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Reconstructing Islamic Educational Values Based on Gratitude: An Educational Analysis of Surah Al-Kawthar

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ABSTRACT *This study aims to reconstruct gratitude-based Islamic educational values through an analysis of Surah Al-Kawthar. This topic is significant because contemporary Islamic education requires the integration of spiritual, moral, and social values to develop learners' character holistically. The study employed a qualitative library research approach and thematic-educational tafsir analysis, using primary data from the Qur'anic text and classical and contemporary tafsir works, as well as secondary data from Islamic education literature and studies on educational values. Data were analyzed systematically to identify core values, educational patterns, and practical implications of gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar. The findings reveal that gratitude functions as a core value of Islamic education, integrating spiritual, worship, and social dimensions. The command *faṣalli li rabbika* emphasizes worship as a meaningful educational medium, while *wahhar* highlights sacrifice and social responsibility, with value-based resilience forming the foundation for long-term educational orientation. These findings suggest that gratitude can serve as a conceptual framework for curriculum development, learning strategies, and the formation of resilient character, while bridging normative values and social practice. This study provides theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions, and opens avenues for future research to empirically examine the implementation of gratitude values and explore other Qur'anic values in contemporary Islamic education.*

Keywords : Islamic Education, Gratitude Values, Thematic-Educational Tafsir, Surah Al-Kawthar, Value Reconstruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is fundamentally oriented not only toward the transmission of religious knowledge (Akrim, 2022) but also toward the formation of character and the internalization of spiritual values that guide human beings in navigating life's realities (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024). However, in the context of contemporary Islamic education, there has been a noticeable shift toward cognitive achievement and administrative outcomes (Faizin, 2024), while the cultivation of moral and spiritual values has increasingly been marginalized (Abdullah, 2017). This condition has contributed to the weakening of authentic religious attitudes, including gratitude (*shukr*) as a foundational value in nurturing God-consciousness and ethical awareness.

The diminishing presence of gratitude in educational practice can be observed through various social and pedagogical phenomena, such as the rise of pragmatic attitudes (Syamsul Aripin & Nana Meily Nurdiansyah, 2022), limited appreciation of the learning process, and the prevalence of dissatisfaction and excessive complaints within educational environments (Brooks

& Mutohar, 2018). Learners tend to perceive education primarily as a means to attain material success and social status rather than as a meaningful process of self-development and devotion to Allah (Hoque, 2024; Syafii & Azhari, 2025). This reality indicates a fundamental problem in the internalization of Islamic educational values derived from the Qur'an.

In Islamic thought, gratitude is not merely a verbal expression of thankfulness but an existential awareness encompassing faith, action, and moral conduct (Horgan & Timmons, 2022). The Qur'an positions gratitude as a central principle that shapes the quality of the relationship between humans and Allah, as well as among fellow human beings (Putra et al., 2024). One of the Qur'anic chapters that concisely yet profoundly emphasizes the principle of gratitude is Surah Al-Kawthar. Beyond affirming divine blessings, this surah presents clear educational implications through the command to worship and sacrifice as concrete manifestations of gratitude (Al-Shidi et al., 2025). Nevertheless, existing studies on Surah Al-Kawthar have predominantly focused on theological and historical interpretations, leaving its educational dimensions underexplored within the framework of Islamic education.

The absence of a reconstructed model of Islamic educational values grounded in gratitude, particularly based on Surah Al-Kawthar, represents a significant scholarly gap. In fact, gratitude-based values hold substantial potential as a foundation for shaping learners' spiritual, moral, and social character amidst the challenges of modernity and moral crises (Anshori et al., 2025). Therefore, a study that goes beyond normative interpretation and seeks to reconstruct gratitude as an educational value that is both contextual and applicable becomes increasingly necessary. Previous studies on gratitude (*shukr*) within Islamic scholarship have predominantly explored the concept from theological, ethical, and psychological perspectives (Sulaiman et al., 2025). Classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegetical works consistently affirm gratitude as a central spiritual virtue that reflects human acknowledgment of divine blessings and obedience to Allah (Khilmiyah & Setiawan, 2021). These studies emphasize that gratitude encompasses three interconnected dimensions: recognition of blessings in the heart, verbal expression through praise, and practical manifestation through righteous deeds. Such findings establish gratitude as a core moral and spiritual principle in Islam.

In the field of Islamic education, several studies have examined the role of values education in shaping learners' character, highlighting the importance of spiritual virtues such as sincerity, patience, and gratitude in fostering moral development (Sholehah et al., 2025). These studies generally conclude that gratitude contributes positively to students' psychological well-being, moral awareness, and social responsibility. From an educational standpoint, gratitude has been identified as an essential element in character education models that aim to integrate religious values into learning processes. Research focusing specifically on Qur'anic-based education has also addressed the pedagogical implications of selected verses and chapters of the Qur'an. Some studies have utilized thematic (*maudū'i*) approaches to derive educational values from Qur'anic narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2023), ethical injunctions, and moral exemplars. These works demonstrate that the Qur'an offers a rich normative foundation for Islamic educational theory and practice (Braun et al., 2022; Wang & Ran, 2023). However, when it comes to Surah Al-Kawthar, existing research largely concentrates on its historical context, linguistic structure, and theological meaning, particularly concerning divine grace and the Prophet's consolation.

Despite these contributions, several limitations can be identified in the existing literature. First, most studies on gratitude remain conceptual and descriptive, without attempting a systematic reconstruction of gratitude as a comprehensive framework of Islamic educational values. Gratitude is often discussed as an isolated virtue rather than as a foundational principle that informs educational goals (Hasanah, 2021), processes, and outcomes (Hidayat et al., 2022). Second, research on Surah Al-Kawthar has rarely been positioned within the discourse of Islamic education. The educational dimensions embedded in the commands of worship and sacrifice in this surah are seldom analyzed through a pedagogical lens (Huda et al., 2020). As a result, the potential of Surah Al-Kawthar as a source of educational values relevant to contemporary Islamic

education remains underutilized. Third, previous studies generally lack contextualization, particularly in addressing current educational challenges such as moral disengagement, instrumental attitudes toward learning, and the erosion of spiritual meaning in educational practice. The absence of an educationally oriented analytical framework limits the applicability of earlier findings to real educational contexts (Sajja et al., 2025).

Recent developments in Islamic education studies indicate a growing emphasis on values-based education as a response to moral and spiritual challenges in the modern era. Islamic education is increasingly understood not merely as the transmission of religious knowledge but as a process of character formation and spiritual awareness (Anshori & Wasehudin, 2024). Within this framework, gratitude (*shukr*) has been recognized as an important moral value, although its discussion in educational research remains general and lacks a systematic conceptual foundation. Previous studies have examined gratitude from theological, ethical, and psychological perspectives (Chalmiers et al., 2023), highlighting its role in strengthening faith and individual well-being. Meanwhile, research in Islamic education has largely focused on the normative integration of Islamic values without exploring specific Qur'anic foundations as the core basis of educational concepts. Studies on Surah Al-Kawthar, in particular, have predominantly addressed theological and historical dimensions, leaving its educational implications underexplored.

This study occupies a distinct position by integrating Qur'anic exegesis with Islamic educational theory through the reconstruction of gratitude-based educational values. By focusing specifically on Surah Al-Kawthar, this research offers a more focused and systematic approach compared to earlier studies that addressed gratitude in a broader or more general manner. The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects: the conceptual reconstruction of Islamic educational values grounded in gratitude, the application of an educational-oriented tafsir approach to Surah Al-Kawthar, and the positioning of gratitude as a core value influencing the aims and orientation of Islamic education. Through this approach, the study contributes to the theoretical development of Islamic education and enriches the discourse on Qur'an-based values education.

This study aims to reconstruct Islamic educational values based on gratitude through an educational analysis of Surah Al-Kawthar. The primary focus of this research is to explore the Qur'anic meaning of gratitude and to conceptualize it as a core value that underlies the aims and orientation of Islamic education. Furthermore, this study seeks to develop a conceptual framework of gratitude-based Islamic education that is relevant to contemporary educational contexts, particularly in strengthening learners' spiritual, moral, and social values. The conceptual hypothesis of this study is that the value of gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar contains fundamental educational principles that can be reconstructed as the foundation of Islamic educational values. Gratitude is understood not merely as an individual spiritual attitude, but as an educational value with broad implications for character formation and religious consciousness in Islamic education.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research as its primary research design. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study aims to explore meanings, values, and conceptual constructions of gratitude within the Qur'anic perspective and their relevance to Islamic education. In the tradition of Islamic educational research and Qur'anic studies, qualitative inquiry is widely used to examine normative, philosophical, and educational dimensions of religious texts that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement.

The analytical approach adopted in this study is thematic–educational tafsir. Theoretically, thematic tafsir (*tafsir maḍwūʿi*) seeks to compile and analyze Qur'anic verses based on a specific theme in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding. In this research, the thematic approach is integrated with the perspective of Islamic education, enabling the analysis to move beyond theological interpretation toward the identification of educational values embedded in the

text. This approach is grounded in the theoretical assumption that the Qur'an serves as a primary source of values and principles for Islamic education.

The data sources of this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data include the text of the Qur'an, specifically Surah Al-Kawthar, along with interpretations from classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegetical works. The use of multiple tafsir sources is based on the theory of interpretive plurality, which views Qur'anic interpretation as dynamic and context-sensitive. Secondary data comprise scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic works on Islamic education, values education, character formation, and the concept of gratitude in Islamic thought. These sources are employed to support the process of reconstructing gratitude-based Islamic educational values.

Data collection is conducted through documentary analysis, involving the identification, classification, and systematic recording of relevant textual data. The collected data are then analyzed using content analysis. From a theoretical standpoint, content analysis enables researchers to identify themes, meanings, and value patterns within texts. In this study, the analysis focuses on uncovering the educational dimensions of gratitude reflected in acts of worship, sacrifice, and God-centered orientation as articulated in Surah Al-Kawthar. The data analysis process follows several stages: data reduction to select relevant information, categorization of educational values, interpretative analysis based on Islamic educational theory, and the formulation of conceptual conclusions. This procedure aligns with qualitative analytical models that emphasize reflective and interpretative engagement with religious texts.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study applies source triangulation by comparing interpretations across different exegetical works and correlating them with established theories of Islamic education. This strategy is intended to strengthen the normative authenticity of the reconstructed values while maintaining their theoretical relevance to contemporary Islamic educational discourse. Through this methodological framework, the study aims to produce a reconstruction of gratitude-based Islamic educational values that is textually grounded, theoretically robust, and applicable to the development of Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study indicate that Surah Al-Kawthar contains Islamic educational values that are fundamentally rooted in gratitude (*shukr*) as the core foundation for spiritual, moral, and social development. Through thematic-educational tafsir analysis, gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar is understood not merely as a response to divine blessings, but as an integrative and sustainable educational principle. These findings demonstrate that gratitude in this surah embodies a systematic educational structure encompassing God-centered orientation, the formation of worship-based character, and social responsibility.

1. Gratitude as the Foundation of Islamic Educational Values

The main finding of this study reveals that gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar functions as the foundation of Islamic educational values by integrating the dimensions of faith, worship, and social action. The bestowal of the blessing of *Al-Kawthar* is interpreted as the basis for spiritual awareness that requires an educational response in the form of sincere devotion to Allah and meaningful sacrifice. Accordingly, gratitude is not confined to internal awareness but is manifested through educational actions that shape learners' life orientation. Gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar also reflects a God-centered (theocentric) paradigm of Islamic education, in which the educational process aims to cultivate divine consciousness as its ultimate objective. This paradigm positions learners not merely as recipients of blessings, but as individuals educated to responsibly manage and actualize those blessings within the framework of worship and service.

2. Spiritual and Worship Values as Manifestations of Gratitude

The first supporting finding shows that the command *faṣalli li rabbika* in Surah Al-Kawthar conveys spiritual educational values that emphasize worship as a concrete manifestation of gratitude. Worship is understood not simply as ritual practice, but as an educational medium for instilling spiritual discipline, sincerity, and awareness of the vertical relationship between humans and Allah. In the context of Islamic education, this value underscores that religious character formation must be rooted in meaningful worship experiences.

3. Sacrifice and Social Responsibility as Educational Values

The second supporting finding indicates that the command *wanḥar* represents the values of sacrifice and social responsibility as essential dimensions of gratitude. Sacrifice in this context is interpreted as readiness to share, serve, and contribute to the broader community. These values carry significant educational implications for developing learners' empathy, social solidarity, and moral responsibility. Thus, gratitude is reconstructed as an educational value that balances spiritual and social dimensions.

4. Value-Oriented Educational Orientation and Moral Resilience

Another supporting finding highlights that the statement *inna shāni'aka huwa al-abtar* conveys an educational message concerning value-oriented commitment and long-term educational orientation. Gratitude-based Islamic education is not dependent on external recognition or material success, but rather on consistency of values and meaningful action. This finding emphasizes that Islamic education should foster moral and spiritual resilience in learners when confronting social challenges and pressures.

The findings demonstrate that Surah Al-Kawthar contains a coherent structure of Islamic educational values, with gratitude serving as the core value that connects spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. The reconstruction of gratitude-based Islamic educational values provides a conceptual foundation for developing Islamic education that is meaningful, value-oriented, and responsive to contemporary educational challenges. The findings of this study indicate that gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar carries a deeper educational meaning than merely an individual moral attitude. Gratitude is reconstructed as a core value that integrates spiritual awareness, worship practices, and social responsibility within Islamic education. This suggests that gratitude-based Islamic education not only fosters personal piety but also shapes learners' life orientation and social behavior.

The key contribution of this study lies in its positioning of gratitude as the foundation of Islamic educational values. While previous studies have treated gratitude as one of many character values, this research demonstrates that gratitude animates the entire educational process from God-consciousness and meaningful worship to social sacrifice. The interpretation of the command *faṣalli li rabbika* highlights worship as an educational medium that cultivates awareness and sincerity, rather than as a purely formal ritual.

Furthermore, the command *wanḥar* extends the meaning of gratitude into the socio-educational sphere by emphasizing sacrifice, care, and active contribution. This finding enriches Qur'anic interpretation by linking sacrificial acts to character education and social responsibility. The final verse of Surah Al-Kawthar reinforces a value-oriented educational outlook that prioritizes moral consistency over external recognition or material success. Overall, this interpretation demonstrates that reconstructing Islamic educational values based on gratitude from Surah Al-Kawthar offers a meaningful shift in Islamic educational discourse, presenting a more holistic, value-driven, and spiritually grounded educational paradigm.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a substantive answer to the research question regarding how gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar can be reconstructed as the foundation of Islamic educational values. The results indicate that gratitude should not be understood in a partial or symbolic

manner, but rather as an educational principle that shapes the overall orientation of Islamic education. Consequently, gratitude possesses the conceptual capacity to guide educational goals, learning processes, and the character formation of learners.

The educational interpretation of Surah Al-Kawthar demonstrates that the relationship between divine blessings, worship, and sacrifice forms a coherent educational value system. This directly addresses the research question about the role of gratitude in Islamic education, showing that gratitude serves as a connecting value between theological awareness and educational praxis. Gratitude is not merely an outcome of the educational process but functions as a foundational principle that animates the process itself.

The theoretical implications of these findings expand the scholarly discourse on Islamic education, particularly in the development of Qur'an-based values education. This study illustrates that an educational tafsir approach can bridge normative Qur'anic scholarship with the conceptual needs of contemporary Islamic education. By positioning gratitude as a core value, the research opens avenues for developing more integrative and meaning-oriented Islamic educational theories. Furthermore, the study has methodological implications for future research. The reconstructive approach applied here can be extended to other Qur'anic values to enrich models of Islamic education grounded in revelation. Future studies may adopt empirical approaches to examine the implementation of gratitude in curricula, learning strategies, or Islamic school culture.

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the reconstruction of gratitude-based Islamic educational values from Surah Al-Kawthar aligns with the research objectives, which aim to identify and position gratitude as the foundational value of Islamic education integrating spiritual, worship, and social dimensions. These results are also consistent with Islamic educational theory, which emphasizes the integration of moral, spiritual, and social values as the basis for character development in learners (Chalmiers et al., 2023). Within the framework of educational tafsir, gratitude is not only an internal attitude but also a principle that animates the entire educational process, as emphasized by value education theories that highlight the interconnectedness of values, educational goals, and practice (Surbakti et al., 2024).

When compared with previous studies, these findings show both similarities and significant differences. Prior research has emphasized the role of gratitude in character development and individual psychological well-being (Fatimah & Siswanto, 2024), but their focus was limited to personal and normative dimensions, without positioning gratitude as a conceptual foundation of education. Similarly, studies examining Surah Al-Kawthar from a tafsir perspective have predominantly focused on theological, historical, and linguistic aspects (Ağbal, 2025; Al-Riday & Abdul Hafiz Musa Walusimbi, 2025), leaving its educational implications largely unexplored.

This study demonstrates that gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar can be contextualized as an integrative educational value, bridging spiritual, worship, and social dimensions. This aligns with the theory of reconstructive Islamic education, which emphasizes the holistic application of Qur'anic values but expands it by highlighting gratitude as the core value that animates the educational process. Therefore, this research contributes a new perspective, showing that gratitude is not merely a supporting value, but a foundational principle that unifies goals, practices, and orientation in Islamic education. The findings of this study not only align with the research objectives and Islamic educational theory but also enrich previous scholarship. By positioning gratitude as a fundamental value, this study provides a conceptual and practical reference for the development of contemporary, value-based Islamic education.

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on Islamic education by reconstructing gratitude-based educational values from Surah Al-Kawthar, positioning gratitude as a core value that underlies the entire educational process, unlike previous studies that often treat it as merely one of many character values. Moreover, the study integrates an educational tafsir approach with Islamic educational theory, strengthening the connection between Qur'anic scholarship and contemporary educational practice, and offering a systematic and applicable

conceptual model. Methodologically, it demonstrates that a reconstructive approach to Qur'anic texts is effective for identifying holistic educational values encompassing spiritual, moral, and social dimensions, while opening opportunities for future research to develop revelation-based Islamic education theories or explore empirical implementations in curricula, schools, or educational settings. Thus, this study enriches the literature with an integrative, applicable, and contextually relevant perspective for the development of contemporary Islamic education.

One limitation of this study lies in its qualitative and library-based approach, which renders the findings largely conceptual and interpretative, without empirical testing in real educational contexts. This approach limits the ability to assess the implementation of gratitude values in daily learning practices or their quantitative impact on learners' character development. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings is restricted to the conceptual and theoretical realm.

The findings carry broad implications. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the literature on Islamic education by positioning gratitude as a core value that integrates spiritual, moral, and social dimensions, offering a conceptual model that can serve as a foundation for future research. In terms of policy, the results can inform the development of Qur'an-based Islamic education curricula, where the concept of gratitude becomes a guiding principle for character building and moral education in schools. From a practical perspective, the findings encourage educators and institutions to design learning activities that cultivate gratitude through worship, social sacrifice, and spiritual reflection, making Islamic education not only academic but also transformative in shaping learners' character. This study provides guidance for the advancement of theory, policy, and practice in Islamic education, offering a holistic, meaningful, and contextually relevant approach to contemporary educational challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that gratitude in Surah Al-Kawthar can be reconstructed as a core value of Islamic education, integrating spiritual, worship, and social dimensions. The findings reveal that the command *faṣalli li rabbika* emphasizes worship as a meaningful educational medium, while *wanḥar* extends gratitude into the realm of sacrifice and social responsibility, with the final verse highlighting value-based resilience as the foundation for long-term educational orientation. These findings introduce new ideas that gratitude can serve as a conceptual framework for holistic curricula and learning strategies, foster resilient character, and bridge normative values with social practice. Considering the limitation of a qualitative, library-based approach, future research is recommended to empirically examine the implementation of gratitude values, develop gratitude-based curricula, and explore other Qur'anic values to build a more applicable, relevant, and contextually grounded model of Islamic education. In this way, the study contributes theoretically, methodologically, and practically to the development of contemporary Islamic education.

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