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Synthesis of the Concept of Madīnah Fāḍilah Al-Fārābī and the Reconstruction of Muhammad Iqbal's Civilization as the Philosophical Foundation of the 21st Century Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The development of artificial intelligence (AI), the increasing dissent on social media, and the decline in critical thinking habits have made the direction of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning necessary to be improved. The current PAI curriculum has two problems: the teaching method tends to be dogmatic so that students are not encouraged to think critically, and the focus is still on administrative matters that have not formed much of students' social ethics. This study aims to formulate a combination of the concept of Madīnah Fāḍilah from Abu Nasr al-Farabi and the idea of renewal of Islamic thought in The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam by Muhammad Iqbal as a philosophical foundation for the PAI curriculum. This study uses a philosophical library research with a dialectical hermeneutic approach and critical curriculum analysis. The results show that Al-Farabi provides a framework for social order, public ethics, and the integration of science with revelation (Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm) to achieve true happiness. Iqbal encouraged renewal through the development of independent and creative individuals (Khudi), a spirit of charity ('amal), and a vibrant ijtihad (initiative). The combination of these two ideas resulted in an integrated Islamic Religious Education curriculum model with four components: objectives that shape civilized individuals, material that incorporates digital and environmental ethics, critical discussion and problem-solving methods, and authentic assessments based on moral integrity. This model is expected to serve as a guideline that teachers can use to prepare a young generation with noble character in the digital era.

Keywords : *Al-Farabi, Muhammad Iqbal, Madīnah Fāḍilah, Khudi, PAI Curriculum, Curriculum Reconstruction.*

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INTRODUCTION

Technology is advancing rapidly, and generative artificial intelligence (AI) has now entered classrooms, including in Indonesia. AI certainly helps process data and complete technical tasks quickly. However, there is another side to be wary of: cognitive offloading, the habit of handing over thought processes to machines, which weakens critical, analytical, and reflective thinking skills. Gerlich (2025) surveyed 666

participants and found that the more frequently a person used AI tools, the lower their critical thinking scores, with cognitive offloading as the link. The 17–25 age group showed the highest dependency. This finding only suggests a relationship, not a cause-and-effect relationship, but it is enough to raise concerns. If left unchecked, students could become accustomed to accepting instant answers without engaging in in-depth thought and ethical reflection.

Another problem arises from social media. Differences of opinion easily escalate into heated arguments, polite speech is becoming increasingly rare, and hoaxes spread rapidly. Amril and Sazali (2025) explain that the crisis in communication ethics on social media is influenced by weak digital literacy, the neglect of internet ethics, and the strong role of platform algorithms. On the other hand, Indonesia is currently undergoing a crucial transition period, from the development of the Indonesian Capital City (IKN) designed as a smart forest city to efforts to capitalize on the demographic bonus towards Indonesia Emas 2045. All of this requires a young generation that is not only technically skilled, but also possesses integrity, emotional maturity, sensitivity to others, and spiritual strength.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should serve as a moral guide and character guide for students. In reality, the direction and methods of learning remain problematic. In many schools, PAI often operates as an administrative routine: students memorize Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) rules as is, material is delivered one-way without room for discussion, and religious values are separated from modern science and technology. This separation is also one reason why the idea of integrating science and Islam continues to be discussed in Islamic education (Harahap et al., 2025). As a result, students may memorize religious terms to answer exam questions but struggle to use them as guidance when using social media or facing real-life problems in society.

Therefore, updating the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is not enough to streamline administration, change curriculum terminology, or simply digitize learning media. Change needs to begin with its philosophical foundation. Studies in the philosophy of Islamic education emphasize that students must be viewed as complete individuals, with intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and moral aspects united in monotheism (Zakaria et al., 2026). From this, three things need to be addressed: how to view the essence of students (ontology), how to integrate various disciplines (epistemology), and the moral goals to be achieved (axiology). Revisiting the treasures of Islamic philosophy in this regard does not mean going backward or becoming trapped in nostalgia. Classical thinkers have proven capable of reconciling the values of revelation with the demands of reason in their time, making their thinking worthy of being used as a foundation for addressing today's educational challenges.

There are two figures whose ideas are relevant to this issue, namely Abu Nasr al-Farabi (872–950 CE) from the classical era and Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938 CE) from the modern era. Through his works Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah and Kitāb Taḥṣīl as-Sa'ādah, Al-Farabi describes a civilized society (al-madīnah al-fāḍilah) and emphasizes that true happiness can only be achieved through a sharpened mind, integrated knowledge, and an orderly social life (Azzahra et al., 2025;

Nuthpaturahman, 2022). Meanwhile, Iqbal in The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam criticized the stagnation of thinking and the resignation of the people. He offers Khudi, namely active and creative self-awareness, as well as ijtihad and dynamic movement as provisions for building civilization (Hasanah et al., 2025; Rana, 2025).

The thoughts of these two figures have actually been extensively researched. However, from the literature reviewed between 2021 and 2026, studies on Al-Farabi generally discuss the concepts of happiness, the main city, and education in general (Azzahra et al., 2025; Erdriani et al., 2024; Nuthpaturahman, 2022). Studies on Iqbal have focused largely on Khudi from a psychological and spiritual perspective, as well as on the renewal of Islamic thought (Arroisi & Qorib, 2023; Hasanah et al., 2025; Khan & Malik, 2021; Rana, 2025). Research that combines the two to design concrete Islamic Religious Education curriculum components in the classroom is still very limited. The novelty of this research lies in three aspects. First, this study combines two figures from different eras as a single philosophical foundation, rather than discussing them separately. Second, this philosophical foundation is translated into concrete curriculum components, namely objectives, materials, methods, and assessment. Third, the formulation is directly linked to current challenges, namely artificial intelligence, social media, and the direction of national development.

This study attempts to fill this gap by combining these two major ideas. The argument is that the weaknesses of the current Islamic Religious Education curriculum, namely its lack of attention to public ethics and its limitations on students' critical thinking, can be addressed by combining the orderly values of social civility (al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah) from Al-Farabi with the spirit of independent and creative thinking (Khudi) from Muhammad Iqbal. Based on this background, the study focuses on three research questions:

- What are the fundamental challenges and weaknesses of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the current era of digital disruption?
- How can Al-Farabi's ideas of civilization and Muhammad Iqbal's spirit of thought renewal be conceptually combined?
- How can an applicable PAI curriculum reconstruction model be designed based on the synthesis of the thoughts of these two figures?

The results of this study are expected to provide two benefits. Theoretically, this study adds to the treasury of Islamic educational philosophy by demonstrating that classical and modern thought do not have to be in conflict, but can be combined to address the same question: how reason, revelation, and concrete action are integrated in the educational process. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide considerations for curriculum developers, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and administrators of madrasahs and public schools in developing objectives, materials, methods, and assessments that better align with the needs of students in the digital age.

METHOD

This research includes library research with philosophical studies in the field of Islamic educational philosophy (Zakaria et al., 2026). The approach used is dialectical hermeneutics, which combines the idea of fusion of horizons from Hans-Georg

Gadamer and critical hermeneutics from Paul Ricoeur, then combined with critical curriculum inquiry. This approach was chosen so that the texts of the figures are not treated merely as historical records, but are invited to dialogue with current educational issues. In the world of education, hermeneutics does help readers understand the text more deeply, although still requires caution in matters of meaning and ethics (Faridah & Nurhayati, 2025). From this dialogue, it is hoped that the formulation of curriculum reform that can be put into practice will emerge.

This approach has a rationale. Al-Farabi and Iqbal's texts emerged from very different contexts, so reading them literally for the purposes of today's curriculum risks imposing preconceived conclusions. Gadamer's notion of a fusion of horizons helps researchers recognize that readers always bring questions and prejudices from their own time, and that a good understanding arises when the text's and the reader's horizons meet. Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics adds a cautionary note: texts need to be distanced from each other to avoid being merely justified by the reader's interests, and then their meaning appropriated to address real-world problems. With these two perspectives, this research attempts to read the ideas of both figures faithfully within their original context while simultaneously being productive for contemporary educational issues.

Data sources are divided into two, namely primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the original works of both figures. From Al-Farabi, the works studied include Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah (Richard Walzer edition), Kitāb Taḥṣīl as-Sa'ādah (Ja'far Al Yasin edition), Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm (Uthman Amin edition), and Kitāb as-Siyāsah al-Madaniyyah. From Muhammad Iqbal, the works used are The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (M. Saeed Sheikh edition) as well as his poetic-philosophical works, namely Asrār-i Khudī, Rumūz-i Bekhudī, and Jāvid Nāma. The secondary sources are scientific journal articles published in 2021–2026 related to Islamic educational philosophy, curriculum development, and education in the digital era.

Secondary sources were selected based on topic relevance and timeliness. The articles reviewed were limited to publications from 2021–2026 and related to one of four topics: Al-Farabi's thought, Iqbal's thought, Islamic educational philosophy, and curriculum and education development in the digital age. Primary sources were read as primary references for key concepts, while secondary sources were used to examine how these concepts were interpreted and developed in an educational context. It should be noted that this study is conceptual in nature. Therefore, the resulting curriculum model is a theoretical design that has not been tested in the field. Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, a selection of philosophical texts related to reason, knowledge, happiness, public civility, and selfhood (Khudi) was conducted. Second, a dialectical comparison of the two schools of thought was conducted to find common ground and complementarities between the orderliness of Al-Farabi's system and the driving force of Iqbal's. Third, a conceptual synthesis was developed as the foundation for an integrated Islamic education. Fourth, these principles were translated into the four main components of the curriculum, according to Ralph Tyler and William Pinar's framework: learning objectives, teaching materials, learning strategies, and assessment.

These four stages are not linear, but iterative. When drafting curriculum components, researchers return to the text to ensure that each proposal aligns with the two authors' underlying ideas. Conversely, when rereading the text, researchers test whether the ideas still address today's educational needs. This back-and-forth movement between the text and the problem is what is known in hermeneutics as the hermeneutic circle. To ensure accuracy of interpretation, each conclusion is compared with more than one source, and differences in interpretation between sources are noted and considered before a final formulation is made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Critical Evaluation of Islamic Education Curriculum in the Era of Digital Intelligence: Addressing the Thinking Crisis and Values Void

Digital technology has transformed the face of Indonesian education. AI is now not only a reference search engine but can also help quickly compile teaching materials and resources. For Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, AI can help design more interactive and student-centered materials, enhancing pedagogical competence as long as AI is used as a support, not a substitute, for teachers (Darojat et al., 2024). However, this convenience brings new challenges to students' learning styles, namely weakened critical reasoning and a shallower search for meaning in life (Gerlich, 2025).

This critical evaluation is not meant to dismiss technology. AI and digital media offer significant opportunities, such as access to extensive learning resources, assistance with material development, and rapid feedback. The issue lies in how it is used. Technology becomes problematic when it replaces thinking processes, and beneficial when it is used to deepen them. This distinction is crucial because it determines the direction of curriculum reform: what needs to be strengthened is students' ability to control technology, not simply limit its use.

In the Islamic perspective, seeking knowledge (ṭalab al-'ilm) is essentially more than just gathering data or information. It is a journey of thought and purification of the soul (tazkiyat an-nafs) to discover the truth and wisdom of life. Unfortunately, the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in schools still faces two major problems. First, Islamic Religious Education learning is often rigid and formalistic. Religious material is simplified to memorizing Islamic texts, worship is assessed with administrative points, and moral habits are passive. Second, when AI is introduced, students who are accustomed to memorizing tend to hand over their thinking to the machine (Gerlich, 2025). As a result, fundamental questions about morality and faith that should encourage students to reflect are instead answered instantly by the application, without any inner understanding.

This phenomenon is also evident in the digital space. While excerpts from religious sermons, hadith quotes, and religious Q&A sessions are readily available on social media, the online behavior of the younger generation hasn't necessarily improved. Hate speech, hoaxes, and aggressive communication are still prevalent in the digital space (Amril & Sazali, 2025). A religious education curriculum that fails to foster critical thinking makes students easily swayed by this flow of information. Religious studies also seem to be merely a collection of memorizations disconnected from the social realities around them. A closer look reveals this problem is multi-

layered. The first layer is knowledge: students are accustomed to receiving material as a collection of answers to be memorized, rather than as testable reasoning. The second layer is ethics: religious knowledge doesn't automatically translate into attitudes, allowing students to explain the importance of honesty but still copy assignments from apps without guilt. The third layer is social: religious studies are rarely connected to the problems students face in their communities, such as bullying, online hate speech, or the accumulation of trash around schools. These three layers reinforce each other. Learning that stops at memorization is difficult to produce attitudes, and attitudes that are not practiced in social life will easily fade.

The teacher's role is also crucial. When administrative burdens become time-consuming, teachers tend to choose teaching methods that are easiest to measure and report, namely memorization and written tests. However, the primary role of Islamic Religious Education teachers is to be role models and mentors who encourage students to think. While teachers' use of AI can certainly ease technical workloads (Darojat et al., 2024), the time saved should be spent on dialogue with students, not simply increasing the amount of paperwork. Without a clear philosophical direction, technology only accelerates old patterns and does not improve the quality of education.

Therefore, reforming the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum needs to start from its roots. The religious curriculum must not be allowed to become a space for memorization that lags behind the development of knowledge. Reform is needed that reunites rational reasoning with spiritual sincerity, and connects personal piety with concern for the social environment. This is where the concept of the primary social order of Al-Farabi and the spirit of reform from Muhammad Iqbal become relevant.

Thus, the answer to the first problem statement can be summarized in three findings. First, the weaknesses of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum lie in its philosophical foundation, not just its administrative apparatus. Second, the challenges of the digital era demand reasoning skills and media ethics, which have not been adequately addressed. Third, the necessary reforms must address objectives, materials, methods, and assessments simultaneously, not simply improvements to one area.

Al-Farabi's Concept of Civilization: Social Order, Integration of Knowledge, and Achieving Happiness

Abu Nasr al-Farabi was one of the most important Muslim philosophers who sought to reconcile rational reasoning with the guidance of revelation. In Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah, he described the ideal of a primary society (al-madīnah al-fāḍilah) (Nuthpaturahman, 2022). This concept was not merely a political ideal, but rather a plan for an orderly and mutually supportive life together for the common good. For Al-Farabi, a person's happiness is inseparable from a just, ethical, and well-organized society (Azzahra et al., 2025). A good society, in other words, is one in which its citizens work together and fulfill their respective roles in a balanced manner.

In Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah, Al-Farabi describes the main city as a healthy body. Each part of the body works according to its function and all move to maintain life as a whole. The city's leader is likened to the heart that regulates the other parts, while the citizens each play their roles according to their abilities. Al-Farabi also

compares the main city with cities that have deviated: a city that does not know true happiness (al-madīnah al-jāhiliyyah), a city that knows but does not practice it (al-madīnah al-fāsiqah), a city that changes noble values (al-madīnah al-mubaddalah), and a city that has gone astray (al-madīnah aḍ-ḍāllah). This comparison shows that what is measured is not the splendor of buildings or the advancement of tools, but the direction of the lives of its citizens. In the context of education, this message is clear: an excellent school is not just a school with complete facilities, but a school whose students know the true purpose of life and strive to achieve it.

Al-Farabi's thoughts contain three important foundations for designing an Islamic education curriculum.

1. **The close relationship between individuals and communities.**Al-Farabi viewed humans as social beings (madaniyy bi al-ṭtab') who need others to develop fully. A person's moral goodness will not be seen if they live alone; that goodness is only tested when it benefits the common good. Therefore, the goal of religious education is not to cultivate selfish personal piety, but rather to cultivate individuals who are responsible for their social lives (Azzahra et al., 2025).
2. **Integration of science.**In Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm, Al-Farabi emphasized the importance of unifying various branches of knowledge, in line with his emphasis on the integration of philosophy and practice in education (Erdriani et al., 2024). He did not view rational sciences, such as logic, mathematics, and natural sciences, as opposed to sharia sciences such as fiqh and kalam. Logic keeps the mind from going astray, mathematics trains orderly thinking, science studies God's creation, while religion guides the direction of faith. Demonstrative reason (burhān) and revelation both speak of the one truth from God. This spirit aligns with efforts to integrate science and Islam, which are now widely developed in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (Harahap et al., 2025).
3. **Achievement of true happiness (Taḥṣīl as-Sa'ādah).**In his book Taḥṣīl as-Sa'ādah, Al-Farabi explains that happiness is achieved when humans combine four main abilities: theoretical understanding (faḍā'il naẓariyyah), profound reasoning (faḍā'il fikriyyah), moral excellence (faḍā'il khuluqiyyah), and practical skills. This idea aligns with the view that education must combine intellectual development with moral and spiritual development (Azzahra et al., 2025). A curriculum that only demands theoretical memorization without cultivating character and applied skills will produce graduates who are not yet personally mature.

From these three foundations, it is clear that Al-Farabi distinguished two paths to human development. The first path is teaching (ta'līm), which instills theoretical knowledge through explanation and proof. The second path is moral habituation (ta'dīb), which trains people so that virtue becomes an ingrained character through repeated practice and role models. The two are inseparable. Teaching without habituation produces people who are good at speaking but weak in action, while habituation without teaching produces obedience without understanding. A good Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to balance both.

The concept of the integration of knowledge in Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm can also be read as a learning map. In this work, Al-Farabi arranges the branches of knowledge sequentially,

starting from linguistics, logic, mathematics, natural and divine sciences, social and political sciences, to jurisprudence and theology. This sequence shows that he viewed knowledge as a mutually supporting structure: the tools of thinking are learned first so that subsequent sciences can be properly understood, and all knowledge culminates in the common good. For curriculum designers, an important lesson from this map is that logical reasoning should not be considered foreign to religious studies, because it is a tool for understanding religion more clearly.

Renewal of Muhammad Iqbal's Thought: Strengthening Self (Khudi), the Movement of History, and the Door of Ijtihad

While Al-Farabi provided a framework for orderly thought and social civility, Muhammad Iqbal emerged to address the decline of Muslim thought in the modern era. Through his book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and his poetic works such as *Asrār-i Khudī* and *Rumūz-i Bekhudī*, Iqbal criticized the resignation and stagnation of Islamic scholarly discourse. His thinking centered on three elements: ijtihad, the dynamics of reason, and spiritual renewal, which served as the basis for revitalizing Islamic teachings to be rational, active, and relevant to social realities (Hasanah et al., 2025).

Iqbal's main idea was to strengthen Khudi, namely an independent, active, and creative self-awareness. He rejected mystical understandings that encourage people to escape from the realities of life. According to Iqbal, the human soul was not created to surrender to circumstances, but needs to be honed through hard work and real interaction with its environment, including active involvement in society and nature (Rana, 2025). Humans are entrusted with the role of caliphs on earth, and are required to utilize science and technology to manage the world while adhering to the values of monotheism.

The strengthening of Khudi is often misunderstood as a drive for selfishness. However, for Iqbal, a strong self is directed towards God and the welfare of others. Self is strengthened through love ('ishq) which drives a person to act sincerely, and this strength is directed towards service, not towards domination. This understanding is important so that the strengthening of independence in the classroom does not turn into an individualistic attitude. Students who are independent in thinking still need to learn to listen, cooperate, and respect the opinions of others. The process of forming Khudi according to Iqbal goes through three continuous stages: (1) the stage of obedience (Iṭā'at), namely getting used to obeying moral principles and sharia law to build self-discipline; (2) the stage of self-control (Ḍabṭ-i Nafs), namely training the mind and conscience to be able to control lusts; and (3) the stage of devoted leadership (Niyābat-i Ilāhī), namely the formation of a mature personality (insān kāmil) who takes the initiative, dares to work, and is of broad benefit to others (Arroisi & Qorib, 2023; Khan & Malik, 2021).

These three stages also provide an overview of the sequence of development in schools. The obedience stage corresponds to the early stages, when students are introduced to rules, worship, and discipline, fostering discipline. The self-control stage corresponds to the later stages, when students begin to understand the rationale behind rules and learn to resist harmful impulses, including the urge to respond to negative comments or copy others' work. The servant leadership stage represents the

final stage, when students are trusted to take initiative and benefit their environment. This division is certainly not a rigid boundary, as all three can coexist at different levels. However, this sequence serves as a reminder that freedom of thought should not be achieved by neglecting habituation, and habituation should not stop before students learn to assume responsibility.

For Iqbal, the universe is a dynamic and ever-evolving process of creation. Therefore, religious understanding must not stop at interpretations of the past. The door to ijtihad needs to be opened so that the principles of revelation can continue to respond to changing times (Hasanah et al., 2025). Within this framework, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum should train students to think independently, be open to scientific research, and diligently practice real practice. Iqbal's views on ijtihad need to be read within the broader framework of his ideas. In The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, he discusses religious knowledge and experience, the philosophical dimensions of revelation, the meaning of prayer, the nature of the human self, and the principle of movement within the structure of Islam. Ijtihad is not understood solely as the purview of jurists, but as a spirit of movement that keeps Islamic teachings alive. Iqbal criticized the attitude of blind imitation (taqlīd) that causes people to stop thinking and assume that religious issues have been fully interpreted by previous generations. This criticism is not an invitation to abandon tradition. Iqbal respected the scientific heritage of the past, but emphasized that this heritage must be revived through new readings that dare to answer the problems of the times.

Iqbal also placed great emphasis on a scientific attitude. He believed that the spirit of observing nature, reasoning, and testing experiences aligns with the Quran's encouragement to observe the signs of God's greatness in the universe. Therefore, science is not seen as a threat to faith, but as a path to better understanding God's creation. This attitude is crucial for religious education, as students accustomed to viewing science and religion as opposing camps are easily confused when confronted with new scientific or technological discoveries.

In the context of the era of artificial intelligence, Khudi's idea holds both a warning and an opportunity. The warning is that a weak self easily delegates decisions and thinking to others, including machines. The opportunity is that a strong self will treat technology as a tool, not a determinant. Students who mature according to Khudi don't reject technology, but they don't become immersed in it either. They use AI to aid their learning, then continue to examine, weigh, and take responsibility for the results of their own thinking. This formulation aligns with concerns about cognitive offloading discussed previously (Gerlich, 2025).

Philosophical Meeting Point: Combining Al-Farabi's Social Order and Iqbal's Motivation

Despite living in different eras, the thoughts of Al-Farabi and Iqbal actually complemented each other. Al-Farabi formulated his ideas during the golden age of Islamic civilization, aiming to organize a civilized society through the integration of knowledge. Iqbal, on the other hand, spoke at a time when Muslims were in decline due to colonialism, so his primary focus was on fostering self-confidence and a spirit of progress.

These different contexts shaped the character of each thought. Al-Farabi lived during a time when the study of philosophy, logic, and the natural sciences was flourishing in Islamic civilization, so his task was to organize and reconcile the various branches of knowledge in an orderly manner. Iqbal lived during a time when Muslims in the Indian subcontinent were under colonial rule, so his task was to awaken their spirit and self-confidence. By understanding this background, both ideas are not read as timeless formulas that can simply be transferred, but rather as responses to their respective times, the principles of which can still be learned.

Al-Farabi's emphasis on structural order risks making education rigid if it does not allow for individual freedom of movement. At this point, Iqbal's Khudi spirit provides a counterbalance, opening up space for creativity, expression, and innovation. Conversely, Iqbal's freedom of expression can lose its way if not guided by orderly reason and social sensitivity. This is where Al-Farabi's concept of public civility and coherent thinking serve as guideposts. The combination of the two creates a new foundation for Islamic education: a progressive and just society can only be realized if its citizens are independent, creative, and critical thinkers; conversely, individual creativity only bears real fruit if it grows in a social environment that is orderly and respectful. The intersection of these two schools of thought can be summarized in three points. First, both make the formation of a complete human being the goal of education, namely a person who is intelligent, moral, and beneficial to others. Al-Farabi calls this a person who achieves true happiness, while Iqbal calls it a mature person (insān kāmil). Second, both reject the separation between reason and revelation. Al-Farabi reconciled the two through the integration of knowledge, while Iqbal reconciled them through ijtihad and a scientific attitude. Third, both emphasized that knowledge must lead to action. For Al-Farabi, knowledge is incomplete until it becomes practical virtue, and for Iqbal, selfhood is only valuable when it is manifested in works ('amal).

Besides common ground, there are differences in starting points that need to be maintained. Al-Farabi tended to start from order: individuals are educated to fulfill their roles in an orderly society. Iqbal tended to start from the individual: society is improved through the self-empowerment of its citizens. In curriculum formulation, this distinction need not be skewed. Order is needed to prevent freedom of thought from degenerating into chaos, while independence is needed to prevent order from degenerating into blind obedience. With this perspective, Islamic Religious Education classes can become small training spaces for a civilized society: students learn to express their opinions freely, but within shared rules of mutual respect.

Comparison of the Thoughts of Al-Farabi, Muhammad Iqbal, and PAI Curriculum Direction

a. Views on humans (ontology). Al-Farabi's Thought (Madīnah Fāḍilah): Humans are social and rational beings who need a good community. Muhammad Iqbal's Thought (Khudi): Humans are creative individuals who actively change their lives. Direction of Synthesis of the PAI Curriculum: Civilized individuals who are willing to change: strong in faith, independent, and concerned about the common good.

b. How to acquire knowledge (epistemology). Al-Farabi's thought (Madīnah Fāḍilah): Logical reasoning and revelation are combined in a coherent manner (Iḥṣā' al-

'Ulūm). Muhammad Iqbal's thought (Khudi): Inner sensitivity, openness to knowledge, and dynamic ijtihad. Direction of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Synthesis: Integrated knowledge: understanding of religion, science, and digital literacy are studied as one unit.

c. Purpose (teleology). Al-Farabi's thought (Madīnah Fāḍilah): True happiness both physically and mentally (taḥṣīl as-sa'ādah). Muhammad Iqbal's thought (Khudi): A complete person (insān kāmil) through hard work and real work. Direction of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Synthesis: Happiness based on strong morals and contribution to society.

d. Learning methods (pedagogy). Al-Farabi's thought (Madīnah Fāḍilah): Training logical thinking (ta'līm) while cultivating good character (ta'dīb). Muhammad Iqbal's thought (Khudi): Learning through action ('amal), group work, and solving challenges. Direction of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Synthesis: Critical discussion based on real problems in the surrounding environment.

e. Attitudes towards changing times. Al-Farabi's Thought (Madīnah Fāḍilah): Organizing life together with the wisdom of reason and prophetic guidance. Muhammad Iqbal's Thought (Khudi): Opening new insights, rejecting the herd attitude, and moving first. Direction of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Synthesis: Developing digital skills guided by divine values.

f.The comparison above shows that both figures follow the same pattern in every aspect: one provides structure and the other provides motivation. In the human aspect, Al-Farabi's social structure is complemented by Iqbal's creativity. In the knowledge aspect, Al-Farabi's integrated knowledge is complemented by Iqbal's openness to ijtihad. In the goal aspect, Al-Farabi's true happiness is complemented by Iqbal's concrete work. This pattern is used as the basis for deriving the four curriculum components in the following section.

Future Islamic Education Curriculum Design: Four Main Components

Based on the above meeting point, the future PAI curriculum can be designed through four interrelated components.

The division into four components follows the basic questions posed in curriculum development: what is to be achieved, what is to be learned, how is it to be learned, and how are the results assessed. These questions are rooted in Tyler's framework, while Pinar reminds us that curriculum is not simply a document to be implemented, but also a lived experience and a process of understanding oneself and society. The combination of these two perspectives fits with the synthesis developed earlier: Al-Farabi's structured framework is enlivened by Iqbal's meaningful experience.

Objective Component: Forming a Civilized Generation that is Independent and Critical

The goals of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) need to be expanded, no longer limited to memorizing rituals and passive obedience. By combining the ideals of a virtuous person from Al-Farabi and a creative person from Iqbal, the PAI curriculum is directed at developing students who are firmly rooted in monotheism, independent in

thinking (Khudi), accustomed to clear reasoning (al-'aql al-burhānī), and determined to realize justice and peace in society. Students are not merely prepared to memorize Islamic texts, but to become a generation with a strong moral compass.

To ensure these goals remain as slogans, they need to be translated into observable outcomes. Knowledge-wise, students are able to explain religious teachings along with their rationale and purpose, not just stating their arguments. Attitude-wise, students are accustomed to being honest, polite, and responsible, even when there is no teacher present and when interacting online. Skill-wise, students are able to filter information, construct coherent arguments, and express opinions without demeaning others. Concerning their concerns, students are willing to engage in activities that benefit the school and community. These four aspects align with Al-Farabi's concepts of theoretical competence, reasoning, morals, and practical skills, as well as Iqbal's emphasis on independence and good deeds.

Content/Material Components: Integrating Religious, Scientific, and Technological Values

Separation between general lessons and religious lessons needs to be avoided. The subject matter of PAI is rearranged into three interrelated groups.

a. The foundations of logic and critical reasoning (Manṭiq). Students are trained to recognize logical fallacies, filter out hoaxes, and distinguish fact from opinion. These skills are essential for responding to instant information and AI-generated content.

b. Ethics of science, cyberspace, andEnvironmental awareness. Students learn the application of monotheistic values in modern life, such as academic honesty in the digital world, the ethics of using smart technology, protecting others' personal data, and the responsibility to protect nature (Fiqh al-Bī'ah).

c. Embracing the meaning of Islamic law (Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah). Rigid understanding of Islamic jurisprudence is avoided by encouraging students to understand the primary reasons and objectives behind sharia regulations, namely protecting religion, life, intellect, posterity, and wealth. This maqāṣid approach is also seen as crucial for character development through the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers (Rudiansyah & Jaya, 2024). This way, students understand that religious regulations aim to bring tangible good.

These three subject areas are not intended as new, stand-alone subjects. They can be integrated into existing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) topics. For example, discussions about honesty can be linked to academic honesty and the use of AI in assignments, discussions about brotherhood can be linked to the ethics of commenting on social media, and discussions about God's creation can be linked to scientific knowledge about the environment. In this way, teachers don't need to increase the class load but instead change the way they connect the material to students' lives.

The depth of the material also needs to be adjusted to the student's developmental stage. At the early stages, emphasis is placed on developing attitudes and recognizing the rationale behind simple rules. At the intermediate stage, students begin to learn to compare opinions and verify the accuracy of information. At the final stage, students are encouraged to consider more complex issues, such as ethical dilemmas in

technology or differences of opinion in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), while maintaining respect for differences. This adjustment aligns with the view that students are whole individuals whose intellectual, emotional, social, and moral aspects need to be developed in a balanced manner (Zakaria et al., 2026).

Method Components: Reflective Dialogue and Problem-Based Projects

Islamic Religious Education teaching methods need to shift from one-way lectures to active and practical learning patterns.

- **Reflective-critical dialogue.**The teacher acts as a guide who asks in-depth questions about everyday moral issues, so that students are encouraged to discuss the reasons behind religious teachings critically and rationally.
- **Real action projects in the community.**Students work on simple problem-solving tasks, such as creating content for messages of kindness on social media, participating in school environmental cleanliness campaigns, or organizing social activities with friends.

In practice, a learning series can be structured in five steps. The first step is presenting a real-life problem, such as a case of fake news circulating in a student messaging group. The second step is dialogue, where students share their views and reasons, while the teacher ensures that each voice is heard and delivered politely. The third step is exploration, where students seek references from the Quran, hadith, explanations from scholars, and scientific sources, including comparing the AI's answers with credible sources. The fourth step is drawing conclusions and action plans, where students formulate their next course of action. The fifth step is reflection, where students write down what they have learned and how they will apply it. This series combines Al-Farabi's orderly thinking with Iqbal's courage to undertake ijtihad.

In this method, the teacher's role shifts from being the sole source of answers to being a guide to the process. The teacher retains scientific authority but uses it to guide discussions, correct errors, and maintain the agreed-upon boundaries of teachings. Thus, the freedom of thought granted to students remains within the framework of monotheism and adab (ethics), and does not develop into relativism, which assumes all opinions are equally valid.

Assessment Components: Comprehensive and Ongoing Assessment

Assessments that rely solely on multiple-choice tests are insufficient to measure character and social sensitivity. Therefore, PAI evaluations are directed at authentic assessments that include: (1) writing portfolios and self-reflection notes, to see how students express their moral views on issues around them; (2) observation of attitudes in digital spaces, to assess politeness in speaking and honesty without online plagiarism; and (3) involvement in social activities, to see students' cooperation and empathy in group projects that benefit the environment.

Each form of assessment requires a clear rubric to avoid subjective bias. Portfolios, for example, can be assessed based on accuracy of understanding, depth of reflection, and the congruence between ideas and actions. Observing attitudes in digital spaces can use indicators such as honesty in citing sources, politeness in comments, and caution in sharing information. Involvement in social activities can be

seen in sincerity, cooperation, and the impact felt by others. Rubrics should be shared from the outset so students understand what is expected and can assess their own progress.

Assessments should also be viewed as part of the learning process, not simply as a means of assigning grades. Regular feedback from teachers helps students improve, in line with Iqbal's philosophy that self-esteem grows through continuous effort. Integrity, on the other hand, is a value upheld in the assessment itself. Students are judged not only on the final results but also on the honesty of the process, including openness in disclosing that they are using AI to assist with assignments.

Summary of Changes to the PAI Curriculum Design

a. Learning Objectives. Old Patterns in School: Memorizing ritual principles and passively obeying. Ideas from the Character Foundation: Balance of the main character (Al-Farabi) and active independence (Iqbal). New Curriculum Design: Forming individuals who are faithful, critical, independent, and socially concerned.

b. Subject Matter. Old Pattern in School: Science and rote theorem run separately. Ideas from the Figure Platform: Rational science and sharia are harmoniously combined. New Curriculum Design: Integrated materials: sound thinking logic, digital/AI ethics, and environmental conservation.

c. Teaching Strategy. Old Patterns in School: One-way lectures and taking notes. Ideas from the Character Foundation: Reasoned dialogue combined with proof through real work. New Curriculum Design: Problem-solving discussions (inquiry) and environmental care projects.

d. Assessment of Learning Outcomes. Old Patterns in Schools: Mostly multiple-choice written exams. Ideas from the Figure Platform: Measuring the integration of knowledge, character, and applied work. New Curriculum Design: Self-reflection portfolios, digital media ethics, and group social action assessments.

eThe summary above shows that the proposed changes are not piecemeal. Each component is shifting from the old pattern to the new design, and these shifts reinforce each other. Broader goals require more integrated materials, integrated materials require more active methods, and active methods require assessments that capture students' processes and attitudes. If one component fails to change, the others will struggle to function as they should.

Curriculum Implementation Strategies in Indonesian Schools

This integrated curriculum concept aligns with the direction of national education development. In the development of a new civilization, such as the Indonesian Capital City (IKN), based on sustainability and smart technology, Al-Farabi's thinking emphasizes that physical progress must be balanced by the moral integrity of its citizens. Religious education plays a role in preparing a young generation that is not only adept at operating smart technology but also possesses a high ethical consciousness.

To capitalize on the demographic bonus, Iqbal's Khudi concept can foster a hard work ethic and optimism in the younger generation, ensuring they remain competitive in the workforce. Religious education is geared toward fostering a productive work

ethic, enabling the younger generation to grow into professional, honest, and virtuous individuals. Technically, in schools and Islamic schools, this concept can easily be aligned with the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile in the Independent Curriculum. Critical and independent reasoning can be cultivated through guided logical discussions and independent assignments. Faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character can be fostered through environmental conservation activities and the practice of polite communication online (Musdalipah et al., 2023).

The alignment with the Pancasila Student Profile is not limited to these two dimensions. The independent dimension aligns with the strengthening of Khudi, namely the ability to self-regulate and take responsibility for one's own learning process. The collaborative dimension aligns with Al-Farabi's core societal ideals, where every citizen fulfills their role for the common good. The creative dimension aligns with Iqbal's encouragement for students to dare to create, not simply repeat. The global diversity dimension can be cultivated through the etiquette of differing opinions, including when interacting with people of different backgrounds in the digital space. With this alignment, the proposed model should not be viewed as an additional burden, but rather as a way to provide a stronger philosophical foundation for the goals already stated in the national curriculum.

Implementation of this model should be done in stages to avoid overwhelming schools. The first stage is a shared understanding, when Islamic Religious Education teachers, other subject teachers, and school leaders understand the rationale and direction of the reform. The second stage is the development of tools, which incorporates integrated objectives, materials, methods, and assessments into existing teaching modules without adding new documents. The third stage is a limited trial in several classes or subject areas, accompanied by notes on what worked well and what needs improvement. The fourth stage is evaluation and expansion, which refines the design based on the trial results before wider implementation. Slow but focused stages are better than major changes that are quickly abandoned.

Teachers are key to the success of this model. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers need to be equipped with the skills to guide discussions, design problem-based learning, develop authentic assessment rubrics, and utilize AI wisely in teaching. Training should not only consist of theoretical presentations but also include hands-on practice and mentoring, for example through teacher work groups. Teachers who are accustomed to dialogue and dare to think independently will more easily transmit the same attitudes to their students. In this sense, strengthening Khudi is not only aimed at students, but also at teachers as role models.

Furthermore, classroom implementation needs to be supported by school culture. Principals can create an atmosphere that values questions and differing opinions, establish shared agreements on the ethical use of devices and AI, and provide space for student social activities. Collaboration between teachers is also crucial. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers can collaborate with science, language, and informatics teachers to design projects that connect religious values with other disciplines, such as school waste management projects or digital literacy campaigns. Parents and the surrounding community can also be involved so that moral habits

cultivated at school are reinforced at home. The integration of knowledge, as proposed by Al-Farabi, ultimately requires the integration of educators.

As an example, consider the topic of honesty (ṣidq) at the secondary level. The teacher opens with the case of a student who submitted an AI-generated assignment entirely without checking it. Students discuss whether this action aligns with the value of honesty, then explore references from the Quran and hadith regarding honesty and the views of Islamic scholars on the responsibility of knowledge. In the project phase, students develop shared guidelines on how to use AI honestly in their classroom and make them a class agreement. Assessment is carried out through reflective notes, observations of honesty in completing assignments, and implementation of the class agreement. This single topic encompasses all four components: the goal of developing honest and independent individuals, material that integrates religious values with digital ethics, dialogue and project methods, and authentic assessment.

The success of implementation can be monitored through several simple indicators, such as increased student participation in discussions, reduced cases of copying assignments and inappropriate behavior in digital spaces, increased student work and social activities, and stronger student ability to explain the rationale behind religious teachings. These indicators are not intended to strictly assess schools, but rather to help teachers and school leaders identify areas for improvement.

Implementation Challenges, Study Limitations, and Further Research Directions

The proposed model certainly faces challenges. The first challenge is teacher preparedness. Not all teachers are accustomed to leading open discussions, and some may worry that allowing students to ask questions will undermine the authority of religious teachings. This concern needs to be addressed by explaining that critical dialogue is not intended to question teachings, but rather to deepen understanding and belief. The second challenge is limited time and resources. Limited Islamic Religious Education (PAI) class hours make projects and dialogues difficult, requiring creativity in integrating these activities into existing school activities. The third challenge is the disparity in technology access between schools. Schools with limited digital facilities can still implement this model, as the core of the design lies in ways of thinking and dialogue, not sophisticated devices. The fourth challenge relates to assessment. Moral and attitude assessments are more difficult to standardize than written exams, and there is a risk that students only display good behavior when observed. Therefore, assessments need to be repeated in diverse situations, involving more than one observer, and supplemented by students' own reflections. Good assessments ultimately aim to foster, not judge.

This study also has limitations. First, this research is library-based, so the resulting model is still a conceptual design and has not been tested in schools or Islamic schools. Second, the two figures studied come from different historical and cultural contexts than Indonesian students today, so translating their ideas into the curriculum always contains elements of debatable interpretation. Third, this study is limited to two figures. Other thinkers, both from the Islamic tradition and from outside, could certainly enrich this formulation. Therefore, the results of this study should be viewed as an initial proposal open to criticism and refinement.

Moving forward, there are several directions other researchers can pursue. This four-component model can be tested through classroom action research or development research in schools and madrasas with diverse backgrounds. The digital character and ethics assessment instruments designed within this model also need to be tested for validity and reliability. Furthermore, further studies could compare the thoughts of Al-Farabi and Iqbal with those of other Islamic educational thinkers to determine how far this formulation can be expanded. With these steps, ideas that began as philosophical studies can evolve into concrete educational practices.

CONCLUSION

1. This study demonstrates that improving the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is not simply about replacing administrative documents or adding digital devices. The foundations of Islamic education require a comprehensive restructuring. The rapid automation of smart technology, sharp disagreements on social media, and declining student interest in deep thinking demonstrate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction based solely on formal memorization is no longer adequate. The combination of Al-Farabi's ideas about a civilized society and Muhammad Iqbal's spirit of self-renewal provides a strong foundation for such improvement. Al-Farabi emphasized the importance of orderly social life, noble character, and the integrity of knowledge and revelation. Iqbal encouraged students to be independent, courageous in innovation, and diligent in taking concrete actions for the common good. The result is a direction for developing students into Muslims who are steadfast in their faith, clear in their thinking, and concerned with their social environment.
2. In practice, this idea is realized in four steps: expanding learning objectives to produce graduates with a strong social spirit; integrating religious material with a logical and ethical basis using technology; implementing reflective dialogue based on social projects; and using portfolio assessment and observation of real attitudes. As a policy recommendation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, along with stakeholders in madrasah and public school education, is advised to begin incorporating this integrated Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning pattern into teaching modules and teacher training guidelines. In this way, PAI can become a source of enlightenment in reason and character, as well as a driving force for the birth of a superior generation towards Indonesia Emas 2045.

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