Synergizing Iqra' Values and Artificial Intelligence in Learning: Restoring the Essence of Seeking Knowledge in the Instant Generation

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Abstract

The 21st century offers various instant conveniences. Rapid technological development marks the era of disruption, affecting every aspect of life, including education. The presence of AI (Artificial Intelligence) is like a double-edged sword with both benefits and harms. Its convenience triggers a lack of resilience and an instant mentality, leading to a loss of perseverance in the process of seeking knowledge. This study aims to offer a conceptual solution through the integration of spiritual values and literacy, specifically by synthesizing the spirit of *iqra'* into the utilization of AI technology. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with literature review, the results of this study indicate that: (1) The spirit of *iqra'* in Islam is not merely about reading texts, but involves a process of *tadabbur* (contemplation), critical reasoning, and *tabayyun* (verification) of information; (2) AI technology must be positioned as a thinking partner rather than a replacement for human cognitive processes; and (3) The synergy between *iqra'* values and AI is the key to restoring the essence of seeking knowledge (*thalabul ilmi*), which is gradual, ethical, and grounded in noble character (*akhlakul karimah*). Through this internalization, students are expected to become a generation that is digitally savvy yet mentally resilient amidst the onslaught of technological disruption.

Keywords: *iqra'* synergy, artificial intelligence, islamic education, instant generation, critical literacy.

Introduction

Cutting-edge technology, on the one hand, creates many conveniences. However, on the other hand, it gives rise to various problems. The 21st century is touted as a phase of life full of challenges. People are racing to adapt to various skills. Not just physical technology in the form of highly sophisticated tools, the presence of artificial intelligence, or AI, appears like a prima donna. AI has entered into everyday life, including education.

This change reflects a social transformation where digital technology is no longer just a supporting tool, but a strategic instrument that influences how students learn, teachers teach, and institutions design curricula (Timotheou et al., 2023). With AI's immense potential in the technological era, it can be utilized as an opportunity to improve learning quality, despite giving rise to complex ethical risks (Santoso, 2025).

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is an innovation that answers the challenges of the times. Alongside changes in the teacher's role, education also faces various interrelated and complex challenges. Some prominent issues include the lack of improvement in the quality of human

resources among educators, traditional learning methods, and the minimal utilization of the latest technology in the learning process. All these challenges need to be addressed so that Islamic religious education can be more effective and responsive to the needs of the times (Sahlan et al., 2024).

Unfortunately, behind the myriad of benefits offered, AI harbors problems. Some teachers and even students are trapped in an instant culture. As humans endowed with extraordinary potential by Allah, this is certainly quite concerning. Technology is also not just a supporting tool, but has become a major component in contemporary education that is flexible, individual, and independent. However, this convenience also brings negative consequences in the form of rampant misinformation, disinformation, and the tendency to access knowledge in an instant and pragmatic manner, which damages understanding and scientific order (Putri et al., 2025).

AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology does not always produce accurate data, thus requiring critical thinking to use it. Yet, on the other hand, the convenience it offers actually erodes curiosity, the essence of learning, and certainly critical reasoning itself. In fact, Islam is a religion that highly values science. The first revelation received by Prophet Muhammad PBUH in Q.S. Al-'Alaq verses 1–5 shows the importance of the activity of reading, learning, and developing knowledge as part of human duties on earth (Shihab, 2002).

According to Ibn Katsir, this verse demonstrates the nobility of knowledge because the first revelation begins with the command to read. This command serves as an important foundation for humans to seek knowledge and understand the signs of Allah SWT's greatness found in the universe (Katsir, 1998). It is very important for a human being to understand the importance of learning, especially since humans are *khalifah fil ard*.

Unlike previous studies that generally focused on the technical aspects of AI adoption or general normative reviews of *Maqashid Syariah* (such as Supriatin et al., 2025; Hadi, 2025), this study specifically dissects how the synergy of *iqra'* values can be reconstructed into an 'epistemological filter' to respond to the phenomenon of the instant generation, where the speed of AI algorithms often reduces the true essence of the process of seeking knowledge (*menuntut ilmu*) itself. This study offers a conceptual solution through the integration of spiritual and literacy values, specifically by synthesizing the spirit of *iqra'* into the utilization of AI technology.

Methods

Research Design

This research was designed using a Qualitative Library Research Design with a Hermeneutic-Philosophical approach and Conceptual-Synthetic Analysis (Roe et al., 2025; Supriatin et al., 2025). This design was chosen because the primary focus of the research is not quantitative empirical testing, but rather the elaboration of the epistemological meaning of *Iqra'* values in the Al-Qur'an (Shihab, 2002) as well as the philosophical construction to respond to the dynamics of Generative AI in learning (Miao & Holmes, 2023). This design brings together two main domains: Islamic epistemology regarding the essence of seeking knowledge (*talab al-'ilm*) and the phenomenon of cognitive surrender in the digital generation (Shaw & Nave, 2026).

Participants / Subjects of Study

Within the framework of library research, the term participants is contextualized as Conceptual Subjects and Text Data Objects studied in depth (Asy'ari, 2017; UNESCO, 2024). The subjects and objects in this study include:

Primary Conceptual Object

Al-Qur'an verses on *Iqra'* (specifically Q.S. Al-'Alaq: 1–5), classical Islamic scholarly ethics literature, and regulatory and ethical frameworks for AI in education (Miao & Holmes, 2023; Shihab, 2002).

Gen Z/Alpha Characteristic Profile (Study Subject)

The cognitive behavioral patterns of students as an instant generation experiencing dependency on AI automation tools (Shaw & Nave, 2026).

Research Procedures

The research procedure was executed through five structured, systematic stages (Hadi et al., 2026; Supriatin et al., 2025):

Problem Identification & Orientation*:*

Mapping the clash between AI algorithm speed and the decline of deep thinking in the instant generation (Shaw & Nave, 2026).

Literature Inventory (Heuristics)*:*

Collecting primary religious/exegesis (*tafsir*) literature and secondary literature related to AI in education (Miao & Holmes, 2023; Shihab, 2002).

Textual Criticism & Literature Evaluation:

Testing the validity, relevance, and philosophical depth of the gathered sources (Asy'ari, 2017; Roe et al., 2025).

Synthesis & Conceptual Dialectic:

Synergizing *Iqra'* values (reading, researching, verification/*tabayyun*, and *tazkiyat an-nafs*) as an epistemological filter against AI usage (Al-Zarnuji, 2018; Hadi et al., 2026).

Model Formulation & Conclusion:

Formulating an integrative pedagogical conceptual framework to restore the essence of seeking knowledge (Supriatin et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2024).

Data Collection Technique(s)

Data collection utilized Documentation and Systematic Literature Searching Techniques (Miao & Holmes, 2023; Roe et al., 2025). The collection procedure was conducted by:

Academic Database Searching*:*

Accessing digital databases (Garuda, Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SAGE) using keyword combinations: *Iqra epistemology*, *AI in Islamic education*, *critical AI literacy*, *cognitive surrender*, and *ethics of learning* (Hadi et al., 2026; Shaw & Nave, 2026).

Tracing / Snowball Literature Technique:

Identifying and pursuing cross-referencing from major exegesis books and international AI ethics guidelines (Miao & Holmes, 2023; Shihab, 2002).

Data Analysis Technique

Data was analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis combined with Hermeneutic-Philosophical Analysis (Al-Zarnuji, 2018; Supriatin et al., 2025). The analysis stages include:

Data Reduction:
Sorting, focusing, and categorizing texts into: (a) *Iqra'* epistemology, (b) AI characteristics, and (c) Learning psychology of the instant generation (Shaw & Nave, 2026; Shihab, 2002).
Data Display:
Mapping the dialectical relation between AI technical efficiency and the principles of *tabayyun* and the depth of knowledge absorption (*talaqqi*) (Asy'ari, 2017; Hadi et al., 2026).
Comparative-Critical Analysis:
Critically analyzing the potential for cognitive decadence due to the instant mentality and how *Iqra'* values restore students' critical awareness (Roe et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2024).
Conclusion Drawing & Conceptual Model Building:
Formulating conclusions in the form of theory synthesis and new pedagogical models synergizing religious values and technology (Supriatin et al., 2025).

Dynamics of the Disruption Era: The Impact of AI and the Challenge of Instantanism in Education

The development of the disruption era has drawn attention from various circles because it brings significant changes across various aspects of life (Putri et al., 2025). In this context, technological disruption possesses a dual character: it is both destructive and creative. The destructive nature is demonstrated by the replacement of old technologies and communication systems that increasingly lose relevance to contemporary developments.

The development of digital technology needs to be utilized as a means to guide students to think positively, act critically in sorting information, and develop a wise mindset. On the other hand, technological advancements also bring major changes to the educational world, marked by a massive flow of information accessible quickly by anyone, even if not entirely from credible sources (Syaifudin et al., 2026).

Previously, conventional methods positioned the teacher as the sole center of knowledge. However, along with rapid technological advancement, this paradigm has shifted drastically. Technology now takes a central role in expanding access to education, enabling distance learning models, and creating more dynamic, interactive, and flexible learning spaces (Muchlis, 2025).

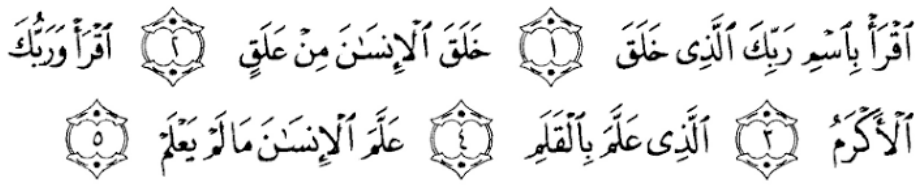
Currently, an innovation named Artificial Intelligence (AI) has taken up significant space in learning. This is a challenge, especially since AI provides various conveniences. AI is an integration product of electronic, computer, and mathematical sciences designed to mimic human cognitive abilities such as thinking, decision-making, and situation classification (Febriyanti et al., 2024).

One of the primary concerns is AI excessively helping students complete assignments or answer questions automatically, without providing room for students to think and process on their own (Pongoh et al., 2023). When students get used to receiving instant solutions from machines, they risk losing essential cognitive abilities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are the core of meaningful learning and higher-order thinking skill development (Istikomah et al., 2024). Several studies also note the phenomenon of passive learning, where the active role of students in the learning process diminishes due to over-reliance on AI technology (Nasihuddin, 2024). Adaptive learning systems designed to suit students' learning styles might actually make students comfortable in their comfort zones and reluctant to explore more challenging new knowledge (Ali & Hadi, 2025).

On the other hand, the social condition of the current young generation shows a serious challenge in the form of a moral crisis. Phenomena such as low worship awareness, declining social ethics, and moral degradation due to the relentless current of digital culture are increasingly rampant. This confirms that Islamic character education cannot rely solely on conventional methods, but must be optimized through creative approaches utilizing technology (Sholihah, 2026).

Reorganizing the Meaning of *Iqra'*: Epistemological Interpretation for Modern Digital Literacy

The first revelation revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reads as follows:



Translation:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clinging clot. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. He taught man that which he knew not." (Q.S. Al-'Alaq: 1–5)

The arrangement of these verses shows a very distinctive epistemological pattern in Islam: the process of acquiring knowledge is always preceded by mentioning the name of Allah, not merely a standalone cognitive activity. The command of *iqra'* repeated twice emphasizes that reading is not merely a technical skill, but a spiritual action linking humans to their Creator. This finding aligns with studies affirming that Islamic epistemology views knowledge as inseparable from consciousness, ethical responsibility, and interpretative accountability—dimensions that artificial intelligence machines lack (Alrumayh, 2025).

In Islam, reading (*iqra'*) holds a deep and broad meaning. Reading is not just recognizing letters, but also includes understanding, contemplating, and interpreting God's signs (*ayat kauniyah* and *qauliyah*) (Mayuda, 2025). *Iqra'* also means *tadabbur* (reflection), critical thinking, and *tabayyun* (verification and validity).

Positioning AI as a Thinking Partner: Reorienting the Role of Technology in Cognitive Processes

The fundamental difference between AI as a tool and AI as a thinking partner lies in the level of its involvement in human cognitive processes. AI as a tool is instrumental and passive, used to perform specific functions without active involvement in the process of understanding or reflection. Conversely, AI as a thinking partner plays an active role in facilitating idea exploration, providing feedback, and evaluating various decision alternatives. In the cognitive partnership paradigm, AI not only presents information, but also supports sense-making and decision-making processes through complementary human-AI collaboration (Masfuah et al., 2026).

Artificial Intelligence literacy is not only related to the ability to operate technology, but also encompasses the ability to understand generated information, assess its suitability, and use it responsibly. Teachers who possess good Artificial Intelligence literacy have a greater opportunity to develop various forms of learning appropriate to the characteristics of students.

This capability can also encourage teachers not just to be technology users, but to be able to process technology into a means for learning development (Hatta, 2026).

Overall, this study affirms that AI in education is a dialectical space between innovation, ethics, and pedagogy. The massive opportunities offered by AI will only be achieved if operated using ethical governance, fair distribution of access, and comprehensive pedagogical renewal (Aler Tubella et al., 2024).

Synergy of the *Iqra'* Spirit and AI: Restoring the Essence of *Thalabul 'Ilmi* Based on *Akhlakul Karimah*

The present century is the peak of human civilization. All human intelligence has shown its results; intercontinental communication takes place rapidly, and traveling around the earth does not need to take days. Technology has made it easier for humans to move and relocate. Today, all progress has reached its peak. When humans are increasingly facilitated by technology, they also experience moral degradation, losing an identity that involves clever and smart people who have lost common sense. As a result of this human pragmatism, nature becomes damaged, and the climate and weather become erratic (Sani, 2023).

AI is revolutionizing education by changing traditional learning methods and offering innovative solutions in various fields. AI provides three main advantages: personalized learning experiences, optimization of administrative tasks, and intelligent performance evaluation (Garzón et al., 2025). This technology enables educators to make data-driven decisions while increasing student engagement and learning opportunities (Paolucci et al., 2024).

AI enables unprecedented flexibility and customization in education, thereby easing the work of educators (Bhutoria, 2022). However, its implementation faces significant challenges including ethical issues, data privacy, algorithmic bias, equity considerations, and questions regarding reliance on human educators (Akgun & Greenhow, 2021).

Seeking knowledge also manifests happiness of life in this world and the hereafter. Without knowledge, humans cannot do anything (Nurhalimah, 2023). The activity of seeking knowledge undertaken by someone is to expect the countenance of Allah SWT and the afterlife; therefore, a Muslim must sincerely seek knowledge only for Allah SWT, which is by intending in seeking knowledge for the sake of expecting the countenance of Allah SWT (Manik, 2017).

Therefore, the spirit of *iqra'* must remain internalized. No matter what, we cannot stem the tide of technology, but we can synergize between technology and *akhlakul karimah* so as to be able to use it wisely. With sufficient literacy regarding AI, students do not merely become passive users, but also active agents capable of assessing the potential risks and opportunities of technology in both academic and social contexts (Pinski & Benlian, 2024).

Conclusion

We cannot stem the tide of information and innovation in this world, because everything affects the education sector. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an innovation that answers the challenges of the times. Many things are assisted through the use of AI. However, with its myriad advantages, AI harbors a drawback: it causes the death of critical thinking and the essence of seeking knowledge. In fact, Islam is a religion that highly upholds science. Surah Al-'Alaq verses 1–5 demonstrate the importance of reading, learning, and developing knowledge as part of human duties on earth.

Therefore, students who currently reside in a generation offering easy solutions need to hold tightly to the spirit of *iqra'* so as not to fall into moral decadence and to continue understanding and implementing the essence of *tolabul ilmi* as part of human duties in this world.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there are no financial, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest in the execution of this research and the preparation of this manuscript.

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