Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Sosial (JIPSI)
Vol. 5, No. 3, Oktober 2026
E-ISSN:2829-2723
DOI: 10.58540/jipsi.v5i3.2740

THE FORMATION OF CIVILIZATION IN THE PROPHETIC PERIOD: EDUCATION AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This study examines the formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period by focusing on education as a fundamental instrument of social transformation. It aims to analyze the educational foundations, developmental stages, institutional practices, and social changes that characterized the leadership of Prophet Muhammad. This study employs a qualitative library research approach, drawing on academic literature related to Islamic civilization, Islamic educational history, and the Prophet's biography. Data were collected through documentation and analyzed descriptively and analytically by identifying key themes concerning the relationship between education and civilizational development. The findings indicate that the formation of Islamic civilization occurred through a gradual process rooted in tawhid, moral development, knowledge acquisition, community building, and institutional establishment. The Meccan period emphasized the formation of faith, character, and individual responsibility, while the Medinan period institutionalized Islamic values through social solidarity, educational activities, community organization, and shared regulations. The study highlights that Prophetic education connected individual transformation with broader social development. These principles remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in integrating faith, knowledge, morality, literacy, and social responsibility into educational practices.
Keywords: Prophetic Period; Islamic Education; Social Transformation

Introduction

The formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period represents a significant historical process in which religious values, education, and social transformation developed as interconnected elements. The emergence of Islam under Prophet Muhammad introduced fundamental changes to Arabian society, particularly in its religious orientation, moral principles, social relationships, and community organization. These changes were not limited to the establishment of a new religious identity but also involved the transformation of human behavior and the development of a more organized social order. In this context, education became an essential instrument for translating Islamic teachings into individual character and collective social practices. Recent studies emphasize that education during the Prophet Muhammad's period played a strategic role in shaping Islamic civilization through its influence on individual development and broader social dynamics (Agustina, 2026; Sihab & Imawan, 2025).

The development of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period occurred through two interconnected phases, namely Mecca and Medina. The Meccan phase primarily emphasized the internalization of monotheism (*tawhid*), moral development, spiritual awareness, and the formation of individual responsibility toward God and society. Meanwhile, the Medinan phase represented an expansion of these foundational values into the establishment of social institutions, community solidarity, and collective arrangements. The migration (*Hijrah*) from Mecca to Medina marked an important transition that enabled Islamic teachings to be

implemented within a more structured social environment. Research by Ghifari et al. (2026) and Wijaya et al. (2024) highlights the transformation of Islamic education from its initial development in Mecca toward more organized educational practices and institutions in Medina, demonstrating the continuity between individual formation and social development.

Education during the Prophetic period extended beyond the transmission of religious knowledge and functioned as a comprehensive process of human development. Prophet Muhammad employed various educational approaches, including exemplary conduct, dialogue, habituation, direct practice, storytelling, and moral guidance, to cultivate faith, knowledge, and ethical behavior among his companions. These approaches established a close relationship between educational principles and their practical implementation in everyday life. Furthermore, educational activities were integrated into family environments, learning circles, and mosques, particularly the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, which served as a center for religious instruction, social interaction, and community development. Recent historical studies demonstrate that the Prophet's educational methods contributed to character formation and provide important insights for the development of contemporary Islamic education Albshkar et al. (2026), Syahira et al. (2026), and Thani et al. (2021).

Although previous studies have examined Islamic education during the Meccan and Medinan periods, educational institutions, and the pedagogical methods of Prophet Muhammad, the relationship between education and the broader process of civilizational transformation deserves further analytical attention. The formation of Islamic civilization cannot be understood solely through the development of religious institutions or the expansion of political authority, but must also be examined through the educational processes that shaped individuals and collective social behavior. Education facilitated the internalization of monotheistic values, the development of moral character, and the establishment of social solidarity, which subsequently supported the formation of more organized community institutions. This perspective is consistent with recent research on Prophetic holistic education, which identifies the integration of spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions as important foundations of early Islamic civilization (Norlaila & Hudaya, 2026; Sofa et al., 2026; Suyudi & Firdaus, 2025). Therefore, examining education as a mechanism connecting personal transformation with institutional and social development offers an important perspective for understanding the formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period by examining education as a fundamental basis of social transformation. Specifically, it explores the development of educational values during the Meccan and Medinan phases, the role of Prophetic educational methods in shaping individual character, and the contribution of educational institutions to the organization of Muslim society. This study also examines how the internalization of monotheism, moral values, knowledge, and social responsibility contributed to the transformation of Arabian society into a more structured Muslim community. Furthermore, it considers the relevance of these historical and educational principles to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in strengthening the integration of faith, knowledge, morality, and social responsibility. Through this analysis, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of education not merely as a process of individual development but as a foundational mechanism in the formation and sustainability of Islamic civilization.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a library research design to examine the formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period, with particular emphasis on education as a foundation for social transformation. The research focused on relevant literature concerning Islamic civilization, the history of Islamic education, Islamic educational thought, and the life of Prophet Muhammad (Sirah Nabawiyah). The primary materials consisted of the Qur'an and relevant historical accounts of the Prophetic period, while secondary materials included academic books and scholarly publications discussing the development of Islamic civilization and education during the Meccan and Medinan phases. Literature selection was based on its relevance to the research focus and its contribution to understanding the relationship between education, moral development, and social transformation.

Data were collected through documentation by identifying, examining, and organizing relevant written sources. The collected materials were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical approach through several stages, including data classification, historical interpretation, thematic analysis, and synthesis of relevant findings. The analysis focused on identifying the educational foundations established during the Meccan period, examining their institutional development in Medina, and interpreting their contributions to individual character formation and broader societal transformation. Furthermore, the findings were synthesized to explain how the integration of monotheism, moral values, knowledge, and social responsibility contributed to the formation of Islamic civilization and to identify their relevance to contemporary Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Socio-Cultural Conditions of Arabian Society before the Prophetic Period

The formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period cannot be separated from the socio-cultural conditions of Arabian society before the emergence of Islam. Pre-Islamic Arabian communities possessed several established cultural characteristics, including commercial activities, literary traditions, strong family relationships, courage, and a sense of honor. However, these positive characteristics coexisted with social problems such as tribal conflicts, social inequality, exploitative economic practices, and polytheistic religious beliefs. Such conditions created a complex social environment that required not only religious transformation but also changes in moral orientation and patterns of social interaction. Therefore, the mission of Prophet Muhammad represented a transformative process that sought to preserve constructive cultural traditions while correcting practices that contradicted monotheism, justice, and human dignity.

From an educational perspective, this transformation demonstrates that civilization develops through the reconstruction of human values and social behavior rather than through institutional changes alone. Islamic teachings introduced a new moral framework that emphasized accountability before God, equality in human dignity, social responsibility, and justice in interpersonal relationships. These principles gradually challenged the dominance of tribal identity as the primary basis of social solidarity. Education consequently functioned as an instrument for developing a new collective consciousness that transcended narrow tribal affiliations. This interpretation is consistent with Maksum et al. (2025), whose study, identifies

education as a strategic instrument for transforming individuals and establishing a more inclusive social order grounded in religious and moral values.

The findings suggest that the transformation of Arabian society was not simply a process of replacing one cultural system with another. Rather, it involved the selection, reinterpretation, and reconstruction of existing social practices according to Islamic principles. This process provides an important explanation of why education became fundamental to the formation of Islamic civilization: it enabled individuals to understand new values, internalize them, and translate them into social practices. Consequently, the early development of Islamic civilization should be understood as a process of cultural and moral transformation supported by education.

The Meccan Period: Education as the Foundation of Individual Transformation

The Meccan period represented the initial stage of civilizational formation through the development of faith, moral consciousness, and individual responsibility. During this period, Islamic education primarily emphasized monotheism (*tawhid*), belief in the Hereafter, spiritual awareness, and ethical accountability. These teachings established a fundamental orientation for human life by directing individuals toward a relationship with God and responsibility for their actions. The educational process was conducted gradually, considering the social conditions and challenges experienced by the early Muslim community. Dar al-Arqam became an important setting for early educational activities, providing opportunities for instruction, spiritual development, and the strengthening of commitment among the first Muslims.

The findings indicate that education during the Meccan period focused on building the internal capacities necessary for sustainable social transformation. The development of faith and moral character prepared individuals to respond to social injustice and maintain ethical commitments despite external pressure. In this context, education was not merely a mechanism for transmitting religious doctrines but also a process of developing resilience, discipline, and a shared moral identity. The formation of individuals with similar ethical commitments created the foundation for a more cohesive community. This interpretation is supported by Aslam et al. (2025) whose historical analysis of Prophetic educational methods identifies gradual instruction, dialogue, exemplary conduct, and spiritual cultivation as important characteristics of education during the Meccan period.

Furthermore, the Meccan experience demonstrates that meaningful social transformation requires the development of individuals who possess strong internal values before those values can be institutionalized within society. The emphasis on monotheism established a common ethical orientation, while moral education encouraged individuals to practice honesty, patience, compassion, and responsibility. These values gradually shaped a community whose identity was no longer determined exclusively by tribal background or social position. Therefore, the Meccan period can be interpreted as the foundational stage of Islamic civilization, in which educational activities prepared the human resources and moral principles required for subsequent social and institutional development.

Hijrah as a Turning Point in Social and Educational Transformation

The migration (*Hijrah*) from Mecca to Medina represented a significant transition in the development of Islamic civilization. This movement was not merely a geographical relocation but also a transformation of the social environment in which Islamic values could be implemented more systematically. In Medina, the Muslim community gained opportunities to establish stronger social relationships, develop collective responsibilities, and organize

institutions that supported religious and community life. The presence of the Muhajirun and Ansar also created a new social context in which solidarity, cooperation, and mutual assistance became essential components of community development. Thus, Hijrah provided the conditions necessary for translating the educational foundations established in Mecca into practical arrangements within society.

From an educational perspective, the transition to Medina demonstrates the importance of supportive environments in strengthening the internalization of values. Religious and moral principles cannot be sustained exclusively through individual understanding; they require social structures that encourage their practical implementation. The relationship between the Muhajirun and Ansar illustrates how educational values can be transformed into concrete social practices through cooperation, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility. This development also shows that education has a community-building function because it prepares individuals to participate constructively in shared social life. (Aswati et al., 2025; Jeong, 2023; Keagamaan et al., 2024), similarly emphasize the transition from limited educational activities in Mecca toward more organized educational arrangements in Medina.

The analysis further indicates that Hijrah connected two complementary dimensions of civilizational development: personal transformation and institutional transformation. The moral and spiritual foundations established in Mecca provided the principles for organizing the community in Medina. Meanwhile, the social environment of Medina enabled those principles to become visible through institutional practices and collective behavior. Therefore, the formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period should be understood as a continuous process in which educational values were gradually translated into social structures and community arrangements.

The Medinan Period: Institutionalization of Educational Values

The Medinan period demonstrated the development of Islamic education from relatively limited community-based activities into a broader social and institutional process. One of the most important developments was the establishment of the Prophet's Mosque, which functioned not only as a place of worship but also as a center for education, consultation, social interaction, and community organization. This multifunctional role illustrates the close relationship between religious education and the practical needs of society. The mosque provided a shared environment in which individuals could participate in learning activities while developing social relationships and collective responsibilities. Its educational function also demonstrated that knowledge transmission was closely integrated with the everyday life of the Muslim community.

Another important development was the establishment of social solidarity between the Muhajirun and Ansar. This initiative demonstrated that religious identity required practical expressions through cooperation, mutual assistance, and social responsibility. The establishment of the Charter of Medina further reflected the development of shared arrangements governing relationships among different groups within the community. From an educational perspective, these developments represented practical learning experiences through which individuals could understand the importance of agreements, rights, obligations, justice, and collective responsibility. Education therefore operated not only through direct instruction but also through participation in social and institutional practices.

Recent research by Ifendi (2021), supports the significance of educational strategies and institutions in developing a more organized Muslim community. Similarly, Febria & Wilaela

(2026), in their study of the Prophetic educational model in Medina, emphasize the integration of monotheism, exemplary conduct, humanism, dialogue, and social integration. These findings reinforce the argument that institutional development during the Medinan period was closely connected to the educational process. The mosque, community relationships, and shared social arrangements collectively provided an environment in which Islamic values could be implemented and transmitted across generations.

Moral Character Formation as the Core of Islamic Civilization

The formation of moral character constituted one of the most fundamental dimensions of education during the Prophetic period. Islamic civilization required individuals whose behavior reflected the values they professed, including honesty, trustworthiness, patience, compassion, courage, justice, and social responsibility. These values were not presented merely as abstract ethical principles but were demonstrated through the daily conduct of Prophet Muhammad. His exemplary behavior provided a practical model through which the companions could understand and internalize moral teachings. Consequently, exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*) became an important educational mechanism connecting religious knowledge with practical behavior.

The findings suggest that moral education played a strategic role in establishing the social foundations of civilization. Institutions and regulations may organize community life, but their effectiveness depends on the moral commitments of the individuals who participate in them. Honesty supports trustworthy social relationships, justice strengthens institutional legitimacy, and responsibility encourages individuals to contribute to collective welfare. In this sense, character formation was not an additional component of education but an essential condition for maintaining social order and sustaining civilizational development.

Agustina (2026), emphasizes that Prophetic education integrated intellectual development, moral formation, and social responsibility within a coherent educational framework. This perspective strengthens the interpretation that education during the Prophetic period sought to develop individuals holistically rather than focusing exclusively on religious knowledge or ritual practice. The relevance of this principle is particularly important for contemporary Islamic education, where the achievement of academic competence should be accompanied by the development of ethical behavior and social awareness.

Knowledge Development and the Emergence of an Islamic Literacy Tradition

The development of knowledge and literacy represented another important dimension of civilizational formation during the Prophetic period. The first revelation, which begins with the command to read (*Iqra'*), established a strong symbolic foundation for the relationship between knowledge acquisition and religious responsibility. Reading and learning were not understood merely as technical activities but as processes oriented toward understanding creation, human existence, and the signs of divine power. This orientation encouraged the development of intellectual awareness alongside spiritual and moral responsibility. Therefore, education during the Prophetic period established the foundations for a knowledge tradition that integrated religious understanding with the development of human intellectual capacities.

Educational activities during this period were primarily conducted through direct interaction between the Prophet and his companions. Knowledge was transmitted through explanation, memorization, discussion, observation, and practical learning. Oral transmission remained important, while writing was also recognized as a means of preserving and communicating knowledge. These practices demonstrate that the early Muslim community

valued the accuracy of knowledge transmission, the authority of learning sources, and the relationship between teachers and learners. Such educational practices subsequently contributed to the development of more complex Islamic intellectual traditions.

Recent research on early Islamic educational institutions by Fihri et al. (2025), identifies Dar al-Arqam, mosques, al-Suffah, and kuttab as complementary environments supporting knowledge transmission and educational development. These institutions illustrate that education during the Prophetic period was not dependent on a single formal institution. Instead, it developed through different social environments that provided opportunities for religious learning, literacy, and community development. The findings indicate that the early Islamic literacy tradition emerged through the integration of educational interaction, religious commitment, and the practical needs of society.

Social, Economic, Political, and Legal Transformation

The formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period also involved significant changes in social, economic, political, and legal relationships. In economic life, Islamic teachings emphasized honesty, justice, and the avoidance of exploitative practices. Commercial activities were expected to reflect ethical responsibility, while zakat, charity, and social solidarity contributed to the protection of vulnerable members of society. These principles demonstrated that economic activities were not separated from religious and moral obligations. From an educational perspective, the development of ethical economic behavior represented the practical application of values acquired through religious instruction and social habituation.

In the political and legal dimensions, the Medinan community developed more organized arrangements for leadership, conflict resolution, consultation, and relationships among different social groups. The Prophet's leadership involved the management of collective affairs and the establishment of agreements that supported social order. The Charter of Medina, as discussed in the original manuscript, illustrates the importance of shared responsibilities and arrangements for maintaining relationships among community members. Such developments demonstrate that Islamic civilization was not limited to spiritual or individual transformation but also involved the organization of public life through principles of justice, consultation, and mutual responsibility.

The relationship between education and these transformations is particularly important. Education encouraged individuals to understand that religious commitment also involved responsibilities toward other people and the broader community. Social solidarity, economic fairness, respect for agreements, and participation in collective decision-making were therefore not merely institutional requirements but also educational outcomes. Febria & Wilaela (2026) similarly emphasize the relationship between Prophetic education and the development of a more just, integrated, and knowledge-oriented society. These findings support the argument that education functioned as a connecting mechanism between moral principles and the organization of social life.

Education as the Mechanism Connecting Individual and Social Transformation

The overall findings demonstrate that education occupied a central position in the formation of Islamic civilization because it connected individual development with broader institutional and social changes. This relationship can be understood through four interconnected processes. First, the internalization of monotheism and moral principles established the foundation of individual identity and ethical orientation. Second, educational practices such as exemplary conduct, dialogue, habituation, and practical learning transformed

these values into individual behavior. Third, individuals who shared similar moral commitments developed stronger social relationships based on solidarity, cooperation, and mutual responsibility. Fourth, these relationships supported the development of institutions and social arrangements that reflected Islamic values.

Table 1. The Relationship between Prophetic Education and the Formation of Islamic Civilization

Educational dimension	Historical manifestation	Contribution to civilization
Spiritual foundation	Internalization of *tawhid* during the Meccan period	Establishment of religious identity and moral orientation
Character development	Exemplary conduct, habituation, and moral guidance	Development of honesty, trustworthiness, justice, and responsibility
Intellectual development	Qur'anic instruction, dialogue, memorization, and literacy	Development of knowledge, learning traditions, and intellectual awareness
Social education	Brotherhood between Muhajirun and Ansar	Strengthening solidarity, cooperation, and social integration
Institutional education	Establishment of the Prophet's Mosque and learning activities	Integration of worship, education, consultation, and community services
Civic and legal education	Charter of Medina and shared social arrangements	Development of collective responsibility, agreements, and social order
Economic education	Ethical trade, zakat, charity, and mutual assistance	Development of economic justice and social welfare

The table illustrates that the formation of Islamic civilization involved the integration of several educational dimensions rather than the development of isolated educational activities. Spiritual development established the fundamental orientation, while moral and intellectual education strengthened individual capacities. Social and institutional education then provided opportunities for these values to be implemented collectively. The relationship among these dimensions indicates that educational transformation was closely connected to the development of social structures and community practices. This synthesis supports the central argument that education functioned as a foundation for civilizational development during the Prophetic period. The relationship can also be represented through the following conceptual framework.

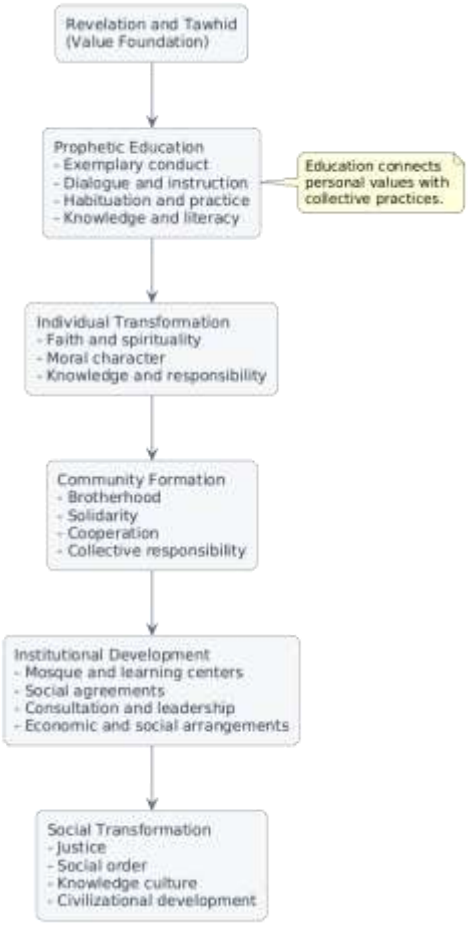


Figure 1. Education as the Foundation of Social Transformation in the Formation of Islamic Civilization during the Prophetic Period

The conceptual framework explains the progressive relationship between revelation, education, individual transformation, community formation, institutional development, and social transformation. It emphasizes that education acts as the connecting mechanism through which religious values become individual commitments and eventually influence collective arrangements. The framework also reflects the historical continuity between the Meccan and Medinan periods: the former established the spiritual and moral foundations, while the latter provided opportunities for institutionalizing those foundations in social life. Therefore, the formation of Islamic civilization can be interpreted as an integrated process involving human development, educational practices, and institutional organization.

Critical Analysis and Contemporary Relevance to Islamic Education

The findings provide an important basis for understanding why the formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period began with education rather than with institutional development alone. Institutions require individuals who understand and practice the values that sustain them. Without moral commitment, institutional structures may exist formally but fail to produce justice, solidarity, and social responsibility. The Prophetic experience demonstrates that sustainable civilizational development requires a relationship between the internal transformation of individuals and the external organization of society. Education therefore represents a long-term investment in the moral, intellectual, and social capacities of a community.

This historical perspective has significant implications for contemporary Islamic education. First, Islamic education needs to strengthen the integration of faith, knowledge, and moral character. Religious knowledge should not be separated from practical behavior, social

awareness, and ethical decision-making. Second, teachers should function as educational role models whose attitudes and actions reflect the values communicated during learning activities. Third, learning should provide opportunities for students to experience social responsibility through cooperation, discussion, community service, and collective activities. These principles are consistent with recent research on holistic Prophetic education, which emphasizes the integration of intellectual, spiritual, and social development.

Fourth, Islamic education requires a supportive educational ecosystem involving families, schools, mosques, and communities. Character formation cannot be assigned exclusively to classroom instruction because students develop their attitudes through continuous interactions with their social environments. The multifunctional role of the Prophet's Mosque provides a historical illustration of how educational activities can be connected with worship, consultation, community services, and social relationships. Contemporary educational institutions can adapt this principle by integrating classroom learning with religious activities, community engagement, leadership development, and social responsibility programs.

Fifth, the development of literacy and critical thinking should become an essential component of contemporary Islamic education. The emphasis on reading and knowledge acquisition during the Prophetic period provides a foundation for developing students who are capable of understanding information, evaluating sources, and using knowledge responsibly. In the digital era, these competencies are particularly important because students encounter increasingly complex information environments. The integration of religious literacy, scientific knowledge, and ethical awareness can help prevent the separation between intellectual development and moral responsibility.

The contribution of this study lies in presenting the formation of Islamic civilization as an educationally mediated process connecting personal transformation with institutional and social development. Rather than interpreting the Meccan and Medinan periods as separate historical episodes, this analysis emphasizes their continuity as two interconnected stages of civilizational formation. The Meccan period established the foundations of faith and character, while the Medinan period provided the social and institutional environment for implementing those foundations. This interpretation reinforces the understanding that education was not simply one component of the Prophetic mission but a fundamental mechanism through which Islamic values became an organized way of life.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the research design. As a qualitative library study, this research relies on historical literature and contemporary academic interpretations rather than empirical observations of educational practices during the seventh century. Consequently, the analysis identifies conceptual and historical relationships but does not establish measurable causal effects between specific educational methods and civilizational outcomes. Further research may investigate how the principles of Prophetic education are implemented in contemporary Islamic educational institutions, particularly in relation to character development, institutional culture, social solidarity, and educational leadership.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that education during the Prophetic period provided the moral, intellectual, and social foundations necessary for the emergence of Islamic civilization. The transformation from the Meccan community to the organized society of Medina illustrates the importance of integrating individual development with institutional and social arrangements. The enduring relevance of this historical experience lies in its emphasis on the

unity of faith, knowledge, morality, and social responsibility. Accordingly, contemporary Islamic education can draw upon the Prophetic model not by reproducing historical institutions mechanically, but by adapting its underlying principles to present educational and societal challenges.

CONCLUSION

The formation of Islamic civilization during the Prophetic period was a gradual process of transformation rooted in the principles of *tawhid* and developed through education, moral formation, community building, and the establishment of social institutions. The Meccan period laid the foundations of individual transformation by strengthening faith, moral character, and social responsibility. This process continued in the Medinan period through the institutionalization of Islamic values in community life, as reflected in the establishment of the Prophet's Mosque as a center for education and social activities, the brotherhood between the Muhajirun and Ansar, and the regulation of intercommunity relations through the Charter of Medina. These developments demonstrate that the formation of civilization involved not only religious change but also transformations in social relations, economic practices, political organization, legal arrangements, and cultural life.

This study concludes that education was a fundamental instrument connecting individual development with broader social transformation during the Prophetic period. Through exemplary conduct, dialogue, habituation, practical instruction, advice, and other contextually appropriate methods, the Prophet Muhammad fostered individuals whose faith, knowledge, and moral character could contribute to the development of an organized and responsible community. The historical experience of the Prophetic period offers important implications for contemporary Islamic education, particularly the need to integrate faith, knowledge, morality, and social responsibility in the learning process. It also highlights the importance of teachers' exemplary conduct, supportive educational environments involving families, schools, mosques, and communities, as well as the development of literacy and social engagement. Therefore, Islamic education should not be limited to the transmission of religious knowledge but should function as a continuous process of human development and social transformation oriented toward justice, solidarity, and the common good.

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