

Reconstruction of The Epistemology of Qur'anic Moral Education In At-Tibyan By Imam An-Nawawi and Its Relevance for Contemporary Islamic Education

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Abstract. Contemporary Islamic education faces epistemological challenges in the form of reducing education to cognitive achievement, fragmenting knowledge and moral character, and weakening the transcendental orientation in Qur'anic learning. This condition has generated a crisis of meaning and value disorientation, despite the quantitative growth of Islamic educational institutions. This study aims to reconstruct the epistemological structure of Qur'anic moral education formulated by Imam An-Nawawi in *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat al-Qur'an* and to analyze its relevance for the renewal of contemporary Islamic education. Employing a qualitative approach with a library research method, this study is based on thematic analysis and philosophical hermeneutics of *At-Tibyan*, enriched by critical dialogue with classical and contemporary theories of Islamic education. The findings reveal that Imam an-Nawawi systematically reconstructs the epistemology of Islamic education by affirming five core elements: a theologically transcendental source of knowledge; the epistemic subject as the bearer of the trust of revelation; the object of knowledge as the Qur'an understood as a normatively binding moral truth; methods of knowledge acquisition oriented toward the internalization of adab and ethical praxis; and the ultimate educational aim of forming a Qur'anic person who is both knowledgeable and morally upright. Within this structure, adab is positioned as the foundation, medium, and indicator of the validity of knowledge, thereby rejecting the reduction of knowledge to purely cognitive understanding detached from moral consequences. These findings are relevant as an alternative epistemological framework for contemporary Islamic education, enabling it to move beyond technocratism and formalism toward the integration of knowledge, adab, and moral-social responsibility.

Keywords: educational epistemology, Qur'anic morality, At-Tibyan, contemporary Islamic education.

Abstrak. Pendidikan Islam kontemporer menghadapi tantangan epistemologis berupa reduksi pendidikan menjadi pencapaian kognitif semata, fragmentasi antara pengetahuan dan karakter moral, serta melemahnya orientasi transendental dalam pembelajaran Al-Qur'an. Kondisi ini melahirkan krisis makna dan disorientasi nilai, meskipun secara kuantitatif lembaga pendidikan Islam mengalami pertumbuhan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi struktur

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epistemologis pendidikan moral Qur'ani yang dirumuskan oleh Imam An-Nawawi dalam *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat al-Qur'an* serta menganalisis relevansinya bagi pembaruan pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (library research), yang didasarkan pada analisis tematik dan hermeneutika filosofis terhadap *At-Tibyan*, serta diperkaya dengan dialog kritis terhadap teori-teori pendidikan Islam klasik dan kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Imam An-Nawawi secara sistematis merekonstruksi epistemologi pendidikan Islam dengan menegaskan lima elemen inti: sumber pengetahuan yang bersifat teologis-transendental; subjek epistemik sebagai pembawa amanah wahyu; objek pengetahuan berupa Al-Qur'an sebagai kebenaran moral yang bersifat normatif dan mengikat; metode perolehan pengetahuan yang berorientasi pada internalisasi adab dan praksis etis; serta tujuan akhir pendidikan berupa terbentuknya manusia Qur'ani yang berilmu sekaligus berakhlak mulia. Dalam struktur ini, adab diposisikan sebagai fondasi, medium, sekaligus indikator validitas pengetahuan, sehingga menolak reduksi pengetahuan menjadi sekadar pemahaman kognitif yang terlepas dari konsekuensi moral. Temuan ini relevan sebagai kerangka epistemologis alternatif bagi pendidikan Islam kontemporer, sehingga mampu melampaui pendekatan teknokratis dan formalisme menuju integrasi antara pengetahuan, adab, serta tanggung jawab moral dan sosial.

Kata kunci: epistemologi pendidikan, moral Qur'ani, *At-Tibyan*, pendidikan Islam kontemporer.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era characterized by technological acceleration, the globalization of values, and the fragmentation of moral authority the field of education faces serious challenges in the form of a moral crisis and spiritual disorientation (Rohova, 2024). Likewise, contemporary Islamic education is currently situated within a tension between the demands of 21st-century curricular rationality and the legacy of the classical scholarly tradition that emphasizes *adab* as the foundation of knowledge (Setiawan, 2025). Educational paradigms oriented toward instrumental rationality tend to prioritize academic achievement, efficiency, and easily measurable practical skills, while ethical, transcendental, and character-forming dimensions are often marginalized. As a result, a generation emerges that is intellectually accomplished yet morally fragile, lacking value orientation and possessing insufficient ethical responsibility in social life (Ningsih et al., 2025).

In practice, many Islamic educational institutions place greater emphasis on cognitive aspects, mastery of subject matter, and academic evaluation standards, while character formation based on Qur'anic values has not been systematically and operationally implemented. This condition gives rise to an epistemological gap between the idealized Qur'anic morality upheld normatively and the practical reality of education that is oriented merely toward cognitive outcomes. (Triani et al., 2025). In contrast, within the classical Islamic intellectual tradition, scholars consistently asserted that knowledge cannot be separated from morality (Aravik et al., 2022). Imam an-Nawawi, for instance, regarded *adab* as an epistemic prerequisite for the emergence of valid and beneficial knowledge. Knowledge that is not accompanied by purity of heart, sincerity of intention, and a divine orientation is viewed as having lost its transformative value (Cahyono, 2025).

Previous studies have discussed the concept of moral education in Islam, among others through the works of (Al-Ghazali, 1983) in *Ihya' Ulum Ad-Din*, (Ibnu Miskawaih, n.d.) in *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, and (Az-Zarnuji, n.d.) in *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim*. However, studies on *At-Tibyan fi Adab Hamalat Al-Qur'an* by Imam An-Nawawi remain largely confined to normative-adabiy dimensions and have not sufficiently addressed the underlying epistemological framework (Supriani et al., 2021). From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, the *adab* of the bearers of the Qur'an involves three interrelated elements: (a) the method of knowledge (how interpretive and textual validity is assessed), (b) the sources of knowledge (the Qur'an, Sunnah, *ijma'*, *qiyas*, and classical *ijtihad*-based sources), and (c) the ethical dimension within epistemology (intellectual honesty, scholarly humility, verification integrity, and pedagogical empathy). (Elman & Mahrus, 2020).

The limited number of studies reconstructing the epistemology of Qur'anic moral education from Imam An-Nawawi's perspective indicates an academic gap in the development of contemporary Islamic education paradigms. Many modern works remain confined to normative morality and practical pedagogical approaches without exploring the epistemic principles that explain how *adab* functions as a constitutive element of knowledge. Therefore, a reconstruction of the epistemology of Qur'anic moral education is needed one that is not merely historical-descriptive but also analytical and contextual.

This study aims to reconstruct the epistemology of Qur'anic moral education as formulated by Imam an-Nawawi in *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat al-Qur'an* and to analyze its relevance for the renewal of contemporary Islamic education. Theoretically, this research contributes to strengthening the discourse on Islamic educational epistemology by reaffirming the position of *adab* as the foundation, instrument, and ultimate goal of Qur'anic education. Practically, the findings are expected to provide a conceptual basis for reconstructing the curriculum, pedagogy, and practices of Qur'anic education in an integrative and holistic manner, oriented toward the formation of Qur'anic individuals who are knowledgeable, well-mannered, and morally and socially responsible.

Accordingly, this study situates itself at the intersection of Islamic educational philosophy, Qur'anic epistemology, and contemporary educational challenges. Through a philosophical-hermeneutical approach to classical texts, it seeks to revitalize Imam An-Nawawi's thought as a source of inspiration for renewing the paradigm of Islamic education one capable of addressing the current crisis of values and spirituality without losing its epistemological roots in the Islamic scholarly tradition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Islamic educational epistemology examines the nature, sources, validity, and purposes of knowledge within a tawhid-based framework that integrates revelation, reason, and experience into a unified system of values. In contrast to Western epistemology, which tends to emphasize rationality and empiricism, Islamic epistemology is theo-anthropocentric, positioning revelation as the primary source that guides human intellectual activity. Within this perspective, knowledge is not viewed as a neutral entity, but as a trust (*amanah*) carrying moral and spiritual consequences. Therefore, the validity of knowledge is not measured solely through cognitive criteria, but also through its impact on moral formation and closeness to God. This view aligns with Al-Ghazali, 1983 emphasis on the inseparability of knowledge and action, as well as Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's concept of *adab* as the core of Islamic education and his critique of the phenomenon of loss of *adab* in modern education (Al-Attas, 1994).

In this context, Qur'anic moral education is understood as a process of character formation grounded in the values of the Qur'an, encompassing spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. This form of education is not limited to the transmission of knowledge, but also involves the internalization of values such as sincerity, piety, responsibility, and justice in the lives of learners. Classical Islamic scholarship has long emphasized this dimension, as reflected in the thought of Miskawaih, 1966, who highlighted character development through moral habituation, and Az-Zarnuji, n.d. who asserted that the success of learning is largely determined by the adab of the student. Thus, Qur'anic moral education is inherently transformational, as it aims at comprehensive personal change rather than mere mastery of content.

The book *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat al-Qur'an* by Imam an-Nawawi can be understood as a text that embodies an integral structure of Islamic educational epistemology, although it is not presented in an explicit philosophical format. In this work, Qur'anic educational epistemology is constructed through five main elements: the source of knowledge as theological-transcendental, the epistemic subject as the bearer of the trust of revelation, the object of knowledge as the Qur'an as a normative truth, the method of acquiring knowledge based on the internalization of adab and ethical praxis, and the ultimate goal of education as the formation of the Qur'anic individual. The uniqueness of this epistemology lies in its assertion that adab is not merely a complementary ethical component, but rather the foundation, medium, and indicator of the validity of knowledge. Thus, *At-Tibyan* implicitly rejects the notion of value-neutral knowledge and affirms that the validity of knowledge is deeply determined by the moral quality of the knowing subject.

The reconstruction of epistemology in this study is understood as a systematic effort to uncover, organize, and contextualize the epistemic principles implicitly embedded within classical texts. This reconstruction is internal-critical in nature, aiming to strengthen the Islamic intellectual tradition from within while simultaneously correcting reductionist tendencies in educational practice. Through this approach, *At-Tibyan* is not merely read as a normative ethical text, but as a conceptual source with philosophical and pedagogical relevance for the development of Islamic education. Therefore,

epistemological reconstruction becomes a crucial step in bridging classical intellectual heritage with contemporary educational needs.

In the reality of contemporary Islamic education, several significant epistemological problems persist, including cognitive reductionism, the fragmentation between knowledge and morality, and a crisis of scholarly authority. Education is often reduced to the pursuit of academic achievement, mastery of content, and technical skills, while moral and spiritual dimensions receive insufficient attention. As a result, a generation emerges that is intellectually capable but lacking in moral integrity and social responsibility. This condition reflects a gap between the ideal of Qur'an-based Islamic education and the pragmatic, technocratic tendencies of current educational practices.

In this context, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* holds significant relevance as an alternative paradigm for the renewal of Islamic education. It offers an integrative framework that unites knowledge, adab, and action within a coherent educational system. At the level of orientation, *At-Tibyan* emphasizes that the goal of education is the formation of the Qur'anic individual; at the curriculum level, it calls for the integration of cognitive aspects and moral development; at the pedagogical level, it positions the teacher as both an epistemic and moral figure; at the evaluation level, it stresses the importance of assessing character transformation; and at the institutional level, it directs educational management to be grounded in the trust of revelation and moral integrity. Thus, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is not only theoretically relevant but also carries practical implications for reorienting Islamic education toward a more holistic and transformative model.

Overall, this theoretical framework demonstrates that Islamic educational epistemology places adab at the core of the educational process, and the reconstruction of the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* presents an integrative model that unites cognitive, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This framework serves as an important conceptual foundation for addressing the crisis in contemporary Islamic education while revitalizing the intellectual tradition rooted in the values of revelation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach based on library research, grounded in a philosophical hermeneutic paradigm as the analytical framework. This approach is chosen because the object of study is a classical religious text that contains layers of meaning, normative values, and an epistemological structure that cannot be reduced to quantitative data (Hanif, 2021, Setyawan & Muslih, 2024).

Paradigmatically, this research is rooted in philosophical hermeneutics, which views a text as a product of a scholarly tradition emerging from specific historical and intellectual contexts, while also possessing an open horizon of meaning that can be made relevant across time (Steinmetz, 2024). This paradigm enables *At-Tibyan* to be read not only in a literal-normative manner but also reflectively to uncover the underlying epistemological structure of education embedded within it.

The analysis is directed toward reconstructing the epistemology of Qur'anic moral education, namely a systematic effort to uncover and systematize the epistemic principles dispersed throughout the discussions on the etiquette of Qur'an recitation, the ethics of teachers and memorizers, the preservation of the Mushaf, and Qur'anic educational praxis (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). This reconstruction is critically dialogued with Islamic educational theory, particularly Al-Ghazali's concept of the integration of knowledge and practice, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dib*, and contemporary critiques of cognitive reductionism in Islamic education (Al-Ghazali, 1983; Ahmad, 2021).

The primary data source is *At-Tibyan*, while secondary sources include classical scholarly works, literature on Islamic epistemology and philosophy of education, and relevant contemporary studies. Data analysis is conducted through content analysis combined with an interpretive-hermeneutic approach, encompassing thematic identification, philosophical interpretation, and conceptual reconstruction of the epistemological structure of Qur'anic moral education (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2019)

The final stage of analysis contextualizes the reconstructed framework within contemporary Islamic education discourse through critical dialogue with other educational theories. Thus, this research methodology produces not merely a normative

description of Imam An-Nawawi's thought, but an epistemological formulation with both theoretical and practical relevance for developing an Islamic educational paradigm oriented toward the formation of the Qur'anic person who is knowledgeable and ethically grounded.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Epistemological Structure of Qur'anic Moral Education in *At-Tibyan*

Based on thematic and hermeneutic analysis of *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat Al-Qur'an*, it can be concluded that Imam an-Nawawi constructs the epistemology of Qur'anic moral education in a relatively clear and systematic structure. This epistemology is not presented as an abstract theory or explicit philosophical framework; rather, it is internalized within the chapter organization, the selection of hadith and athar, and the consistent normative emphasis on specific forms of *adab*. This pattern indicates that *At-Tibyan* functions as a pedagogical-epistemological text integrating the dimensions of knowledge, ethics, and educational praxis (Syamsuddin et al., 2021).

Structurally, the educational epistemology in *At-Tibyan* can be mapped into five principal elements:

- A. Source of knowledge
- B. Epistemic subject
- C. Object of knowledge
- D. Method of knowledge acquisition
- E. Ultimate goal of education

These five elements do not stand independently; rather, they form a hierarchical and mutually determining unity. This model aligns with the Islamic educational epistemology approach that views knowledge as an integrated value system encompassing ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Oktarini et al., 2025).

A. Source of Knowledge: Theological-Transcendental Dimension

The source of knowledge in the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is fully theological-transcendental in nature. The Qur'an is positioned as the sacred *Kalamullah*, absolute and morally binding. This perspective appears from the very beginning of the book,

particularly in the chapter on *fadh'l Al-Qur'an wa fadh'l hamalatihi*, where Imam An-Nawawi opens the discussion by affirming the excellence of the Qur'an and its status above all other forms of knowledge (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). The placement of this chapter at the beginning of the work indicates a deliberate epistemological priority: that the entire educational process must begin with recognition of the authority of revelation.

In this chapter, the Qur'an is not understood as a merely historical text or a neutral object of study, but as a source of normative truth that demands *ta'zhim* (veneration), submission, and reverence. This epistemic attitude is reinforced through hadiths concerning the virtues of the People of the Qur'an and warnings for those who treat the Qur'an without proper *adab* (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). At this point, Imam An-Nawawi implicitly reconstructs Islamic educational epistemology by rejecting the assumption of value-neutral knowledge abstracted from moral commitments (Al-Irsyadiyah, 2023). Thus, the source of knowledge determines not only cognitive validity but also the ethical orientation and purpose of education.

B. Epistemic Subject: The Concept of Ḥāmil al-Qur'an (Bearer of the Qur'an)

The second element is the epistemic subject, which in the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is formulated through the concept of *Hamil al-Qur'an*. The knowing subject is not understood merely as a reader, memorizer, or teacher of the text, but as a bearer of the trust (*amanah*) of revelation. This concept is explicitly discussed in the chapter on the etiquette of Qur'anic readers and memorizers, particularly regarding the qualities that must be possessed by a *Hamil Al-Qur'an* (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

Imam An-Nawawi emphasizes that the Qur'anic epistemic subject must embody moral integrity, humility, inner and outer purity, and social responsibility. Thus, scholarly authority is not determined solely by cognitive capacity but by the consistency between knowledge, *adab*, and practice. This structure indicates that the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is amanah-based epistemology (trust-centered epistemology), rather than achievement-based epistemology (performance-centered epistemology), fundamentally differing from modern educational paradigms that prioritize technical competence, certification, and individual achievement (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). This reconstruction reinforces Al-Ghazali's theory of the inseparability of knowledge and practice (*'ilm and*

'*amal*) and aligns with Al-Attas's concept of the *insan adabi*. (Al-Ghazali, 1983; (Al-Attas, 1994).

C. Object of Knowledge: The Qur'an as a Normative Trust

The object of knowledge in *At-Tibyan* is the Qur'an itself, understood not merely as material for recitation or memorization, but as a normative trust that carries ethical consequences. This is clearly reflected in the chapters on the etiquette toward the *Mushaf*, the etiquette of *tilawah*, and the prohibition against treating the Qur'an carelessly (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

Imam An-Nawawi asserts that the manner in which the object of knowledge is treated reflects the epistemic quality of the subject. Therefore, the safeguarding of the *Mushaf*, physical cleanliness, and propriety in recitation are not viewed as ritual formalities, but as epistemological mechanisms to preserve the sanctity of the human–revelation relationship. At this point, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* rejects the objectification of knowledge and aligns with Al-Attas's critique of reducing knowledge to value-free information (Al-Attas, 1994). The Qur'anic object of knowledge is sacred, meaningful, and demands the moral engagement of the knower.

D. Method of Knowledge Acquisition: Adab as an Epistemic Principle

The method of knowledge acquisition in the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is grounded in adab. This is extensively discussed in the chapters on the etiquette of Qur'anic teachers, the etiquette of students, and the ethics of learning assemblies (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). Within this framework, adab does not function as a mere methodological complement; rather, it operates as an epistemic principle that determines the blessing (*barakah*) and validity of knowledge.

Imam An-Nawawi emphasizes that knowledge acquired without adab has the potential to produce arrogance, distortion of meaning, and social conflict. This view aligns with Al-Ghazali's critique of knowledge detached from *tazkiyat an-nafs*, and stands in direct opposition to modern technocratic approaches that separate the learning process from character formation (Al-Ghazali, 1983). Accordingly, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* views learning as an ethical-performative activity, not merely the transfer of information, in which the truth of knowledge is tested through the moral transformation

of the subject. At this point, Imam An-Nawawi effectively reconstructs the method of Islamic education by positioning devotional praxis as an epistemic medium, in continuity with the classical Islamic pedagogical tradition and in contrast to modern technocratic educational models.

E. The Ultimate Aim of Education: Formation of the Qur'anic Person

The ultimate aim of education in the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is not merely the mastery of textual knowledge or technical competence, but the formation of the *Qur'anic person* (*insan Qur'ani*) who is knowledgeable, well-mannered, and socially responsible. This orientation is evident in the closing chapters, which emphasize the dangers of *riya'* (ostentation), the misuse of the Qur'an for worldly interests, and the obligation to actualize knowledge in practice (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

Through this structure, Imam An-Nawawi reconstructs the orientation of Islamic education so that it does not become trapped in ritual formalism or educational technocratism, but is instead directed toward the integration of knowledge, character (akhlaq), and social praxis. This epistemology is teleological-eschatological rather than pragmatic-instrumental, and it directly critiques contemporary educational paradigms that are oriented primarily toward the labor market, social prestige, and utilitarian logic (Elman, 2023) (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2023).

3.2 Parts of Islamic Educational Epistemology Reconstructed by Imam An-Nawawi

The findings indicate that Imam An-Nawawi, through *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat Al-Qur'an*, does not merely reproduce the classical Islamic educational tradition but undertakes a significant epistemological reconstruction of the foundations, orientation, and mechanisms of Qur'anic moral education. This reconstruction is internally critical in nature that is, it reinforces normative elements that tend to be reduced in educational practice while also correcting formalistic and technocratic tendencies in the transmission of Qur'anic knowledge (Al-Attas, 1994). Thus, *At-Tibyan* can be read as a work of epistemological renewal from within the tradition rather than as an external critique of it.

Systematically, this epistemological reconstruction encompasses the following six main aspects:

A. Reconstruction of the Relationship between Knowledge and Adab

The most fundamental epistemological reconstruction carried out by Imam An-Nawawi concerns the relationship between knowledge (*'ilm*) and *adab*. In *At-Tibyan*, *adab* is not positioned as an ethical consequence following the mastery of knowledge, but rather as an epistemic prerequisite for the validity and value of knowledge itself (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). This structure affirms that Qur'anic knowledge cannot be separated from the moral disposition of the subject who bears it; therefore, the separation between knowledge and ethical responsibility is regarded as a form of epistemological distortion.

Substantively, this position reinforces Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's critique of modern Islamic education, which he describes as suffering from the *loss of adab* a condition in which knowledge is detached from its hierarchy of values and moral purposes (Al-Attas, 1994). However, unlike Al-Attas, who formulates the problem in philosophical-conceptual terms, Imam An-Nawawi expresses it in normative-practical form through the regulation of tilawah etiquette, teacher–student relations, and the ethics of learning assemblies. Thus, An-Nawawi's reconstruction is applicative and operational rather than speculative.

Within the framework of classical Islamic educational theory, this view is consistent with Al-Ghazali particularly in *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din* who asserts that knowledge devoid of *adab* and *tazkiyat an-nafs* leads to moral corruption and intellectual arrogance (Al-Ghazali, 1983). Nevertheless, Imam An-Nawawi sharpens the epistemological dimension by positioning *adab* as an indicator of the validity of knowledge, not merely as a safeguard of intention. This shift reflects a movement from individual ethics toward performative epistemology, wherein the truth of knowledge is tested through its impact on moral formation.

B. Reconstruction of the Validity and Truth of Knowledge

The second aspect reconstructed by Imam An-Nawawi concerns the concept of the validity of knowledge. In modern epistemology, the validity of knowledge is often measured through logical coherence, methodological accuracy, and technical replicability. In contrast, *At-Tibyan* affirms that Qur'anic knowledge is deemed valid not

merely because of the precision of recitation, but because of its capacity to produce humility, practical implementation, and moral transformation (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

This reconstruction epistemologically rejects objectivism and the assumption of value-neutral knowledge. Knowledge is not positioned as a value-free entity, but as a divine trust that entails moral responsibility. This perspective aligns with normative Islamic epistemology, which situates knowledge within the framework of *tawhid*, yet it fundamentally contrasts with the positivistic paradigm that continues to influence modern educational systems, including contemporary Islamic education (Harahap, 2021) (Irawati et al., 2021)

When compared with Ibn Khaldun who emphasized the functional and social dimensions of knowledge in civilizational development Imam An-Nawawi complements that approach with an ethical-transcendental dimension. Knowledge is not merely a social instrument, but also a means for shaping the moral orientation of the civilizational subject itself. (Ibnu Khaldun, 1986).

C. Reconstruction of the Epistemic Subject: From Learner to Bearer of Trust

Imam An-Nawawi also reconstructs the concept of the epistemic subject. In *At-Tibyan*, the subject of Qur'anic education is not merely a learner, but a *Hamil Al-Qur'an* (bearer of the trust of revelation). This concept shifts the educational orientation from the mere acquisition of competence toward the internalization of moral and spiritual responsibility (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

This reconstruction reinforces the view of Ibn Jama'ah in *Tadzkirat As-Sami'*, which emphasizes purity of intention, moral integrity, and proper teacher–student etiquette as the foundation of education (Ibnu Jama'ah, 2020). However, Imam An-Nawawi goes further by positioning the status of *Hamil Al-Qur'an* as an epistemic identity with social and spiritual consequences, not merely pedagogical ones.

In the context of contemporary education, this concept stands in tension with learner-centered education models that tend to emphasize individual autonomy without normative burden. The epistemology of *At-Tibyan*, by contrast, asserts that the higher a person's

knowledge, the greater the ethical and social responsibility they bear an outlook fundamentally opposed to modern pedagogical individualism. (Rois & Suprianto, 2021).

D. Reconstruction of Scholarly Authority

Another crucial aspect is the reconstruction of scholarly authority. Imam An-Nawawi affirms that authority in Islamic education derives from the depth of one's relationship with the Qur'an, not from social status, age, or political legitimacy. This is evident in his emphasis on the virtue of the people of the Qur'an and the legitimacy of ritual leadership based on Qur'anic competence (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

This reconstruction aligns with the practice of the early *salaf* generation while simultaneously serving as an implicit critique of the crisis of scholarly authority in the digital age, where popularity and visibility often replace depth of knowledge (Rose-Wiles, 2024). In this respect, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* offers a corrective to the "knowledge market" logic that dominates contemporary education.

Compared with modern theories of scholarly authority grounded in certification and formal institutionalization, Imam An-Nawawi restores authority to epistemic and moral integrity. This approach does not reject educational institutions, but rather subjects them to the ethics of revelation and the trust (*amanah*) of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1994).

E. Reconstruction of the Relationship Between Revelation and Social Structure

Imam An-Nawawi also reconstructs the relationship between revelation and the social context. Through his discussions on the preservation of the *mushaf*, the standardization of recitation, and the collective ethics of engaging with the Qur'an, he demonstrates that Qur'anic epistemology requires institutionalization, social discipline, and communal consensus. (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.)

Rekonstruksi ini mengoreksi kecenderungan individualistik dalam spiritualitas modern. Epistemologi *At-Tibyan* menegaskan bahwa ilmu Al-Qur'an memiliki dimensi sosial-institusional yang tidak dapat direduksi menjadi pengalaman personal semata, sejalan dengan kritik terhadap privatisasi agama dalam masyarakat modern (Rasyid et al., 2022).

This reconstruction corrects the individualistic tendencies found in modern spirituality. The epistemology of *At-Tibyan* affirms that knowledge of the Qur'an possesses a socio-institutional dimension that cannot be reduced to merely personal experience, in line with critiques of the privatization of religion in modern society (Assunção & José, 2018).

F. Reconstruction of the Ultimate Aim of Education

The culmination of Imam An-Nawawi's epistemological reconstruction lies in the ultimate aim of education. Qur'anic education, in his framework, is not directed toward producing professional readers or memorizers, but toward forming *Insan Qur'ani* individuals who are knowledgeable, ethically refined, and morally as well as socially responsible (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

This orientation both reinforces the classical Islamic educational tradition and serves as a sharp critique of the reduction of education to cognitive achievement and technical competence. Within the epistemology of *At-Tibyan*, educational success is measured by the integration of knowledge, adab, and praxis not by quantitative indicators alone an emphasis that resonates with critiques found in contemporary critical philosophy of education (Marjuki et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education undertaken by Imam an-Nawawi in *At-Tibyan* is comprehensive, encompassing the sources of knowledge, the epistemic subject, the validity of knowledge, scholarly authority, and the ultimate aims of education. This reconstruction does not contradict the classical Islamic educational tradition; rather, it strengthens and sharpens it, while simultaneously offering a corrective to contemporary Islamic educational paradigms that have become fragmented and ethically disoriented.

3.3 Synthesis of the Epistemological Reconstruction of *At-Tibyan*

With this structure and epistemological reconstruction, *At-Tibyan* can be understood as a coherent and comprehensive text of Islamic educational epistemology. Imam An-Nawawi did not merely compile guidelines on the etiquette of reciting the Qur'an; rather, he reconstructed Qur'anic education from a mere ritual practice into a system for forming

morally cultivated human beings grounded in revelation. This epistemology integrates divine sources of knowledge, a morally grounded epistemic subject, praxis-ethical methods of knowledge acquisition, and educational aims oriented toward transcendental and eschatological ends.

This synthesis affirms that *At-Tibyan* holds not only historical significance within the classical Islamic educational tradition but also offers an alternative epistemological paradigm relevant to contemporary Islamic education. This epistemological framework is substantively aligned with Al-Ghazali's notion of the integration of knowledge and action, as well as Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dib*, which places *adab* at the core of Islamic education (Al-Ghazali, 1983; Al-Attas, 1994). In the modern context, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* functions as a critique of tendencies toward formalism, technocratism, and the reduction of education to mere cognitive achievement, while simultaneously offering a constructive framework for the formation of the Qur'anic person (*Insan Qur'ani*) who is knowledgeable, ethically refined, and morally and socially responsible. (Majid & Aljunied, 2023).

3.4 Analysis of the Relevance of the Epistemology of *At-Tibyan* for Contemporary Islamic Education

The epistemology of Qur'anic moral education developed by Imam An-Nawawi in *At-Tibyan* holds strategic relevance for addressing major challenges in contemporary Islamic education, particularly the moral crisis, fragmentation of knowledge, and the tendency to reduce education to a technocratic instrument. Within this framework, *At-Tibyan* does not merely provide ethical guidelines for reciting the Qur'an; rather, it presents an epistemological paradigm that positions *adab* as the foundation, method, and ultimate goal of education.

Analytically, the relevance of the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* can be mapped across the following five principal levels:

A. Relevance of the Epistemology of *At-Tibyan* at the Level of Educational Orientation.

At the level of educational orientation, *At-Tibyan* affirms that the primary goal of Islamic education is not merely the mastery of academic competencies, but the formation

of the *Insan Qur'ani* a person who is both knowledgeable and well-disciplined in *adab*. This principle constitutes a fundamental critique of modern educational models that often measure learning success solely through cognitive and administrative indicators, without sufficient attention to the moral and spiritual integrity of learners.

In the contemporary context of Qur'anic education and *tahfizh*, an epistemological reduction is frequently observed, whereby learning success is assessed primarily through memorization achievements and recitational accuracy, while the cultivation of *adab* receives inadequate emphasis. Yet, according to Imam An-Nawawi, the bearer of the Qur'an is obliged to maintain both outward and inward *adab* such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), humility (*tawadhu'*), piety (*wara'*), and self-restraint because without these, Qur'anic knowledge risks losing its transformative power (Imam An-Nawawi, pp. 23–25).

The phenomenon of learners who possess strong memorization but weak moral character reflects an epistemic failure namely, when knowledge is understood merely as the accumulation of information. Empirical findings indicate that education emphasizing academic achievement without character formation tends to produce individuals who are intellectually capable yet deficient in ethical and social responsibility (Robbaniyah, 2023)(Octavia & Oktavia, 2024). From the perspective of *At-Tibyan*, this condition signifies a rupture between Qur'anic knowledge and its ethical telos.

B. Relevance of the Epistemology of *At-Tibyan* at the Curriculum Level

At the curriculum level, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* demonstrates strong relevance for the development of integrative contemporary Islamic education curricula. Qur'anic education cannot be reduced to the technical-instrumental teaching of *tahsin*, *tahfizh*, or *tafsir*; rather, it must be designed as a process of internalizing sincerity (*ikhlas*), proper *adab* toward revelation, and the responsibility of practicing Qur'anic teachings in personal and social life. This view aligns with Al-Attas's critique of modern Islamic education, which tends to emphasize cognitive aspects and technical skills while neglecting *adab* as the core of Islamic education (Al-Attas, 1994).

From Imam An-Nawawi's epistemological perspective, the separation between mastery of knowledge and the cultivation of *adab* risks producing educational disorientation namely, the emergence of subjects who are formally competent in reading

and understanding the Qur'an yet deficient in moral exemplarity and ethical maturity. This pattern echoes Al-Ghazali's warning that knowledge which does not yield practice and moral formation may itself become a source of corruption for both individuals and society (Al-Ghazali, 1983). In the contemporary context, similar critiques have been voiced by Islamic education scholars who highlight the fragmentation between curriculum design, character formation, and real-life praxis (Rahmat et al., 2025).

Therefore, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is highly relevant as a conceptual foundation for reconstructing the Qur'anic curriculum toward an integrated orientation that unites knowledge, *adab*, and lived practice. The curriculum should not be understood merely as a vehicle for knowledge transmission but as a medium for forming the *Insan Qur'ani* who simultaneously integrates cognitive, affective, and ethical dimensions. This relevance positions *At-Tibyan* not merely as a classical work on *adab*, but as a contextual epistemological reference for the renewal of Islamic education amid the challenges of modernity and educational technocracy.

C. The Relevance of the Epistemology of *At-Tibyan* at the Pedagogical Level

At the pedagogical level, *At-Tibyan* positions the Qur'anic teacher as both an epistemic and moral figure. Instructional authority does not arise from popularity, academic credentials, or public exposure, but from the consistency between knowledge, *adab*, and practice. The teacher functions not merely as a transmitter of recitation and memorization but as a guide who cultivates students' ethical relationship with the Qur'an. This conception is clearly reflected in the emphasis of Imam an-Nawawi on the etiquette of teachers and the obligation to maintain moral integrity as a prerequisite for the legitimacy of teaching the Qur'an (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.). This view aligns with the classical Islamic pedagogical tradition that places the teacher as a model of exemplary conduct (*uswah*) and a guardian of the trust of knowledge, as emphasized by (Ibnu Jama'ah, 2020; Al-Ghazali, 1983).

In the context of contemporary Islamic education, however, this principle is often diluted by pedagogical practices that overemphasize memorization targets and curricular achievement. In many Islamic educational institutions, accelerated memorization is treated as the primary indicator of learning success, while comprehension of meaning and

internalization of values receive insufficient attention (Anwar et al., 2023). From the perspective of Imam An-Nawawi's epistemology, this tendency reflects the dominance of a rational-instrumental paradigm in pedagogy that neglects *adab* as the epistemic foundation of knowledge. Teachers who function merely as supervisors of memorization lose their epistemic role as mentors of *adab* and guardians of the meaning of revelation, thereby risking a mechanistic and formalistic relationship between students and the Qur'an.

A number of educational studies also affirm that teachers' character and exemplary conduct significantly influence students' internalization of religious values. Teachers do not merely transmit knowledge; they shape students' value horizons, attitudes, and moral orientations through everyday practices of exemplification (Lestari & Misbah, 2022). These findings reinforce the epistemology of *At-Tibyan*, which positions teachers' moral integrity as a condition for the blessing and legitimacy of knowledge. Thus, the pedagogical relevance of Imam An-Nawawi lies in the assertion that authentic Qur'anic education requires the presence of teachers as epistemic subjects who are knowledgeable, ethically grounded, and morally responsible not merely technical instructors of learning.

D. The Relevance of the Epistemology of *At-Tibyan* at the Level of Educational Evaluation

At the level of educational evaluation, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* calls for an expansion of the indicators of learning success. The success of Qur'anic education cannot be adequately measured solely through memorization achievement and textual comprehension; rather, it must also include changes in attitude, discipline in worship, etiquette toward the Mushaf, and the manifestation of students' social morality. This principle stems from the view of Imam An-Nawawi that knowledge of the Qur'an is an *amanah* and is considered valid only when it produces humility, practice, and moral transformation in the learner (Imam An-Nawawi, n.d.).

Within the framework of classical Islamic education, this holistic orientation of evaluation aligns with the thought of Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that the goal of education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge but the purification of the soul and the formation of character. Al-Ghazali maintained that knowledge which does not lead to

behavioral improvement may instead become an argument against its possessor (Al-Ghazali, 1983). Accordingly, evaluation in Islamic education must be capable of capturing the inner and ethical dimensions, not merely the technically measurable cognitive aspects.

In the context of contemporary Islamic education, a number of studies indicate that evaluation systems overly focused on quantitative and short-term outcomes tend to fail in measuring the educational impact on students' character formation and religiosity (Fahmiyudin et al., 2025). Therefore, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is highly relevant as a conceptual foundation for reorienting Islamic educational evaluation toward a holistic and longitudinal approach one that assesses the integration of knowledge, adab, and the practical embodiment of Qur'anic values in students' daily lives.

E. The Relevance of the Epistemology of *At-Tibyan* at the Institutional Level

At the institutional level, *At-Tibyan* provides a strong normative foundation for the governance of Islamic educational institutions that uphold adab, the sanctity of knowledge, and the honor of revelation. From the perspective of Imam An-Nawawi, Qur'anic educational institutions do not merely function as spaces for knowledge transmission but as custodians of the epistemic trust of revelation. Therefore, the modernization of Islamic educational institutions including the utilization of digital technology must be directed toward strengthening Qur'anic values, rather than merely pursuing administrative efficiency, acceleration of technical achievement, or the commercialization of religious education (Imam An-Nawawi, ; Al-Attas, 1994).

In the context of the digitalization of scholarly authority, the epistemology of adab becomes increasingly relevant. Several studies indicate that in the social media era, religious authority is often determined by visibility, popularity, and digital platform algorithms rather than by scholarly integrity and moral depth (Faradila et al., 2025). This phenomenon has resulted in a shift of epistemic authority from scholars and institutions to popular figures who do not always possess adequate scholarly legitimacy. In this context, the epistemology of adab functions as a filtering mechanism for religious knowledge authority by affirming that the legitimacy of knowledge derives from moral integrity, epistemic caution, and responsibility toward revelation (Kamali, 2025).

Imam an-Nawawi explicitly issued a stern warning against the delivery of the Qur'an motivated by *riya'*, ego-driven disputation, and the pursuit of social influence. In *At-Tibyan*, he emphasized that treating the Qur'an without proper adab and caution may lead a person to moral ruin and the loss of the blessing of knowledge (Imam An-Nawawi, pp. 37–38). This principle has strong institutional relevance as an ethical foundation for structuring systems of scholarly authority, religious leadership, and public ethics within Islamic educational institutions amid a culture of popularity.

Furthermore, the relevance of the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* is also evident in the dimension of institutional ethical hermeneutics. Imam an-Nawawi stressed *wara'*, humility, and caution in understanding and conveying the Qur'an in order to avoid haste in interpretation and claims of exclusive truth. Contemporary hermeneutical studies show that religious text interpretation detached from interpretive ethics risks producing dogmatic, exclusivist, and judgmental attitudes toward others (Isern-Mas & Gomila, 2019). In pluralistic and digital societies, this principle functions as an epistemic mechanism to prevent distortion of meaning and social conflict arising from the misuse of religious texts.

Overall, the relevance of the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* for contemporary Islamic education lies in its proposal to comprehensively reorient the educational paradigm encompassing goal orientation, curriculum development, pedagogical approaches, evaluation systems, and institutional governance. Educational success is no longer understood merely as cognitive or technical achievement, but as the integration of knowledge mastery, the formation of adab, and the embodiment of Qur'anic values in real life (Al-Ghazali, 1983).

Thus, the Qur'anic moral education epistemology formulated by Imam an-Nawawi offers a normative and transformative framework relevant as an alternative for renewing Islamic education so that it does not become trapped in technocratism and formalism, but instead orients itself toward the formation of the Qur'anic person (*insan Qur'ani*) who is knowledgeable, well-mannered, and morally and socially responsible. In this framework, *At-Tibyan* may be read as a concrete representation of normative Islamic epistemology that rejects the reduction of knowledge into a mere technical instrument or tool of intellectual domination (Majid & Aljunied, 2023).

Moreover, Imam an-Nawawi's epistemological construction demonstrates a close relationship between the truth of knowledge and the moral quality of the knowing subject. This view aligns with the virtue epistemology approach in contemporary philosophy, which affirms that the reliability of knowledge is strongly influenced by epistemic character traits such as intellectual honesty, humility, and moral responsibility (MacKenzie & Bhatt, 2019). From this perspective, *adab* is not merely an external norm but an internal disposition that determines the validity of the knowing process.

Accordingly, *At-Tibyan* affirms that Qur'anic knowledge is meaningful only when it produces a Qur'anic person who is not only intellectually competent but also morally mature and socially responsible. This institutional vision of Islamic education that remains highly relevant amid the challenges of modernity and the digitalization of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of *At-Tibyan fi Adabi Hamalat Al-Qur'an*, it can be concluded that Imam an-Nawawi reconstructs the epistemological structure of Islamic education in an integral and normative manner. This reconstruction includes the affirmation of a theological-transcendental source of knowledge; the epistemic subject as the bearer of the trust of revelation; the object of knowledge in the form of the Qur'an as a morally binding normative truth; the method of acquiring knowledge that emphasizes the internalization of *adab* and ethical praxis; and the ultimate goal of education oriented toward the formation of the Qur'anic person (*Insan Qur'ani*). Within this structure, *adab* is reconstructed not as a complementary ethic but as the foundation, medium, and indicator of the truth of knowledge. Accordingly, the epistemology of *At-Tibyan* rejects value-neutrality in knowledge, affirms the performative nature of knowledge, and integrates theological, ethical, and socio-institutional dimensions within the educational process.

This epistemological reconstruction by Imam An-Nawawi holds strong relevance for contemporary Islamic education, which is currently facing problems of cognitive reductionism, fragmentation between knowledge and character, and a crisis of scholarly authority. The epistemology of *At-Tibyan* offers an alternative paradigm that positions Qur'anic education as a process of forming moral consciousness and social responsibility, rather than merely transmitting information or technical skills. In this context, Islamic

education is required to reorient its curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation, and institutional governance so that they are grounded in the integration of knowledge and adab. Therefore, Imam An-Nawawi's Qur'anic moral education epistemology is relevant as a conceptual framework for the renewal of contemporary Islamic education one that is oriented toward forming individuals who are knowledgeable, well-mannered, and committed to the values of revelation in both individual and social life.

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