



MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT

<https://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/myjid>

How to cite this article:

Che' Zahari, A.A.I., & Hanapi. M.S. (2026). From ritual to method: Repositioning *tadabbur* as a methodological process in Islamic-based human development. *Malaysian Journal of Islamic Development*, 1(1), 32-45. <https://doi.org/10.32890/myjid2026.1.1.3>

FROM RITUAL TO METHOD: REPOSITIONING *TADABBUR* AS A METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS IN ISLAMIC-BASED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Received: 14/4/2026

Revised: 20/5/2026

Accepted: 2/6/2026

Published: 31/7/2026

ABSTRACT

Contemporary discourse on Islamic-based human development (IbHD) is increasingly marked by an epistemological imbalance, in which developmental frameworks remain heavily influenced by secular psychological paradigms while Qur'anic concepts are often confined to normative or symbolic roles. Within this context, *tadabbur* al-Qur'an is frequently reduced to a devotional practice rather than being understood as a structured methodological process that mediates between revelation and human transformation. This reduction has contributed to a critical gap in IbHD, where engagement with the Qur'an remains largely ritualistic—centered on recitation and memorization—without generating sustained cognitive, spiritual, and ethical development. This article aims to reposition *tadabbur* as an operational method within IbHD by examining its epistemological role in transforming revealed knowledge into lived human experience. Employing a qualitative conceptual approach, the study systematically analyzes selected Qur'anic verses, classical Islamic scholarship, and contemporary literature on Qur'anic engagement, Islamic psychology, and human development through conceptual analysis and thematic synthesis. The study critically evaluates the limitations of prevailing approaches, including the influence of pseudo-scientific constructs, selective textual appropriation, and the emerging risks of epistemic outsourcing in the digital and post-artificial intelligence era. The study argues that *tadabbur* should be understood not merely as reflective contemplation, but as a disciplined Qur'anic process of reflective meaning internalization that integrates cognition, affect, and action. By reframing *tadabbur* beyond ritual practice, the study highlights its role as a methodological bridge between revelation and holistic human development. It concludes that restoring *tadabbur* as an operational method is essential for developing a coherent, revelation-based framework of IbHD capable of addressing contemporary epistemological and pedagogical challenges.

Keywords: Human transformation, Islamic-based human development, Qur'anic epistemology, reflective meaning internalization, *tadabbur* al-Qur'an.

ABSTRAK

Wacana kontemporari mengenai pembangunan insan berteraskan Islam (PIBI) semakin memperlihatkan ketidakseimbangan epistemologi apabila kerangka pembangunan masih banyak dipengaruhi oleh paradigma psikologi sekular, manakala konsep-konsep al-Qur'an sering dihadkan kepada fungsi normatif atau simbolik. Dalam konteks ini, tadabbur al-Qur'an lazimnya direduksi sebagai amalan kerohanian semata-mata, bukannya difahami sebagai suatu proses metodologi yang tersusun yang berperanan menghubungkan wahyu dengan transformasi insan. Keadaan ini telah mewujudkan jurang yang ketara dalam PIBI apabila interaksi dengan al-Qur'an masih banyak tertumpu kepada pembacaan dan hafazan yang bersifat ritualistik tanpa menghasilkan pembangunan kognitif, spiritual dan etika secara berterusan. Artikel ini bertujuan meletakkan semula tadabbur sebagai suatu kaedah operasional dalam PIBI dengan meneliti peranan epistemologinya dalam menterjemahkan ilmu wahyu kepada pengalaman hidup manusia. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan konseptual kualitatif melalui analisis sistematik terhadap ayat-ayat al-Qur'an yang terpilih, karya-karya sarjana Islam klasik serta literatur kontemporari berkaitan interaksi dengan al-Qur'an, psikologi Islam dan pembangunan insan menerusi analisis konseptual serta sintesis tematik. Kajian ini turut menilai secara kritis keterbatasan pendekatan semasa, termasuk pengaruh konstruk pseudo-saintifik, pemilihan teks secara selektif serta risiko penyerahan autoriti epistemik yang semakin ketara dalam era digital dan pasca kecerdasan buatan. Kajian ini berhujah bahawa tadabbur tidak seharusnya difahami sekadar sebagai aktiviti renungan, sebaliknya sebagai suatu proses Qur'ani yang berdisiplin dalam penginternalisasian makna secara reflektif yang mengintegrasikan dimensi kognitif, afektif dan tindakan. Dengan meletakkan semula tadabbur melangkaui amalan ritual, kajian ini menonjolkan peranannya sebagai jambatan metodologi antara wahyu dengan pembangunan insan secara holistik. Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa pemulihan fungsi tadabbur sebagai kaedah operasional merupakan suatu keperluan bagi membangunkan kerangka PIBI yang berasaskan wahyu secara lebih koheren serta berupaya menangani cabaran epistemologi dan pedagogi kontemporari.

Keywords: Tadabbur al-Qur'an, pembangunan insan berteraskan Islam, epistemologi al-Qur'an, penginternalisasian makna secara reflektif, transformasi insan.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary discourse on human development has expanded significantly across disciplines such as psychology, education, and social theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Erikson, 1968). However, dominant frameworks remain largely grounded in secular epistemological assumptions that prioritize empirical, behavioral, and socio-economic dimensions of development while relegating spiritual and revelatory sources of knowledge to peripheral or symbolic roles (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978; Chande, 2023). Consequently, development is frequently understood in terms of functional adaptation and psychosocial competence rather than moral purpose, existential meaning, and ultimate accountability (Aydin, 2017).

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, human development is fundamentally grounded in revealed knowledge (*wahy*), where the human being is conceptualized as both servant (*'abd*) and vicegerent (*khalīfah*), entrusted with moral responsibility and purposeful transformation (al-Attas, 1995; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). Classical Islamic scholarship consistently emphasizes that authentic human development must integrate spiritual, intellectual, and ethical dimensions within a unified ontological framework (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Rothman et al., 2024). Despite this, contemporary Islamic-based human

development (IbHD) continues to exhibit a disjunction between its epistemological commitments and methodological implementation, where Qur'anic concepts are frequently affirmed normatively yet remain insufficiently operationalized within coherent developmental processes (Rothman et al., 2024; Gillani & Khan, 2025).

A central factor underlying this gap is the marginalization of *tadabbur* al-Qur'an within contemporary discourse. Although widely recognized as an important mode of engagement with revelation, *tadabbur* is frequently confined to the domain of personal spirituality and devotional reflection (Sabki & Hardaker, 2019; Umashankar, 2020). Consequently, interaction with the Qur'an tends to remain at the levels of recitation (*tilāwah*) and memorization (*ḥifẓ*), without progressing into structured processes of reflective internalization capable of translating revealed knowledge into ethical and psychological transformation (Abdelnour, 2024).

This reductionist mode of engagement has contributed to several problematic trends. Contemporary religious and motivational discourses increasingly appropriate pseudo-scientific constructs and external paradigms—such as manifestation theories and the “law of attraction”—under Islamic terminology without sufficient epistemological grounding (Khan & Sheikh, 2012; Samseer & Beegom, 2019; Piraino, 2020; Haryanto & Muslih, 2024). In parallel, Qur'anic verses are frequently employed selectively and decontextualized to support motivational narratives, resulting in what may be described as textual instrumentalization (Bonner, 2019; Bunt, 2022). These developments reflect not merely pedagogical weaknesses, but a deeper methodological crisis concerning how revelation is engaged, interpreted, and operationalized within contemporary developmental discourse.

These methodological distortions are no longer confined to popular religious discourse, but are increasingly amplified by digital and technological mediation. The rapid expansion of digital technologies and artificial intelligence has undoubtedly enhanced accessibility to Qur'anic knowledge. However, it has simultaneously introduced new epistemological risks, particularly the tendency toward epistemic outsourcing, where processes of reflection, interpretation, and meaning internalization are increasingly delegated to external systems (Zhang et al., 2025; Nolasco & Kwak, 2025; Coeckelbergh, 2026). Such developments raise concerns regarding the erosion of deep reflection, critical reasoning, and meaningful engagement with revelation.

In light of these challenges, this article argues that the central issue in contemporary IbHD lies not in the absence of Qur'anic values or spiritual ideals, but in the absence of a clearly articulated methodological process that explains how revelation is internalized and translated into human transformation. Accordingly, the study proposes that *tadabbur* should be repositioned as an operational method—a disciplined Qur'anic process of reflective engagement that mediates between revelation and lived human experience. By doing so, the study seeks to restore the epistemological function of *tadabbur* within IbHD and contribute toward a more coherent, revelation-driven framework of human development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly discourse on human development has been predominantly shaped by psychological, educational, and sociological paradigms that conceptualize development in terms of cognitive growth, behavioral adaptation, and socio-emotional well-being (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978). Collectively, these frameworks have contributed significantly to understanding human behavior and

psychosocial functioning. However, they remain largely grounded in secular epistemological assumptions that provide limited space for metaphysical and revelation-centered sources of knowledge (Chande, 2023; Nolasco & Kwak, 2025). Consequently, human development is often framed in functional and adaptive terms rather than in relation to moral purpose, spiritual transformation, and ultimate accountability (Aydin, 2017).

Within Islamic scholarship, human development is articulated through concepts such as *tarbiyah*, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, and *akhlāq*, all of which emphasize spiritual purification, moral refinement, and alignment with divine guidance (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003; Rothman et al., 2024). Contemporary discussions on IbHD have increasingly attempted to reintroduce spiritual and revelatory dimensions into developmental discourse, particularly through the integration of Islamic psychology, spirituality, and ethics (Rassool, 2020; Rothman et al., 2024). Nevertheless, much of the existing literature remains predominantly normative and outcome-oriented, focusing on the desired characteristics of the developed individual without sufficiently theorizing the methodological process through which revelation becomes internalized and translated into transformation (Gillani & Khan, 2025; Rothman et al., 2024). As a result, a persistent gap remains between the ontological foundations of IbHD and its practical operationalization.

Parallel to this, a substantial body of literature has examined modes of engagement with the Qur'an, including recitation (*tilāwah*), memorization (*hifẓ*), exegesis (*tafsīr*), and reflection (*tadabbur*) (Sabki & Hardaker, 2019; Umashankar, 2020). Contemporary studies frequently emphasize the pedagogical and devotional dimensions of these engagements, particularly within educational and religious settings. However, reflective engagement with the Qur'an is often treated as supplementary rather than central, resulting in limited attention to structured processes of reflective internalization and transformation (Abdelnour, 2024). Consequently, interaction with revelation tends to prioritize textual familiarity and ritual performance without adequately addressing how Qur'anic meanings are internalized within human consciousness and behavior.

Classical Islamic scholarship presents a more integrated understanding of Qur'anic engagement. Scholars such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Qayyim consistently emphasize that the Qur'an is not merely to be recited or intellectually understood, but to be reflected upon, internalized, and embodied in ethical conduct (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). Within this framework, reflection serves as a mediating process linking revealed knowledge with spiritual and moral transformation. Importantly, classical scholars distinguish between *tafsīr* as a specialized scholarly discipline concerned with textual explanation and *tadabbur* as a reflective mode of engagement oriented toward guidance, self-transformation, and ethical action (al-Muṭayrī, 2017). This distinction positions *tadabbur* not as an optional devotional exercise, but as an essential process in actualizing the transformative function of revelation.

Despite growing contemporary interest in Qur'anic engagement and Islamic psychology, relatively few studies have conceptualized *tadabbur* within a comprehensive methodological framework capable of explaining its operational role in human development. Existing scholarship generally approaches *tadabbur* either as a pedagogical tool or a spiritual activity, without sufficiently articulating its epistemological and methodological significance as a structured process mediating between revelation and transformation (Abdelnour, 2024; Haryanto & Muslih, 2024). Consequently, the literature continues to lack a coherent framework that systematically explains how engagement with revelation contributes to cognitive, ethical, spiritual, and behavioral development within IbHD.

This reveals a critical gap in contemporary scholarship: the absence of a clearly articulated methodological process that positions *tadabbur* as a mediating mechanism between revelation and human transformation. The present study addresses this gap by repositioning *tadabbur* beyond its ritual and devotional associations and conceptualizing it as an operational Qur'anic method within a revelation-based framework of Islamic human development.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative conceptual research design aimed at developing a theoretical understanding of *tadabbur* as an operational method within IbHD. Rather than relying on empirical investigation, the study focuses on the systematic examination of concepts, epistemological relationships, and methodological structures derived from primary Islamic sources and contemporary academic scholarship. Such an approach is consistent with conceptual and theory-building research commonly employed in Islamic studies and Islamic psychology to articulate frameworks grounded in revelation and classical intellectual traditions (Rassool, 2020; Rassool, 2023).

The study specifically seeks to examine the methodological role of *tadabbur* as a reflective process that mediates between revelation and human transformation, thereby addressing the gap between the normative foundations of IbHD and its operational articulation within contemporary developmental discourse (Rothman et al., 2024; Gillani & Khan, 2025).

Data Sources

The analysis draws upon two primary categories of sources:

Primary Scriptural Sources

These include selected Qur'anic verses emphasizing reflective engagement with revelation, such as Q 4:82, Q 38:29, and Q 47:24, alongside relevant Prophetic traditions concerning interaction with the Qur'an. These sources provide the normative and epistemological foundation for understanding *tadabbur* as a transformative process rather than merely a ritual or textual activity (al-Attas, 1995; Abdelnour, 2024).

Scholarly Sources

The study engages both classical and contemporary scholarship relevant to Qur'anic engagement, Islamic epistemology, and human development.

Classical scholarship, particularly works related to *tafsīr*, spirituality, and ethics, including contributions by al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Qayyim, is examined to identify the conceptual relationship between reflection, internalization, and moral transformation (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003).

Contemporary scholarship on Islamic psychology, Islamic education, and IbHD is also analyzed to identify prevailing conceptual trends, epistemological tensions, and methodological gaps within current developmental discourse (Rassool, 2020; Rothman et al., 2024; Keskin, 2025).

Sources were selected based on their scholarly relevance, conceptual authority, and contribution to discussions concerning revelation, reflective engagement, and human transformation, in line with

established principles of conceptual and qualitative inquiry in Islamic studies (Rassool, 2023; Mardatillah et al., 2025).

Analytical Approach

The study employs an integrated analytical strategy combining conceptual analysis and thematic synthesis, both of which are widely utilized in non-empirical Islamic scholarship for theory construction and framework development (Rassool, 2023; Mardatillah et al., 2025).

Conceptual Analysis

Conceptual analysis is employed to clarify the theoretical and epistemological dimensions of *tadabbur* by examining its linguistic roots, conceptual meanings, and methodological functions within Islamic discourse. This process further distinguishes *tadabbur* from related modes of Qur'anic engagement such as *tilāwah* (recitation), *hifẓ* (memorization), and *tafsīr* (exegesis), thereby establishing its distinctive role as a disciplined process of reflective internalization and transformation (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003; Abdelnour, 2024).

Thematic Synthesis

Thematic synthesis is utilized to identify recurring epistemological and methodological patterns across the literature concerning the relationship between Qur'anic engagement and human development. Through this process, themes related to methodological fragmentation, pedagogical imbalance, reflective marginalization, and epistemological inconsistency are systematically organized and critically examined (Rothman et al., 2024; Gillani & Khan, 2025). This synthesis forms the basis for articulating *tadabbur* as a mediating process between revelation and transformation within IbHD.

Analytical Procedure

The analytical process is conducted in three interrelated stages:

Textual Examination

Relevant Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and scholarly discussions concerning modes of engagement with the Qur'an are examined to identify their developmental and transformative implications within both classical and contemporary discourse (Sabki & Hardaker, 2019; Umashankar, 2020; Abdelnour, 2024).

Conceptual Clarification

Key concepts related to Qur'anic engagement, particularly *tadabbur*, are differentiated and refined in order to establish their methodological significance within the developmental process.

Relational Analysis

The study subsequently examines the functional relationship between revelation, reflection, internalization, and ethical action in order to conceptualize *tadabbur* as an operational process linking engagement with revelation to human transformation.

Validity and Limitations

As a conceptual study, the validity of the analysis is grounded in conceptual coherence, epistemological consistency, and alignment with primary Islamic sources and established scholarly discourse (Rassool, 2023). The study does not seek empirical generalization; rather, it aims to develop a theoretically grounded framework capable of informing future research and application within IbHD.

A primary limitation of the study lies in its non-empirical nature, as the proposed framework has not been examined through field-based implementation or observational validation. Future studies may therefore extend this framework through qualitative case studies, pedagogical interventions, curriculum development, and empirical investigations examining the role of *tadabbur* in cognitive, moral, emotional, and spiritual development (Rothman et al., 2024; Rassool, 2020).

Ethical and Epistemological Considerations

The study adheres to principles of academic integrity and Islamic epistemic ethics in engaging Qur'anic texts and classical scholarship. Revelation is approached not merely as textual data, but as a normative source of knowledge that informs both the conceptual content and methodological orientation of the study (al-Attas, 1995; Rassool, 2023).

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

This section develops the central conceptual argument of the study by examining the position of *tadabbur* within IbHD in light of the epistemological and methodological challenges outlined earlier. Building upon the identified gaps in the literature, the discussion proceeds through three interrelated stages. First, it examines the epistemological crisis shaping contemporary IbHD discourse. Second, it analyzes the marginalization of *tadabbur* within contemporary modes of Qur'anic engagement. Third, it advances a reconceptualization of *tadabbur* as an operational Qur'anic method mediating between revelation and human transformation. This progression reflects a movement from critical diagnosis toward conceptual reconstruction.

Epistemological Crisis in IbHD

Contemporary IbHD increasingly faces a multidimensional epistemological crisis that extends beyond theoretical inconsistency to methodological fragmentation in the way human development is conceptualized and operationalized. Although IbHD consistently affirms revelation as its epistemological foundation, prevailing approaches frequently reveal a disjunction between this commitment and actual developmental practice (Rothman et al., 2024; Gillani & Khan, 2025). Consequently, Qur'anic guidance is often acknowledged normatively without being systematically integrated into the developmental process itself.

A central dimension of this crisis lies in the uncritical incorporation of external conceptual paradigms into Islamic developmental discourse. Contemporary religious and self-development narratives increasingly appropriate constructs derived from secular psychology and motivational culture—such as manifestation theories, positive energy discourse, and the “law of attraction”—while rearticulating them through Islamic terminology without sufficient epistemological scrutiny (Haryanto & Muslih, 2024). This produces a form of conceptual syncretism in which ideas emerging from divergent ontological and

metaphysical foundations are merged without adequate methodological reconciliation (Chande, 2023). As a consequence, foundational Islamic concepts such as *tawakkul*, *qadar*, causality, and divine agency risk being subtly reinterpreted through non-Qur'anic conceptual frameworks.

Closely related to this is the growing commodification of Qur'anic discourse. Qur'anic verses are increasingly employed selectively and decontextualized to support motivational, therapeutic, or productivity-oriented narratives, particularly within contemporary religious media and self-development culture (Abdelnour, 2024). This phenomenon, which may be described as textual instrumentalization, reduces revelation to a rhetorical resource rather than engaging it as an integrated and coherent source of guidance (Azaiez, 2023; Alak, 2024). Such approaches weaken the internal coherence (*munāsabah*) of the Qur'anic worldview and diminish the ethical discipline traditionally associated with engagement with revelation.

The crisis is further reinforced by pedagogical imbalances in contemporary Qur'anic engagement. Current practices frequently prioritize recitation (*tilāwah*) and memorization (*hifẓ*) while giving comparatively limited attention to reflective engagement and internalization (Sabki & Hardaker, 2019; Umashankar, 2020). While these modes remain foundational and indispensable, their isolation from structured reflective processes limits their transformative capacity. Consequently, interaction with the Qur'an may produce textual familiarity without corresponding ethical, spiritual, and psychological transformation (Abdelnour, 2024).

These methodological distortions are increasingly intensified by rapid technological developments. Digital platforms and artificial intelligence have significantly expanded accessibility to Qur'anic knowledge and religious content. However, they also introduce new epistemological risks, particularly the tendency toward epistemic outsourcing, whereby processes of reflection, interpretation, and intellectual engagement are progressively delegated to external systems (Nolasco & Kwak, 2025; de Araujo & Madureira, 2025). While technological tools may facilitate access to information, excessive dependence upon them risks diminishing deep reflection, critical reasoning, and meaningful engagement with revelation.

Taken together, these developments suggest that the crisis within contemporary IbHD is fundamentally methodological rather than merely conceptual. The issue is not the absence of Qur'anic values or spiritual ideals, but the absence of a disciplined process that governs how revelation is engaged, internalized, and translated into human transformation.

The Marginalization of *Tadabbur* in Contemporary Discourse

Despite its centrality within the Qur'anic paradigm, *tadabbur* has become increasingly marginalized within contemporary Islamic discourse. Although frequently invoked in devotional contexts, it is rarely conceptualized as a structured epistemological process capable of mediating between revelation and transformation. Instead, *tadabbur* is often reduced to a subjective or experiential activity associated primarily with emotional reflection and personal spirituality (Sabki & Hardaker, 2019; Umashankar, 2020).

This conceptual narrowing fundamentally weakens the transformative function of Qur'anic engagement. When *tadabbur* is treated as an optional or supplementary practice, engagement with revelation remains concentrated at the levels of recitation and memorization without progressing into

disciplined processes of reflective internalization and ethical embodiment (Abdelnour, 2024). As a result, the relationship between revelation, understanding, and transformation becomes fragmented.

The marginalization of *tadabbur* is further reinforced by disciplinary segmentation within contemporary Islamic scholarship. *Tafsīr* is frequently positioned as the primary mode of engaging Qur'anic meaning, requiring specialized linguistic and methodological expertise. While this specialization remains essential for preserving scholarly rigor, it may also contribute to the perception that meaningful engagement with the Qur'an is largely restricted to experts. In contrast, *tadabbur*—despite its universal relevance—is seldom articulated as a disciplined reflective process accessible across different levels of engagement (Azaiez, 2023; Badi, 2025).

Moreover, the absence of a clearly articulated methodological framework for *tadabbur* has contributed to the emergence of unregulated forms of reflective interpretation. In the absence of epistemological and ethical discipline, reflective engagement may devolve into subjective projection, where personal assumptions, emotions, or pre-existing ideological commitments are imposed upon the text (Alak, 2024; Akbar, 2019). Historical and contemporary examples demonstrate that such approaches may lead to interpretive excesses and distortions when reflective engagement becomes detached from the broader Qur'anic worldview and established interpretive principles.

The implications of this marginalization are significant for IbHD. Without *tadabbur* as a mediating process, the Qur'an risks being engaged either ritually—through recitation and memorization—or instrumentally—through selective application to contemporary agendas. In both cases, the absence of disciplined reflective engagement disrupts the continuity between revelation, internalization, and ethical transformation.

***Tadabbur* as an Operational Method in IbHD**

In response to these challenges, this study proposes that *tadabbur* should be repositioned as an operational method within IbHD. This requires shifting from viewing *tadabbur* as merely a devotional or experiential activity toward understanding it as a disciplined Qur'anic process of reflective engagement that mediates between revelation and human transformation.

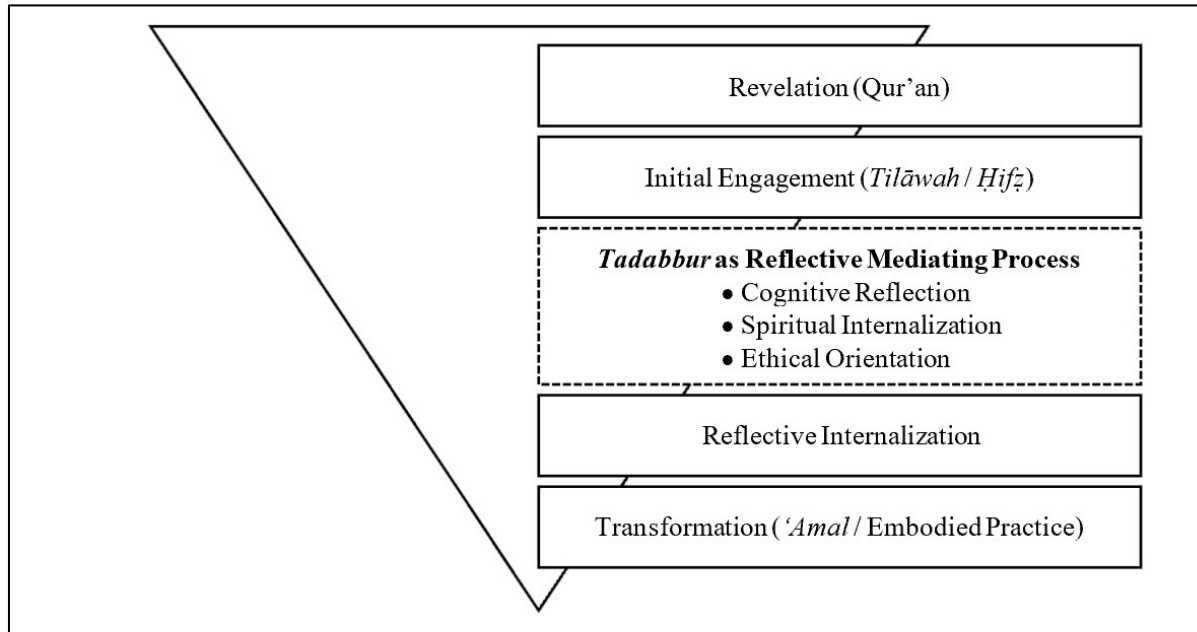
At its core, *tadabbur* involves a deliberate and sustained engagement with revealed meaning. It is characterized by repeated, reflective, and purpose-oriented contemplation directed toward uncovering guidance (*hidāyah*), ethical orientation, and existential implications embedded within the Qur'anic text (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). Unlike passive reading or purely informational engagement, *tadabbur* integrates cognition (*'aql*), affect (*qalb*), and intentionality (*niyyah*), thereby enabling the internalization of revealed knowledge within the human self (Rassool, 2020; Rothman et al., 2024).

Conceptually, *tadabbur* operates across three interrelated dimensions. First, it involves cognitive engagement, whereby the reader actively reflects upon meaning, coherence, implications, and guidance within the text. Second, it entails affective engagement, through which revealed meanings evoke humility, accountability, hope, fear, and spiritual awareness. Third, it culminates in behavioral orientation, whereby internalized meanings are translated into ethical conduct and lived practice (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003; Rassool, 2020; Rothman et al., 2024). Through this integration, *tadabbur* transforms engagement with the Qur'an from ritual familiarity into a sustained process of ethical and spiritual formation.

The role of *tadabbur* as a mediating process may be conceptualized as follows:

Figure 1

Tadabbur as a Reflective Mediating Process in Islamic-Based Human Development (IbHD)



As illustrated in Figure 1, *tadabbur* functions as a central reflective mechanism linking engagement with revelation to internalization, ethical orientation, and behavioral transformation.

Positioning *tadabbur* as an operational method further implies the necessity of methodological discipline. Reflective engagement must remain grounded in appropriate linguistic understanding, awareness of textual coherence, and alignment with established interpretive principles (al-Ghazālī, n.d.; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). These elements function as epistemological safeguards ensuring that reflection remains anchored within the Qur’anic worldview rather than devolving into unrestricted subjectivity.

Within IbHD, *tadabbur* fulfills a critical mediating role by bridging the gap between revelation as a source of guidance and the human being as a subject of transformation. Without such mediation, revelation risks remaining external—recited and memorized but insufficiently internalized. *Tadabbur*, by contrast, enables revealed knowledge to become ethical consciousness, intentional orientation, and transformative action.

Conceptualizing *tadabbur* as an operational method also enables IbHD to move beyond excessive dependence upon externally derived developmental paradigms. Rather than adapting secular developmental theories and subsequently “Islamizing” them through terminological modification, this approach begins with revelation as the epistemological foundation and develops its methodological processes from within the Islamic worldview itself (Chande, 2023; Alkouatli, 2024).

In contemporary contexts increasingly shaped by technological mediation, the role of *tadabbur* becomes even more critical. As knowledge production and interpretation become progressively mediated by digital systems and algorithmic structures, the human capacity for deep reflection and

ethical reasoning risks becoming diminished (Nolasco & Kwak, 2025; de Araujo & Madureira, 2025). *Tadabbur* restores the human role in reflective engagement with revelation by cultivating a form of disciplined reflective intelligence grounded in meaning, purpose, and moral responsibility.

Ultimately, repositioning *tadabbur* as an operational method provides a coherent epistemological foundation for a revelation-driven approach to human development. It transforms engagement with the Qur'an from ritual familiarity into a continuous process of reflective internalization and ethical transformation, ensuring that revelation functions not merely as a symbolic reference, but as a formative force in shaping the human self.

CONCLUSION

This study has argued that the central challenge confronting contemporary IbHD lies not in the absence of Qur'anic values or spiritual ideals, but in the absence of a clearly articulated methodological process explaining how revelation is engaged, internalized, and translated into human transformation. Although contemporary IbHD discourse consistently emphasizes faith, morality, and spiritual growth, these dimensions frequently remain at the level of normative aspiration without a coherent operational framework capable of mediating between revelation and lived human experience.

Through a critical examination of contemporary developmental and Qur'anic engagement discourse, the study identified a broader epistemological and methodological crisis characterized by conceptual syncretism, textual instrumentalization, pedagogical imbalance, and increasing dependence upon technologically mediated forms of engagement. Collectively, these developments reflect a deeper fragmentation in the relationship between revelation, reflective engagement, and transformation within contemporary Islamic developmental thought.

In response, the study proposed the repositioning of *tadabbur* al-Qur'an as an operational method within IbHD. Rather than approaching *tadabbur* as merely a devotional or supplementary activity, the study conceptualized it as a disciplined Qur'anic process of reflective engagement integrating cognition, affect, intentionality, and ethical action. Through this reconceptualization, *tadabbur* functions as a mediating mechanism through which revealed knowledge becomes internalized within human consciousness and translated into transformative practice.

By articulating *tadabbur* as an operational method, this study contributes toward bridging the persistent gap between the epistemological foundations of IbHD and its practical developmental articulation. More broadly, it advances a revelation-driven approach to human development that derives its methodological orientation from within the Islamic worldview itself rather than relying primarily upon externally derived developmental paradigms subsequently adapted into Islamic discourse.

The implications of this study extend beyond theoretical discussion. In educational contexts, it underscores the importance of cultivating reflective engagement with the Qur'an beyond recitation and memorization alone. Within broader developmental discourse, it highlights the necessity of restoring disciplined engagement with revelation as a foundation for ethical formation, spiritual consciousness, and meaningful human development. In an era increasingly shaped by digital mediation and algorithmic knowledge systems, the study further emphasizes the importance of preserving human reflective agency through sustained engagement with revelation.

As a conceptual study, the present work remains limited to theoretical analysis and does not seek empirical validation. Future research may therefore explore the practical application of *tadabbur* as an operational method through qualitative inquiry, pedagogical interventions, curriculum development, and empirical studies examining its role in moral, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development.

Ultimately, reinstating *tadabbur* as an operational method within IbHD offers a coherent epistemological response to the contemporary fragmentation of human development discourse. It repositions engagement with the Qur'an beyond ritual familiarity toward a sustained process of reflective internalization and ethical transformation, ensuring that revelation functions not merely as a symbolic reference, but as a formative force in shaping the human self.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable contributions and support of all individuals who were directly or indirectly involved in the preparation and publication of this article.

FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research and no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available within this article.

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