

## Historical Analysis of Prophet Muhammad's Educational Methods in The Mecca and Medina Periods Based on Sirah Nabawiyah: Implications for Contemporary Islamic Education

Sabila Azmi Syahira <sup>a,1,\*</sup>, Iin Kandedes <sup>b,2</sup>, Zaimudin <sup>c,3</sup>

<sup>a,b,c</sup> UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> [sabila.azmi25@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:sabila.azmi25@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id) ; <sup>2</sup> [iin.kandedes@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:iin.kandedes@uinjkt.ac.id) ; <sup>3</sup> [zaimudin@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:zaimudin@uinjkt.ac.id)

\*Correspondent Author, [sabila.azmi.syahira@gmail.com](mailto:sabila.azmi.syahira@gmail.com)

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history

Received:

04-11-2025

Revised:

05-11-2025

Accepted:

13-02-2026

#### Keywords

Prophetic Educational Methods; Sirah Nabawiyah; Mecca Period; Medina Period; Contemporary Islamic Education

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide a historical analysis of the educational methods employed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during the Mecca and Medina periods, based on the Sirah Nabawiyah, and to explore their implications for the development of contemporary Islamic education. Employing a qualitative approach with a historical-descriptive method, the research examines primary sources in the form of classical works on the Sirah Nabawiyah and secondary sources consisting of contemporary academic studies published in reputable journals. The findings indicate that the Prophet's educational method in Mecca focused on the formation of faith, moral character, and spiritual resilience through personal and dialogical approaches, particularly within the setting of Dar al-Arqam. In contrast, during the Medina period, the educational method evolved into a more systematic and institutional model, marked by the establishment of the mosque as the center of learning, the implementation of community-based instruction, and the integration of spiritual, social, and practical dimensions of education. The study further reveals that prophetic educational principles such as *tadarruj* (gradualism), *hiwar* (dialogue), *qudwah* (exemplary conduct), *tarbiyah ruhiyah* (spiritual cultivation), and *ta'lim 'amali* (practical learning) remain highly relevant in addressing the crises of contemporary Islamic education, which are characterized by the dichotomy of knowledge, moral decline, and detachment from spiritual values. The practical implications of this research include recommendations to integrate holistic approaches into Islamic educational curricula, to develop learning models grounded in exemplary conduct, and to build educational ecosystems that harmonize intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions.

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### Introduction

Contemporary Islamic education faces increasingly complex multidimensional challenges in the era of globalization and rapid social transformation. Leading scholars such

as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi have long pointed to a systemic crisis in the management of education across the Muslim world, calling for a fundamental reassessment of its philosophy and methodology (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1993). This crisis is not limited to quantitative issues such as access and equity, but more profoundly concerns qualitative dimensions, including orientation, substance, and the effectiveness of education in shaping individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, and morally complete.

Another pressing concern is the rise of moral decline and identity crises among Muslim youth. Sociological studies indicate that many young Muslims experience value disorientation and struggle to see the relevance of Islamic teachings in modern life. This paradox suggests that Islamic education, as currently practiced, has not fully succeeded in embedding moral and spiritual values into the character of its learners. Fazlur Rahman argues that the central weakness of modern Islamic education lies in its inability to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions in a balanced way (Rahman, 1982).

The long-standing dichotomy between religious and secular sciences, which has persisted since the decline of classical Islamic civilization, remains a fundamental obstacle to the advancement of Islamic education. Al-Faruqi, through his concept of the Islamization of Knowledge, observed that this separation has fragmented the Muslim educational system. Religious sciences have become isolated from modern scientific developments, while secular sciences have advanced without ethical or spiritual foundations (Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, 1982). The consequences are evident in the limited contribution of the Muslim world to global knowledge production and the weak competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions internationally. This reality highlights the urgent need to reconstruct an educational paradigm that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions in a holistic manner.

In the midst of reform efforts, there is a growing awareness of the importance of returning to the educational model established by Prophet Muhammad as an ideal prototype. The *Sirah Nabawiyah*, as the historical record of the Prophet's life, offers a rich repository of educational methodologies that proved effective in transforming Arabian society from *jahiliyyah* into the finest generation of humankind. Martin Lings, in *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, emphasizes that the Prophet's success in building a civilization within twenty-three years is unparalleled in human history, with education serving as the central instrument of this transformation (Martin Lings, 1991). The Prophet's holistic approach, which simultaneously addressed spiritual, intellectual, and physical aspects, provides a model worthy of careful study as a potential solution to the crisis of contemporary Islamic education.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, although many works on Islamic education exist, systematic comparative analyses of the Prophet's educational methods during the Mecca and Medina periods based on authoritative *Sirah Nabawiyah* sources remain scarce. Second, most existing studies tend to be normative and idealistic, offering limited contextual analysis of how these methods can be applied in modern educational settings. Third, this research seeks to bridge the gap between prophetic educational heritage and the needs of contemporary Islamic education through a comprehensive historical-analytical approach. It is therefore expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of Islamic education that is authentic, relevant, and transformative.

Specifically, this study aims to: (1) identify and analyze the educational methods employed by Prophet Muhammad during the Mecca period; (2) identify and analyze the methods employed during the Medina period; (3) compare the characteristics of

educational methods in both periods; and (4) formulate practical implications of prophetic educational methods for the advancement of contemporary Islamic education. The research questions focus on the following: What are the characteristics of the Prophet's educational methods in the Mecca and Medina periods? What contextual factors shaped the differences between these approaches? And how can the relevance and implications of prophetic educational methods inform the renewal of Islamic education in the contemporary era?

## Method

The research methodology employed in this study adopts a qualitative approach with the type of library research, characterized by a historical-descriptive-analytical orientation. The qualitative approach was chosen to enable a deep understanding and interpretation of socio-historical phenomena, in line with John W. Creswell's assertion that qualitative research allows scholars to explore and comprehend the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. The historical method is applied to analyze educational events in the Sirah Nabawiyah chronologically and contextually, following the principles of Islamic historiography developed by Tarif Khalidi and Chase F. Robinson. Meanwhile, the descriptive-analytical approach is employed to systematically portray the characteristics of the Prophet's educational methods and to examine their implications for contemporary education.

Primary data sources consist of three main categories: first, the Qur'an as the supreme authoritative source containing revealed principles of education; second, canonical hadith collections such as *Sahih al-Bukhari*, which record the Prophet's sayings, actions, and approvals related to educational practices; and third, classical works of Sirah Nabawiyah, including *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Hisham, *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* by Ibn Sa'd, and *Zad al-Ma'ad* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. Secondary sources encompass contemporary academic studies on Islamic education and prophetic pedagogy, such as Abdullah Nasih Ulwan's *Tarbiyat al-Awlad fi al-Islam*. In addition, peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus and nationally accredited journals (SINTA 1 and 2) serve as critical references.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques, involving the systematic gathering, reading, and note-taking of relevant information from both primary and secondary sources. This process followed the *systematic review* procedure developed by Barbara Kitchenham, with inclusion criteria based on topical relevance, source authority, and accessibility. The collected data were organized thematically according to the research focus: educational methods during the Mecca period, educational methods during the Medina period, and their contemporary implications. Data analysis employed a combination of content analysis and historical criticism, encompassing stages of data reduction, systematic presentation, cross-verification among sources, and interpretive synthesis of findings. Research validity was ensured through source triangulation, comparing data across multiple primary and secondary references, and peer debriefing with experts in Sirah Nabawiyah and Islamic education. Through this methodology, the study aims to reconstruct the Prophet Muhammad's educational methods in their historical context while highlighting their relevance for modern Islamic educational discourse.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. The Historical Context of Education during the Time of Prophet Muhammad

To understand the educational methods of Prophet Muhammad in a comprehensive manner, it is necessary to examine the socio-historical context of pre-Islamic Arab society, which became the focus of his educational transformation. The Arabs before the advent of

Islam, often referred to as the *jahiliyyah* (age of ignorance), had distinctive cultural, social, and intellectual characteristics that were both specific and complex. Philip K. Hitti, in *History of the Arabs*, describes pre-Islamic Arab society as tribal and nomadic, with a value system centered on *'asabiyyah* (tribal solidarity), *muruwwah* (manliness), and *hamiyyah* (tribal pride). This value system produced a hierarchical social structure based on lineage and tribal strength, accompanied by practices that contradicted universal human principles, such as the burial of infant girls alive, unrestricted slavery, and exploitation of the weak (Philip K. Hitti, 2002).

Education in the pre-Islamic era was informal and limited to the transmission of practical knowledge within family and tribal circles. Albert Hourani notes that the education of the *jahiliyyah* Arabs primarily involved survival skills in the desert, the art of warfare, oral poetry and literature, and genealogical traditions (Albert Hourani, 2010). There were no formal educational institutions, and literacy levels were extremely low, with only about seventeen individuals in Mecca reportedly able to read and write at the dawn of Islam. This situation illustrates the extraordinary challenge faced by Prophet Muhammad in his educational mission, as he was required not only to transmit new knowledge but also to dismantle deeply entrenched values and beliefs that had persisted for centuries.

The prophetic mission, which began in 610 CE with the first revelation in the Cave of Hira, introduced a revolutionary educational paradigm. The first revealed verse, "*Iqra' bismi Rabbika alladhi khalaq*" ("Read in the name of your Lord who created"), explicitly affirmed that education and knowledge are the foundational pillars of the Islamic message. Fazlur Rahman, in *Islam and Modernity*, interprets the command *iqra'* not merely as an instruction to read texts, but as a call to critically engage with the realities of the universe and humanity from a divine perspective (Rahman, 1982). Thus, education in Islam was positioned from the outset as an instrument for knowing God, understanding the cosmos, and humanizing humankind, a vision that is profoundly holistic and transformative.

The Prophet's mission and educational activity are generally divided into two major phases: the Mecca period (610–622 CE) and the Medina period (622–632 CE). This division is not simply chronological or geographical, but reflects fundamental differences in context, challenges, and educational approaches (Hisham, 1955). Ibn Khaldun, in his *Muqaddimah*, analyzes how the differing socio-political conditions of Mecca and Medina influenced the nature of the revelations and the strategies of the Prophet's mission, including his educational methodology (Ibn Khaldun, 2015). The Mecca period, lasting thirteen years, was marked by minority status, persecution, and restricted freedom, whereas the Medina period, lasting ten years, was characterized by the formation of a political community, the expansion of Islam, and the institutionalization of its teachings. These contextual differences produced methodological variations that are rich and instructive for study.

Understanding this historical context is crucial, as the Prophet's educational methods cannot be adequately grasped without considering the socio-cultural setting in which they were applied. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasizes that any attempt to adopt the legacy of Islamic education must take into account the principle of *hikmah* (wisdom), which requires contextual understanding and the ability to distinguish between universal principles that are timeless and particular applications that are bound to specific circumstances (Al-Attas, 1999). Such contextual analysis helps to identify methodological elements that are universal and applicable across diverse settings, as well as those that are particular and require adaptation to contemporary contexts.

## 2. The Educational Methods of Prophet Muhammad during the Mecca Period

The Mecca period, which lasted for thirteen years (610–622 CE), was a formative phase in which the foundations of Islamic faith (*ta'asis*) and character were established. The minority status and persecution faced by Muslims during this time shaped the educational methods employed by Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Ishaq, in *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, records that the mission unfolded gradually: the first three years in secrecy (*da'wah sirriyyah*) and the following ten years openly (*da'wah jahriyyah*), though still under pressure and opposition from the Quraysh (Hisham, 1955). These circumstances required the Prophet to develop educational methods that were personal, intensive, and oriented toward building spiritual resilience and strong ideological commitment.

The first prominent method in the Mecca period was *al-hiwar* (dialogue) and *al-muhawarah* (discussion). Prophet Muhammad used dialogue as a primary means of conveying the message of monotheism and dismantling the polytheistic beliefs of Quraysh society. The Qur'an records numerous dialogues between the Prophet and different groups, ranging from discussions with polytheists about the oneness of God, with the People of the Book about the continuity of revelation, to exchanges with opponents regarding the truth of prophethood. Zakaria Ahmad al-Qadhi, in his study of Qur'anic educational methods, identifies that dialogue in the Qur'an is highly pedagogical: it respects the intellect of the interlocutor, encourages critical thinking, employs rational argumentation, and avoids coercion (Zakaria Ahmad al-Qadhi, 2007). This dialogical approach was particularly effective in a society with a strong oral literary tradition and a culture of debate (*munazharah*).

The second method was *al-qudwah* (exemplary conduct), which served as a central pillar of prophetic education. In the Mecca context, where Muslims were a persecuted minority, the Prophet's example of patience, steadfastness, and consistency between word and deed provided extraordinary spiritual strength for his companions. Ibn Sa'd, in *Al-Tabaqat*, records episodes showing how the Prophet's endurance in the face of suffering and intimidation inspired his companions to remain firm in their faith (Ibn Sa'd, 1968a). Abdullah Nasih Ulwan argues that exemplary conduct is the most influential educational method, as learners naturally imitate figures they admire and respect, and its effectiveness depends on the moral authority and credibility of the educator (Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, 1992). The Prophet's example encompassed all aspects of life: worship, ethics, social relations, perseverance in trials, and balance between spiritual and material dimensions.

The third method was education through the institution of *Dar al-Arqam*, which became the nucleus of Islamic learning. The house of al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam, located at the foot of Mount Safa, served as the gathering place for the Prophet and his early companions for intensive instruction. Ibn Hisham notes that in *Dar al-Arqam*, the Prophet taught the Qur'an, explained the principles of faith, guided worship practices, and fostered solidarity among believers (Hisham, 1955). Ahmad Syalabi, in *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, refers to *Dar al-Arqam* as the "first Islamic university," since it facilitated systematic education despite its small scale and constrained circumstances (Hamdan Rasyid, 2020). Its educational model was characterized by small groups that allowed intensive interaction, personal approaches tailored to individual needs, integration of cognitive learning with character formation, and emphasis on building *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) among learners.

The fourth method was *tadarruj* (gradualism) in the delivery of teachings. This principle is clearly reflected in the chronology of Qur'anic revelation, which unfolded gradually over twenty-three years, with stages that considered the psychological and social readiness of the community. During the Mecca period, the focus of revelation was on establishing the foundations of monotheistic faith, belief in the afterlife, and moral character, while detailed

legal rulings were revealed later in Medina (Rahman, 1982). Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, in *Al-'Aql wa al-'Ilm fi al-Qur'an*, explains that gradualism reflects pedagogical wisdom that takes into account human capacity for change, recognizing that fundamental transformation requires a step-by-step process to be deeply internalized and sustained (Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, 1996). This principle was also applied in worship practices, for example, prayer was initially prescribed as two units (*rak'at*), later increased to four after the migration, with detailed regulations introduced progressively (Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, 1997).

The fifth method was the cultivation of spiritual resilience (*tarbiyah ruhiyyah*) through strengthening the relationship with God. In conditions of minority and persecution, the Prophet emphasized the importance of building a strong spiritual foundation as an internal source of strength. The revelations of the Mecca period were rich in themes that reinforced faith in God, consoled and motivated the Prophet and his companions, and provided an eschatological perspective that framed worldly struggles within a larger eternal purpose. Spiritual practices such as *qiyam al-layl* (night prayer), Qur'anic recitation, and remembrance of God (*dhikr*) were central components of training in *Dar al-Arqam*. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, in *Zad al-Ma'ad*, explains that strengthening the spiritual dimension functioned as an "inner fortress" enabling believers to remain steadfast against external pressures, since deeply rooted conviction in the heart cannot be shaken by intimidation or material temptation (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1994). This spiritual training produced companions of extraordinary resilience, as reflected in the perseverance of Bilal ibn Rabah, the family of Yasir, and the early emigrants who sacrificed wealth and family ties to preserve their faith.

### 3. The Educational Methods of Prophet Muhammad during the Medina Period

The migration to Medina in 622 CE marked a fundamental transformation in the socio-political condition of the Muslim community and brought significant changes to educational methodology. Prophet Muhammad was no longer leading a persecuted minority but had become the head of state with political, legal, and social authority. W. Montgomery Watt, in *Muhammad at Medina*, notes that this period was characterized by complex processes of state building and community formation, in which the Prophet simultaneously assumed multiple roles as spiritual leader, political authority, military commander, judge, and educator (W. Montgomery Watt, 1956). This shift in context influenced the nature of educational methods, making them more systematic, institutionalized, and encompassing broader dimensions of life.

The first prominent method in Medina was the institutionalization of the mosque as the center of education. The Prophet's first step upon arriving in Medina was to build the Prophet's Mosque (*Masjid Nabawi*), which functioned not only as a place of worship but also as a center for education, consultation, adjudication, and socio-political coordination (Hisham, 1955). Within the mosque complex, he established the *suffah*, a veranda that served as both residence and learning space for companions who had no homes and dedicated themselves entirely to seeking knowledge. Ibn Sa'd records that the inhabitants of the *suffah* numbered between seventy and four hundred at different times, forming a special group that received intensive training directly from the Prophet (Ibn Sa'd, 1968a). This model became the prototype of Islamic boarding schools, where students lived in a learning community that integrated formal education with character formation through communal life.

The second method was the development of a comprehensive and integrated curriculum. Unlike the Mecca period, which focused primarily on faith and character formation, the Medina period was marked by diversification of educational content covering all aspects of life (Muhamad Faisal Ashaari, 2022). The revelations of this period were rich in legal rulings: worship such as prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage; transactions including trade, leasing, and debt; family law covering marriage, divorce, and inheritance; criminal law; as well as governance and international relations. The Prophet taught these subjects in an integrated manner, linking spiritual and ritual dimensions with social and practical aspects. Muhammad Hamidullah, in *Introduction to Islam*, notes that the Prophet's curriculum included the Qur'an and its interpretation, hadith and sunnah, jurisprudence and law, ethics and spirituality, as well as practical skills such as writing, arithmetic, archery, swimming, and horsemanship (Muhammad Hamidullah, 1981). This integration reflected Islam's view of the unity of knowledge, which does not separate religious sciences from worldly sciences.

The third method was practice-based learning, which became highly intensive in Medina. The Prophet did not merely convey teachings verbally but demonstrated them and involved his companions in direct practice (Muhammad Abdurrahman, 2015). Hadiths on worship illustrate this method: "Pray as you have seen me pray" (Bukhari) and "Take your rites of pilgrimage from me" (Muslim). In economic matters, he engaged directly in trade and agriculture with his companions while teaching the relevant principles of Islamic law (Muhammad Hamidullah, 1981). In military affairs, he personally led expeditions and taught strategies, tactics, and the ethics of warfare through practical involvement. Muhammad Abdurrahman concludes that the balance between theoretical and practical learning in Medina was ideal, as every concept taught was immediately applied in the lived experience of the community (Muhammad Abdurrahman, 2015).

The fourth method was decentralization of education through the appointment of companions as teachers and missionaries. With the expansion of Islam and the growing number of adherents, the Prophet recognized that he could not personally instruct all believers. He therefore delegated educational responsibilities by appointing competent companions to teach in different regions. Mu'adh ibn Jabal was sent to Yemen, Mus'ab ibn 'Umair to Medina before the migration, and others to newly converted communities. Ibn Sa'd records detailed instructions given by the Prophet to these envoys regarding teaching methods, priority subjects, and approaches suited to local contexts (Ibn Sa'd, 1968b). The famous dialogue between the Prophet and Mu'adh before his departure to Yemen, concerning reliance on the Qur'an, Sunnah, and personal reasoning (*ijtihad*), shows that the Prophet also trained his companions in methodology for interpreting and developing Islamic teachings, not merely in transmitting content. This decentralized model became the foundation of Islamic education networks, sustained by scholars and institutions across diverse regions.

The fifth method was the development of the *halaqah* or study circle, which became the standard format of Islamic learning. In a *halaqah*, students sat in a circle around the teacher to listen, ask questions, and engage in discussion (George Makdisi, 1981). This format encouraged direct interaction between teacher and students, peer discussion, and a participatory learning atmosphere. Al-Bukhari narrates that the Prophet often sat in the mosque with his companions in such circles, answering their questions, explaining newly revealed verses, and addressing communal issues (Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, 1997). George Makdisi, in *The Rise of Colleges*, argues that the *halaqah* system established during the Prophet's time became the foundational model for classical Islamic institutions, from *kuttub* to *madrasah* and major universities such as Al-Azhar and Nizamiyyah (George Makdisi, 1981). Its characteristics included flexibility of time and place, open access without

social discrimination, emphasis on oral transmission and memorization, and personal bonds between teacher and student that extended beyond formal institutional relations.

The sixth method was the integration of education with the socio-political life of the community. In Medina, education was inseparable from governance and social practice. The Constitution of Medina (*Sahifah al-Madinah*), drafted by the Prophet, served both as a constitutional document and as civic education material, teaching principles of coexistence in a plural society (Muhammad Hamidullah, 1981). The Prophet involved his companions in political decision-making through consultation (*shura*), which functioned simultaneously as leadership training and social responsibility education. Major decisions, such as strategies for the battles of Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq, were made through collective deliberation with senior companions. Akbar Ahmed, in *Discovering Islam*, notes that this integrated educational model produced a generation of companions who mastered religious knowledge while also excelling in political leadership, state administration, military affairs, diplomacy, and economics, resulting in a holistic and multidimensional profile of graduates (Ahmed, 2002).

#### 4. Comparative Analysis: Continuity and Contextual Adaptation

A comparative analysis of the Prophet's educational methods in Mecca and Medina reveals both principled continuity and significant contextual adaptation. Continuity is evident in the fundamental principles consistently applied across both periods: monotheism as the foundation of the entire educational structure, exemplary conduct (*qudwah*) as the primary method of character formation, respect for reason and dialogue in the transmission of knowledge, gradualism (*tadarruj*) in the delivery of teachings, and the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions (Al-Attas, 1999). These principles are universal and not dependent on specific socio-political contexts, making them enduring elements (*tsawabit*) of prophetic educational methodology.

Contextual adaptation is visible in operational and institutional aspects. The Mecca period was characterized by education that was personal, secret in its early phase, small in scale, and focused on building the foundations of faith and spiritual resilience. The Medina period, by contrast, was marked by education that was more systematic, open, institutionalized through the mosque and *suffah*, and covering a broader spectrum of subjects including law, social transactions, politics, and practical skills (Amjad M. Hussain, 2020). This shift did not represent a change in principle but rather an adaptive response to new circumstances: from a persecuted minority to a sovereign majority, from internal consolidation to external expansion, from forming a core group to educating the wider community.

The following table summarizes the methodological characteristics of both periods:

Aspect	Mecca Period	Medina Period
Social Setting	Minority, persecuted	Majority, sovereign
Educational Focus	Faith, ethics, spiritual resilience	Law, social transactions, politics, skills
Institutions	Dar al-Arqam (informal)	Mosque, Suffah (semi-formal)

Scale	Small groups, personal	Mass education, decentralized
Approach	Intensive, in-depth	Extensive, comprehensive
Orientation	Building foundations	Building civilization

These differences reflect the principle of *hikmah* (wisdom) in Islamic education, which emphasizes the importance of considering learners' conditions and social environment in determining appropriate methods. Prophet Muhammad demonstrated remarkable methodological flexibility without compromising fundamental principles. As al-Qaradhawi explains, flexibility in methods (*wasail*) combined with steadfastness in objectives (*maqasid*) is a defining characteristic of prophetic education that contemporary Muslim educators must understand and emulate (Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, 1996).

Further analysis shows that the methodological transition from Mecca to Medina was not abrupt but gradual and organic. Several methods developed in Mecca continued in Medina with modifications, while new methods were introduced as needed. Exemplary conduct, for instance, remained central in Medina but expanded from patience under persecution to leadership, justice, and governance. Dialogue, which was intensive in Mecca, evolved into political consultation (*shura*) in Medina. Spiritual education, initially focused on strengthening individual faith, developed into collective worship and communal rituals (Amjad M. Hussain, 2020). This continuity within change demonstrates the coherence of prophetic educational vision, oriented toward forming the complete human (*al-insan al-kamil*) within a believing and just society.

The implication of this comparative analysis is that contemporary Muslim educators must distinguish between universal principles that must be preserved and particular applications that can be adapted to context (Al-Attas, 1999). Principles such as monotheism, exemplary conduct, dialogue, gradualism, and integration of spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions are timeless foundations of Islamic education. Institutional formats, curriculum structures, learning media, and specific techniques, however, should be developed according to the needs of the time and the characteristics of learners. Failure to distinguish between principle and application can lead to two problematic extremes: sacralizing historical forms that are no longer relevant, or secularizing education in ways that neglect fundamental principles.

### 5. Implications for Contemporary Islamic Education

The study of Prophet Muhammad's educational methods offers several important implications for the reform and development of contemporary Islamic education. The first implication concerns the reconstruction of a holistic and integrated educational paradigm. The dichotomy between religious and secular education, which has long been a fundamental problem in the Muslim world, can be addressed by returning to the prophetic vision of education that does not recognize such separation (Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, 1982). As practiced in Medina, Islamic education should encompass all dimensions of human life, including spiritual, intellectual, social, and practical skills, within a coherent curriculum. Practical implementation of this implication includes developing integrated curricula that connect religious subjects with science, social studies, and the humanities; comprehensive teacher training that combines spiritual, academic, and pedagogical competencies; and holistic assessment systems that cover cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects within the framework of Islamic values (Rosnani Hashim, 1999).

The second implication is the revitalization of exemplary conduct (*qudwah*) as the cornerstone of character education. In the digital era, where information and knowledge are easily accessible through various platforms, the role of teachers as sources of information has diminished (Shabir Ahmed, 2022). Yet their role as moral and spiritual exemplars has become even more crucial, since no technology can replace lived example. Practical applications of this principle include reforming teacher recruitment and training systems to emphasize not only academic competence but also moral integrity; developing mentoring and guidance programs that foster personal interaction between educators and learners; and creating school environments conducive to practicing Islamic values by all members of the school community (Najwan Saada, 2020). As modeled by *Dar al-Arqam* and the *suffah*, the relationship between teacher and student should be built on spiritual and personal bonds (*suhbah*) that transcend formal administrative ties.

The third implication relates to the application of gradualism (*tadarruj*) in curriculum development and teaching methods. Contemporary Islamic education is often criticized for imposing overly complex material on learners without considering their psychological and intellectual readiness. The principle of gradualism applied by the Prophet, where the foundations of faith were established before detailed legal rulings, where worship obligations were introduced step by step, and where prohibitions were revealed after positive alternatives had been strengthened, offers a highly relevant pedagogical model (Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, 1996). Practical implementation includes designing tiered curricula that respect developmental stages, emphasizing motivation and meaning before imposing obligations, and using inductive methods that build understanding progressively from concrete to abstract, from simple to complex.

The fourth implication is the development of dialogical and participatory learning models. The monologic and passive educational style that still dominates many Islamic institutions needs to be transformed into dialogical and participatory models, as practiced by the Prophet in his *halaqah*. Dialogue in prophetic education was not merely a questioning technique but reflected respect for human intellect and recognition that effective learning occurs through active interaction rather than passive reception. Practical applications include reforming teaching methodologies from one-way lectures to interactive discussions, fostering critical thinking and argumentation skills within the framework of Islamic ethics, creating space for learners to ask, critique, and explore, and utilizing technology to expand dialogue and collaboration beyond conventional classrooms (Charlene Tan, 2020).

The fifth implication is the strengthening of the spiritual dimension (*tarbiyah ruhiyyah*) within Islamic education. A common critique of contemporary Islamic education is its tendency to reduce Islam to cognitive information and behavioral rules without engaging the transformative spiritual dimension (Clare Alkouatli, 2018). The Prophet's model, both in Mecca and Medina, placed the cultivation of a relationship with God at the foundation of the entire educational process. Practical applications include integrating spiritual practices such as remembrance (*dhikr*), reflection (*tafakkur*), and mindfulness (*muraqabah*) into daily school routines; developing structured spiritual training programs; creating atmospheres that support authentic spiritual experiences rather than mere formal ritualism; and training teachers to serve as spiritual guides as well as instructors of religious knowledge.

The sixth implication is the decentralization and contextualization of Islamic education. The Prophet's practice of appointing companions as teachers in different regions, with flexibility to adapt approaches to local contexts, demonstrates that Islamic education need

not be uniform in format and method. Practical applications include granting greater autonomy to local institutions to develop curricula and methods suited to their communities, producing Islamic educational content relevant to local and contemporary issues, and empowering local scholars and educators as agents of education who understand their social context (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2008). This decentralization, however, must remain within the framework of universal Islamic principles that unify the community amid contextual diversity.

## Conclusion

This study yields several important conclusions regarding the educational methods of Prophet Muhammad and their implications for contemporary Islamic education. First, the methods employed during the Mecca period focused on building the foundations of faith, moral character, and spiritual resilience through personal and intensive approaches, dialogue, exemplary conduct, gradualism, and the strengthening of spiritual dimensions within the framework of *Dar al-Arqam*. Second, the methods developed during the Medina period became more systematic and institutionalized, utilizing the mosque as the center of education, establishing a comprehensive and integrated curriculum, emphasizing practice-based learning, decentralizing education through the appointment of companions as teachers, adopting the *halaqah* system, and integrating education with the socio-political life of the community.

Third, there is clear continuity between the two periods in terms of fundamental principles: monotheism as the foundation, exemplary conduct as the primary method, dialogue and gradualism as key approaches, and the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions as defining characteristics. At the same time, contextual adaptation is evident in operational and institutional aspects. Fourth, the practical implications for contemporary Islamic education include reconstructing a holistic and integrated paradigm, revitalizing exemplary conduct in character formation, applying the principle of gradualism in curriculum design, developing dialogical and participatory learning models, strengthening the spiritual dimension, and decentralizing and contextualizing education.

This study recommends that policymakers, educational leaders, and teachers critically evaluate existing systems by referring to the prophetic principles identified here. Further research is needed to develop practical models for implementing these implications and to conduct experimental studies that test the effectiveness of prophetic educational methods in contemporary formal education settings.

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