

**ADAB SEARCHING FOR KNOWLEDGE IN THE DIGITAL ERA:  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF THE QUR'AN AND HADITH**Gina Maharani<sup>1</sup>, Elfira Masri<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Pongandian Hasibuan<sup>3</sup>, and Muhamad Yahya<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia<sup>3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia<sup>4</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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2026**Abstract**

This article examines the etiquette of seeking knowledge in the Qur'an and Hadith through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates religious knowledge with modern science. This research is qualitative with a library research method. The results of the study indicate that: (1) The command to iqra' in QS. Al-Alaq: 1 is in line with the principles of Cognitive Science on neural plasticity and metacognition; (2) The goal of seeking religious knowledge in QS. At-Taubah: 122 correlates with the theory of social transformation and social capital; (3) The signs of ulul albab in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 reflect Howard Gardner's concept of Multiple Intelligences; (4) The command to observe nature in QS. Al-Ghasiyah: 17-20 is the basis for the development of Artificial Intelligence. The hadiths of the Prophet SAW also strengthen the integration of divine values with modern science. Reactualization of the etiquette of seeking knowledge in the digital era is a necessity so that Muslims are able to become ulul albab who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble morals and are socially responsible.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Multiple Intelligences, The Etiquette of Seeking Knowledge, Ulul Albab, Cognitive Science



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## INTRODUCTION

Islam places knowledge in a highly esteemed position. The first revelation revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not a command to pray or to pay zakat, but rather a command to read: "Iqra'." This indicates that Islam, from its inception, has emphasized the importance of intellectual activity as a foundation for sound religious practice (Sutarjo & Mirza, 2026). The "Iqra'" command is not merely a technical instruction, but rather an epistemological declaration that places the pursuit of knowledge as a central act of worship in Islam.

In the digital era, marked by the accelerated flow of information, artificial intelligence (AI), and the transformation of how humans learn, the ethics of seeking knowledge as taught in the Quran and Hadith face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Today's Muslim generation faces a choice between being passive consumers of technology or becoming agents of transformation that integrate divine values with the advancement of civilization (Ataman et al., 2024). Reactualizing the ethics of knowledge is an urgent need so that Islam is not merely relevant but becomes a normative guide amidst the global knowledge revolution.

Many studies on the etiquette of knowledge from an Islamic perspective have been conducted, but most remain normative and have not integrated them with contemporary scientific developments such as Cognitive Science, modern social theory, Multiple Intelligences, and Artificial Intelligence. However, the integration of revelation and science is not only possible but also essential for building a comprehensive and contextual Islamic scientific paradigm (Termizi et al., 2025).

This article aims to: (1) analyze the obligation to seek knowledge in QS. Al-Alaq: 1 from a Cognitive Science perspective; (2) examine the purpose of pursuing religious knowledge in QS. At-Taubah: 122 from a social perspective; (3) examine the signs of ulul albab in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 within the framework of Multiple Intelligences; (4) explore the development of science and technology in QS. Al-Ghasyiyah: 17-20 in the context of Artificial Intelligence; and (5) identify hadiths that support this integration. Thus, this article is expected to contribute to the development of an integrative Islamic epistemology relevant to the needs of the times.

Research related to this theme has been conducted by Muhaimin (2020), who examined the concept of Islamic education from a modern scientific perspective; Yusuf (2021), who discussed the integration of religion and neuroscience; and Nasution (2022), who examined the relevance of Multiple Intelligences in Islamic education. However, research integrating these four aspects simultaneously in a single study is still very limited, thus making this study significantly novel.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This literature review was chosen because this research aims to analyze and interpret normative texts (the Quran and Hadith) and integrate them with scientific theories from various disciplines (Sugiyono, 2021). This method is deemed appropriate for generating a deep and comprehensive understanding of relevant primary and secondary sources.

The primary data sources in this study are verses from the Quran related to the etiquette of seeking knowledge, namely QS. Al-Alaq: 1, QS. At-Taubah: 122, QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, and QS. Al-Ghasyiyah: 17-20, as well as relevant hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Secondary data sources include tafsir books, scholarly books, reputable journal articles, and other scholarly works relevant to the research theme.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, namely collecting, reading, recording, and processing data from various predetermined literature sources. Data analysis used a content analysis approach combined with a thematic interpretation approach (tafsir mawdu'i) to systematically examine Quranic verses based on

specific themes. Data validation was conducted through source triangulation by comparing interpretations from various commentators and modern scientific experts.

The analytical framework used was the integration-interconnection paradigm developed by Amin Abdullah (2020), a paradigm that views religious knowledge and general knowledge not as opposing entities, but as two sides of the same coin of knowledge that complement and enrich each other. This paradigm was chosen because it can bridge textual-normative studies with scientific-empirical approaches in a balanced manner.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Obligation to Seek Knowledge in QS. Al-Alaq: 1 and Cognitive Science Studies

Allah SWT sent down the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad SAW with a very monumental statement: *اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ*, "Read it with (mentioning) the name of your Lord who created" (QS. Al-Alaq: 1).

The word "iqra" comes from the root word "qara'a," which means to read, understand, research, and reflect. Ibn Kathir (2019) in his commentary states that this commandment is not merely the act of reading a text, but encompasses the entire human intellectual process of understanding the reality of the universe. Al-Qurtubi added that the inclusion of the phrase "bismi rabbika" indicates that all human cognitive activity must be intended as worship to Allah SWT (Haningsih et al., 2022).

From a cognitive science perspective, this commandment "iqra" aligns deeply with scientific findings on how the human brain works. Cognitive science is the study of mental processes involving perception, attention, memory, language, reasoning, and problem-solving (Sassi, 2023). Some identifiable integrations include:

First, Neural Plasticity. The repetitive and active nature of the Iqra' command aligns with the concept of neuroplasticity, namely the brain's ability to form new neural connections through consistent learning (Sa'diyah et al., 2024). Every time someone learns something new diligently, the brain literally changes its structure by forming new synapses. This concept explains why Islam places such emphasis on *istiqamah* (consistency) in the pursuit of knowledge.

Second, Metacognition. The phrase "bismi rabbika" (consistency) implies a dimension of awareness in learning, known in Cognitive Science as metacognition, namely the ability to monitor and regulate one's own cognitive processes (Baharuddin & Ismail, 2016). A Muslim student who learns "in the name of his Lord" will constantly evaluate and orient his thought processes toward divine truth, rather than merely pursuing academic achievement.

Third, Embodied Cognition. Revelation was revealed in the context of the Prophet Muhammad's serene and contemplative retreat in the Cave of Hira. This aligns with Cognitive Science findings on embodied cognition, which state that physical and environmental conditions significantly influence the quality of a person's cognitive processes. The Islamic etiquette of seeking knowledge, which emphasizes tranquility, cleanliness, and focus, has a strong scientific basis.

This integration is reinforced by recent neuroscience research showing that reading and studying with spiritual awareness increases activity in the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for higher-order reasoning and ethical decision-making (Armizi et al., 2025). These findings support the Islamic view that true knowledge cannot be separated from spiritual and moral dimensions.

## The Purpose of Seeking Religious Knowledge in QS. At-Taubah: 122 and Social Studies

Allah SWT says in QS. At-Taubah verse 122: وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ , “And it is not fitting that the believers should all go forth (to the battlefield). Why should not a group from each of them go forth to deepen their knowledge of their religion and to warn their people when they return, so that they may guard themselves” (QS. At-Taubah: 122).

This verse contains two interrelated main messages: tafaqquh fid-din (deepening religious knowledge) and indzar (warning/teaching the community). Al-Thabari (2018) interprets this verse as establishing a fardu kifayah law for Muslims to dedicate some of their time to studying religious knowledge, the results of which must be disseminated back to their community. This demonstrates that Islam views knowledge not as private property, but as a collective trust.

From a social science perspective, this verse has profound relevance to various modern sociological theories. First, Emile Durkheim's Structural Functionalism Theory. Durkheim argued that every institution in society has a specific function that contributes to social stability (Furqan et al., 2023). Within this framework, scholars and religious figures who practice tafaqquh fid-din function as value keepers, safeguarding the social cohesion of society from moral and spiritual disintegration.

Second, Robert Putnam's Social Capital Theory. Putnam distinguishes between bridging capital (social capital that connects different groups) and bonding capital (social capital that strengthens bonds within a group) (Rahman et al., 2020). Those who practice tafaqquh fid-din ideally become bridging capital, connecting divine values with the realities of social life, translating heavenly messages into earthly language.

Third, Agent of Change. The concept of indzar in this verse aligns with the agent of change theory in modern sociology. Those who study religious knowledge are responsible not only for preserving knowledge but also for actively transforming society toward good. This is the theological foundation for the role of ulama (Islamic scholars) as moral and intellectual leaders amidst social change.

The relevance of this verse in the digital age is increasingly pressing. The phenomena of disinformation, religious hoaxes, and digital radicalism require the presence of those who practice tafaqquh fid-din as guardians of Islamic intellectual orthodoxy (Yunita et al., 2024). Social media platforms have created a "free market" for religious discourse, where anyone can claim spiritual authority without sufficient depth of knowledge. Surah At-Taubah (Quran, 122) emphasizes that valid tafaqquh (religious understanding) must be through a structured learning process oriented toward communal well-being.

## Signs of Ulul Albab in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 and Multiple Intelligences

Allah SWT describes the signs of a person of intelligence (ulul albab) in His word: إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ , “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for people of understanding, (namely) those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or lying down, and they reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth” (QS. Ali Imran: 190-191).

Al-Maraghi (2018) interprets this verse as describing the profile of the perfect Muslim intellectual: those who are able to harmoniously integrate dhikr (spiritual awareness) with fikir (intellectual activity). Ulul albab are those who are not merely intelligent in one dimension, but possess a comprehensive and integrated intelligence.

A very interesting integration can be made between the description of ulul albab in this verse and Howard Gardner's (2020) theory of Multiple Intelligences. Gardner posits that human intelligence is not singular (unitary), but rather multiple and encompasses at least eight

different types of intelligence. The following is a map of the integration between the signs of ulul albab and Gardner's theory:

First, 'Yadzurunallahu qiyaman wa qu'udan' (dhikr in various positions) reflects Intrapersonal Intelligence, namely the ability to understand oneself, emotions, values, and internal motivations. Someone who is able to perform dhikr in all situations demonstrates a highly mature self-awareness. Second, 'Yatafakkaruna fi khalqis samawati wal ardh' (contemplation on the creation of nature) reflects Naturalist Intelligence (the ability to observe and understand natural patterns) and Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (the ability to think systematically and analytically).

Third, the conclusion 'Rabbana ma khalaqta hadza bathila' (nothing in Your creation is in vain) reflects Existential Intelligence, namely the ability to reflect on fundamental questions about existence, meaning, and the purpose of life. Fourth, the ability to express contemplation in the form of prayer demonstrates Linguistic Intelligence (the ability to use language effectively to communicate thoughts) as well as Spiritual Intelligence.

Gardner's theory (2020) emphasizes that good education must develop all dimensions of intelligence, not just the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence that have dominated the formal education system. QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 actually already offers a holistic educational model that integrates intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and naturalistic intelligence within a coherent framework. The concept of ulul albab is the Qur'an's answer to the fragmentation of intelligence that occurs in the modern education system.

### **The Development of Science and Technology in QS. Al-Ghasiyah: 17-20 and Artificial Intelligence**

Allah SWT commands humans to pay attention to natural phenomena through His words: **أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾**, "Then do they not consider the camel, how it was created? And the sky, how it was raised? And the mountains, how it was set in place? And the earth, how it was spread out?" (QS. Al-Ghashiyah: 17-20).

The phrase "afala yanzhuruna" (do they not observe?) is an explicit invitation from Allah SWT to conduct scientific observation of natural phenomena. Al-Zamakhsyari (2019) explains that the word "nadzara" in this context does not simply mean "seeing with the eyes," but rather "seeing with the mind," which encompasses the processes of observation, analysis, and drawing conclusions. This is the foundation of scientific methodology in Islam.

From an Artificial Intelligence (AI) perspective, the command to observe in this verse holds extraordinary relevance. AI is essentially a technological system that seeks to emulate human observational and inferential abilities through computation (Fadllurrahman et al., 2025). Some points of integration include:

First, Computer Vision. The command to "observe" camels, the sky, the mountains, and the earth is a command to conduct observations based on visual data. Computer Vision is a branch of AI that teaches computers to "see" and interpret images, much like how humans process visual information (Goodfellow et al., 2021). The development of smart cameras, surveillance drones, and object identification systems all stem from the observational abilities commanded by this verse.

Second, Biomimicry in AI Development. The phenomena mentioned in this verse have inspired various technological innovations. The camel's foot structure, capable of walking on various terrains, inspired the development of hexapod robots; the aerodynamism of the sky inspired drones and autonomous aircraft; the stability of mountains inspired optimization algorithms; and the Earth's "spread-out" nature inspired AI-based mapping and navigation systems.

Third, Deep Learning and Pattern Recognition. The process of contemplation commanded by the Quran is the process of discovering patterns (pattern recognition) behind natural phenomena. This is the essence of how Deep Learning works, where AI systems learn to recognize patterns from massive amounts of data (big data) through layers of artificial neural networks (LeCun et al., 2020). The universe, in all its complexity, is the largest "big data" created by Allah, waiting to be unraveled by rational humans.

However, the development of AI from an Islamic perspective must always be accompanied by ethics and noble goals. The Quran never commands observation of nature for the sole purpose of exploitation, but rather for contemplation (spiritual reflection) that culminates in recognizing and glorifying the Creator. Therefore, AI developed by Muslim scientists must be based on the values of rahmatan lil 'alamin (mercy for the universe), benefiting all humanity and maintaining the balance of nature.

### **Hadiths Supporting the Integration of Islamic Knowledge and Modern Science**

The Quran, as a primary source of law, is reinforced by the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a secondary source of law that explains and applies the Quran's message to real-life contexts. Several hadiths that are highly relevant to the theme of integrating Islamic knowledge and modern science include:

First, the hadith on the obligation to seek knowledge: *طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ*, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim" (Narrated by Ibn Majah: 224, considered authentic by Al-Albani). This hadith emphasizes the universal obligation to learn without discrimination based on gender, age, or social status. In the context of cognitive science, this hadith is a command to continuously activate the brain's neural plasticity throughout life, because the learning process should never stop.

Second, the hadith on the virtues of scientists: *فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ*, "The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon over all the stars" (Narrated by Abu Dawud: 3641, Narrated by Tirmidhi: 2682). This hadith places scientists at a very high level in the Islamic social hierarchy, aligning with Putnam's concept of Social Capital, which emphasizes the strategic role of intellectuals in building community capacity (Rifa'i et al., 2021).

Third, the hadith on the obligation to disseminate knowledge: *بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً*, "Convey from me even one verse" (HR. Bukhari: 3461). This hadith reinforces the message of Surah At-Taubah: 122 concerning the social obligation to disseminate knowledge. In the context of the digital era, 'tabligh' can be conducted through social media, online educational platforms, podcasts, and various other digital media, thus enabling the reach of scientific da'wah to transcend time and space.

Fourth, the hadith on contemplation as an act of worship: *تَفَكُّرُ سَاعَةٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ سِتِّينَ سَنَةً*, "A moment of contemplation is better than sixty years of worship" (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi in Syu'abul Iman). This hadith explicitly glorifies the activity of thinking (tafakkur) as the highest form of worship. This serves as theological validation for all scientific activities, including scientific research and technological development, as all of these are essentially forms of contemplation on the verses of Allah.

Fifth, the hadith on knowledge as the legacy of the prophets: *الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ*, "The ulama are the heirs of the Prophets" (HR. Abu Dawud: 3641, HR. Tirmidhi: 2682). This hadith provides a prophetic dimension to scientific activity. Muslim scientists who integrate Qur'anic values with modern science are truly continuing the prophetic mission of transforming human civilization toward truth, justice, and prosperity (Majid, 2021).

## Reactualization of the Ulul Albab Concept in the Digital Era

Based on the integrative study above, the profile of Ulul Albab in the Digital Era can be formulated as a concept that integrates Qur'anic values with 21st-century competencies. Ulul Albab of the Digital Era are Muslim intellectuals who possess: (1) strong cognitive abilities based on *iqra'* (literacy, critical analysis, and lifelong learning); (2) a social orientation rooted in *tafaqquh fid-din* and *indzar* (using knowledge for social transformation); (3) comprehensive intelligence (multiple intelligences) that integrates *dhikr* and thinking; and (4) ethical technological competence, developing and utilizing AI as an instrument of *khalifatullah fil ardh*.

This reactualization demands reform in the contemporary Islamic education system. Islamic educational institutions need to integrate religious knowledge with science organically, not merely cumulatively (Fadllurrahman et al., 2025). A curriculum that teaches the interpretation of *Kauniah* verses alongside physics, biology, and technology is a concrete manifestation of the spirit of *iqra'* (religious understanding) enjoined by the Quran fourteen centuries ago.

In the era of artificial intelligence, the challenges for scholars of knowledge are increasingly complex. AI is not only changing the way humans work, but also the way they think, socialize, and even worship. In this context, the ethical values of seeking knowledge taught by the Quran and Hadith serve as an indispensable moral compass to ensure that technological development does not become a disaster, but rather a blessing for humanity (Anam & Sholikhah, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the integrative study conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the command to seek knowledge in Surah Al-Alaq: 1 is deeply correlated with the principles of Cognitive Science, particularly the concepts of neural plasticity, metacognition, and embodied cognition. This scientifically proves that the etiquette of seeking knowledge in Islam is not baseless dogma, but rather has a strong neuroscientific foundation. Second, Surah At-Taubah: 122 emphasizes the social dimension of knowledge, which aligns with the theories of social functionalism, social capital, and agents of change. Knowledge in Islam is not a personal asset, but rather a social trust that must be disseminated for the benefit of the community, as commanded by the concepts of *tafaqquh* and *indzar*.

Third, the description of *ulul albab* in Surah Ali Imran: 190-191 reflects the ideal of Multiple Intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner, proving that the Quran had already formulated a holistic intelligence model that integrates spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and naturalistic dimensions simultaneously. Fourth, the command to observe nature in Surah At-Taubah: 122 emphasizes the social dimension of knowledge, which aligns with the theories of social functionalism, social capital, and agents of change. *Al-Ghasiyah*: 17-20 is the theological foundation for the development of science and technology, including Artificial Intelligence. The principle of '*afala yanzhuruna*' is an Islamic scientific methodology that encourages exploration, innovation, and the ethical and responsible use of nature.

Fifth, the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarding the obligation to seek knowledge, the virtue of scholars, and the obligation to disseminate knowledge consistently reinforce the integration of divine values with the development of modern science and technology, proving that Islam is a highly pro-science religion. Suggestions that can be put forward based on the above conclusions are: (1) Islamic educational institutions need to organically integrate religious and science curricula using an integration-interconnection paradigm; (2) Further research is needed to explore the integration of other verses of the Quran with various modern disciplines; (3) Muslim educators need to develop multidisciplinary competencies to be able to guide the generation of *ulul albab* in the digital era; (4) Muslim

technology developers need to integrate the values of Islamic scientific ethics into the ethics of AI and digital technology development.

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