

History Of Islamic Education During The Period Of The Great Empires After The Collapse Of Baghdad And Andalusia

Wilian Fransisco

Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq State Islamic University of Jember

Mukniah

Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq State Islamic University of Jember

Mustajab

Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq State Islamic University of Jember

Corresponding Author :

lianfrans23@gmail.com, mukniah@lecturer.uinkhas.ac.id, mustajab@uinkhas.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines the dynamics and development of Islamic education during the period of the great empires after the fall of Baghdad (1258 AD) and Andalusia (1492 AD). In the context of Islamic history, the fall of these two centers of civilization did not end the intellectual tradition of Muslims, but rather became the momentum for a new revival in various regions such as the Seljuk, Mamluk, Ottoman, Mughal, and North African dynasties. This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach. Data were obtained through a literature review, both from classical books and modern academic sources. The results of the study indicate that Islamic education during this period continued to play a vital role in maintaining the identity of Islamic scholarship, establishing a formal education system through madrasas, and producing great scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Baghdad, Andalusia, Madrasah Nidzamiyah, Al-Azhar

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is the most vital aspect in maintaining the existence and progress of Islamic civilization. Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), education has been the primary means of instilling the values of monotheism, morality, and the formation

2436

IJEVSS, Volume 05 Issue 04, 2026



Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

of a civilized society. When two great centers of Islamic civilization, Baghdad in the East (1258 CE) and Andalusia in the West (1492 CE), were destroyed, the Islamic world did not lose its intellectual vigor. In fact, this destruction gave rise to a new spirit to establish more organized educational institutions under the auspices of the great Islamic kingdoms (Hasan Langgulung, 2003).

The fall of Baghdad to the Mongol invasion and the fall of Andalusia to Christian forces were major events that shook the Islamic world politically and culturally. However, on the other hand, these two tragedies stimulated the emergence of new centers of scholarship in various regions, such as Persia, Egypt, Turkey, India, and North Africa. Islamic education during this period was not solely oriented toward religious knowledge, but also encompassed rational sciences such as logic, philosophy, medicine, and mathematics.

In Islamic history, educational institutions such as Madrasah Nidzamiyah, founded by Nizam al-Mulk in Baghdad, and Al-Azhar University in Cairo, played a large role in maintaining Islamic scientific traditions. These two institutions not only function as places of learning, but also become symbols of scholarship, the spread of the Sunni school of thought, as well as a forum for the formation of Muslim ulama and intellectuals.

Furthermore, the rise of great empires such as the Seljuk, Mamluk, Ottoman, and Mughal dynasties marked a significant milestone in the history of Islamic education after the fall of Baghdad and Andalusia. Under their rule, Islamic education developed rapidly and became more structured. The government provided facilities, paid teachers, and made education a part of state policy.

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze in depth the development of Islamic education during the great kingdoms after the fall of Baghdad and Andalusia. It is hoped that this study can contribute to an understanding of Islamic intellectual resilience amidst changing political and social dynamics.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach is used to understand the phenomenon of Islamic education from a historical, philosophical, and sociological perspective through a review of various written sources. Data are obtained from classical and modern literature, such as books, scientific journals, works by Muslim scholars, and historical documents on Islamic education (Shihab, 2002).



Data analysis was conducted using a historical-comparative analysis method, tracing the development of Islamic education over time and comparing the role of each major empire in maintaining the educational system. The main focus of this research is to describe the continuity of Islamic scientific traditions from the Abbasid period to the Ottoman Dynasty (Nata, 2012).

Data validity was strengthened by triangulating sources, which involves comparing information from various credible sources to gain an objective and comprehensive understanding. Researchers also considered the socio-political context underlying the development of Islamic education at that time, ensuring that the resulting interpretations were not only descriptive but also analytical and critical.

With this method, this article is expected to present an in-depth study that is able to explain the resilience and dynamics of Islamic education after the collapse of two great centers of Islamic civilization, as well as provide reflections for the development of Islamic education in the modern era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Condition of the Islamic World After the Fall of Baghdad and Andalusia

The fall of Baghdad in 1258 CE to the Mongols was a major turning point in Islamic history. Baghdad, previously the center of the Abbasid Dynasty and a symbol of scientific advancement, was reduced to ruins by physical and cultural destruction. However, despite the collapse of Islamic political power, the tradition of Islamic scholarship remained alive in various regions.

After the fall of Baghdad, Islamic scholars and scientists migrated to various regions such as Persia, Egypt, and Central Asia. They established madrasas, mosques, and centers for the study of religious and rational sciences (Hitti, 1970). At the same time, in the Islamic West, Andalusia also experienced a collapse in 1492 CE after the fall of Granada to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. This event marked the end of Islamic rule in Western Europe.

Nevertheless, the spirit of seeking knowledge among Muslims did not fade. The emergence of new empires such as the Seljuk, Mamluk, Ottoman, and Mughal empires demonstrated that the Islamic world was still able to maintain its intellectual identity. Islamic education even underwent a more systematic and organized restructuring. The new rulers made education a central pillar of government, providing waqf funds, building madrasas, and hiring religious teachers and scholars.



2. Nidzamiyah Madrasah as a Model of Formal Islamic Education

One of the Islamic educational institutions that had a big influence in the post-Baghdad collapse was Madrasah Nidzamiyah. Founded by the Prime Minister of the Seljuk Dynasty, Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092 AD), this madrasa became the first model of formal education in the Islamic world (Makdisi, 1981).

Madrasah Nidzamiyah played an important role in spreading the teachings of Sunni Islam, especially the Shafi'i school, as well as countering the influence of Shia teachings which were growing rapidly in the Persian region. Its curriculum included religious sciences such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh and morals, as well as rational sciences such as logic, language and mathematics. One of the great figures who was a teacher at this madrasa was Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, who later wrote the monumental work *Ihya' Ulumuddin* as a combination of sharia, philosophy and Sufism.

This madrasah had a highly advanced educational system for its time. Students were provided with scholarships, accommodation, and direct academic guidance from scholars.¹⁷ This system was later adopted by other Islamic educational institutions in various regions, including Al-Azhar in Egypt and madrasas in Central Asia. Madrasah Nidzamiyah became a symbol of the transition of Islamic education from an informal system (halaqah in mosques) to an organized, formal system.

3. Al-Azhar University: The World Center for Islamic Knowledge

Al-Azhar University was founded in Cairo, Egypt, during the Fatimid Dynasty (970 AD). Initially, this institution was Shia Ismaili, but after Egypt was controlled by the Ayyubid and Mamluk dynasties, Al-Azhar became a center of Sunni Islamic scholarship (Syalabi, 1991).

Al-Azhar developed into the most influential Islamic educational institution in the world. Here, scholars study tafsir, hadith, fiqh, Sufism, and Arabic language science in depth. The learning system uses the talaqqi method, where students learn directly from the teacher through halaqah in the mosque.

Apart from that, Al-Azhar is also the birthplace of great scholars such as Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, Ibnu Hajar al-Asqalani, and Imam Nawawi, whose works are references to this day. During the Mamluk and Ottoman dynasties, Al-Azhar was not only an educational institution, but also a symbol of religious legitimacy and a center for the spread of Islam to Africa and Asia.



The intellectual life at Al-Azhar is vibrant. Students come from as far afield as Morocco, Yemen, Syria, and even the Indonesian archipelago. To this day, Al-Azhar remains a leading global reference for Islamic education, combining classical tradition and modernity.

4. Islamic Education during the Mamluk and Ottoman Dynasties

The Mamluk dynasty (1250–1517 CE) in Egypt played a crucial role in maintaining Islamic educational traditions after the fall of Baghdad. The Mamluk rulers built numerous madrasas, mosques, and libraries to support scholarly activity. They also honored scholars and supported the teaching of Islamic sciences such as tafsir (interpretation of the Islamic tradition), hadith (hadith), and fiqh (jurisprudence).

After the end of Mamluk rule, the Ottoman Dynasty continued this tradition more systematically. They established structured educational institutions, ranging from maktab (primary education), madrasah (secondary and higher education), to dar al-hadith (hadith studies). The curriculum encompassed religious and general sciences such as medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. Teachers were paid by the state, and educational institutions were funded by royal endowments.

This Ottoman educational system laid the foundation for the emergence of modern Islamic education. It was here that the integration of religious and secular knowledge, a hallmark of classical Islamic education, took place.

5. Islamic Education in India and North Africa

In India, Islamic education flourished during the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. During the reigns of Sultan Alauddin Khalji and Emperor Akbar, many madrasas were established and centrally organized. Islamic science, philosophy, and Arabic literature were translated into Persian and Urdu, making Islamic education easily accessible to the local population (Makdisi, 1981).

Meanwhile, in North Africa, the University of Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco, is known as the oldest university in the world. This institution became a center of Islamic higher education, teaching both religious and scientific knowledge. Education in this region played a significant role in producing Muslim scholars and scholars who spread Islam to West Africa and Southern Europe.

6. The Role of Islamic Scholars in the Sustainability of Islamic Education



Ulama played a central role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic education after the fall of Baghdad and Andalusia. Figures such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Sina, and Al-Farabi were key pillars in building the Islamic intellectual tradition (ramayulis.nd).

Al-Ghazali, through the work of Ihya' Ulumuddin, emphasized the importance of balance between sharia knowledge and reason. Meanwhile, Ibnu Khaldun in his Muqaddimah views education as a process of cultural formation (umran), where science and civilization are interrelated.

These figures are proof that Islamic education focuses not only on religious instruction but also on the development of knowledge and morality. They played a crucial role in bridging classical and modern thought, which would later form the basis for the revival of Islam in the modern era.

The Social Setting of Islamic Education After the Fall of Baghdad and Andalusia

The fall of Baghdad in 1258 CE and Andalusia in 1492 CE were two major events that not only shook the Islamic political world but also affected the social, cultural, and educational order of Muslim society. The collapse of the Abbasid center of power in Baghdad left a vacuum of political authority, but instead gave rise to a new social dynamic centered on the power of knowledge and religion.

According to Al-Huda's research (2022) in the Journal of Islamic Religious Character Building, the destruction of Baghdad gave birth to social mobility of scholars and scientists to various Islamic regions such as Egypt, Syria, and Persia.¹ These scholars acted as agents of social renewal by establishing madrasas, mosques, and waqf institutions that functioned as educational facilities as well as community service centers.

In Andalusia, the conquest of Granada by Christian rulers in 1492 CE gave rise to a massive social and intellectual diaspora. Al-Hamid (2021) in the At-Taqqaddum Journal notes that Andalusian scholars who migrated to North Africa and the Middle East brought with them a scientific culture, rationality, and high literacy that enriched the world's Islamic educational heritage.

From a socio-economic perspective, the waqf system plays a crucial role in supporting education. Waqf serves as a socio-economic instrument that enables the poor to access education, while providing stable financial support to scholars.³ Research by Aly and Hamid



(2018) in the At-Taqaddum Journal of Islamic Civilization confirms that Islamic education serves as a social balance between the political elite and the general public.

From a cultural perspective, the post-fall social setting of Baghdad and Andalusia was marked by a fusion of Arab-Islamic scientific traditions with local wisdom in the regions that continued Islamic civilization, such as Egypt, India, and Turkey. According to Rahman (2020) in the Journal of Islamic Educational Thought, Islamic education serves as a means of cultural acculturation, integrating Islamic values with local cultures without losing Islamic identity.

From a religious perspective, Sunni orthodoxy emerged under new empires such as the Seljuk, Mamluk, and Ottoman empires. Madrasas became both social institutions and tools of religious legitimacy, preserving the purity of faith and strengthening the solidarity of the Muslim community (Azyumardi, 2017).

Overall, the social setting of Islamic education after the fall of Baghdad and Andalusia can be described through four main dimensions:

Social Dimension	Conditions that Emerge
Political	The disintegration of power gave birth to new kingdoms (Seljuk, Mamluk, Ottoman) which used education as a tool social stabilization and political legitimacy.
Economy	The waqf system and patronage of scholars maintain the sustainability of education without dependence on state taxes.
Culture	There was an exchange of culture and knowledge between the Eastern and Western Islamic regions due to the migration of scholars.
Religion	Madrasas and mosques are centers for the purification of faith and social solidarity of Muslims.

Thus, Islamic education not only survives as a scientific institution, but also as a social system that functions to strengthen identity, maintain community morals, and restore the social structure of the community after a period of political destruction.

1. Socio-Political Impact and Changes in Class Structure

The destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols marked the end of Abbasid domination and the emergence of a new government under the Ilkhanids. This situation triggered the formation of new social classes in Muslim society. According to research by Sawadi Abd



Mohamed (2021) in the Kufa Journal of Arts, after the fall of Baghdad, distinct social classes emerged: the old nobility, the new Mongol officials, the ulama, and the general public living in economic hardship. The ulama became the mainstay of society, as in addition to teaching, they played a role in spiritual and social guidance.

In this context, education became a means of social mobility. Through madrasas, individuals from non-elite backgrounds could rise in social status through knowledge. This was emphasized by Sukijan Athoillah (2022) in *Al-Fikri: Journal of Islamic Education Studies and Research*, stating that the Nidzamiyah Madrasas during the Seljuk Dynasty opened up broad social opportunities for the people to pursue higher education, even with full funding from waqf funds.

2. Migration of Scholars and the Formation of New Centers of Knowledge

The destruction of Baghdad forced many scholars and scientists to migrate to other regions such as Syria, Egypt, and Persia. This phenomenon is known as Islamic intellectual migration. According to Riswan Pratama et al. (2023) in the *Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, this mass migration of scholars actually served as a catalyst for the rebirth of new educational centers outside Baghdad.

In Egypt, the Mamluk Dynasty built large madrasas and expanded the influence of Al-Azhar University as a center of Sunni Islamic learning. Meanwhile, the fall of Andalusia to Christians in 1492 CE led to a social diaspora of Muslims to North Africa and the Middle East. Osama Hammoud (2022) in the *Journal of Education College, Wasit University*, explains that the migrating scholars brought Andalusian traditions of literacy, philosophy, and scientific rationality to these regions.

3. Endowments and Educational Economy as Social Pillars

In a socio-economic context, the waqf system is the main foundation for the sustainability of Islamic education. According to Rajapov Pirnazar (2022) in the *Spectrum Journal of Innovation, Reforms and Development*, every madrasah during the Seljuk and Ottoman eras had a waqf network that covered the costs of education, dormitories, libraries, and even the daily consumption of students and teachers. This waqf system made educational institutions not only places of learning but also socio-economic centers of the Muslim community. Aly and Hamid (2018) in the *At-Taqaddum Journal of Islamic Civilization* explain that Islamic education serves as a tool for social stabilization amidst economic inequality, as madrasahs provide access to free education for the poor.



4. Cultural Dynamics and Religious Identity

After the collapse of Andalusia, Muslims under Christian rule faced social and cultural pressures. They lost religious freedom and access to educational institutions. However, research by Wijdan Fareeq Enad (2021) in the Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities found that Andalusian society maintained its Islamic identity through small communities and a tradition of clandestine home study.

Meanwhile, in Eastern regions such as Egypt and Persia, the fusion of Arab and local traditions resulted in an acculturation of Islamic educational culture. Rahman (2020) in the Journal of Islamic Educational Thought states that madrasas became spaces for cultural integration and intellectual dialogue between schools of thought and ethnic groups.

5. Social Functions of Islamic Educational Institutions

Islamic madrasas and universities function not only as academic institutions, but also as centers of social service. According to Sukijan Athoillah (2022), Madrasah Nidzamiyah provides dormitories, libraries and living allowances for students from lower classes, thus becoming a model of a humanist social education system.

In the context of government, madrasas also served as a tool of socio-political legitimacy. Research by Mushtaq Ahmed & ZH Subhani (2021) in the Global Journal Al-Thaqafah shows that the Seljuk and Ottoman dynasties used educational institutions to strengthen public loyalty to the government through moral and religious education.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Islamic education in the post-fall of Baghdad (1258 CE) and Andalusia (1492 CE) demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of the political and social crises that befell the Muslim world. Despite the weakening of political power, the spirit of Islamic scholarship and intellectual values never waned.

Great empires such as the Seljuks, Mamluks, Ottomans, Mughals, and North African kingdoms successfully protected the Islamic educational tradition through the establishment of madrasas, universities, and other academic institutions. The Madrasah Nizamiyah and Al-Azhar University symbolized the rise of Islamic education, integrating religious and rational knowledge.

Furthermore, the contributions of scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Sina, and Al-Farabi strengthened the philosophical foundation of Islamic education, which focuses on



spiritual and intellectual balance. They were not only teachers but also shapers of a paradigm of Islamic thought that endures to this day.

Islamic education during this period demonstrated that the strength of Islamic civilization lay not solely in political power, but rather in a tradition of knowledge and education rooted in the values of revelation. This is what enabled Islam to remain steadfast, even amidst the collapse of world empires.

From this study it can be concluded that:

1. Islamic education was the main factor in maintaining the continuity of Islamic civilization after the destruction of Baghdad and Andalusia.
2. Educational institutions such as madrasas and universities play a role in building cross-regional scientific networks.
3. Muslim scholars and scientists are the main agents in maintaining Islamic intellectual and spiritual values.
4. The classical Islamic education system became the foundation for the modern Islamic education system which continues to develop today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1999.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid. *Ihya' Ulumuddin*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d
- Azra, Azyumardi. *Islamic Education: Tradition and Modernization Towards the New Millennium*. Jakarta: Logos Discourse of Science, 1999.
- Hitti, Philip K. *History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present*. London: Macmillan Press, 1970.
- Ibn Khaldun. *Al-Muqaddimah*. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996. Langgulung, Hasan. *Principles of Islamic Education*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Husna, 2003.
- Makdisi, George. *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981.
- Ramayulis. *History of Islamic Education*. Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 2005. Syalabi, Ahmad. *History of Islamic Education*. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991. Al-Azhar University. *Official Profile*. Cairo: Al-Azhar Press, 2018.
- Shihab, M. Quraish. *Grounding the Qur'an: The Function and Role of Revelation in Life*



Public. Bandung: Mizan, 2002.

