



From *Tafaqquh* to *Indhār*: Reconstructing Social Responsibility in Islamic Education through Qs. Al-Taubah [9]: 122

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Abstract

Tafaqquh fī al-dīn in Q.S. al-Tawbah [9]:122 is often understood as the obligation to deepen religious knowledge; however, such a reading does not adequately explain where knowledge is directed once intellectual depth has been attained. This issue is significant because an educational system that measures achievement primarily through the accumulation of knowledge risks producing forms of specialization that are epistemically strong but socially detached. This study therefore reconstructs tafaqquh as an epistemic construct that connects depth of knowledge with collective life. Employing library research, tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī, and Paul Ricœur's hermeneutics, Q.S. al-Tawbah [9]:122 is read intertextually alongside Q.S. al-Zumar [39]:9, al-Mujādilah [58]:11, Fāṭir [35]:28, Āli 'Imrān [3]:104, al-Naḥl [16]:125, and al-ʿAṣr [103]:1-3, and subsequently brought into dialogue with the thought of Edward Said, Jürgen Habermas, and Jacques Rancière. The findings demonstrate that tafaqquh is not merely knowledge acquisition but constitutes epistemic depth: the capacity to understand and assess complex matters profoundly while remaining socially oriented from the outset. This orientation is marked by rujū' to the qawm and enacted through inḏār, whereby expertise does not culminate in individual authority but is returned to the community as a shared epistemic resource. Meanwhile, yaḥẓarūn indicates the social objective of this process, namely the cultivation of collective awareness and collective epistemic capacity. These findings lead to the reconstruction of the Qur'anic public intellectual as a figure who differs not only from the specialist and professional expert, but also reconfigures the modern notion of the public intellectual: publicness is not primarily defined by participation in public debate, but by the inherent responsibility of knowledge to return to, warn, and strengthen the community's capacity to interpret reality. Accordingly, this study proposes a paradigm shift from knowledge acquisition to knowledge as social responsibility, providing a conceptual basis for rethinking Islamic education and Muslim intellectual ethics.

Keywords: Tafaqquh fī al-dīn; Inḏār, Epistemic depth, Qur'anic public intellectual, Social responsibility.

Abstrak

Tafaqquh fī al-dīn dalam Q.S. al-Taubah [9]:122 sering dipahami sebagai kewajiban memperdalam pengetahuan agama, tetapi pembacaan tersebut belum menjelaskan secara memadai ke mana pengetahuan diarahkan setelah kedalaman intelektual tercapai. Persoalan ini penting karena pendidikan yang mengukur keberhasilan terutama dari akumulasi pengetahuan berisiko melahirkan spesialisasi yang kuat secara epistemik, tetapi lemah dalam tanggung jawab sosial. Karena itu, penelitian ini merekonstruksi tafaqquh sebagai konstruksi epistemik yang menghubungkan kedalaman pengetahuan dengan kehidupan kolektif. Dengan menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan, tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī, dan hermeneutika Paul Ricœur, Q.S. al-Taubah [9]:122



dibaca secara intertekstual bersama Q.S. al-Zumar [39]:9, al-Mujādilah [58]:11, Fāṭir [35]:28, Āli ‘Imrān [3]:104, al-Naḥl [16]:125, dan al-‘Aṣr [103]:1–3, kemudian didialogkan dengan pemikiran Edward Said, Jürgen Habermas, dan Jacques Rancière. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tafaqquh bukan sekadar knowledge acquisition, melainkan epistemic depth: kemampuan memahami dan menilai persoalan secara mendalam yang sejak awal memiliki orientasi sosial. Orientasi tersebut ditandai oleh rujū‘ kepada qawm dan diwujudkan melalui inzār, sehingga kepakaran tidak berakhir sebagai otoritas individual, tetapi dikembalikan menjadi kapasitas pengetahuan bagi masyarakat. Adapun yaḥzarūn menunjukkan tujuan sosial dari proses tersebut, yakni terbentuknya kewaspadaan dan kapasitas epistemic kolektif. Temuan ini mengarah pada konstruksi Qur’anic public intellectual, yakni figur yang tidak hanya berbeda dari specialist dan professional expert, tetapi juga merevisi pengertian public intellectual modern: status publiknya tidak terutama ditentukan oleh keterlibatan dalam perdebatan publik, melainkan oleh tanggung jawab inheren pengetahuan untuk kembali, memperingatkan, dan memperkuat kapasitas masyarakat dalam membaca realitas. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menawarkan pergeseran paradigma dari knowledge acquisition menuju knowledge as social responsibility, yang dapat menjadi dasar konseptual bagi rekonstruksi pendidikan Islam dan etika intelektual Muslim.

Kata kunci: *Tafaqquh fī al-dīn, Inzār, Epistemic depth, Qur’anic public intellectual, Tanggung jawab sosial.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The main problem facing Islamic education today lies not merely in producing individuals who master knowledge. Rather, , knowledge should cultivate intellectuals who are able to maintain critical agency while carrying out social responsibilities in the public space. This research gains urgency as academic knowledge undergoes increasingly narrow specializations and intellectuals become increasingly tied to institutional structures, risking the detachment of the critical functions of scholarship from the needs of society (Grant Farred, 1995). In this context, Edward Said offers a conception of the *public intellectual*, positioning intellectuals as *outsiders* and disturbers of the *status quo*. Scientific specialization should not isolate intellectuals from public problems. Rather, academic expertise must be translated into critical engagement in social life (Varghese, 2025).

This perspective exemplifies the modern intellectual paradigm of the 20th century, underscoring the vital link between intellectual depth and social responsibility. Although originating in a different historical context from Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122. This framework can be read as an articulation of parallel concerns in modern intellectual discourse regarding how knowledge and freedom of thought can be preserved so that intellectuals are not disconnected from public issues (Zreik, 2021). This conception shows that intellectuals are not mere producers or consumers of information

commodities, but individuals who can connect knowledge with public issues (Setyana & Asbari, 2023).

In the context of education, the issue underscores the necessity intellectual standards that do not separate academic life from social reality. Intellectuals must think objectively, engage in rational dialogues, test knowledge claims, and apply educational outcomes to societal life (Candrika & Nisa, 2025). For example, the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), subculture in Indonesia, shows that the process of acquiring knowledge ideally has social consequences: students who have gained knowledge return to the community to convey, explain, and actualize that knowledge in a communal life (Wahid, 2007).

From the perspective of the Qur'an, the relationship between the deepening of knowledge and social responsibility is prominently anchored in Qs. At-Taubah [9]:122. The textual structure of this verse indicates that Qur'anic knowledge encompasses both epistemological and ethical dimension; The depth of understanding must translate into responsibility for collective life. The verse is positioned as the primary textual object to test how the Qur'an establishes the relationship between scholarly deepening (*tafaqquh*), intellectual formation, and social responsibility in Islamic education.

Existing literature on Qs. Al-Taubah 122 generally falls into three main thematic orientations: first, the obligation to acquire and develop knowledge (Suryani, 2024); second, the pedagogical function (Vaneza & Sinambela, 2025); and third, the role of educators, intellectual jihad (Syahputra & Ismail, 2025), as well as scientific integration (Sulam et al., 2023) (Nihayah, 2016) (Indrawan & Abidin, 2022). This verse is predominantly understood as a legitimation for deepening knowledge and its application in life. The tendency of these studies is to position knowledge as a mere object of learning, an intellectual capacity, or an instrument of educational development, leaving the relationship between scholarly depth of knowledge and social responsibility unconstructed as an epistemological problem. A re-examination of the structure of the verse reveals a deeper imperative beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge, specifically the formation of awareness to return to society. This study shifts the focus from "what is known" to "what knowledge is for", transcending from education as the transmission of knowledge to education as transformative praxis. The contribution of this research lies in reconstructing the relationship between *tafaqquh*, *Al-Indhār*, and social

responsibility as an epistemological foundation for the formation of public intellectuals in Islamic education.

This literature gap shows that when education halts at the mastery of knowledge and produces competent intellectuals who are disconnected from their social responsibility the core purpose of scholarship is compromised. Therefore, this study reconstructs Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 within an epistemological paradigm that redirects knowledge from passive information acquisition to transformation praxis. This research confirms that scholarly depth and social involvement are not two separate entities, but represent an epistemic continuity in the formation of Islamic intellectuals. The concept of *public intellectual* is used as a framework for dialogue, while the Qur'an serves as the source of its normativity, fostering an Islamic education paradigm that yields to socially responsible knowledge.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employ a qualitative library research desgin approach with Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 as the priimary obbject of study and *Tafsir al-Mahdhū'ī* as the primary analytical method (Ahyar, 2019). The study also integrates Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics as an analytical framework, specifically utilizing the hermeneutic movement of text explanation (understanding), interpretation and the appropriation of meaning (Haryatmoko, 2016). These methodologies are combined to reconstruct contextual meanings without detaching the text from the historical context and normative horizons of the Qur'an.

The analytical procedure follows the *tafsir al-maudhū'ī* developed by Abd al-Hayy al-Farmāwī, which os systematically operationalized into four stages. First, *thematic identification*, establishes the term *tafaqquh fī al-dīn* and *Indhār* as the conceptual axis, followd by gathering semantically and thematically related verses. Second, *textual-contextual reconstruction*, an analysis of linguistic structure, the root of the word, the context of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, *munāsabah*, and its relevance to classical-contemporary interpretation (al-Farmāwī, 1977). Third, *comparative hermeneutic analysis compares the interpretive constructions among commentators and re-reads them* through Ricœur's hermeneutics to distinguish textual meaning and its potential meaning in the context of contemporary Islamic education (Furia, 2022). Fourth, *conceptual reconstruction*, which

synthesizes the results of textual, contextual, and hermeneutical readings into a relational epistemological framework connecting *tafaqquh*, *Indhār*, public intellectual formation, and social responsibility (Mustaqim, 2017).

Primary data sources are in the form of the Qur'an and books of commentary, both classical and contemporary, while secondary sources include literature on Islamic education, Ricoeur hermeneutics, *public intellectual*—as a dialogue partner—and relevant scientific articles. Data reading is carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner through linguistic, historical, comparative, and hermeneutical readings, then synthesized so as to form Qur'anic epistemology. The analysis is driven by the question "what is knowledge for?", so that *Al-Indhār* is reconstructed as a social consequence of knowledge and as the basis for the shift of Islamic education from *knowledge acquisition* to *socially responsible knowledge*.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Qur'anic Construction of *Tafaqquh*: From Knowledge Acquisition to Epistemic Depth

The concept *tafaqquh fī al-dīn* in Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 serves a strategic function for the survival of the ummah. *Tafaqquh* is not a standalone intellectual activity (Fajri et al., 2026). This is evident from the structure of the verse which categorizes the community into two complementary functions: some carry out external tasks, and others settle down to deepen the religion, then give warnings to their communities. The structure of the verse places knowledge that is always related to social needs. Rather than a mere division between those who depart and those who remain, it represents a division of functional roles based on communal necessity.. As some of the companions left to carry out their duties outside Medina, the rest were required to stay, study and understand the revelations received by the Prophet (al-Māturīdī, 2005). This division of roles shows that the ummah does not only need those who are engaged in the field of jihad, but also those who are deep in knowledge so that knowledge is maintained and can be conveyed back to the community. Thus, *tafaqquh* is not a solitary learning endeavor for personal gain or group monopoly, rather it constitutes a structural division of duties and responsibilities to ensure that religious knowledge remains vital and active within society.

Riwayat *Asbab al-Nuzūl*, which is diverse, further strengthens the structural construction. Al-Naisabūrī, for example, explains several contexts: first, when the entire population of Medina departed. Second, all friends follow *sariyyah* (al-Naisaburri, 1411H). Third, the opinion of al-Māturīdī when some *Al-Wufūd* (delegates) came to the Prophet from various regions to learn religion before returning to their people (al-Māturīdī, 2005). All three show the same normative pattern, namely that communities need differentiation of functions between those who carry out activities directly in the field and those who build capacity to deepen knowledge. These contextual variation need not be homogenized into a single historical narrative, as they converge upon the same underlying normative principle.

Furthermore, *tafaqquh* does not absolve an individual of social responsibility simply because they do not participate directly in jihad, precisely because he is a different form of social responsibility. This concept gained legitimacy from al-Thabarī regarding the relationship of Qs. Al-Taubah 120 and 122 state that it is not about the abolition of the obligation of jihad (al-Thabarī, 1431). The information is about the distribution of obligations according to the needs of the community. Meanwhile, al-Jashshās understood the existence of a group that settled for *tafaqquh* as a communal need (al-Jashshās, 1405). He disagrees with al-Qusyairī, who describes the differentiation of the function of science through jurisprudence, *ushūl al-fiqh*, *ḥadīthda'wah*, and other religious functions (al-Qusyairī, 1431). These exegetical readings clarify the epistemological implication that the Qur'an does not reject scientific specializations, but gives them for social purposes, while at the same time laying down a fundamental distinction between the specializations built by verses and modern specializations that can be isolated in the space of expertise.

Based on this information, the term *tafaqquh* is very narrow if interpreted only as *knowing* or mastery of religious information. The Qur'an chooses the word *tafaqquh* as a derivative of *Scarlet Witch* as a cue of a form of understanding that can penetrate the substance of the problem, different from *'ilm*, which generally refers to knowledge. This distinction is important because the problem of education is not only a lack of information. More than that, it is the failure to turn information into an understanding that can read problems, consider context, and generate action orientation (Bashier Badi, 2025). The information makes *Tafaqquh* here; it is more appropriate if it is constructed as *epistemic depth*, that is, the ability to understand deeply, beyond the accumulation of

knowledge towards interpretive capacity and responsible judgment. On that basis, the depth of knowledge produced must be returned to *Qowm* (community). Likewise, specialization does not become the end of knowledge; It is an infrastructure for the usefulness of knowledge.

This conceptual construction is not stand alone only in Qs. Al-Taubah 122. This is also explained in Qs. Al-Zumar [39]:9 through a rhetorical question that directs knowledge to the reflective capacity "hal yastawī alladhīna ya'lamūn wa alladhīna lā ya'lamūn" (Rochmad et al., 2026). While in Qs. Al-Mujādilah [58]:11 it relates faith and knowledge with an increase in degrees, while in Qs. Fāṭir [35]:28 it gives an ethical dimension by associating knowledge with sense *khasyyah* (fear based on awareness of knowledge) (Muid et al., 2024) (Munjahid & Latansa, 2026). This means that the epistemology formed by the Qur'an does not limit knowledge to the cognitive dimension only. Knowing must develop into understanding, understanding must form consciousness, and awareness becomes meaningful when it has ethical consequences.

At this level, Islam does not only require deepening knowledge. What is more significant is that the Qur'an constructs the depth of knowledge through its social function. Levels demanded in tiers *tafaqquh* require a high epistemic capacity. However, it is not allowed when a distance is built between *'ālim* and the community. Therefore, the structure of the verse leads to *Wa Liyundhirū Qawmahum*, that is, even though the level achieved is high, it contains a direction from the beginning of the exit from the self to the community. This formulation makes *tafaqquh* understood as *knowledge with epistemic depth*, not just *knowledge acquisition* (Mohd Zarif, 2020). The function of knowledge reaches completion when analytical depth enables scholars to critique reality and assume social responsibility, rather than remaining confined to academic mastery. . In the context of contemporary Islamic education, this finding resonates that religious learning does not stop at the mastery of the material, but is directed at the formation of the spiritual and social attitudes of its students (Syauqi et al., 2025).

This analysis shifts the paradigm of Islamic education, from *tafaqquh* which is read as a scientific specialty, the consequence of which is that education is measured by the quantity of knowledge received, becomes *tafaqquh* which is understood as *epistemic formation*, which is the measure of success is not only what students know, but also *how deeply they understand, how critically they interpret, and what responsibility their*

knowledge generates. It is at this level that Qs. Al-Taubah 122 becomes the foundation for an educational paradigm that integrates epistemic depth with social responsibility. This interconnectedness is the entrance to understanding *al-indhār* not as an additional activity after acquiring knowledge, but as an internal consequence of the *tafaqquh*.

2. From *Tafaqquh* to *Indhār*: The Social Direction of Knowledge

If *tafaqquh* is interpreted as the process of deepening knowledge, then the next phrase, *The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:*, determine where that knowledge should be directed. Based on this information, it is not appropriate to interpret *Indhār*. It is interpreted as an additional activity after a person gains knowledge. The structure of the verse directly integrates the two phases: epistemic depth leads naturally to a social orientation wherein scholars convey their critical insights. . Ultimately, the deepening of knowledge is incomplete unless it translates into active social responsibility to the community.

The thematic significance of Qs. Al-Taubah 122 about the function of knowledge and the transmission of truth to the community become even more prominent when contextualized within a broader network of Qur'anic passages.. For instance, Qs. 'Āli Imrān [3]:104, which places the position of the ummah that calls for virtue as part of the collective responsibility, or in Qs. Al-Nahl [16]:125 about regulating the way of conveying knowledge through *ḥikmah*, good advice, and the best dialogue (Arifin et al., 2026). The Qur'an describes that knowledge must enter the social communication to shape how communities analyze their contemporary issues.. This context makes the term *Indhār* more accurately read as the intentional social *orientation of knowledge* rather than just a regular reminder (Godonoga & Sporn, 2023).

Crucially, the term: *qawmahum* is often frequently overlooked when *tafaqquh* is reduced to a purely individualistic mandate to seek knowledge.. Intellectuals who delve into knowledge are not directed to build distance from society. This pattern is reinforced by historical accounts of the delegation (*Al-Wufūd*), wherein individuals traveled to learn from the Prophet, then returned to educate their respective tribes with the knowledge they had gained. The pattern of "come-learn-return" represents an epistemic trajectory in the verse with explicit social goals. Scholars do not depart from the community to become detached from its realities, instead they cultivated epistemic depth precisely to return with greater intellectual capacity and serve the community (Sales et al., 2024).

Therefore, *Tafaqquh* have a social message because the community needs a subject who can understand, whereas *Indhār* ensures that the capacity does not confined to individual mastery.

Meanwhile, the analysis of the end of the sentence using the term *La'alahum yaḥdharūn*, not *Ya'lamūn*, explains the purpose of the *tafaqquh* and *Indhār*. This orientation can be compared to verses that warn of the path to knowledge with awareness, e.g. Qs. Yāsīn [36]:70 and al-Anbiyā [21]:45. It is therefore inaccurate to conflate the term *Indhār* with coercion or intimidation (scare tactics). Giving warnings is not the same as scare; It is a process of building awareness so that people can recognize the consequences of actions and determine attitudes more consciously using knowledge. Together with public intellectuals, the community is empowered to critically evaluate reality rather than passively consuming unverified information (Karimah et al., 2025).

In this framework, *Indhār* operates as a core epistemic responsibility. While scholars occupy a distinct position owing to their capacity to clarify complex knowledge for the public, this epistemic distinction is not intended to establish a permanent hierarchy. In this sense, *tafaqquh* and *Indhār* do not produce a monopoly of knowledge, but open up space for *collective intellectual capacity* (Pino, 2021). For example, it is insufficient for Islamic economics merely to formulate theoretical models of Islamic financial instruments. The knowledge must demonstrate tangible social impact by equipping communities to address economic injustice, consumerism, and systemic debt traps.. Likewise, it is not enough for environmentalists to simply produce data on ecosystem damage. They should translate their findings to enable communities to comprehend ecological risks and foster sustainable behavioral change.

This aligns with Freire's critique that education should not just transfer knowledge from those who know to those who do not know. If this happens, then it becomes a one-way transfer of information (McInerney, 2009). However, the Qur'an affirms this premise from a distinct theological foundation, asserting that social responsibility is neither a simple social contract nor solely a project of human emancipation. Knowledge carries moral consequences because it is seen as a trust; the *collective social capacity* emphasized in the verse is part of the *Taklīf* for intellectuals.

The framework conceptualize *Indhār* as a form of knowledge responsibility that does not stop at the relationship between educated and uneducated. This opinion, as

Jacques Rancière critique in the *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, which challenges hierarchical intellectual structures assuming a fundamental disparity in reasoning capacity between educated elites and the general public (Biesta, 2017). According to Rancière, education must open up the potential for everyone to become a subject who can consciously understand and speak (Indriyastutik, 2019). Rancière's perspective explains who has the right to be the subject of knowledge, while the meaning of the verse directs those who are educated to return to the *Qowm* to jointly have the ability to *yaḥdharūn*. Process *Indhār* is an expansion of the capacity of public awareness about the importance of *knowledge with epistemic depth*.

In Habermas's public communication perspective, education that uses communicative theory emphasizes that the communication of knowledge is not a one-way process, but requires interpretation and exchange in a shared context, meaning that the term *Indhār* means making knowledge and the presence of an intellectual a space where understanding is built through the exchange of reasons, not just the acceptance of authority (Dann, 2016). Knowledge is not enough to be stored as an individual speciality; It must continue to be communicated collectively to form a common consciousness. Nonetheless, the orientation *Indhār* what the Qur'an offers does not stop at communicative understanding or intellectual subjects themselves; The Qur'an directs to *yaḥdharūn*, a level of alertness that encourages people to be able to recognize dangers, consider the consequences of actions, and determine attitudes (Setyaningsih, 2017). Thus, Qur'anic epistemology requires knowledge not only to be liberated from intellectual monopolies and communicated publicly, but also to remain ultimately accountable to God and translated into concrete societal benefits.

Ultimately, the Qur'an, through the term *Indhār not merely for the passive* dissemination of information or knowledge into critical public consciousness. This transformation of knowledge serves as a vital function in the context of contemporary Islamic education to strengthen students' resilience againsts pressing societal challenges, such as radicalism and destructive social change (Kurnia et al., 2024).

3. Beyond Knowledge Acquisition: Reconstructing the Qur'anic Public Intellectual

An analysis of Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 yields a conceptual logic that far exceeds the simplistic relationship between learning and teaching. Knowledge transitions from individual depth to shared collective capacity. The text frames social engagement as an

imperative consequence for anyone who achieves a depth of knowledge. The syntactic structure of the verse definitely asserts that knowledge must not remain merely an isolated individual achievement. Rather, it requires an essential process of *return*, specifically returning to the community (*qawm*) through *Indhār*, knowledge is transformed into a viable capacity for communal life..

In conventional models centered on mere *knowledge acquisition*, a person's success is typically measured by the breadth of material mastery, depth of specialization, academic legitimacy, or professional achievement. While these elements remain vital within the scope of *tafaqquh* in Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 gives one boundary that specialization must not be serve as the end point of knowledge. The higher a person's epistemic capacity, the greater the demand for this capacity to be returned to society. The verse does not repudiate expertise, but rather critiques expertise that loses its social orientation. A person with a certain skill set has achieved a specialization, yet fail to fulfill the social horizon of *tafaqquh*. Here, the verse corrects the tendency of modern education, which often commodifies knowledge into individual capital, titles, positions, careers, and reputations, while the relationship between expertise and the needs of society is getting thinner (Al-Attas, 1980).

In Edward Said's idea of a *public intellectual*, scholars must not allow themselves to be confined by hyper-specialization or institutional interests. True scholarly pursuit requires the courage to adopt a critical position on public issues and the *status quo* (Said, 1996). Said's opinion is in line with Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122, meaning that the depth of knowledge is not intended to form a group of experts that are increasingly distant from society. However, the Qur'an goes further than simply demanding the intellectual courage to speak in the public sphere. The series of verses shows that public involvement is instead placed as part of the goal of knowledge itself. Edward Said emphasized the critical position of intellectuals before society and power. The Qur'an anchors intellectual engagement within a cyclic epistemic movement,, associating the position with the circulation of knowledge, deepening, returning, warring, and then forming a collective vigilance (*yaḥḍharūn*). So, *publicness* in the Qur'anic paradigm, it is not just the courage to appear in the public space, but the consequence of knowledge that from the beginning bears responsibility for society.

This Qur'anic model of knowledge circulation does not frame the community as a passive recipient nor does it establish an authoritarian social hierarchy.. As a paradigm critique of *Emancipation* Rinciere, educational processes risk degenerating into mechanism that reproduce dependency whenever a scholar are perpetually framed as sole possessors of knowledge and the public as ignorant masses. Although the verse preserves a specialized cohort (*tā'ifah*) dedicated to *tafaqquh*; demonstrating that specialized expertise is still needed, but scholarly authorities must have a liberating direction, not make society more dependent on experts (al-Qurṭubī, 1964).

Firqah refers to a large group (*Jamaan Kathīroh*) such as a tribe or inhabitants of a certain area, while *tā'ifah* is a small part of them. Thus, the meaning becomes "It is not proper for all the believers to go (jihad) all at once, and it is not appropriate for them all to stay without anyone leaving, because it will mess up their affairs (al-Baiḍāwī, 1416H).

This opinion emphasizes the relationship between *tafaqquh* and *yaḥdharūn* highlighting the competence of experts to jointly build a social *mindset* oriented to achieve a conscious and alert state. Scholarly competence is not just measured by the ability to maintain expertise as the exclusive source of knowledge. Rather, the whole verse signifies that knowledge can transform the individual and his society to have a common epistemic capacity.

This process inherently involves complex social dynamics because the knowledge gained does not automatically have a social influence just because it is true or profound; It is therefore important to be communicated, opposed, exchanged, and accounted for in a common space (Nafisah et al., 2023). In Habermas' perspective, knowledge has social relevance only when brought into the space of communication that allows claims, reasons, and interests to be tested openly, enabling the public to form reflective judgements rather than passively absorbing content (Friedland & Kunelius, 2023). Term *Indhār*: It cannot be reduced to just lectures, the delivery of fatwas, or the transfer of information. Instead, it requires communicative models that enhance the epistemic responsiveness of the community (Thoyibah et al., 2026). In this context, an intellectual is not only in charge of "giving answers", but also helps people develop the ability to read their own problems. This paradigm shifts intellectual-societal relations away from the pattern of *knowledge delivery* to *knowledge empowerment*.

From this conceptual construction, the figure of the *Qur'anic public intellectual* can be clearly distinguished from some of the intellectual models that have developed in modern discourse. It's not just a *specialist*, as their role transcends discipline mastery nor merely a *professional expert*, because their competence is not solely directed at careers and institutional functions, and not just a *public intellectual*, if the term refers only to critical intellectuals and those present in public debate (Dallyn et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the intellectual figure of the Qur'an is built through four qualities that are interrelated and interlocking with each other: *epistemic depth* through *tafaqquh*; *social accountability* through *Indhār*; *communal embeddedness* through *The Devil Wears Prada*; and *collective epistemic empowerment* through *yaḥdharūn*. This shows that expertise does not stop as private property. Expertise is an epistemic mandate that must be returned to the social space and assessed based on the transformative capacity it produces.

Table 1. Modern Public Intellectual and Qur'anic Intellectual

Comparative Reconstruction of the Modern Public Intellectual and Qur'anic Public Intellectual Based	
Modern Public Intellectual	Qur'anic Public Intellectual
Expertise professional authority	<i>Tafaqquh</i> : Epistemic depth
Public engagement	<i>Title</i> : Return to the Drawing Board
Criticism & Influence	<i>Indhār</i> : Social accountability
Social impact: public influence	<i>Qawm</i> : Social knowledge space
	<i>Yaḥdharūn</i> : Collective epistemic capacity
	Social transformation

The difference between the two is seen in the direction and measure of knowledge success. The first model moves from expertise to public space and social influence. While the Qur'ani model moves more in circulation, society becomes the axis that makes *tafaqquh* and *Indhār* more meaningful, and the success is evaluated by the community's collective capacity to comprehend and transform reality. Ultimately, the *Qur'anic public intellectual* is not defined by how much a person hears his voice, but by the degree to which their scholarship empowers others to cultivate critical consciousness. .

This marks the essential distinction between mere *publicity* and authentic *public responsibility*. The consequence in the context of education is the importance of a

curriculum that not only measures mastery of the material, but also the ability of students to read social problems, communicate knowledge across disciplines, and use it to produce responsible solutions. This orientation is relevant in the development of the independent curriculum, which provides space for learning that is more flexible, contextual, and adapted to the needs of students and their social environment (Nurphi et al., 2024).

The conceptual contribution of Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 extends far beyond merely reinforcing the generic proposition that knowledgeable people should be useful to society as such an assertion fails to differentiate the Qur'anic paradigm from other intellectual frameworks. The key finding of this study is that the verse reconstructs the relationship between expertise and society: it maintains the need for specialization, but rejects the monopoly of knowledge, recognizes epistemic authority, but directs it to empowerment, and demands the depth of knowledge, but makes social impact part of the meaning of science itself. *Tafaqquh* is thus interpreted as the process of producing people who are not only intellectually rigorous but also capable of revitalizing knowledge within society. *Qur'anic public intellectuals* are fundamentally defined as thinkers who convert epistemic depth into collective epistemic capacity, offering an integrative model that connects expertise, responsibility, communication, and social transformation within a single paradigm of Islamic education.

D. CONCLUSION

This study shows that Qs. Al-Taubah [9]:122 frames *tafaqquh fī al-dīn* not merely as a process of acquiring knowledge, but rather as an epistemic depth that, from the beginning, is directed to social responsibility. The syntactic and thematic structure of the verse indicates that science gains its full function when it is returned to society, thereby augmenting communal capacity to comprehend and consciously respond to reality. While the verse does not repudiate academic specialization, it explicitly rejects hyper-specialization detached from societal needs.

Consequently, this yields a conceptualization of the Qur'anic public intellectual that differ markedly from conventional modern models. Within this Qur'anic framework, social impact is not defined solely by challenging the status quo, engaging in public discourse, or navigating hierarchical divides between scholars and the lay public. However, the Qur'an connects the three through one more fundamental demand, namely

that expertise must return to collective capacity. The Qur'an directly avoids two extremes: the monopoly of knowledge and anti-expertise populism by placing the depth of knowledge and public responsibility in one epistemic sequence.

Integrating this paradigm into contemporary islamic education facilitates a vital shift from passive knowledge acquisition to socially responsible scholarship. Under this framework, education transcends the mere production of knowledgeable and professionally competent individuals. Instead, it successfully cultivates intellectuals capable of translating specialized expertise into critical consciousness, constructive dialogue, and transformative social action. This paradigm is particularly relevant in the modern information age, where the central challenge is no longer information accessibility, but the capacity to critically analyze, evaluate and ethically account for knowledge within the public sphere.

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