

The Relevance of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's and Muhammad Abduh's Educational Thought to Contemporary Education

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Abstract: This study examines the educational philosophy of 19th-century Islamic modernist reformers Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, analyzing its enduring relevance to contemporary educational challenges. Modern educational systems—particularly within Muslim-majority societies—frequently grapple with epistemological dualism, pedagogical dogmatism, and a structural gap between traditional moral formation and rapid scientific-technological advancement. Utilizing a qualitative philosophical inquiry and historical-hermeneutic content analysis, this paper systematically evaluates Afghani's anti-colonial, socio-political educational awakening alongside Abduh's institutional and curricular reform paradigms at Al-Azhar. The findings reveal that both thinkers formulated a revolutionary synthesis that rejected *taqlid* (uncritical imitation), advocated for the revival of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), and championed the integration of modern empirical sciences with dynamic Islamic ethics. The study demonstrates that al-Afghani's emphasis on critical political consciousness and Abduh's structural integration of sacred and secular knowledge offer vital theoretical models for resolving contemporary epistemological bifurcation, combating instructional passivity, and cultivating ethically grounded, critically minded citizens capable of navigating globalized knowledge economies.

Keywords:

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani;
Muhammad Abduh;
Islamic Modernism;
Educational Reform;
Epistemological Dualism;
Contemporary Pedagogy

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji filosofi pendidikan pemikir reformis modernis Islam abad ke-19, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani dan Muhammad Abduh, serta menganalisis relevansinya yang berkelanjutan terhadap tantangan pendidikan kontemporer. Sistem pendidikan modern—khususnya di masyarakat Muslim—sering kali bergelut dengan dikotomi epistemologis, dogmatisme pedagogis, dan kesenjangan struktural antara pembentukan moral tradisional dengan kemajuan sains-teknologi yang pesat. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis kajian filosofis dan analisis isi historis-hermeneutik, artikel ini secara sistematis mengevaluasi kesadaran pendidikan sosio-politik anti-kolonial al-Afghani bersanding dengan paradigma reformasi institusional dan kurikuler Abduh di Al-Azhar. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua pemikir merumuskan sintesis revolusioner yang menolak *taqlid* (peniruan buta), mendorong pembaharuan *ijtihad* (penalaran kritis mandiri), dan memperjuangkan integrasi sains empiris modern dengan etika Islam yang dinamis. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa penekanan al-Afghani pada kesadaran politik kritis dan integrasi struktural pengetahuan sekuler-agama oleh Abduh memberikan model teoritis yang sangat penting untuk mengatasi dikotomi epistemologis

Kata Kunci:

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani;
Muhammad Abduh;
Modernisme Islam;
Reformasi Pendidikan;
Dikotomi Epistemologis;
Pedagogi Kontemporer

kontemporer, memerangi pasivitas pembelajaran, serta membentuk warga negara yang berpikir kritis dan berkarakter etis di tengah ekonomi pengetahuan global.

A. Introduction

Modern educational paradigms across the globe are increasingly confronting a profound crisis of purpose characterized by technological acceleration, market-driven utilitarianism, and hyper-standardization. As global schooling becomes overwhelmingly dominated by transactional metrics and economic imperatives, educational institutions frequently alienate learners from their moral, spiritual, and civic responsibilities (Biesta, 2010). This reductionist trend has diminished the holistic dimension of human development, transforming education from a transformative pursuit of wisdom into an instrumentalist mechanism for vocational efficiency and material output (Nussbaum, 2010).

In Muslim-majority nations and post-colonial societies, this global crisis is further compounded by a persistent structural and ideological challenge: epistemological dualism. Contemporary schooling in these regions remains deeply fractured between secular modern institutions that prioritize technical skills without moral grounding and traditional religious institutions that frequently struggle to engage with modern empirical sciences and social realities (al-Attas, 1980; Hashim, 1996). This persistent bifurcation leaves educated youth stranded between an uncritical adoption of Western modernity and an insular traditionalism detached from contemporary global dynamics.

The historical origins of this epistemological bifurcation lie in the 19th-century colonial encounter, during which European secular schooling models were superimposed upon traditional educational institutions across the Islamic world. Colonial administrations introduced bureaucratized, utilitarian schooling designed primarily for civil administration, systematically marginalizing traditional madrasas and religious seminaries (Keddie, 1972;

Hourani, 1983). Consequently, classical educational frameworks—which had historically synthesized rational philosophy, natural sciences, and divine revelation—were fragmented into segregated tracks of secular technical training and dogmatic religious instruction.

In response to the dual threats of European imperial dominance and internal socio-intellectual stagnation, 19th-century Islamic Modernism emerged as a dynamic reformist movement. Reformers sought to construct alternative educational frameworks that were deeply rooted in Islamic intellectual tradition while actively engaging with modern scientific rationality, critical inquiry, and socio-political renewal (Kurzman, 2002; Voll, 1994). This intellectual movement argued that true Islamic revival (*nahdah*) was impossible without a thorough overhaul of educational philosophy, curriculum design, and instructional practices.

At the forefront of this intellectual revival stood Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), a charismatic, itinerant pan-Islamic philosopher, political activist, and educator. Operating across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, Afghani argued that the decline of Muslim societies was not due to the inherent teachings of Islam, but rather to intellectual passivity, political fragmentation, and the abandonment of rational inquiry (Keddie, 1972; Pakdaman, 1969). Afghani envisioned education as an indispensable instrument of anti-colonial resistance, political consciousness, and intellectual empowerment.

Central to Afghani's educational philosophy was the belief that true learning is inherently dynamic, political, and liberating. He forcefully criticized traditional religious scholars (*'ulama*) for treating knowledge as a static, sacred museum artifact rather than a living tool for social transformation and self-determination (Afghani, 1968; Adams, 1933). For Afghani, an educational system that fails to cultivate critical political awareness, scientific curiosity, and anti-imperialist solidarity is fundamentally failing its moral and civilizational mission.

Building upon Afghani's revolutionary spark, his foremost disciple, Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), translated these reformist ideals into systematic pedagogical theories, curricular models, and institutional strategies. While Afghani was primarily a political agitator and visionary philosopher, Abduh was a theologian, jurist, and practical educator who recognized that lasting political revival required deep, gradual structural reform of educational institutions (Abduh, 1903; Hourani, 1983). Abduh's work focused on reforming the internal mechanics of schooling, teacher training, and theological hermeneutics.

Abduh's educational vision reached its operational maturity during his tenure as a leading reform force at Al-Azhar University and later as the Grand Mufti of Egypt. He sought to dismantle the rigid, traditionalist pedagogy of Al-Azhar by introducing modern science, history, geography, and rational philosophy into the classical curriculum (Gesink, 2009; Scharbrodt, 2007). Abduh argued that a modern Islamic university must produce graduates who are simultaneously well-versed in divine law (*Shari'ah*) and fully equipped to address the socio-technological challenges of the modern nation-state.

A cornerstone of both Afghani and Abduh's pedagogical critique was their uncompromising rejection of *taqlid*—the uncritical, blind imitation of historical juristic rulings and medieval commentaries. They argued that *taqlid* had paralyzed the Muslim mind, replacing vibrant intellectual inquiry with passive memorization and dogmatic conformity (Afghani & Abduh, 1884; Hallaq, 1984). In its place, both thinkers advocated for the urgent reopening of *ijtihad* (independent rational reasoning) as an essential educational practice for both teachers and students.

In place of *taqlid*, Afghani and Abduh proposed a dynamic epistemological synthesis that restored reason (*'aql*) to its rightful place alongside divine revelation (*naql*). They asserted that sound human reason and true divine revelation are inherently compatible and mutually illuminating, as both originate from the same ultimate source of truth (Moaddel, 2005; Saeed,

2006). This synthesis provided a theological and philosophical justification for integrating modern natural and social sciences into religious curricula without fear of spiritual compromise.

Crucially, both reformers maintained that the acquisition of modern empirical science (*'ulum al-hadithah*) was not an act of cultural capitulation to the West, but rather a retrieval of Islam's own intellectual heritage. They reminded their contemporaries that early classical Islamic civilization flourished precisely because it embraced scientific experimentation, mathematical inquiry, and philosophical dialogue with other cultures (Afghani, 1968; Abduh, 1966). Consequently, mastering modern science was framed as a religious duty (*fard*) essential for civilizational survival and human flourishing.

Beyond epistemological integration, Afghani and Abduh recognized that education must serve as the primary engine for cultivating civic responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), ethical citizenship, and public virtue. They argued that true schooling should not merely produce compliant subjects or technical specialists, but active, ethically conscious citizens capable of contributing to the public good (*maslahah*) and challenging tyrannical governance (Hourani, 1983; Pink, 2010). Education was thus conceptualized as a moral contract between the individual, the community, and God.

In terms of instructional methodology, both thinkers forcefully challenged traditional rote memorization (*hifz*) when stripped of conceptual comprehension and critical reflection. They advocated for active learning strategies, dialogic teaching, and reflective inquiry that encouraged students to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and articulate independent arguments (Gesink, 2009; Starrett, 1998). This methodological shift aimed to cultivate autonomous thinkers rather than passive consumers of authoritative texts.

Furthermore, their educational philosophy sought to harmonize traditional moral formation (*tarbiyah* and *ta'dib*) with the functional demands of a rapidly modernizing world. They insisted that moral character (*akhlaq*) must

not be taught as abstract legalistic rules, but as lived values embedded in social justice, civic engagement, and intellectual honesty (al-Attas, 1980; Halstead, 2004). Character education, in their view, was the essential foundation that prevented scientific and technological progress from degenerating into moral chaos.

The educational dilemmas that Afghani and Abduh confronted in the late 19th century remain strikingly relevant to contemporary educational systems in the 21st century. Today, schools and universities worldwide continue to struggle with curriculum fragmentation, the ethical implications of technological expansion, and the challenge of balancing cultural identity with global interconnectedness (Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Tan, 2011). Re-engaging with Afghani and Abduh's thought provides contemporary educators with a historical blueprint for navigating these ongoing tensions.

Moreover, in an era marked by rising ideological polarization, religious extremism, and dogmatic anti-intellectualism, the rationalist and reformist hermeneutics of Afghani and Abduh offer a vital intellectual antidote. Their insistence on context-aware interpretation, critical reasoning, and moral humanism challenges both literalist religious fanaticism and aggressive secular reductionism (Abu-Rabi, 2004; Esposito & Voll, 2001). Their framework demonstrates how religious traditions can engage constructively with modern democratic and scientific ideals.

As digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and globalized knowledge economies rapidly redefine learning environments, contemporary education faces an urgent need for robust ethical and philosophical anchors. Uncritical technological adoption without ethical reflection threatens to deepen social inequalities and dehumanize learning (Postman, 1995; Selwyn, 2016). Afghani and Abduh's holistic educational philosophy provides a framework for harnessing technological advancements while keeping human dignity, ethical accountability, and social justice at the center of the learning process.

Despite the extensive literature on Islamic modernism, existing scholarship frequently isolates Afghani and Abduh's political activism and theological writings from their specific contributions to educational theory and practice. Studies often treat their educational ideas as secondary footnotes to their broader political campaigns or legal reforms, underestimating their potential to inform modern pedagogical models (Haj, 1998; Sedgwick, 2010). A systematic exploration of their educational thought remains necessary to unlock its full utility for contemporary schooling.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to systematically analyze the relevance and conceptual alignment of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's and Muhammad Abduh's educational thought to contemporary educational challenges. By bringing their 19th-century reformist vision into constructive dialogue with modern pedagogical theory, this research aims to formulate an integrated framework for resolving epistemological dualism, revitalizing critical pedagogy, and cultivating ethical citizenship in a globalized world.

Specifically, this study aims to achieve four key sub-objectives: first, to examine the foundational philosophical tenets of Afghani and Abduh regarding the synthesis of reason, revelation, and empirical science; second, to evaluate their critique of epistemological dualism and pedagogical dogmatism (*taqlid*); third, to analyze their strategies for institutional, curricular, and methodological reform within traditional and modern schooling; and fourth, to propose an integrated pedagogical framework based on their thought to address contemporary challenges of digital literacy, critical thinking, and ethical citizenship in contemporary education.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative philosophical-hermeneutic research design grounded in historical-interpretive analysis to examine the educational philosophies of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. Philosophical inquiry in education allows for the rigorous critique of underlying

epistemological, ontological, and pedagogical assumptions embedded within educational theories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Utilizing a Gadamerian hermeneutic analytical lens, the study approaches historical texts not as static artifacts, but as dynamic intellectual frameworks capable of entering into a meaningful "fusion of horizons" with contemporary educational dilemmas (Gadamer, 2004). This methodological approach enables the researcher to systematically unpack 19th-century Islamic modernist concepts—such as the rejection of *taqlid* and the revival of *ijtihad*—and evaluate their theoretical applicability to 21st-century schooling challenges (Snyder, 2019).

The primary data corpus was constructed using a criterion-based theoretical sampling strategy, selecting foundational primary texts authored by al-Afghani and Abduh alongside authoritative secondary scholarship (Bowen, 2009). Primary sources for al-Afghani include his seminal essays in *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa* (The Firmest Bond), *The Refutation of the Materialists*, and his various public lectures on education and science (Afghani, 1968; Afghani & Abduh, 1884). Primary sources for Abduh comprise *Risalat al-Tawhid* (The Theology of Unity), excerpts from *Tafsir al-Manar*, and his official administrative reports regarding the curricular reform of Al-Azhar University (Abduh, 1903, 1966). These primary texts were supplemented by critical secondary literature detailing the socio-historical context of 19th-century Islamic modernism and contemporary theories of educational reform (Adams, 1933; Hourani, 1983; Keddie, 1972).

To ensure systematic retrieval and rigorous data collection, a formal document search and selection protocol was established across academic databases, including Scopus, JSTOR, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, adapting PRISMA guidelines for qualitative document analysis (Moher et al., 2009). The retrieval protocol utilized targeted Boolean combinations such as ("Jamal al-Din al-Afghani" OR "Muhammad Abduh") AND ("educational reform" OR "epistemological dualism" OR "ijtihad" OR "taqlid" OR "modernism"). Textual selection was governed by explicit inclusion criteria:

peer-reviewed monographs, scholarly book chapters, and direct primary source translations in English and Arabic that specifically addressed educational philosophy, institutional reform, or intellectual epistemology, thereby guaranteeing high academic validity and thematic relevance (Krippendorff, 2018).

Textual data were analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) integrated with Hermeneutic Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Krippendorff, 2018). Utilizing qualitative data analysis software, the textual corpus underwent a two-tiered coding process. Initial open coding identified primary conceptual units related to pedagogical dogmatism, reason vs. revelation, scientific literacy, anti-colonial resistance, and moral character. Subsequent axial and theoretical coding organized these categories into a structured comparative matrix, mapping al-Afghani's macro-political vision of educational liberation alongside Abduh's micro-institutional strategies for curricular reform. This analytical process facilitated the thematic synthesis of their combined educational framework against modern challenges such as epistemological bifurcation and rote instruction.

Methodological rigor and trustworthiness were maintained by adhering to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) qualitative criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was achieved through source triangulation—cross-referencing primary treatises with secondary historical accounts and modern pedagogical theories (Whittemore et al., 2001). Dependability and confirmability were sustained through an explicit audit trail documenting all textual selection criteria, coding schemes, and interpretive pathways. To prevent the methodological trap of presentism—uncritically imposing modern concepts onto historical figures—the analysis maintained strict historical contextualization, ensuring that al-Afghani and Abduh's reformist principles were interpreted authentically within their original 19th-century milieu before assessing their transferability to contemporary educational contexts (Secules et al., 2021).

C. Results and Discussion

The qualitative content analysis and hermeneutic synthesis demonstrate that the educational thought of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh offers a remarkably cogent, highly relevant conceptual framework for addressing contemporary educational crises. The findings reveal that while al-Afghani provided the macro-political vision—framing education as an anti-colonial catalyst for political consciousness and civilizational awakening—Abduh supplied the micro-institutional mechanics, translating these revolutionary principles into concrete curricular, pedagogical, and structural reforms (Keddie, 1972; Hourani, 1983). Together, their integrated reformist vision provides a historical blueprint for overcoming epistemological bifurcation, instructional passivity, and moral fragmentation in contemporary schooling.

A central finding of this study is al-Afghani and Abduh's systematic dismantling of epistemological dualism—the artificial dichotomy separating sacred religious knowledge (*'ulum al-din*) from secular empirical sciences (*'ulum al-dunya*). Both thinkers forcefully argued that segregating empirical scientific inquiry from spiritual and moral foundations creates an intellectually crippled and socially stagnated citizenry (Afghani, 1968; Abduh, 1966). This finding directly addresses the persistent structural bifurcation in contemporary Muslim-majority societies, where students are frequently forced to choose between secular technical institutions devoid of moral grounding and traditional seminaries isolated from modern scientific rationality (al-Attas, 1980; Hashim, 1996).

To resolve this epistemological rift, al-Afghani and Abduh formulated a dynamic synthesis that restored divine revelation (*naql*) and human reason (*'aql*) to a complementary, mutually reinforcing relationship. They insisted that true revelation and sound reason emanate from the same divine source, asserting that scientific discovery is fundamentally an exploration of the natural laws (*sunnatullah*) embedded in creation (Moaddel, 2005; Saeed, 2006). In contemporary educational contexts, this integrated epistemology allows curriculum designers to present modern natural and social sciences not as alien secular imports, but as intrinsic components of a holistic search for truth.

Furthermore, the results highlight al-Afghani's radical framing of scientific literacy as an act of civilizational retrieval and anti-colonial empowerment. Afghani reminded his contemporaries that early Islamic civilization achieved its golden age precisely because it embraced scientific experimentation, mathematical innovation, and rational philosophical inquiry (Afghani, 1968). In contemporary education, where Global South institutions frequently wrestle with feelings of scientific inadequacy and Eurocentric intellectual dependency, Afghani's historical perspective provides learners with cultural pride and intellectual agency, recasting modern science as a universal human heritage (Santos, 2014).

A critical pillar of both reformers' pedagogical critique was their uncompromising rejection of *taqlid*—the uncritical, blind imitation of historical juristic rulings and traditional authorities. They identified *taqlid* as the primary cause of intellectual decay, diagnosing it as a cognitive disease that turns educational institutions into repositories of passive memorization (Afghani & Abduh, 1884; Hallaq, 1984). This finding carries urgent relevance for contemporary schooling, which continues to be plagued by hyper-standardized testing metrics, rote learning, and pedagogical dogmatism that discourage independent critical thought (Biesta, 2010; Nussbaum, 2010).

In place of *taqlid*, al-Afghani and Abduh championed the pedagogical revival of *ijtihad*—the practice of independent rational reasoning and critical problem-solving. They argued that *ijtihad* must not remain an abstract legal tool reserved exclusively for medieval jurists, but should be operationalized as an active learning disposition across all disciplines (Abduh, 1903; Kurzman, 2002). Applied to contemporary classrooms, teaching through the lens of *ijtihad* shifts the educational paradigm from passive information consumption to active intellectual inquiry, training students to critically analyze information, evaluate evidence, and formulate autonomous, evidence-based arguments.

The analysis further highlights al-Afghani's distinct contribution: the integration of critical political consciousness (*al-wa'y al-siyasi*) into educational philosophy. Afghani asserted that an educational system that ignores socio-political oppression, imperial domination, and domestic tyranny is fundamentally defective (Afghani, 1968; Pakdaman, 1969). This perspective aligns remarkably with modern critical pedagogy,

echoing Paulo Freire's (1970) assertion that education is never neutral—it either functions as an instrument of conformity or becomes the practice of freedom.

By connecting al-Afghani's political educational thought with contemporary critical pedagogy, educational institutions are equipped to cultivate critical civic engagement among learners. In an era dominated by market-driven neoliberal schooling that reduces students to future economic units, Afghani's vision reminds educators that schooling must nurture socio-political awareness, democratic participation, and a commitment to social justice (Giroux, 2011). Learners are encouraged to analyze structural inequalities, challenge authoritarian narratives, and actively contribute to public welfare (*maslahah*).

Complementing Afghani's macro-political vision, Muhammad Abduh's concrete institutional reforms at Al-Azhar University provide a practical model for structural educational transformation. Abduh recognized that grand ideological slogans were useless without systematic curricular restructuring, administrative modernization, and teacher training (Abduh, 1903; Gesink, 2009). He successfully introduced subjects such as world history, geography, mathematics, modern philosophy, and health sciences into the traditional Islamic curriculum, demonstrating that traditional religious institutions can modernize without forfeiting their core spiritual identity.

Abduh's institutional strategy offers valuable lessons for modern curriculum integration in both religious and secular educational systems. Contemporary Islamic schools and universities often struggle to create balanced curricula, frequently adding modern subjects as superficial add-ons rather than genuinely integrating them (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Abduh's model demonstrates that true integration requires a deep structural harmonization, where modern empirical disciplines and traditional ethical frameworks interact dialectically within a unified pedagogical vision.

In the realm of classroom dynamics, Abduh forcefully advocated for transforming the role of the teacher from an authoritarian transmitter of fixed truths into an empathetic guide (*Murabbi*) and intellectual facilitator. He condemned the corporal punishment, mechanical drill exercises, and psychological intimidation that characterized 19th-century traditional schooling, arguing that true learning requires a supportive atmosphere of mutual respect and intellectual curiosity (Abduh, 1903; Scharbrodt, 2007). This model aligns directly with contemporary student-centered

learning theories that emphasize psychological safety, dialogic teaching, and reflective mentoring (Noddings, 2013).

The findings also emphasize the rejection of rote memorization (*hifz*) when disconnected from conceptual understanding and practical application. Both thinkers argued that memorizing complex theological or legal texts without understanding their contextual meaning breeds intellectual stagnation and moral hypocrisy (Afghani & Abduh, 1884). Applied to modern instructional design, this principle supports a shift toward inquiry-based learning, problem-solving activities, and dialogic classroom discussions that prioritize deep conceptual mastery over superficial performance metrics.

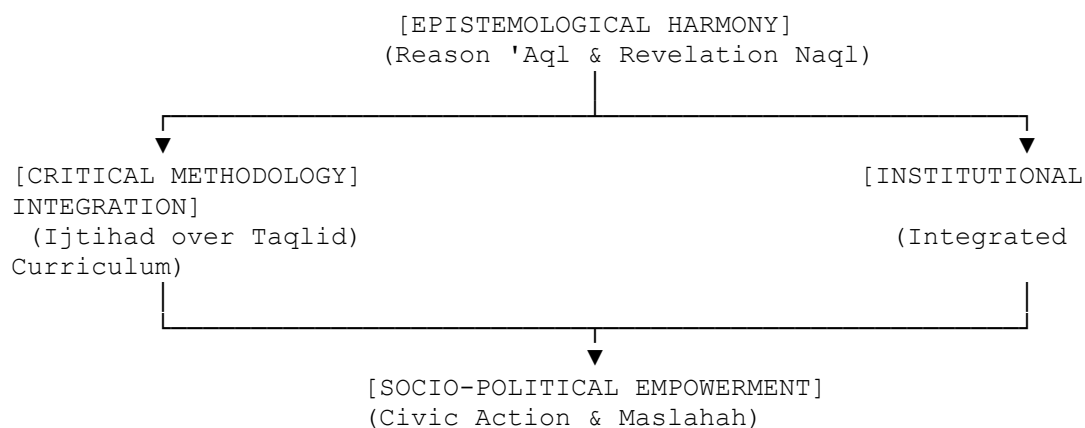
Regarding character education, al-Afghani and Abduh maintained that moral formation (*tarbiyah* and *ta'dib*) must be intrinsically woven into rational inquiry rather than taught as isolated, dogmatic rules. They recognized that scientific and technological advancement without moral grounding leads to ethical anarchy and societal exploitation (Abduh, 1966; Adams, 1933). This finding offers a vital corrective to modern STEM-dominated educational trends that prioritize technical competence while marginalizing ethics, philosophy, and the humanities (Nussbaum, 2010).

Both reformers reconceptualized character education as the cultivation of active civic virtue (*akhlaq ijtimaiyyah*) oriented toward public service and collective progress. They argued that genuine piety (*taqwa*) is not demonstrated through passive withdrawal from society or superficial ritualism, but through active engagement in social reform, public health, economic justice, and community development (Hourani, 1983; Pink, 2010). Character education in modern schools, therefore, must move beyond individual compliance to foster social responsibility, empathy, and active citizenship.

In the context of the 21st-century digital landscape, al-Afghani and Abduh's dynamic rationalism provides a powerful framework for developing digital literacy and information evaluation skills. Facing an influx of digital media, algorithm-driven misinformation, and artificial intelligence, contemporary learners require high-level critical thinking skills to distinguish truth from manipulation (Selwyn, 2016). Applying Abduh's principle of *ijtihad* encourages students to approach digital information critically, verify sources, evaluate ideological biases, and use technology ethically for human flourishing.

Furthermore, Abduh's openness to cross-cultural learning and inter-civilizational dialogue presents a timely model for multicultural education. Abduh maintained extensive intellectual exchanges with European scholars, arguing that wisdom (*hikmah*) is the lost property of the believer, to be embraced wherever it is found (Abduh, 1966; Sedgwick, 2010). In contemporary globalized, multicultural classrooms, this open-minded posture fosters intercultural dialogue, reduces dogmatic insularity, and prepares students to collaborate constructively across cultural and religious divides.

Synthesizing the core findings yields an "Integrated Reformist Educational Framework" based on al-Afghani and Abduh's thought. This framework connects four core dimensions: (1) Epistemological Harmony ('*Aql* & '*Naql*'), (2) Critical Methodology (*Ijtihad* over *Taqlid*), (3) Institutional Integration (Holistic Curricula), and (4) Socio-Political Empowerment (Civic Engagement & *Maslahah*).



Implementing this reformist framework in contemporary educational systems inevitably encounters systemic challenges, including administrative inertia, conservative resistance from traditionalist institutions, and inadequate teacher preparation (Daun & Arjmand, 2005). Overcoming these obstacles requires updating teacher training institutes, developing interdisciplinary learning materials, and engaging policy leaders in dialogues that demonstrate how integrating modern science with critical Islamic rationalism strengthens, rather than weakens, cultural and religious identity.

Educational policy makers in both Muslim-majority and multicultural contexts can draw directly upon Abduh's practical reform strategies to design dual-competency training programs. Teachers must be equipped with both

modern pedagogical methodologies and a deep understanding of integrated epistemology, enabling them to guide students through the complex intersections of faith, science, technology, and ethics in modern society (Starrett, 1998; Tan, 2011).

Ultimately, the results demonstrate that Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh offer a non-Eurocentric, culturally authentic, and intellectually robust blueprint for educational modernization. By rejecting epistemological dualism, dismantling pedagogical dogmatism (*taqlid*), and uniting scientific rationality with moral purpose, their 19th-century reformist legacy continues to provide contemporary education with a vital beacon for cultivating critically minded, ethically grounded, and socially responsible global citizens.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the educational philosophies of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh offer a remarkably resilient and intellectually robust framework for addressing contemporary educational crises. In an era marked by epistemological dualism, hyper-standardized testing, and market-driven utilitarianism, their 19th-century reformist vision provides a vital blueprint for structural renewal. By uniting al-Afghani's macro-political vision of civilizational awakening and critical consciousness with Abduh's micro-institutional strategies for curricular modernization at Al-Azhar, their combined legacy offers a holistic model that bridges the unnatural divide between traditional religious values and modern empirical sciences.

At the pedagogical and methodological level, their thought provides concrete solutions to the widespread challenges of instructional passivity and dogmatic learning. By systematically dismantling *taqlid* (blind imitation) and championing the practice of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) across both religious and secular subjects, their framework transforms classrooms into vibrant centers of critical inquiry, dialogic teaching, and problem-solving. Furthermore, by recasting moral education (*tarbiyah* and *ta'dib*) as active civic virtue (*maslahah*) rather than passive legalistic compliance, their model equips learners with the analytical tools and ethical grounding needed to navigate

modern digital media, evaluate scientific advancements, and challenge socio-political inequalities.

Ultimately, re-engaging with al-Afghani and Abduh's legacy facilitates a vital non-Eurocentric dialogue in educational theory, offering a culturally authentic path to modernization that bypasses both aggressive secularization and insular traditionalism. For educational leaders, curriculum developers, and policy makers in Muslim-majority societies and multicultural contexts alike, this integrated reformist model serves as an enduring guide. By embedding their principles of rational synthesis, critical agency, and social responsibility into contemporary schooling, institutions can fulfill their higher purpose: nurturing intellectually empowered, ethically grounded, and socially engaged citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to global human flourishing.

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