

AHLU SHUFFAH EDUCATION SYSTEM DURING THE TIME OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD SAW

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the Islamic education system during the early period of Islam by examining Ahl al-Suffah, one of the educational institutions established by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina. This study employs a qualitative approach using library research. Data were collected from classical and contemporary literature on the history, development, and concepts of Islamic education. The data were analyzed descriptively and critically to understand the educational principles and practices of Ahl al-Suffah. The findings indicate that its educational system emphasized knowledge acquisition, communal learning, spiritual development, and social service. Its institutional structure and pedagogical practices encouraged collective participation, close interaction between teachers and learners, and the practical application of knowledge in everyday life. These principles contributed to the development of an integrated Islamic education system connecting faith, knowledge, and action. Furthermore, the educational values of Ahl al-Suffah remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in fostering holistic learning, strengthening moral character, and promoting social responsibility among learners in modern educational contexts.

Introduction

Education during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had distinctive characteristics that differentiated it from previous educational systems. It was based on revelation, oriented toward exemplary conduct (*uswah*), and contextualized according to the social dynamics of Arab society at that time. These characteristics distinguished early Islamic education from pre-Islamic educational systems, which generally relied on tribal traditions and the transmission of customary values. The educational system developed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) positioned revelation as the primary

source of knowledge and moral exemplary conduct as a central pedagogical method in the process of shaping individuals and society (Nova, 2022).

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), education played an important role in developing a resilient generation with noble character. At that time, the Prophet established an educational community known as Ahl al-Suffah, whose learning system was relatively unique. Ahl al-Suffah refers to a group of the Prophet's Companions who received special guidance to become a generation capable of understanding, practicing, and disseminating Islamic teachings (Ningsih et al., 2024). They lived in a designated area known as the Suffah within the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid an-Nabawi). In this place, teaching and learning activities were conducted with remarkable intensity and depth. The members of Ahl al-Suffah not only became exemplary figures in learning but also contributed to the development of Islamic civilization, whose influence continues to this day (Tamuri, 2021).

Numerous previous studies have explored the Ahl al-Suffah from various perspectives. For instance, Nova (2022) emphasized that the education system during the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was based on divine revelation and moral exemplification, with the Ahl al-Suffah serving as a central community for learning and spreading Islam early on. Dewi (2023) highlighted that the members of Ahl al-Suffah came from diverse social and economic backgrounds, uniting the community through the dissemination of knowledge and faith, thereby making significant contributions to the development of Islamic civilization.

Husaini (2020) and Tamuri (2021) further emphasized the role of Ahl al-Suffah in shaping character and strengthening Islamic scholarly foundations, with the community acting as a pioneering model for classical Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren and madrasah. Additionally, Ulfah et al. (2024) focused on the pedagogical methods employed by the Ahl al-Suffah, which integrated moral and spiritual values and fostered an active, dialogic, and collective learning environment.

However, these studies primarily focus on certain aspects, such as historical context, social roles, or pedagogical approaches, leaving gaps in a comprehensive understanding of the institutional structures, detailed teaching methods, and their impacts on the development of modern Islamic education systems. Consequently, this research aims to provide a more thorough and contextual analysis of the Ahl al-Suffah educational system, contributing valuable insights for the contemporary development of Islamic education by examining its core principles, methods, and ongoing relevance.

In this process, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) directly served as the primary mentor, providing education that focused not only on religious knowledge but also on character development and love for Allah and His Messenger. The members of Ahl al-Suffah came from diverse social and economic backgrounds, yet they were united by a common desire to deepen their understanding of Islam. Their life in the Suffah illustrates how knowledge can unite people and elevate their status despite worldly differences (Dewi, 2023).

Many of them came from poor families and often lacked sufficient food and clothing. These limitations did not weaken their desire to learn; rather, they regarded such circumstances as an opportunity to cultivate patience and sacrifice. Furthermore, their simple way of life demonstrated their tawakkul (reliance upon

Allah), as they believed that the knowledge and faith they acquired would provide them with the best provisions for both this world and the Hereafter (Husaini, 2020).

The learning methods employed by Ahl al-Suffah included memorization of the Qur'an, understanding Hadith, and direct discussions with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). However, learning was not limited to formal instruction; it also took place through the Prophet's exemplary conduct in every aspect of his life. The members of Ahl al-Suffah did not merely learn by listening to revelations but also observed how the Prophet applied Islamic teachings in his daily life. Therefore, they did not become merely memorizers or speakers but also living examples who were able to apply the knowledge they had acquired in practice (Adri, 2022).

The members of Ahl al-Suffah subsequently became a generation that played a significant role in the spread of Islam to various parts of the world. They developed into scholars, Qur'an reciters (qari), and preachers (da'i) who were committed to teaching Islam wisely. The education they received in the Suffah shaped them not only as knowledgeable individuals but also as sources of inspiration for building a strong Islamic civilization. This educational system demonstrates how education founded on faith, simplicity, and exemplary conduct can produce a generation that excels in both knowledge and morality (Awwaliyah, 2019).

Based on the discussion above, several aspects of the Ahl al-Suffah educational system can be applied to modern education. These include learning from teachers who possess adequate expertise and competence in their respective fields, dedicating sufficient time to the learning process, providing adequate financial support for education, developing intellectual ability, and cultivating enthusiasm, perseverance, and commitment to learning.

Research Methods

This study employs a library research approach to examine the educational system of Ahl al-Suffah during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Library research is appropriate because the study focuses on historical and conceptual information obtained from previously published scholarly sources rather than primary field observations (Yakin, 2023). The research explores the historical background, educational characteristics, learning objectives, teaching methods, and forms of guidance implemented by the Prophet Muhammad for Ahl al-Suffah, who were among the early generations of Muslims directly educated and guided by him. The study also seeks to identify the educational values and learning practices developed in Ahl al-Suffah that may provide relevant insights for contemporary Islamic education. The use of literature-based research enables the researcher to critically examine various scholarly interpretations and reconstruct the educational practices of the early Islamic period based on relevant sources (Ulfah et al., 2024). The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad is also considered an essential dimension of this educational system because his role as educator, leader, and moral model was closely connected with the development of the early Muslim community (Alkattani & Ramdanu, 2023).

The data in this study are obtained from relevant books, peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly publications, and other academic documents that discuss

the history and educational practices of Ahl al-Suffah, the Prophet Muhammad's educational leadership, and Islamic education during the early Islamic period. The literature is selected purposively based on its relevance to the research topic, academic credibility, and contribution to understanding the educational system of Ahl al-Suffah. The data collection process involves identifying relevant literature, reading and reviewing the selected sources, extracting important information, and organizing the findings according to themes related to the research objectives. Particular attention is given to literature discussing the learning environment, educational objectives, teaching methods, character formation, religious instruction, and the Prophet Muhammad's role in guiding Ahl al-Suffah. This process follows the principles of systematic literature-based inquiry, in which researchers identify and interpret relevant information to construct a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Hardani et al., 2020). The interpretation of historical and educational sources is also conducted critically to ensure that the conclusions reflect the information and perspectives contained in the selected literature (Pradoko, 2023).

This study employs a systematic literature review approach, with data collected from a comprehensive set of sources including academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly publications, and relevant digital repositories. The primary databases utilized for locating relevant literature were Google Scholar, Scopus, and the IndonesiaOneSearch portal, covering publications from the year 2000 to 2024 to ensure contemporary relevance while capturing historical developments. The inclusion criteria mandated that the sources explicitly discuss the educational practices, systems, or leadership of Ahl al-Suffah during the Prophet Muhammad's time, and were published in or translated into English or Indonesian. Exclusion criteria included sources focusing solely on social or political aspects without educational context, as well as non-scholarly articles, commentaries, or non-peer-reviewed materials. A total of 35 scholarly documents meeting these criteria were selected for analysis. The data collection process involved systematically identifying relevant literature, screening titles and abstracts for relevance, followed by full-text review, and finally extracting key information related to the historical background, learning methods, curriculum, and educational values of Ahl al-Suffah for thematic analysis. This analytical process follows the framework of Miles and Huberman, which emphasizes the interconnected processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing in qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2020).

Discussion

In examining the history of Ahl al-Suffah as an early Islamic model of education, it can be argued that its significance extends beyond being merely a physical learning space around the mosque. Instead, it represents the foundational development of an integrated and holistic educational system. The philosophy underlying Ahl al-Suffah emphasizes the combination of knowledge, moral values, and social practice, illustrating that educational success relies not only on the transfer of information but also on the internalization of values and their practical application in daily life. This reflects that Islamic education from its inception prioritizes a balance between spiritual and intellectual development, reminding us that understanding religion must be accompanied by strong moral

character and social responsibility. Furthermore, the analysis of methods such as halaqah (circle discussion) indicates that an interactive and dialogic teaching approach fosters a more humane atmosphere and strengthens the bond between teachers and learners. This approach aligns with modern pedagogical principles that emphasize active participation rather than passive reception. Critically, the author argues that applying such methods within contemporary education systems can enhance student engagement and deepen their understanding of the material, ultimately shaping responsible and morally upright individuals.

Additionally, from the analysis, it can be concluded that values such as exemplary leadership, solidarity, and the continuity of learning, as embodied by Ahl al-Suffah, remain relevant in today's educational context. This system challenges the paradigm of result-oriented education by emphasizing the importance of moral excellence and social awareness alongside academic achievement. Consequently, this integration can produce a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also morally virtuous and socially beneficial. Critically, the author suggests that integrating the principles of Ahl al-Suffah into modern education requires a fundamental shift in educational philosophy and culture. The key to success lies in the commitment of all stakeholders teachers, students, and the community to foster an environment that prioritizes not only cognitive development but also personal character formation. Therefore, this educational model is not only a valuable historical legacy but also an ideal paradigm for cultivating a generation of Muslims who are knowledgeable, morally upright, and contributing positively to society both spiritually and socially.

Among the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, there was a particularly distinguished group known as the Ahl al-Suffah. Literally, the term Suffah can be understood as a sofa, a place for sitting, or a place for receiving guests. In Islamic literature, however, Suffah refers to a long, enclosed porch or covered terrace located at the front of a building. Initially, this porch was part of the mosque that was newly built in the city of Medina. In subsequent periods, the Suffah evolved into a terrace or covered space that became a common feature of mosques within the tradition of Islamic architecture (Husni et al., 2023).

The Suffah can also be regarded as the first Islamic educational institution, as it incorporated the essential components of an educational system, including teachers, students, classrooms, residential facilities, and scholarships.

The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad: The Ahl al-Suffah

The people who lived in the Suffah came from diverse backgrounds and can generally be divided into four groups. First, the first group consisted of the Muhajirun the Companions who had migrated from Mecca, particularly those who were poor and had no relatives in Medina. Among them were Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Bilal ibn Rabah, Ammar ibn Yasir, and Suhayb al-Rumi. The residents of the Suffah were not limited to the Muhajirun from Mecca; some also came from other regions outside Mecca, including Abu Hurairah, Sa'id ibn Amr, and Wasilah ibn al-Asqa' (Alkattani & Ramdanu, 2023).

Second, the second group consisted of unmarried Companions. Although some of them had families and homes, they chose to stay in the Suffah so that they could meet the Prophet Muhammad more frequently, acquire knowledge, and gain wisdom directly from him. Among those in this group were Sayyidina Abdullah

ibn Umar, Ka'b ibn Malik, Hanzalah ibn Abi Amir, Harithah ibn al-Nu'man, and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. Third, the third group consisted of people from Arab tribes outside Mecca who embraced Islam and migrated to Medina. The Prophet Muhammad encouraged them to migrate so that the Muslim community in Medina could grow. Another purpose was to protect them from persecution by the leaders of their respective tribes and to facilitate their efforts to learn and practice Islam. One of those associated with this group was Furat ibn Hayyan. Fourth, the fourth group consisted of guests. They were people who visited Medina to meet the Prophet Muhammad, learn about him, and study Islam. During the tenth year after the Hijrah, a period known as Sanat al-Wufud (the Year of Delegations) occurred, when people came to Medina in large numbers to embrace Islam. During this period, the Suffah was no longer sufficient to accommodate either permanent residents or visiting guests.

The educational system of the Ahl al-Suffah was not merely an educational method but also represented a profound spiritual journey. The Companions known as the Ahl al-Suffah lived in a designated area within the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid al-Nabawi). They did not come merely to study; rather, they sought to live according to knowledge and faith. Through direct instruction, the Prophet Muhammad ensured that the teaching and learning process reached not only the intellectual dimension but also the hearts and souls of the learners. They received guidance from the Prophet in understanding and internalizing Islamic teachings, including worship, morality, and proper interaction with others (Ainusyamsi, 2019).

The learning process at the Suffah was unique and reflected a holistic approach to education. The Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), and moral values were taught by the Prophet Muhammad. This direct approach enabled the members of the Ahl al-Suffah to witness the revelation of the Qur'an and observe how the Prophet practiced every teaching in his daily life. Such an approach allowed them to understand both the theoretical and practical dimensions of Islamic teachings. As a result, learning became more applicable and effective because knowledge was immediately connected to everyday practice (Eliana, 2021).

The Ahl al-Suffah were predominantly unmarried Companions who stayed in the Suffah. Among them, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was reportedly the only one who obtained permission from the Prophet Muhammad to remain in the Suffah even after he had married. The number of people residing in the Suffah was not fixed and varied according to circumstances and conditions. Consequently, different sources provide different estimates regarding the total number of people who lived there. Some references state that approximately 400 to 700 individuals are recorded as having stayed in the Suffah at various times.

The members of the Ahl al-Suffah focused primarily on teaching and learning activities. Consequently, they had very limited time to establish permanent occupations or livelihoods. Nevertheless, they did not simply become a burden on the other Companions. Some of them collected firewood and sold it, while others worked as laborers or undertook additional work to meet their daily needs. Their ability to concentrate on learning and worship without being distracted by family responsibilities or the pursuit of worldly possessions contributed to their extensive knowledge and profound spiritual development.

They devoted themselves to worship during the night and fasting during the day. Thus, the Ahl al-Suffah can be characterized by four main qualities: unmarried, simple in lifestyle, humble, and pious (Muthoharoh & Aisyah, 2023 : 306)..

The Ahl al-Suffah were among those who were not required to participate directly in military expeditions because of their role in learning and teaching Islam. Some of them remained behind to teach religion to their communities, which led certain hypocrites to criticize them. They said, "Indeed, there are still people who remain behind in the desert; woe to them!" Following this criticism, Allah revealed the verse: "It is not appropriate for the believers to march forth all together." (Qur'an, At-Tawbah: 122).

This verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining a group of knowledgeable people who remain committed to educating their communities and teaching those who return from the battlefield. The existence of the Ahl al-Suffah ensured the continuity of religious knowledge and provided religious instruction to those who were occupied with other responsibilities. In this way, the religious knowledge of the Muslim community could continue to develop and remain balanced with the demands of other aspects of life (Purnama et al., 2025) .

As described above, the Ahl al-Suffah did not primarily focus on their daily material needs. Instead, they devoted much of their time to being close to the Prophet Muhammad in order to acquire knowledge and wisdom. It is therefore unsurprising that many of them became important transmitters of the Prophet's hadiths. Their daily needs were largely supported by the Prophet Muhammad, who became their principal benefactor, along with other Companions such as Sa'd ibn Ubadah, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, and others (Syafei, 2025) .

The primary role of the benefactors of the Suffah was to provide for the residents' basic needs, particularly food and clothing. The Prophet Muhammad encouraged the Companions to invite members of the Ahl al-Suffah to share meals in their homes. For this reason, the Ahl al-Suffah were also known as *Adyaf al-Muslimin*, meaning "the guests of the Muslims." The Prophet encouraged the Companions to share their food with them, stating that if a person had enough food for two people, the third should be from among the Ahl al-Suffah; if a household had food for four people, the fifth should be from among the Ahl al-Suffah, and so forth (Mudzakkir et al., 2024).

The Suffah can be regarded as one of the earliest Islamic educational institutions. Its primary teacher was the Prophet Muhammad himself. He was assisted by Companions such as Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Salim, the freedman of Abu Hudhayfah, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, and Ubayy ibn Ka'b, who taught the Qur'an. Their competence was highly respected, and the Prophet Muhammad himself testified to their mastery of the Qur'an: "Learn the Qur'an from four people: Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Salim, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, and Ubayy ibn Ka'b." (Sahih al-Bukhari; Sahih Muslim). Abdullah ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As and Sayyidina Ubadah ibn al-Samit were among those who taught reading and writing. Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah was also regarded as an excellent teacher and mentor, as reflected in the Prophet's recognition of his qualities (Fahmiyudin et al., 2025).

Among the renowned alumni of the Suffah were Sayyidina Bilal ibn Rabah and Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, who served as callers to prayer (*mu'adhdhins*) at the Prophet's Mosque. Mus'ab ibn Umayr was sent by the Prophet Muhammad to Medina to teach the Qur'an. Mu'adh ibn Jabal later became a teacher and governor

in Yemen, while Abu Hurairah became one of the most prolific transmitters of the Prophet's hadiths. Abu al-Darda also chose to serve as a teacher in Syria rather than accept a governmental position during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan. Many other alumni of the Suffah made significant contributions to the development and advancement of Islam. More than 1,600 students are reported to have studied and attended the learning circles conducted by Abu al-Darda (Syarifatunnisa & Ahmad Fuadi, 2023).

The Ahl al-Suffah played an increasingly significant role during the expansion of Islamic territories, particularly reaching its peak during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab. During this period, alumni of the Ahl al-Suffah were sent to various regions to teach Islam to communities that had recently embraced the faith. Their role demonstrates that the Suffah was not merely a place of learning but also a center for preparing individuals to become teachers, missionaries, and builders of Islamic civilization (Fitri et al., 2026).

Today, the world needs individuals who possess characteristics similar to those demonstrated by the alumni of the Ahl al-Suffah. The world needs a generation capable of becoming architects of civilization, building the future through education, and willingly serving wherever their knowledge and abilities are needed. A modern generation inspired by the Suffah tradition can emerge when society and educational institutions are able to identify and support teachers who dedicate their time to educating and guiding learners with sincerity and devotion (Jaenudin et al., 2026). Such teachers can guide their students until they develop a genuine love for learning, teaching, and the pursuit of knowledge. Their nights can also be filled with prayers not only for their own well-being but also for the preservation of faith and the success of the students under their guidance.

Teachers who never tire and whose patience does not diminish resemble skilled sculptors. Just as a sculptor shapes a piece of stone, teachers shape the hearts and character of their students. The work of teachers is an invaluable form of art, and the masterpieces produced through their dedication can contribute to the betterment of society and humanity. Such educational excellence, however, requires not only dedicated teachers but also young people who are enthusiastic and willing to devote themselves to learning and seeking knowledge. Adequate scholarships and other forms of educational support are likewise essential to enable both teachers and students to focus on teaching and learning without being overly constrained by their economic circumstances.

Islamic Education among the Ahl al-Suffah

Component	Description	Key Features / Examples	Implications
for Modern Education			
1. Social & Institutional Dimensions	The social setting and organizational structure of the education system; Located in the mosque porch (Suffah), Served as a residence and education hub for the Companions, Facilitated social integration and community development. Emphasizes the integration of learning within social and community contexts, relevant for building social cohesion in modern Islamic education.		
2. Structure & Curriculum	The formal organization of knowledge and its delivery; Focused on Qur'an, Hadith, aqidah, fiqh, Included social and economic dimensions; Practical social activities like da'wah and community		

- service. Highlights the importance of combining religious knowledge with social skills and practical application.
3. Educational Content & Methods The nature of knowledge conveyed and pedagogical approaches; Qur'an interpretation, Hadith, social ethics, Dialogic halaqah (circle discussions), Active participation and question-and-answer sessions. Encourages student-centered, participatory learning models that foster critical thinking and active engagement.
 4. Educational Objectives Goals of the educational system. to produce knowledgeable, morally upright da'is and educators; To develop balanced individuals ('insan kamil'). Underlines character development alongside intellectual growth, applicable to modern holistic education goals.
 5. Educational Values & Impact Core values and their influence on society and subsequent educational systems. Exemplary conduct of the Prophet as a moral role model. Emphasis on social responsibility, lifelong learning, and faithknowledge action integration. Reinforces the importance of ethical leadership, social responsibility, and continuous learning in contemporary Islamic education.

First, Social and Institutional Dimensions of Education. The Medina period marked a significant transformation in Islamic education following the Hijrah, when the Prophet Muhammad had the opportunity to establish a socially and politically sovereign Muslim community. During this phase, education developed beyond the cultivation of faith (aqidah) and morality toward a structured social system oriented toward building a knowledgeable and civilized society (Ihsan, 2019). The primary educational institution during the Medina period was the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid al-Nabawi), which served as a center for worship, education, and community development. From this mosque emerged the Ahl al-Suffah system, a community of Companions who resided in the mosque's porch to pursue knowledge and devote themselves to the propagation of Islam. Radiman emphasizes that the Ahl al-Suffah represents a model of Islamic education that integrated knowledge and practice while also serving as a precursor to the development of classical Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren and madrasah (Radiman, 2021).

Second, The Structure and Educational System of the Ahl al-Suffah. The Ahl al-Suffah emerged from the needs of the Muhajirun, who experienced vulnerable social and economic conditions following the Hijrah. In response, the Prophet Muhammad provided the porch of the Prophet's Mosque (al-Suffah) as both a residential area and an integrated space for education, guidance, and community development. The Ahl al-Suffah system was characterized by the integration of the mosque's functions as a center for worship, education, and social activities; an integrated curriculum encompassing religious knowledge, moral education, and life skills; and an integrated educational role, with the Prophet Muhammad serving as both teacher and moral exemplar. Ahmad Shalaby describes the Ahl al-Suffah as an early form of Islamic educational institution oriented toward knowledge for life, namely, an educational model that connected knowledge with the development of a faithful and civilized society (Shalaby, 1954).

Third, Educational Content and Curriculum. The educational content of the

Ahl al-Suffah encompassed the Qur'an and its interpretation, Hadith and the Sunnah of the Prophet, aqidah and fiqh, as well as the social and economic dimensions of the Muslim community. Education was not merely theoretical but also emphasized practical social activities, including da'wah, the implementation of ethical principles in muamalah, and the strengthening of ukhuwah (Islamic brotherhood). The learning process was conducted through the halaqah method, which was dialogical and participatory, allowing the Companions to actively engage in understanding and applying Qur'anic teachings in their daily lives. According to Nur Ahid, the Ahl al-Suffah provides a concrete example of Islamic education based on the practical application of values. The Companions did not merely memorize revelation; they also practiced Islamic teachings in their daily lives through social activities, da'wah, and service to the community. This educational practice, which integrated learning with social action, gradually shaped a holistic Muslim personality. Within this framework, the concept of insan kamil can be understood as the ultimate outcome of the educational process of the Ahl al-Suffah, namely the formation of individuals who are mature in moral, spiritual, and social dimensions (Taufik, 2021).

Fourth, Educational Methods and Approaches. The educational methods employed by the Ahl al-Suffah were more dynamic than those practiced in the educational system of Dar al-Arqam. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) employed the halaqah method, a learning system in which teachers and students sat together in a circle to read, discuss, and interpret Qur'anic verses collectively. In this halaqah practice, the Companions were not passive recipients of knowledge but actively participated by asking questions, expressing their understanding, and discussing the application of Islamic teachings in everyday contexts. The high level of student participation created an egalitarian and participatory learning environment. Therefore, the educational process of the Ahl al-Suffah can be understood as an early form of student-centered learning within the Islamic educational tradition (Nurlia & Fauji, 2025). Radiman explains that the educational methods of the Ahl al-Suffah included direct instruction, emulation of the Prophet's example, habituation, and social assignments that encouraged the Companions to participate actively in the learning process.

Fifth, Educational Objectives and Impacts of the Ahl al-Suffah. The primary objective of Ahl al-Suffah education was to produce educators and da'wah practitioners who possessed strong intellectual capacity and moral integrity to disseminate Islamic teachings, as emphasized by Husin. Figures such as Abu Hurairah, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, and Salman al-Farisi represent Companions associated with the Ahl al-Suffah who played important roles in the transmission of Islamic knowledge and the propagation of Islam. This educational model had a significant impact on the development of Islamic educational institutions, as the mosque-based system and the halaqah method were subsequently adopted in institutions such as madrasahs, zawiyahs, and pesantren (Husin, 2017).

Ahmad Shalaby describes the Ahl al-Suffah as a prototype of classical Islamic educational institutions, as it gave rise to traditions of learning, memorization, discussion, and dhikr that subsequently became characteristic features of Islamic educational institutions throughout history.

Islamic Educational Values Relevant to the Present Day

The value of tawhid and spirituality is highly relevant to contemporary educational challenges where there is often a disconnect between spiritual development and academic achievement. Modern education tends to prioritize material success and intellectual accomplishments, sometimes neglecting the moral and spiritual growth of students. Incorporating tawhid into the curriculum can foster a holistic development approach, ensuring that knowledge is integrated with worship and moral purification, thus producing individuals whose actions are guided by divine principles rather than secular materialism. Similarly, the emphasis on exemplary conduct and teacher ethics addresses the prevalent crisis of moral degradation among educators, which hampers the internalization of Islamic values in students. When teachers serve as moral exemplars by embodying honesty, patience, and compassion, they can influence students positively and nurture a generation rooted in ethical principles. The importance of social responsibility and community-building in Islamic education directly responds to the rise of individualism and social fragmentation in modern society. Emphasizing community-based learning and collective responsibility, as exemplified by Ahl al-Suffah, can strengthen social bonds and foster empathy among students, ultimately creating a more cohesive society .

The value of lifelong learning tackles issues of low motivation and the limited pursuit of continuous knowledge. Promoting a culture of ongoing education and self-improvement ensures that learners remain engaged and adaptable throughout their lives, integrating knowledge, faith, and action effectively. Lastly, the principle of integrating faith, knowledge, and action confronts the tendency for education to be overly theoretical or compartmentalized. By translating knowledge into concrete actions that serve society, Islamic education can produce individuals who not only understand religious teachings but also apply them practically. This integration is essential in addressing the disconnect between theory and practice, thereby cultivating individuals who practice ethical conduct and contribute meaningfully to societal development. Overall, these values provide a comprehensive framework for resolving current challenges in Islamic education, emphasizing spiritual growth, moral exemplarity, social responsibility, continuous learning, and practical application of knowledge for societal benefit.

Islamic education in the early period, as reflected in the educational systems of Dar al-Arqam and the Ahl al-Suffah, contains universal values that remain relevant in the contemporary context. Both systems demonstrate that Islamic education is not merely oriented toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward character formation, spiritual development, and social responsibility (Sulistiyani & Triyoga, 2021). First, The Value of Tawhid and Spirituality. Dar al-Arqam emphasized tawhid as the foundation of faith and spirituality, making it particularly relevant as a response to the tendency of modern education to prioritize academic and material achievement. The value of tawhid emphasizes that knowledge cannot be separated from worship and the process of spiritual purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*). It also establishes an ethical framework for knowledge, directing its application toward human well-being and the common good. In line with this perspective, Ihsan argues that the core of the Prophet Muhammad's educational mission during the Meccan period was *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), which served as a prerequisite for the development of

individuals and communities that were both knowledgeable and morally upright (Ihsan, 2019) .

The value of tawhid also provides a foundation for scientific ethics, in which knowledge is directed toward human welfare rather than being used as an instrument of domination or exploitation. Consistent with the thought of Osman Bakar, Islamic education positions revelation as a primary source of knowledge that is integrated with rationality, thereby avoiding the secularization of knowledge. In the context of modern Islamic education, reaffirming the harmonious relationship between revelation and reason can be realized through a curriculum that emphasizes not only cognitive and technical achievement but also the development of scientific ethics, moral awareness, and social responsibility. Through this approach, scientific inquiry can continue to develop rationally and critically without becoming detached from transcendent values, enabling Islamic education to avoid the secularization of knowledge.

Second, The Value of Exemplary Conduct and Teacher Ethics. In the educational systems of Dar al-Arqam and the Ahl al-Suffah, the Prophet Muhammad served as the primary teacher (*al-mu'allim al-awwal*) who educated through exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*). This model of education emphasizes that educators function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral and spiritual role models. Radiman explains that the Prophet's educational method among the Ahl al-Suffah emphasized three fundamental elements: exemplary behavior, habituation to worship, and an empathetic approach (Radiman, 2021). Exemplary conduct is a fundamental element of character education in Islam. Effective education does not take place solely through verbal transmission of knowledge but also through the internalization of values demonstrated directly by the educator. According to Abu Ghuddah, the internalization of Islamic educational values takes place through the Prophet's concrete actions, including honesty, patience, and compassion. Through such examples, character development can take place continuously and become embedded in the learner's personality (Nasution et al., 2023).

Third, The Value of Social Responsibility and Learning Communities. The Ahl al-Suffah emphasized community-based education, in which the Companions learned, lived, and worshiped together. This model represents an approach to Islamic education oriented toward lifelong learning, through which the Companions developed into scholars and disseminators of knowledge. According to Husin, the Ahl al-Suffah represents a model of social education that emphasizes solidarity, empathy, and collective responsibility throughout the learning process (Husin, 2017) .

Fourth, The Value of Knowledge and Continuous Learning. Islam regards the pursuit of knowledge as a lifelong obligation. The Ahl al-Suffah provides a concrete example of an educational model oriented toward lifelong learning. Companions such as Abu Hurairah, Ibn Mas'ud, and Salman al-Farisi were among those associated with the Suffah who later became scholars and disseminators of knowledge across various regions. The value of continuous learning remains highly relevant in the contemporary context, where Islamic education is expected to integrate knowledge, faith, and action within a unified ecosystem of learning, spirituality, and social service. Accordingly, the spirit of lifelong learning (*thalab al-'ilm la yanqathi'*) can be realized holistically, with the pursuit of rational

knowledge progressing alongside the development of ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility (Usman, 2021). In this regard, Shalaby describes the classical Islamic educational system as a living tradition of knowledge, referring to an intellectual tradition that remains dynamic and continuously develops because it is rooted in spiritual values.

Fifth, The Integration of Faith, Knowledge, and Action. The two educational models established during the time of the Prophet Muhammad share a fundamental principle: the integration of faith, knowledge, and action. Knowledge did not remain at the level of theoretical understanding but was translated into concrete actions that benefited society. Therefore, as emphasized by Nur Ahid, the synthesis of Dar al-Arqam and the Ahl al-Suffah remains relevant as an integrative model of Islamic education that balances spiritual and rational dimensions within the context of modern Islamic education.

Conclusion

This study highlights the enduring significance of the educational practices of Ahl al-Suffah during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and their relevance to contemporary Islamic education. The research demonstrates that their dedication to sincere pursuit of knowledge, exemplary conduct, and social responsibility offers valuable lessons for modern educational systems. The integration of spiritual, moral, and social dimensions embodied in values such as tawhid, character exemplification, and lifelong learning remains essential for developing well-rounded individuals who serve society ethically and responsibly. The contribution of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of early Islamic educational models, providing insights that can inform the development of holistic, values-based educational frameworks today. Ultimately, the findings underscore that reviving these foundational principles can foster a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also morally upright, spiritually grounded, and socially committed.

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