

Human Fitrah as a Foundation for Islamic Faith and Moral Education

Fierly Noer Halida¹, M. Zikri Salihima², Eva Nurfadillah³

^{1, 2, 3} UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

¹ Email: fierlyuser@gmail.com

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Abstract

Human beings are created in the best form, encompassing both physical and spiritual dimensions that function in biological and psychological domains. In Islamic thought, this dual structure is endowed with inherent dispositions known as fitrah, referring to the innate potential toward truth, goodness, and recognition of divine guidance. This study aims to examine the concept of fitrah and its role in shaping human faith and moral development. This research employs a qualitative library-based approach, drawing on primary sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as classical Islamic scholarship. The analysis is conducted using conceptual and thematic analysis to interpret key ideas related to human nature, potentiality, and deviation from innate dispositions. The findings indicate that fitrah represents a foundational spiritual capacity present from the earliest stage of human existence, including pre-earthly existence, which directs individuals toward belief in God and ethical conduct. However, environmental, social, and educational influences may lead to deviations from this innate disposition. This study contributes to Islamic educational discourse by providing a systematic conceptualization of fitrah as a basis for faith formation and moral education. It highlights the importance of aligning educational practices with human innate potential, thereby offering a framework for strengthening religious consciousness and ethical development in contemporary contexts.

Keywords

Creed; Fitrah; Human

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of fitrah occupies a central position in Islamic anthropology and educational philosophy because it explains the innate disposition with which every human being is created. In Islamic theology, fitrah refers to the natural inclination of humans to recognize the oneness of Allah (tawhid), pursue goodness, and distinguish truth from falsehood. This concept originates from the Qur'an, particularly Surah Ar-Rum (30:30), which emphasizes that Allah created humankind according to an unchanging natural disposition. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad stated that every child is born upon fitrah, while parental and environmental influences shape subsequent religious identity (Sahih al-Bukhari). Consequently, fitrah is regarded as the fundamental basis of human spirituality, morality, and intellectual development within the Islamic worldview (Nasr, 2006; Halstead, 2004).

From the perspective of Islamic education, fitrah represents not merely an inborn religious tendency but also the potential for holistic human development encompassing intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and moral dimensions. Islamic educational philosophy argues that education should nurture this innate disposition rather than replace or suppress it through external influences. According to Halstead (2004), Islamic education aims to develop balanced individuals whose intellectual and spiritual capacities remain aligned with divine guidance. Similarly, Al-Attas (1991) explains that education should cultivate the recognition of the proper place of human beings in relation to Allah, society, and the universe. Therefore, understanding fitrah provides an important theoretical foundation for designing educational practices that facilitate both spiritual growth and ethical character formation.

Human fitrah develops through continuous interaction with environmental, educational, and social factors. Although every individual possesses an inherent tendency toward truth and goodness, this potential may either flourish or deteriorate depending on the quality of external influences. The Qur'an describes humans as Allah's vicegerents (khalifah) on earth (Qur'an 2:30) and honors them above many other creations (Qur'an 17:70). Nevertheless, this elevated status does not guarantee moral excellence without continuous guidance and education. Humans are created to worship Allah (Qur'an 51:56) and have acknowledged His lordship before earthly existence (Qur'an 7:172), indicating that religious consciousness constitutes an intrinsic aspect of human identity. Educational experiences therefore play a decisive role in preserving and strengthening this innate disposition throughout life (Langgulung, 1988; Ashraf, 1985).

Previous studies have extensively discussed fitrah from theological, philosophical, and educational perspectives. Samsuri (2020) argues that fitrah serves as the essential foundation of human existence because it directs individuals toward faith, morality, and social responsibility. Likewise, Andriyani (2015) emphasizes that preserving fitrah requires continuous moral education capable of protecting individuals from negative environmental influences. Lublina (2023) further explains that sinful behavior gradually weakens human fitrah by distancing individuals from their natural inclination toward obedience to Allah. While these studies successfully describe the significance of fitrah in Islamic

life, they primarily focus on normative theological explanations without systematically integrating Qur'anic foundations, prophetic traditions, and educational implications into a comprehensive conceptual framework.

International scholarship has likewise explored the relationship between religion, spirituality, and human development from various perspectives. Halstead (2004) highlights that Islamic education fundamentally aims to nurture moral responsibility through the cultivation of innate human dispositions rooted in divine guidance. Al-Attas (1991) further maintains that genuine education should produce individuals who recognize their existential purpose and moral obligations toward Allah and society. Meanwhile, Nasr (2006) argues that the Islamic conception of human nature differs substantially from secular anthropological perspectives because it emphasizes humanity's spiritual origin and ultimate return to God. These perspectives collectively reinforce the understanding that *fitrah* constitutes not only a theological doctrine but also an educational paradigm for developing ethical and spiritually conscious individuals.

Despite the growing body of literature, several research gaps remain apparent. Existing studies generally examine *fitrah* either from theological discourse or educational philosophy independently, with limited efforts to synthesize both perspectives into a unified conceptual framework. Furthermore, few studies systematically explain how the dimensions of *fitrah*—including divine potential, rational capacity, biological nature, and moral consciousness—collectively contribute to faith formation and character development within contemporary Islamic education. The absence of such an integrative analysis limits the practical application of *fitrah* as a foundational principle for curriculum development, character education, and religious instruction in modern educational institutions.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the concept of *fitrah* as the foundational basis of human nature from the perspective of the Qur'an and Islamic scholarship while examining its implications for faith formation and moral education. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative conceptual analysis that combines Qur'anic teachings, prophetic traditions, classical Islamic scholarship, and contemporary educational theories into a comprehensive framework of human development. Accordingly, this study contributes to the discourse of Islamic education by positioning *fitrah* as the central paradigm for understanding human potential and for developing educational practices that strengthen religious consciousness, moral integrity, and holistic human development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative library research method with a descriptive qualitative approach, using descriptive and content analysis techniques. The unit of analysis in this study is the conceptual content related to the key themes and constructs discussed in the selected texts, particularly those concerning the central research problem. These units include arguments, definitions, theoretical frameworks, and interpretations presented by various scholars. Data collection is conducted through document analysis, involving systematic identification,

selection, and review of relevant literature. The data analysis procedure follows several steps. First, the researcher conducts data reduction by selecting and focusing on relevant information aligned with the research objectives. Second, the data are categorized into thematic groups based on recurring patterns and key concepts. Third, a descriptive and content analysis is applied to interpret meanings, compare perspectives, and identify relationships between concepts. Finally, conclusions are drawn by synthesizing the findings into a coherent conceptual framework that addresses the research problem.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dimensions of Human Fitrah in the Islamic Perspective

This study identifies five interconnected dimensions of human fitrah through a thematic synthesis of the Qur'an, Hadith, and contemporary Islamic educational literature. These dimensions comprise (1) divine potential (ghorizah tadayyun), (2) inclination toward truth, (3) capacity to receive education and guidance, (4) biological and intellectual potential, and (5) physical and spiritual purity. Rather than functioning independently, these dimensions collectively establish the holistic Islamic conception of human nature, integrating spiritual consciousness, cognitive development, moral responsibility, and physical well-being. Contemporary Islamic educational scholars argue that fitrah should be understood as a dynamic human potential that requires continuous nurturing through religious education, moral cultivation, and supportive social environments (Samsuri, 2020; Lubbina, 2023; Hidayat et al., 2023).

Divine Potential (Ghorizah Tadayyun)

The first dimension identified is divine potential, commonly referred to as ghorizah tadayyun, or the innate instinct toward religiosity. Islamic theology maintains that every human being is naturally predisposed to acknowledge the existence of Allah and to seek transcendental meaning throughout life. This intrinsic tendency corresponds to the primordial covenant described in Qur'an 7:172, where all human souls testified to Allah's Lordship before entering worldly existence. Consequently, faith is viewed not as an acquired characteristic but as an inherent disposition that can either be strengthened or weakened through environmental influences.

Recent studies emphasize that religious awareness develops through the interaction between innate spiritual potential and educational experiences. Hidayat et al. (2023) explain that Islamic education should facilitate the actualization of this divine potential by integrating faith-based learning with reflective and experiential educational practices. Likewise, Lubbina (2023) argues that moral deviation and persistent sinful behavior gradually obscure the purity of fitrah, reducing spiritual sensitivity and weakening religious consciousness. Therefore, strengthening ghorizah tadayyun requires educational environments that consistently cultivate worship, ethical conduct, and awareness of Allah's presence in everyday life.

Inclination toward Truth

The second dimension concerns the innate inclination toward truth (al-haqq). Humans possess an inherent desire to seek knowledge, justice, and moral certainty. Within the Islamic worldview, fitrah naturally directs individuals toward hanif values, namely sincerity, purity, and unwavering commitment to divine truth. This tendency forms the epistemological basis for accepting revelation and distinguishing right from wrong through both reason and conscience.

Recent literature indicates that the search for truth constitutes an inseparable component of Islamic character development. According to Abdullah and Hashim (2022), Islamic education encourages learners to combine rational inquiry with spiritual reflection, enabling individuals to understand knowledge as a means of approaching Allah rather than merely achieving intellectual competence. Similarly, Hasan and Arif (2021) note that contemporary Muslim societies require educational approaches capable of strengthening students' ethical reasoning while preserving their spiritual identity amid rapid social transformation. Thus, fitrah functions not only as a theological concept but also as a cognitive orientation guiding humans toward meaningful and value-based learning.

Capacity to Receive Education and Divine Guidance

Another important dimension identified in this study is humanity's capacity to receive education and divine guidance. Islamic teachings affirm that humans are naturally prepared to accept revelation because fitrah provides the internal disposition necessary for understanding and embracing tawhid. Education therefore serves as the external mechanism through which this innate potential is nurtured and transformed into observable religious attitudes and behaviors.

Recent educational research highlights that effective Islamic education should not merely transmit religious information but also facilitate character formation through meaningful learning experiences. According to Rahman et al. (2024), faith-oriented education becomes more effective when learners actively participate in reflective, collaborative, and experiential learning processes. Likewise, Hidayat et al. (2023) emphasize that holistic Islamic education integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, enabling students to internalize religious values rather than simply memorize doctrinal content. These findings reinforce the argument that education acts as a catalyst for actualizing the latent potential embedded within human fitrah.

Biological and Intellectual Potential

The fourth dimension concerns biological and intellectual potential. Islam views the human body, intellect ('aql), senses, and emotions as divine endowments entrusted to humanity for fulfilling its responsibilities as Allah's vicegerent (khalifah) on earth. Biological potential encompasses physical growth, neurological development, sensory perception, and cognitive abilities that enable humans to understand revelation, reflect upon the signs of Allah (ayat kauniyyah), and make ethical decisions. The Qur'an repeatedly encourages believers to observe nature, think critically, and employ reason as means of

strengthening faith (Qur'an 3:190–191). Consequently, biological and intellectual capacities should not be viewed merely as natural attributes but as instruments for achieving spiritual excellence and fulfilling humanity's religious responsibilities.

Recent studies in Islamic educational philosophy emphasize that intellectual development and spiritual growth should proceed simultaneously rather than independently. Rahman et al. (2023) argue that Islamic education promotes holistic human development by integrating scientific reasoning, ethical values, and spiritual consciousness within the learning process. Likewise, Abdullah and Rashid (2022) explain that cognitive competence without spiritual guidance may produce technically capable individuals who lack moral responsibility, whereas balanced educational approaches foster intellectual excellence together with ethical commitment. These findings support the Qur'anic perspective that human intellect functions most effectively when guided by revelation and moral values. Therefore, biological and intellectual potentials constitute complementary dimensions of fitrah that enable individuals to understand divine guidance and contribute positively to society.

The Origin of Human Creation

Another important finding emerging from the literature concerns the theological understanding of human creation as the foundation of fitrah. Islamic sources explain that the creation of Prophet Adam (AS) represents the beginning of human existence and establishes humanity's unique position among Allah's creations. Classical narrations describe that Adam was created from successive stages of earthly materials—turab (dust), tin (clay), hama' masnun (black mud), and shalshal kal-fakhkhar (dried clay resembling pottery)—before Allah breathed into him the divine spirit (ruh) (Qur'an 15:28–29; 38:71–72). This dual composition illustrates that humans possess both material and spiritual dimensions that must develop harmoniously throughout life.

Furthermore, Islamic tradition records the primordial covenant (mithaq) between Allah and the descendants of Adam as narrated in Qur'an 7:172, in which every human soul testified to Allah's lordship before earthly existence. Contemporary Islamic scholars interpret this covenant as evidence that belief in Allah is embedded within human nature from the very beginning of existence rather than acquired solely through external learning (Samsuri, 2020; Hidayat et al., 2023). Consequently, religious education should be understood as a process of awakening and strengthening this inherent disposition rather than introducing an entirely new belief system. This theological perspective reinforces the understanding that fitrah precedes socialization and remains the essential spiritual foundation of human identity.

Physical and Spiritual Purity

The fifth dimension identified in this study concerns physical and spiritual purity. Islamic teachings emphasize that human well-being depends upon maintaining harmony between bodily cleanliness and spiritual refinement. Physical purity (taharah) is not merely a hygienic practice but also symbolizes

obedience, discipline, and readiness to perform acts of worship. Spiritual purity, meanwhile, refers to the purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) from arrogance, envy, hypocrisy, and other destructive moral qualities that obscure the natural disposition of *fitrah*.

The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of preserving *fitrah* through practices of personal hygiene, stating:

"Five practices are part of *fitrah*: circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, trimming the mustache, cutting the nails, and removing the armpit hair." (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Beyond physical cleanliness, Islamic scholars argue that spiritual purification remains essential for preserving the original purity of human nature. Recent studies indicate that regular worship, remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), repentance (*tawbah*), and ethical behavior contribute significantly to strengthening psychological well-being and spiritual resilience (Lubbina, 2023; Rahman et al., 2024). From an educational perspective, character education rooted in Islamic values should therefore integrate both physical discipline and spiritual cultivation to support the comprehensive development of learners. Such an approach enables individuals to maintain their *fitrah* while responding constructively to contemporary moral and social challenges.

The findings demonstrate that *fitrah* should be understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing theological, educational, biological, cognitive, and moral dimensions. The five dimensions identified in this study are mutually interconnected and collectively explain the holistic conception of human beings in Islam. Rather than representing isolated characteristics, divine potential, inclination toward truth, educational receptivity, biological capability, and spiritual purity interact continuously throughout human development. This finding supports contemporary Islamic educational theories that emphasize the integration of intellectual excellence, moral responsibility, and spiritual consciousness as the primary objectives of education (Hidayat et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2024).

The present findings also reinforce the Qur'anic understanding that *fitrah* serves as the foundation of faith formation and ethical behavior. Humans naturally possess the capacity to recognize divine truth; however, this potential requires continuous guidance through education, family influence, and a supportive social environment. This interpretation is consistent with recent studies indicating that Islamic education should focus not only on cognitive achievement but also on nurturing learners' spiritual awareness and moral integrity (Abdullah & Hashim, 2022). Consequently, educational institutions should design learning experiences that encourage reflection, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and religious practice simultaneously.

Furthermore, the integration of classical Islamic teachings with contemporary educational perspectives demonstrates that *fitrah* remains highly relevant for addressing modern educational challenges. Rapid technological advancement, globalization, and cultural transformation expose learners to diverse value systems that may either strengthen or weaken their innate disposition toward goodness. Therefore, educational practices grounded in the

concept of fitrah provide an important framework for developing learners who are intellectually competent, spiritually conscious, morally responsible, and socially engaged. This holistic perspective aligns with the broader objectives of Islamic education (maqasid al-tarbiyah), which seek to cultivate balanced individuals capable of contributing positively to both religious and worldly life.

Overall, this study contributes to the contemporary discourse of Islamic education by offering an integrated conceptual framework that explains fitrah as the fundamental basis of human development. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss fitrah from theological or philosophical perspectives, this research synthesizes Qur'anic teachings, prophetic traditions, classical scholarship, and recent educational literature into a unified model. This framework provides a theoretical foundation for future studies investigating curriculum development, character education, spiritual formation, and faith-based pedagogy within Islamic educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that fitrah constitutes the fundamental nature of human beings in Islam, encompassing interconnected dimensions of divine potential, inclination toward truth, receptivity to education, biological and intellectual capacity, and physical as well as spiritual purity. The findings demonstrate that these dimensions collectively shape human faith, moral consciousness, and holistic personal development. Through a thematic analysis of the Qur'an, Hadith, and contemporary Islamic scholarship, this study confirms that fitrah is not merely an innate disposition but a dynamic potential that requires continuous cultivation through Islamic education, moral guidance, and supportive social environments. Accordingly, the study achieves its objective by establishing fitrah as the foundational paradigm for understanding human development from an Islamic perspective and highlighting its significant implications for strengthening faith formation, character education, and ethical behavior in contemporary Muslim society. Moreover, this conceptual framework provides a theoretical foundation for developing educational practices that integrate spiritual values with intellectual and moral development, thereby contributing to the advancement of holistic Islamic education.

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