead to the misuse of knowledge, while adab without knowledge can result in ignorance and limited understanding. Al-Ghazali warns that knowledge without adab is prone to causing harm, both personally and socially. Knowledge should bring people closer to Allah, but without adab, knowledge can be used for purposes that contradict religious values, such as arrogance or the abuse of power (Mulya & Hanifah, 2025).

The process of seeking knowledge in Islam places great emphasis on adab toward teachers, peers, and the learning environment. Imam Malik once said, "Learn adab before seeking knowledge." This indicates that without adab, one cannot truly appreciate knowledge or share it beneficially with others. Furthermore, the integration of knowledge and adab in education aims to cultivate individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess good character (Mulya & Hanifah, 2025). In this framework, Islamic education serves as a means to nurture the insan kamil, a perfect

human who not only understands knowledge but also applies it in a proper and correct manner (Muslih et al., 2022).

The concept of education in Islam is holistic, not fragmented. Therefore, Islam does not separate worldly and religious knowledge but rather integrates them, ensuring that the essence of Islamic values within knowledge remains intact. The same principle applies to adab and knowledge. Islam not only focuses on the teaching of reason but also places great importance on moral education, as this is the core of education. Regarding the importance of knowledge and adab in education, Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a) emphasized that the teaching of adab should precede knowledge. "Learn adab, then learn knowledge." This statement of Umar r.a highlights that before seeking knowledge, one must first learn adab, which requires time and dedication. Once adab is understood and internalized, then knowledge should be sought. Adab serves as a means to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge (Aini et al., 2016).

From the above explanation, the integration proposed by al-Attas can be understood as an effort to dismantle secularism and rebuild it by taking the first step of establishing a strong ontological foundation, all based on the principle of tawhid (the oneness of God), which asserts that all knowledge originates from Allah. Based on this principle, in the realm of Axiology, moral values and adab can be placed as guiding principles. Epistemologically, the process begins with language and is developed within the framework of knowledge by integrating various sources of knowledge, including revelation, intuition, reason, and empirical observation (I. Ilmu et al., 2024). After deeply understanding the Islamic and Western worldviews, as well as the foundation of the concept of integrating knowledge and adab, the process of integration can then be carried out (Muslih et al., 2022).

To translate this philosophical integration into practical educational transformation, a comprehensive framework is essential. Islamic educational institutions, particularly universities and pesantrens, should embed the principle of *tawhid* at the core of their curricula, ensuring that all academic disciplines reflect the unity of knowledge and its divine origin. Teacher training programs must emphasize both mastery of subject matter and the cultivation of adab, fostering educators who model humility, respect, and sincerity in their interactions. Pedagogical practices should incorporate reflective and experiential learning, encouraging students to internalize ethical values alongside intellectual understanding (Al-Daghistani, 2022). Assessment methods must extend beyond cognitive skills to evaluate the application of adab in academic conduct and social responsibilities. Additionally, institutional policies should support an environment conducive to moral and spiritual development through mentorship, community engagement, and ethical governance. Continuous feedback and curriculum refinement, responsive to contemporary challenges such as digital ethics, will sustain the relevance and effectiveness of this integration. This practical framework enables Islamic education to realize al-Attas's vision of nurturing *insan kamil*, who embody both knowledge and virtuous character in harmony (Robert, 2018).

The Urgency of Integrating Knowledge and Adab in Al-Attas' View as an Answer to the Challenges of Islamic Education in the Digital Era

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' thought provides significant insights and conceptual contributions that are highly relevant to the current educational challenges. Al-Attas views the primary issue in Islamic education not merely as limited access to technology or insufficient digital literacy, but as a crisis of adab the erosion of ethics,

manners, and respect for knowledge, educators, and the learning process itself (Oktavia & Khotimah, 2023).

According to al-Attas, the ideal form of education is one that shapes individuals to understand and place everything in its rightful position. This suggests that the integration of knowledge and adab must be the foundational principle in the Islamic education system. In today's digital context, technology should serve as a supporting tool, not the central focus, for conveying knowledge based on Islamic values and noble character (Sari et al., 2024).

Al-Attas also emphasizes the importance of an Islamic worldview as the foundational framework for the development and dissemination of knowledge. Without this worldview, the use of technology risks losing direction and may push the younger generation towards secularism, materialism, and hedonistic lifestyles, which move away from the spiritual values of Islam (I. Ilmu & Islam, 2019).

In the context of the digital era, the epistemology of knowledge acquisition faces unprecedented disruptions. The fragmentation of authority where traditional sources of knowledge are challenged by a flood of online content creates confusion about what constitutes valid and reliable knowledge. Information overload can overwhelm students, diminishing their capacity for deep understanding and critical reflection. Algorithmic biases embedded in digital platforms may distort perceptions and reinforce echo chambers that hinder balanced and ethical learning. Furthermore, the virtualization of the teacher-student relationship challenges traditional adab, as the personal presence and direct transmission of values are partially replaced by mediated interactions, potentially weakening the moral and ethical foundation of education (Ahmad, 2021).

To address these digital challenges, it is imperative to integrate insights from media studies and digital pedagogy into Islamic education. This would involve training educators not only in technological skills but also in critically navigating and guiding digital content while reinforcing the values of adab. Teachers must become role models who embody adab both offline and online, guiding students in ethical digital citizenship (Sassi, 2020).

To address the current challenges, such as the proliferation of negative content, declining social empathy, and low levels of digital literacy, efforts must begin with the internalization of adab values throughout the Islamic education curriculum, including in the use of digital media. This involves efforts to shape teachers not only as masters of technology but also as strong role models who can pass on the values of adab to their students. Additionally, it is essential to build an educational system that integrates both fardhu 'ain (individual obligations) and fardhu kifayah (communal obligations) within a framework of the Islamization of knowledge (Nuriyati, n.d.).

As emphasized by al-Attas, "The goal of education in Islam is not merely to fill the student's mind with facts, but to instill adab and produce good human beings." Therefore, the integration of knowledge and adab in rebuilding Islamic education is not only a response to digital challenges but also a solid foundation for shaping a generation that is both knowledgeable and virtuous. In al-Attas' view, the ultimate goal of education is to produce al-insan al-salih, a good human being not only intellectually competent or professionally excellent. In the digital era, this urgency becomes even clearer: technology without adab can accelerate moral decay, while knowledge coupled with adab can become a guiding light for civilization (Vilianita et al., 2022)

D. CONCLUSION

In today's digital era, Islamic education needs to emphasize the integration of knowledge and adab, as articulated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. In Islam, knowledge cannot be separated from religious values, and the main goal of education is to cultivate individuals with a balanced spiritual and intellectual awareness. Through an education approach based on *ta'dīb*, various challenges in the digital era can be faced without sacrificing Islamic identity in education.

To operationalize *ta'dīb* in concrete educational terms, it is necessary to design curricula that explicitly incorporate ethical and spiritual development alongside intellectual learning. This includes developing teacher training modules that instill the principles of adab in digital pedagogy, creating learning outcomes that emphasize moral character formation, and fostering classroom environments whether physical or virtual that model respectful interactions rooted in Islamic values. Such practical measures ensure that *ta'dīb* transcends abstract ideals and becomes an actionable framework guiding daily educational practices.

With the rapid advancements in information and communication technology, future Islamic education must be adaptive yet proactive in formulating a transformative education paradigm rooted in Islamic values. This involves critically engaging with digital realities such as algorithmic biases, information overload, and the virtualization of the teacher-student relationship. Addressing these challenges requires integrating insights from media studies and digital pedagogy to safeguard epistemological integrity and uphold adab within digital learning environments.

Therefore, the *ta'dīb* approach needs to be implemented across digital platforms that are inclusive, interactive, and grounded in the ethics of Islamic knowledge, in order to create a holistic and sustainable learning environment. Methodologically, this calls for a fusion of Islamic epistemology with contemporary educational technologies, enabling educators to mediate between timeless Islamic principles and the evolving modalities of learning in the digital age.

Looking ahead, the vision of Islamic education should focus on producing a generation of Muslims who are not only skilled in technology but also possess deep spirituality, integrity in character, and critical thinking abilities to navigate the challenges of the times. With this approach, Islamic education will not only survive the wave of digital disruption but also lead the way in building a civilization based on knowledge, adab, and faith.

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