

From Preservation to Activation: The Value-Based Role of Islamic Manuscripts in Contemporary Education

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Abstract:

Islamic manuscripts represent a fundamental component of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Muslim world. However, contemporary efforts in this field have largely focused on preservation and digitization, with limited attention given to activating their educational and value-based dimensions within modern educational systems. This study seeks to shift Islamic manuscripts from being preserved historical artifacts to active educational resources by re-examining their value-based content in light of contemporary educational needs. The study adopts a qualitative analytical approach based on conceptual and documentary analysis of selected Islamic manuscripts with educational relevance, alongside a review of contemporary literature on value-based education. It aims to develop an analytical perspective that reconceptualizes Islamic manuscripts as a value-based educational framework capable of contributing to identity formation and ethical development in educational institutions. The findings indicate that Islamic manuscripts embody rich educational and ethical values that extend beyond their historical context and remain relevant to contemporary education when appropriately recontextualized. The study also identifies key institutional and pedagogical challenges that limit the effective integration of manuscript-based values into modern education and proposes practical pathways to move from preservation toward meaningful educational activation.

Keywords: Islamic manuscripts, value-based education, Islamic educational thought, educational heritage, contemporary education.

INTRODUCTION:

Value-based education represents a fundamental foundation for shaping individuals' ethical awareness and intellectual development, particularly in the context of rapid global transformations that increasingly challenge cultural identity and moral systems. Within this framework, Islamic educational heritage stands as a rich and authentic source that historically contributed to the formation of a balanced individual. Islamic manuscripts played a central role in preserving this heritage and transmitting its educational and ethical values across generations (Benamer, 2024; Qutb, 2015).

Islamic manuscripts functioned not merely as repositories of religious or linguistic knowledge, but as comprehensive educational texts that articulated principles related to teaching ethics, learner-teacher relationships, character formation, moral discipline, and spiritual refinement. The educational insights found in the works of scholars such as Ibn Sahnun, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Khaldun demonstrate an advanced pedagogical awareness embedded within the Islamic intellectual tradition (Ibn Sahnun, 1972; Al-Ghazali, 1989; Shams Al-Din & Bouzouita, 1986; Ahmad, 1982).

In recent decades, Islamic manuscripts have attracted increasing institutional attention through initiatives focused on preservation, restoration, digitization, and accessibility at both national and international levels (Al-Eqtisadiah, 2020; Editorial Board, 2022). Despite the significance of these efforts, they have largely remained preservation-oriented, with limited emphasis on activating the

Educational and value-based dimensions of manuscripts within contemporary educational systems (Abdelnour, 2012; Mieaza, 2014).

Several studies highlight a persistent gap between the preservation of Islamic manuscripts and their effective pedagogical utilization. Although these manuscripts embody rich value systems capable of addressing contemporary challenges related to identity and moral education, they remain largely detached from educational practice (Al-Muradi & Al-Atrash, 2024). Furthermore, the absence of educational classification frameworks and weak coordination between manuscript preservation centers and educational institutions have contributed to marginalizing their pedagogical role (Ghanem, 2007; Qabawah & Battoush, 2008).

Accordingly, this study seeks to move Islamic manuscripts from preservation toward educational activation by re-examining them as value-based educational resources. Through analyzing their educational content in light of contemporary educational needs, the study aims to develop an analytical perspective that supports integrating manuscript-based values into modern educational frameworks, thereby bridging heritage authenticity with present-day educational demands.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

1. Islamic Manuscripts and Value-Based Education:

Value-based education emphasizes the cultivation of ethical principles and moral awareness that guide human thought and behavior, contributing to the development of balanced individuals capable of positive social engagement. This educational approach has gained increasing attention in contemporary educational discourse as a response to value erosion and identity challenges (Qutb, 2015; Bani Salameh, 2015).

Within this context, Islamic manuscripts represent a foundational source of value-oriented educational thought. Historically, these manuscripts were not produced in isolation from social and educational realities; rather, they embodied a holistic vision of education that integrated knowledge with practice, intellectual development with moral refinement, and learning with ethical responsibility (Ibn Sahnun, 1972; Al-Ghazali, 1989).

Classical Islamic manuscripts addressed key educational concerns such as teaching ethics, learner-teacher relationships, moral discipline, gradual instruction, and character formation. These dimensions align closely with the theoretical foundations of contemporary value-based education, despite differences in historical context (Shams Al-Din & Bouzouita, 1986; Ahmad, 1982).

2. From Heritage to Educational Framework: A Conceptual Shift:

Recent scholarship emphasizes that treating educational heritage merely as static historical material limits its relevance and impact on contemporary educational practice. In contrast, recontextualizing heritage within modern analytical frameworks enables its transformation into a dynamic educational resource (Ghanem, 2007; Walad Miabay, 2021).

This shift requires moving from preservation-oriented approaches toward activation-oriented strategies, whereby the value-based content of Islamic manuscripts is reformulated into applicable educational frameworks. Such an approach involves analytical engagement with manuscripts that extends beyond textual description to encompass their pedagogical purposes, ethical orientations, and behavioral implications (Qabawah & Battoush, 2008).

Accordingly, Islamic manuscripts may be conceptualized as a value-based educational framework capable of informing contemporary educational practices while maintaining cultural authenticity (Abdelnour, 2012; Al-Muradi & Al-Atrash, 2024).

3. Institutional and Conceptual Challenges:

Despite their educational richness, the activation of Islamic manuscript values within contemporary education faces several challenges, including limited pedagogical awareness, absence of educational classification systems, weak integration between preservation institutions

and educational bodies, and technical and linguistic barriers related to manuscript accessibility (Abdelnour, 2012; Mieaza, 2014; Editorial Board, 2022).

Moreover, the predominant institutional focus on digitization as an end in itself—rather than as a means for pedagogical innovation—has constrained the educational utilization of manuscripts, confining them largely to academic archives (Ghanem, 2007; Walad Miabay, 2021).

This context underscores the need for a coherent theoretical framework that reconceptualizes Islamic manuscripts as active educational resources rather than preserved artifacts.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK:

1) Methodology:

This study adopts a qualitative analytical approach based on conceptual and documentary analysis, aiming to examine the value-based and educational dimensions embedded in Islamic manuscripts relevant to educational thought. This methodological approach is particularly appropriate for theoretical studies that seek to develop conceptual frameworks derived from heritage-based sources and contemporary educational literature (Qabawah & Battoush, 2008; Bani Salameh, 2015).

The study does not engage in textual verification of original manuscripts; rather, it focuses on analyzing educational meanings and value-oriented themes as interpreted in previous scholarly works. Special attention is given to recurring educational concepts emphasized by classical Islamic scholars, such as teaching ethics, character formation, gradual learning, moral discipline, and the integration of knowledge and behavior (Ibn Sahnun, 1972; Al-Ghazali, 1989; Ahmad, 1982).

Data sources include:

- Scholarly analyses and studies of Islamic educational manuscripts.
- Contemporary literature on value-based education and educational frameworks.
- Institutional reports and studies addressing manuscript preservation and utilization (Al-Eqtisadiyah, 2020; Abdelnour, 2012).

2) Analytical Procedures:

The analytical process followed these steps:

1. Identifying recurring educational values within Islamic manuscripts as reported in educational literature (e.g., compassion, justice, discipline, gradual instruction, role modeling).
2. Analyzing the pedagogical significance of these values within their historical and educational contexts.
3. Comparing manuscript-based values with principles of contemporary value-based education.
4. Examining the gap between institutional preservation efforts and educational activation.
5. Developing a value-based analytical framework outlining pathways for transforming manuscript heritage into educational practice.

This framework provides a structured perspective for integrating heritage-based values into curricula, teacher education programs, and value-oriented educational policies (Al-Muradi & Al-Atrash, 2024; Ghanem, 2007).

3) Proposed Analytical Framework

The proposed framework consists of four interrelated dimensions:

1. Value Dimension: Core educational values derived from Islamic manuscripts.
2. Educational Dimension: Alignment of these values with teaching and learning practices.
3. Institutional Dimension: The role of educational institutions and manuscript centers in value activation.

4. Applied Dimension: Practical mechanisms for translating value-based content into contemporary educational applications.

This framework highlights that meaningful activation of Islamic manuscripts extends beyond preservation and digitization, requiring intentional pedagogical integration within modern educational systems.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

Findings:

1) Islamic manuscripts as integrated value-based educational systems

The analysis reveals that Islamic manuscripts function as integrated value-based educational systems rather than mere repositories of knowledge. Core educational values such as compassion, justice, discipline, gradual instruction, role modeling, and the integration of knowledge and behavior consistently emerge across classical texts. These values formed the foundation of Islamic educational thought and contributed to the development of balanced individuals (Ibn Sahnun, 1972; Al-Ghazali, 1989; Shams Al-Din & Bouzouita, 1986).

These findings align with contemporary educational literature emphasizing the centrality of values in effective education and the inseparability of learning from ethical and moral development (Qutb, 2015; Bani Salameh, 2015).

2) A structural gap between institutional preservation and educational activation

The findings indicate a significant structural gap between institutional efforts focused on preserving and digitizing Islamic manuscripts and their pedagogical activation within contemporary educational systems. Despite extensive preservation initiatives, manuscripts remain largely disconnected from curricular practices and teacher education programs (Abdelnour, 2012; Mieaza, 2014; Editorial Board, 2022).

This gap is largely attributed to the absence of integrative educational strategies, limited coordination between manuscript centers and educational institutions, and the lack of pedagogically oriented classification systems (Ghanem, 2007; Qabawah & Battoush, 2008).

3) The need for educational re-framing

The findings emphasize that transitioning from preservation to activation requires deliberate educational re-framing. This process involves transforming manuscript-based values into applicable educational components, such as instructional units, learning activities, behavioral models, and value-oriented pedagogical practices aligned with contemporary educational contexts (Al-Muradi & Al-Atrash, 2024; Walad Miabay, 2021).

DISCUSSION:

The findings demonstrate that Islamic manuscripts possess substantial potential to contribute meaningfully to contemporary value-based education. However, the challenge lies not in the richness of content, but in the mechanisms of educational integration. Treating preservation and digitization as ends rather than means limits the transformative educational impact of manuscript heritage.

These results resonate with contemporary educational discourse advocating for holistic approaches that integrate values into curricula and teaching practices, emphasizing the educator's role as a moral exemplar rather than a mere transmitter of information (Bani Salameh, 2015; Qutb, 2015).

Furthermore, the discussion underscores the importance of reconstructing the relationship between heritage and contemporary education through context-sensitive reinterpretation. Such an approach enables the development of educational models rooted in cultural authenticity while remaining responsive to global educational challenges.

Implications and Recommendations:

- Integrating manuscript-based values into value education curricula and teacher preparation programs.
- Developing pedagogically oriented classification systems for Islamic manuscripts.
- Strengthening collaboration between manuscript preservation centers and educational institutions.
- Utilizing digital tools to transform manuscript-based values into interactive educational resources.

Conclusion

- The study concluded that Islamic manuscripts constitute a rich value-based educational resource that goes beyond being preserved historical texts to represent integrated intellectual and pedagogical systems capable of contributing effectively to contemporary values education.
- The findings revealed that the central challenge does not lie in the lack of value-based or educational content within Islamic manuscripts, but rather in the limited mechanisms for activating and utilizing them within modern educational systems.
- The study confirmed that the transition from preservation to activation requires a conscious pedagogical re-framing of Islamic manuscripts that links their value-based contents to contemporary educational realities and transforms them into applicable educational frameworks.
- The results highlighted the importance of institutional integration among manuscript centers, educational institutions, endowment libraries, and digitization centers as a fundamental condition for maximizing the educational impact of Islamic manuscripts.
- This research contributes to opening a new scholarly horizon for engaging with Islamic manuscripts by re-conceptualizing them as active, value-based educational resources rather than static historical artifacts.
- The study presents a value-based analytical framework that reintegrates heritage into contemporary educational processes, strengthens value identity, and simultaneously responds to global educational challenges.

Recommendations

- Attracting retirees and volunteers with passion and expertise in the field of Islamic manuscripts and enabling them to contribute to cataloguing and analyzing manuscripts from an educational perspective that serves contemporary educational needs.
- Integrating educational Islamic manuscripts into contemporary Islamic education curricula, particularly within courses on Islamic education, ethics of education, and Islamic educational thought.
- Designing specialized training programs for teachers and researchers on methodologies for analyzing and pedagogically utilizing educational manuscripts, thereby developing educators capable of linking heritage texts with current educational contexts.
- Organizing periodic specialized academic conferences on Islamic educational manuscripts to enhance research collaboration, exchange expertise, and consolidate the educational dimension of this heritage.
- Establishing specialized university courses focused on Islamic manuscripts with educational dimensions, to be incorporated into teacher preparation programs and educational disciplines.
- Transforming educational manuscripts into multiple educational media through advanced digitization approaches, including audio and visual content, illustrative graphics, and infographics.

- Disseminating digital materials derived from educational manuscripts through digital platforms and social media channels, and translating them into multiple languages to promote educational values using contemporary digital approaches.
- Strengthening partnerships between educational institutions, endowment libraries, and digitization centers through national and field-based projects that activate value-based content derived from manuscripts within educational curricula.
- Launching national projects to classify Islamic manuscripts according to their educational values rather than relying solely on traditional subject-based classifications, thereby facilitating their use in research and educational curricula.
- Supporting the efforts of Islamic countries and relevant institutions involved in preserving educational manuscripts through academic collaboration and the exchange of expertise and best practices.

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