

## **The Concept of *Insân Rabbâni* as the Main Goal of *Rabbâniyyah Tarbiyah*: Thematic Interpretive Study**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to formulate the concept of *insân rabbânî* as the primary goal of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* through a thematic interpretation (tafsir *mawdhû'î*) of Qur'anic verses related to *al-rabbâniyyîn*. Using a qualitative approach and content analysis, the study examines relevant verses, particularly Âli 'Imrân 79 and 146 and Al-Mâ'idah 44 and 63, by synthesizing insights from classical and contemporary tafsir literature. The findings reveal that *insân rabbânî* refers to individuals who combine strong faith, deep religious knowledge, righteous conduct, noble character, and social responsibility through education, da'wah, and community reform (*ishlâh*). The study further shows that the development of *rabbâniyah* is grounded in gradual (*tadarruj*) and continuous (*istimrâr*) engagement with divine revelation. In this framework, *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* represents a holistic educational approach integrating spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions through the complementary processes of *ta'dîb*, *ta'lîm*, and *tazkiyah*. This study contributes a conceptual framework of *insân rabbânî* derived from thematic Qur'anic interpretation and highlights its relevance as an educational model for addressing contemporary moral and spiritual challenges.

Keywords: *Insân Rabbânî; Tarbiyah Rabbâniyah; Thematic Tafsir; Rabbani Generation; Islamic Education.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the context of the modern paradigm, there has been a significant shift in how national progress is measured, moving from a dominant reliance on natural resource indicators toward a stronger emphasis on human resources. This paradigm shift underscores that the quality of human capital is the primary determinant of a nation's competitiveness and the sustainability of its development. Consequently, education plays a strategic role as the principal instrument in producing high-quality human resources who are not only intellectually competent but also morally and spiritually mature. In this regard, Islamic educational and da'wah activities are expected to equip the younger generation with faith, piety, knowledge, technological awareness, independence, and competitiveness (Nasor et al., 2022). From an Islamic perspective, the concept of superior human resources can be represented by the term *sâbiqûn bi al-khairât*, referring to individuals who hasten toward goodness and consistently take the lead in righteous deeds. This concept describes an ideal human profile characterized by the integration of intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions. The core characteristics of *sâbiqûn bi al-khairât* include strong faith (*quwwat al-îmân*), fear of Allah (*al-khawf min Allâh*), purity of monotheism (*tajrîd al-tawhîd*), awareness of the value of time and life (*ma'rîfat qîmat al-awqât wa al-a'mâr*), strong determination, a competitive spirit in good deeds, purity of heart (*salâmat al-şadr*), and consistency in following the path of righteous predecessors (Nata, 2009).

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It is evident from this that the progress or decline of a nation is largely determined by the quality of its educational system. M. Natsir asserted that no nation can overcome backwardness and achieve progress without undertaking serious reforms in education (Natsir, 1961). From an Islamic perspective, the success of education can be observed in the transformation of the Prophet Muhammad's Companions. Prior to the advent of Islam, Arab society was characterized by various social problems, including tribal conflicts, injustice, and a limited tradition of scholarship. However, through an educational process grounded in divine revelation, they were transformed into a generation distinguished by moral integrity, spiritual depth, intellectual excellence, and leadership capacities that contributed significantly to the advancement of human civilization. This transformation demonstrates that Islamic education is not merely concerned with the transmission of knowledge but also with the holistic development of human character.

According to M. Natsir, the ultimate purpose of education is inseparable from the purpose of human life itself (Natsir, 1961). Consequently, the moral, spiritual, and intellectual challenges experienced by society may indicate shortcomings in the orientation and practice of education. Al-Ghazali argued that societal decline originates from the corruption of leaders, while the corruption of leaders stems from the weakening integrity of some religious scholars who fail to uphold their responsibility of promoting good and preventing wrongdoing (*amr ma'rûf nahy munkar*) (Al Ghazali, 2011). In a broader context, contemporary Islamic education faces numerous challenges, including moral decline, weakened religious authority, the proliferation of religious opinions lacking adequate scholarly foundations, and the erosion of spirituality in religious life. This challenge is also reflected in contemporary Islamic legal discourse, where religious authority is increasingly negotiated through the interaction between scriptural interpretation, institutional legitimacy, scientific knowledge, and socio-political contexts (Aseri et al., 2025).

At the same time, the growing enthusiasm among Muslims to study and deepen their understanding of Islam represents a positive development. Nevertheless, such enthusiasm requires proper guidance and an appropriate educational framework to prevent individuals from falling into either excess (*ifrât*) or negligence (*tafrîf*) in their understanding and practice of Islam. The need for proper guidance becomes more urgent because contemporary Muslim societies frequently encounter new religious questions arising from technological and social change, which require careful scholarly reasoning rather than superficial religious judgment (Hayati et al., 2024). Structured religious education has been shown to play an important role in internalizing moderation, tolerance, anti-violence, and social harmony among students (Abu Zaid, 2002; Muliadi et al., 2025). Islamic moderation is also shaped by the interaction between sharia, local culture, legal norms, and social power structures, indicating that religious education must be sensitive to both normative Islamic principles and the sociocultural realities of Muslim communities (Suleman et al., 2025). This situation indicates that contemporary Islamic education requires an educational ideal that extends beyond the acquisition of knowledge to encompass the integration of faith, morality, spirituality, social responsibility, and the capacity to guide and serve society. A *maqâsid*-oriented perspective also emphasizes that Islamic norms should protect religion, intellect, soul, lineage, and property while producing social benefit and preventing harm in Muslim public life (Fikri et al., 2023). In this regard, the concept of *insân rabbânî* becomes highly relevant. It offers a model of the ideal human being who combines profound religious knowledge, strong faith, noble character, educational competence, and a commitment to social reform. Therefore, *insân rabbânî* may be

regarded as a strategic educational objective capable of addressing the moral, spiritual, and intellectual crises confronting modern society.

A number of previous studies have examined the concepts of rabbâniyyah and Rabbani education. Muhammad bin Said bin Abdullah Bafil (2022) explored the foundations of Rabbani education in Qur'anic texts, but his study focused primarily on its guiding principles. Sarbini and Wahidin (2020) discussed the role of Rabbani education in strengthening adolescent character, while Rizaldi et al. (2022) linked the concept to technological adoption in Islamic boarding schools aimed at developing a Rabbani generation. Norsaadah et al. (2022) investigated the elements of the Rabbani educational methodology through a systematic literature review, whereas Siregar et al. (2023) examined Rabbani characteristics in the Qur'an without conducting a comprehensive analysis based on classical and contemporary tafsir literature. Likewise, Huda (2024) discussed Rabbani education within the family context but did not provide a comprehensive conceptual formulation of *insân rabbânî*.

Despite these contributions, studies that specifically formulate the concept of *insân rabbânî* as the primary objective of *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* through a thematic interpretation (*tafsîr mawdhû'î*) of Qur'anic verses concerning *al-rabbâniyyîn* remain limited. This gap is significant because the term *rabbânî* is a distinctly Qur'anic concept with substantial implications for the development of Islamic educational thought. Therefore, this study seeks to formulate the concept of *insân rabbânî* as the primary goal of *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* through a thematic interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to *al-rabbâniyyîn*.

## METHOD

By using qualitative research methods, this study aims to understand and elaborate the concept of *insân rabbânî* through a thematic interpretation (*tafsîr mawdhû'î*) approach. This approach involves collecting Qur'anic verses related to the term *rabbânî*, organizing them according to the circumstances of revelation (*asbâb al-nuzûl*), followed by exegetical explanation (*sharḥ*), analytical interpretation, and drawing conclusions, as well as explaining how *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* forms *insân rabbânî* (*al-Farmâwî*, 1977). Thematic exegesis is employed because it enables a comprehensive synthesis of Qur'anic verses on a specific theme, allowing the researcher to capture all relevant textual evidence in an integrated discussion and to develop a holistic understanding of the topic.

The object of this study consists of Qur'anic verses related to *al-rabbâniyyîn*, namely *Sûrah Âl 'Imrân* (3:79, 146) and *Sûrah al-Mâ'idah* (5:44, 63). The Qur'an and authoritative classical tafsîr works—such as those of *al-Ṭabarî*, *al-Tha'labî*, *al-Qurṭubî*, *al-Sa'dî*, and *al-Shawkânî*—serve as the primary sources of this research. These are further supported by other scholarly materials, including authoritative hadith commentaries, educational literature, and relevant academic articles. Data analysis is conducted using a content analysis approach (content analysis).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Definition of *Insân Rabbani*

*Rabbânî* is the word quranic that appears in the Qur'an three times in the plural form, namely *rabbâniyyûn/rabbâniyyîn*. The command to become a *rabbânî* person is firmly stated in *Surah Ali*

'Imrân verse 79, (وَلْيَكُنْ كُؤُنُوتًا رَّبَّانِيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتَابَ وَيَمَا كُنْتُمْ تُدْرَسُونَ), which means, "But (he should say), 'Become *rabbâni* because you always teach the book and study it!'"

There are two famous opinions regarding its meaning linguistically. First, *rabbâni* is a form of nisbat to the sentence *rabb* (Lord), the origin is *rabbīyy*, the addition of the letters *alif* and *nûn* to it gives the meaning *takhshīsh* (specialization) and *mubâlaghah* (more). So *rabbâni* means a person who has special knowledge about Allah Rabb Al 'Âlamīn and is very devout in worshiping Him (Ibn Manzbur, 1414 H; Al 'Ainī, 2001; Al Qurṭubī, 2006; Ibn 'Âsyûr, 1984; Ibn Atsīr; n.d.). Second, *rabbâni* is a form of nisbat to the sentence *tarbiyah* (Ibn Manzbur, 1414 H; Ibn Atsīr; n.d.). *Tarbiyah* itself contains the meaning of *namâ'* [development], *ziyâdah* [addition], *nasya'ah* [growth], *hifzh* [guardianship], *ri'âyah* [protection], *ishlâh* [improvement], *ta'sīs* [foundation formation] and *rusûkh fi al ilmi* [deep mastery of knowledge] (Markaz Al Tafsīr Wa Al Dirâsât Al Qurâniyyah, 2019). With this *rabbâni* means a person who has a deep mastery of Islamic religious knowledge and carries out educational and improvement practices. This means that he is a *murabbi* and is able to lead. Because of that, some people argue that *rabbâni* is a form of *nisbat* to the sentence *rabbân*, which means captain or leader (Al Ṭabarī, 2001; Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004; Al Alûsī, n.d.).

The difference in nisbat, if observed further in the root words that form it which consist of the letters *râ'* and *bâ'*, becomes possible to be combined so that they do not contradict each other. According to Ibn Faris in his dictionary, *Mu'jam Maqâ'yīs Al Lughah*, the letters *râ'* and *bâ'* in a sentence contain three main meanings, namely (a) repairing and taking care of something; (b) accompanying something and (c) combining/collecting something to something else (Ibn Faris, 1979). So it is not surprising when Ibn Utsaimin stated that *rabbâni* is a form of nisbat to the sentence *rabb* (Lord) and to the sentence *tarbiyah* (Al Utsaimin, tt). Compromising the two opinions above is certainly better, according to the rule in *ushul al fiqh "al jam'u aulâ min al tarjīh mâ amkana"* which means compromising is preferred over *tarjīh* (strengthening one over the other) as long as possible. Thus it can be said that humans are ordered to become *rabbani*, namely people who attribute themselves to Allah Rabb al 'âlamīn where this will be achieved through *tarbiyah*.

As in the linguistic definition, in terms there are also differences among the commentators in interpreting *rabbâni*. When interpreting the meaning of *rabbâniyyûn* in the letter Al Maidah verse 44, Ibn Abbas said that it means the believers (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1419). Sahl bin Abdullah Al Tusturī interpreted *rabbâni* as a person who does not choose other than Allah (Al Tusturī, 1423 H). There are also those who interpret it as a person who is devoted to Allah and does not look to intermediaries (Al Ashfahânī, 2003). Some others interpret it as a worshiper (Muqatil, 1423 H). While others interpret it as a sincere person (Al Utsaimin, tt). Al Baghawī interpreted it as a person who practices knowledge (Al Baghawī, 1419 H). The Quran Translation Team of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia defines it as a steadfast servant of Allah (The Quran and its Translation, 2019). So, *rabbâni* is a person who is strong in faith, an expert in worship, an expert in piety and a wise guardian of Allah (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1419; Al Ashfahânī, 2003; Tantawi, 1993). This is the first group of meanings, where all of them are related to faith and a strong relationship with Allah, where it is in line with its nisbat to the sentence *rabb* linguistically.

In the book *Al Tafsīr Al Wasīt LîAl Qurân Al Karīm*, it is mentioned that *rabbâni* is a scholar who is *faqīh* and *râsikh* [has a strong and deep mastery of knowledge]. There are also those who interpret it as a person who is a judge and pious (Tantawi, 1993; Wati et al., 2022). Others state that *rabbâni* is a person who has a high degree in knowledge and deeds, such as Abdullah bin Abbas, who when he died, was commented on by Muhammad bin Al Hanafiyyah [son of Ali bin Abi Ṭalib],

"Today a *rabbâni* from this nation has died." (Tantawi, 1993). The same thing was also stated by Al Khatib Al Baghdadi in the book *Al Faqih Wa Al Mutafaqih* that *rabbâni* is a person who has a high degree and station in knowledge (Al Baghdadi, 1996). In the book *Tafsîr Mujâhid* and the book *Ma'ânî Al Qurân Wa l'râbuhu* it is stated that *rabbâni* is a faqih and âlim who is a judge or expert in knowledge (Mujahid, 1410 AH; Al Zajâj, 1988). In addition, *rabbâni* is a person who is *halîm* (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1419), namely a person who combines the qualities of accuracy of thought, noble morals and compassion for creatures (Ibnu 'Âsyûr, 1984). Apart from that, there are also those who state that *rabbâniyûn* are experts in knowledge about halal, haram, Allah's commands and prohibitions and know the conditions and problems faced by their people (Al Baghawî, 1420 H). This is the second group of meanings, all of which are related to in-depth knowledge, the practice of knowledge and noble morals in social life, which is in line with its relation to the *tarbiyah* sentence linguistically.

The commentators also interpret *rabbâni* as *murabbî* (educator), teacher and *muslih* [one who makes improvements], as stated in the book of Sahih Al Bukhârî "*rabbâni* is a person who educates people with small sciences before the big sciences" (Al Bukhârî, 1422 H). In line with this, it is stated that *rabbâni* is a *faqih* who educates and improves people (Al Baghawî, 1420 H; Al Râzî, 1420 H; Al Zamakhsyarî, 1407). This is the third group of meanings, where all of them are related to education and teaching and are in line with their nisbat to the *tarbiyah* sentence linguistically.

Another meaning mentioned by the commentators when interpreting *rabbâni* is a leader who takes care of many people related to worldly or religious matters (Al Tabarî, 2001). So *rabbâni* is a person who gathers in himself knowledge and leadership and management for the benefit of many people (Ibn Aṭṭiyah, 1422 H; Al Sam'ânî, 1997). Salman and Asmanto (2024) similarly emphasize that Islamic teachings provide moral and legal guidance for individual and collective responsibility, indicating that religious knowledge should be translated into social concern and practical responsibility for the common good. Baihaqi et al. (2024) demonstrate that local religious authority can significantly shape Muslim social behavior, which implies that religious leadership must be supported by sound knowledge, ethical responsibility, and concern for public benefit. This is the fourth group of meanings, where all of them with knowledge and leadership, are in line with their nisbat to the sentence *tarbiyah* and *rabbâni* linguistically. In addition, there is also an opinion stating that *rabbâniyûn* are the companions of the Prophet (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1419). This provides a picture of the profile of society or the *rabbâni* generation, which is also part of the ideals of Islamic education, from the personal level to the family, then society and generation.

Based on the opinions of the commentators and scholars above, it can be said that the meaning of the term for the sentence *rabbâni* does not deviate from the instructions for its meaning in language. Then, we can synthesize and compromise those meanings into an understanding for *insân rabbânî*, namely a believer who is strong in faith, pious, obedient in worship, has solid religious knowledge, practices knowledge, teaches knowledge, makes improvements, has noble morals, is wise and understands and comprehends the conditions being faced by his people and also plays a role with them. Riwanto and Suryaningsih (2022) also emphasize that Islamic law is closely connected to the realization of social justice and public welfare, indicating that religious values should produce ethical responsibility and social benefit within community life. This understanding itself confirms the high degree of *rabbâni* in his capacity as an ideal profile.

However, scholars also state that in that high degree, their *manzilah* [status] is tiered, some are higher than others. There are minimal criteria for someone to be called a *rabbani*. Fakhruddin

Al Razi and Al Khatib Al Baghdadi quoted from Ibn Al A'rabi stating, "The minimal criteria for someone to be called a *rabbânî* is that he should have religious knowledge, practice knowledge and teach it to humans. If there is anything lacking then he is not called a *rabbânî*" (Al Razi, 1420 H; Al Baghdadi, 1996). However, considering the criteria of faith is the most important basis, especially since Ibn Abbas also interpreted *rabbânî* to mean a believer, then it is necessary to emphasize the criteria of faith. So that a minimal *rabbânî* is someone who has faith, religious knowledge, practices knowledge and teaches it.

The minimum limit must also be clear, in order to get an idea of how to achieve this noble degree, especially in the world of education which must be structured and measurable. Nashir Sulaiman Al Umar in his article stated that whoever can realize the knowledge that is obligatory for him, the deeds that are obligatory and the preaching that is obligatory for him, then he has reached the lowest degree as a *rabbânî* (Al Umar, 1432 H). So, a minimalist *rabbânî* is a person who believes, at least has the knowledge that is obligatory, practices the obligatory and teaches or preaches the obligatory for him. Thus, the command to become a rabbani becomes more possible to be implemented, because the original law of the command is obligatory. In addition, in the context of education, it also becomes more measurable to form a rabbani generation as echoed by Islamic scholars and education experts.

Based on the description above, the ideal criteria for *rabbânî* are *al îmân* (faith), *al taqwâ* (piety), *al 'ibâdah* (worship), *al rusûkh fîal ilmi* (mastery of knowledge), *al amal* (charity), *al hilmu* (noble character), *al ishlâh bi al tarbiyah al da'wah* (improvement through education and da'wah), *al qiyâdah al ijtimâ'iyah* (social leadership), *al hikmah* (wisdom). Febianti et al. (2026) similarly argue that religious morality can serve as a normative foundation for ethical governance, bureaucratic integrity, public service quality, and public trust, indicating that moral and spiritual values must be translated into responsible social and institutional conduct. Meanwhile, the minimum criteria for *rabbânî* are *al îmân*, *al ilmu al wâjib* (obligatory knowledge), *al amal al wâjib* (obligatory charity) *al ta'lim wa al da'wah al wâjibah* (obligatory teaching and preaching).

Based on a linguistic and terminological analysis of the term *rabbânî* within the Qur'anic corpus, classical exegesis, and scholarly intellectual tradition, it can be concluded that the concept of *insân rabbânî* constitutes an integrative construct that unifies theological, epistemological, pedagogical, and social dimensions into a single ideal human profile.

By synthesizing these various semantic layers, *insân rabbânî* may be defined as a believing individual who possesses profound spiritual and intellectual depth, masters and actively practices knowledge, engages in education and societal reform, embodies noble character and wisdom, and plays an active role in social leadership for the benefit of the wider community (ummah). This profile represents the ideal human paradigm in Islamic educational thought, which does not dichotomize faith, knowledge, practice, and social responsibility, but rather integrates them into a unified existential and functional framework.

Nevertheless, this concept is characterized by a hierarchical structure. At the ideal level, *insân rabbânî* encompasses the full spectrum of faith (*îmân*), piety (*taqwâ*), worship (*'ibâdah*), mastery of knowledge, righteous action, moral excellence, reform through education and da'wah, social leadership, and wisdom (*hikmah*). At the minimal level, an individual may be considered *rabbânî* if they fulfill three foundational criteria: possessing faith, mastering obligatory religious knowledge, and consistently practicing and teaching that knowledge. Accordingly, the concept of *insân rabbânî*

is both hierarchical and operational, making it a measurable and applicable framework for defining the objectives of Islamic education.

### ***Insân Rabbâni* as the Goal of *Rabbâniyyah Tarbiyah*** **The Essence of Rabbanical Education**

The word *tarbiyah* as an educational term is considered a new term (Mursi, 1978), but classical scholars such as Imam Al Bukhârî in the book *Sahih Al Bukhârî* have cited the use of the word *tarbiyah* as an educational term when explaining the meaning of *rabbâni*, namely "رَبِّي الَّذِي الرَّبَّانِيُّ" "كِبَارِهِ قَبْلَ الْعِلْمِ بِصِغَارِ النَّاسِ", which means, rabbani is a person who educates humans with "small knowledge" before "big knowledge" (Al Bukhârî, 1422 H). Al Syatibi did the same thing in the book *Al Muwâfaqât* where it is stated

فَلَا يَصِحُّ لِلْعَالِمِ فِي التَّيْبَةِ الْعِلْمِيَّةِ إِلَّا الْمَحَافِظَةُ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْمَعَانِي، وَالْأَلَمْ يَكُنْ مُرْتَبًا، وَاحْتِاجَ هُوَ إِلَى عَالِمٍ يُرَبِّيه.

"It is not valid/not allowed for a teacher in the process of *tarbiyah* (education) of knowledge unless he must pay attention to these principles. If not, then he is not a *murabbi* (educator) but rather needs a *murabbi* (educator) who *tarbiyah* (educates) him" (Al Syâtibî, 2016).

Linguistically, *tarbiyah* is the mashdar form of the verb *rabbâ - yurabbî* which means to grow, add, enlarge, develop, shape, guard, maintain, teach, build principles and improve (Ibnu Manzbur, 1414 AH; Majid & Alim, 2024). In terms, Abdul Rahman Al Nahlawi defines Islîmiyah *tarbiyah* as an effort to develop thinking and organize human behavior and feelings according to the principles of the Islamic religion in order to realize Islamic goals in personal life and society in all aspects of life (Al Nahlawi, 2008). Meanwhile, Khalid Al Hazimi interprets it as an effort to grow humans little by little on all sides to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter according to Islamic methodology (Al Hazimi, 2000).

As for *rabbâniyyah*, linguistically it is a form of *masdar sinâ'i*, an abstract noun formed from the word *rabbânî*. Al Zamakhsyari defines it as the strength of holding fast to obedience to Allah which is caused by knowledge and religious study (Al Zamakhsyari, 1407). Meanwhile Al Syauckani and Muhammad Shidiq Khan stated that *rabbâniyyah* is the teaching of [religious] knowledge and the strength of holding fast to obedience to Allah (Al Syauckani, 1427 H; Khan, 1412 H). These two definitions both place religious knowledge as the basis for formation, obedience to Allah as the goal and continuous education as the transformation process. However, Al Syauckani's broader definition with the addition of a social dimension, namely teaching science, seems more in line with the definition of *rabbânî* that has been put forward.

By paying attention to the meanings contained in the *lafaz rabbânî*, which are put forward by the commentators above, we can interpret *rabbâniyyah* as a high degree of close relationship with Allah and steadfastness in upholding the values of the Islamic religion which is based on strong faith, purity of monotheism, depth of knowledge and understanding of religion, commitment to obedience and practice of knowledge, educational and social leadership in the form of teaching, improvement and concern for the problems of the people and based on the principles of wisdom and morals glorious. All of this is rooted in the learning and teaching of Allah's revelation, namely the Al Quran and Sunnah, which is carried out in *tadarruj* (gradually).

Thus, *rabbaniyyah tarbiyah* can be understood as a holistic and gradual approach to Islamic education, which aims to form a *rabbaniyyah* person, namely an individual who has a close relationship with Allah, with a solid foundation of faith, deep mastery of religious knowledge, and practice of knowledge in daily life and contributes socially, especially in the fields of education and *da'wah*. So, *rabbaniyyah tarbiyah* is an educational approach that integrates *rûhâniyyah* (spiritual), *ma'rifiyyah* (intellectual), *akhlâqiyyah* (moral) and *ijtimâ'iyyah* (social) aspects based on divine values.

Based on the linguistic and terminological analysis of the concepts of *tarbiyah* and *rabbâniyyah* within the corpus of the Qur'anic tradition, Prophetic traditions (Hadith), and the

intellectual contributions of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars, it can be synthesized that *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* constitutes a holistic, gradual (*tadarruj*), and divinely grounded approach to Islamic education aimed at forming the *insân rabbâni*. In its conceptual sense, *tarbiyah* encompasses the processes of developing, nurturing, cultivating, and strengthening the full range of human potentials in a progressive manner toward perfection, whereas *rabbâniyah* represents a profound quality of closeness to Allah, grounded in firm faith, depth of knowledge, and consistency in obedience as well as the practice of religious teachings. Accordingly, *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* is not limited to the transmission of knowledge, but extends to the internalization of values, character formation, and the strengthening of spirituality that is integrally connected with intellectual, moral, and social dimensions. Within this framework, the *insân rabbâni* is understood as the ideal output of Islamic education, namely an individual who achieves a balanced integration of spiritual strength (*rûhâniyah*), intellectual competence (*ma'rifiyyah*), moral maturity (*akhlâqiyyah*), and social responsibility (*ijtima'iyyah*), all of which are cultivated through an educational process grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah in a gradual, continuous, and ummah-oriented manner.

### **Rabbanical Education: *Ta'dîb, Ta'lim and Tazkiyah***

As an educational approach based on *rubûbiyyah* (divinity) values, because of its *nisbat* to Al Rabb and its direct source from revelation, the process of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* has been explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith. Surah Al-Baqarah verses 129 and 151, Surah Ali Imran verse 164 and Surah Al Jum'ah verse 2 provide a description of the educational method applied by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in educating his people. The four verses state that the Prophet Muhammad took three things in carrying out his task of educating the people, namely *tilâwatu al âyât* [reading the verses of Allah], *ta'lim al kitâb wa al hikmah* [teaching the book and wisdom] and *tazkiyah* [purifying the soul] (Al Kilani, 1995).

Since *tilâwatu al âyât* and *ta'lim al kitâb wa al hikmah* are related to cognitive aspects, both can be included in the category of *ta'lim* (teaching knowledge). Thus, these verses provide two descriptions of the category of *tarbiyah* process, namely *ta'lim and tazkiyah* (purification of the soul), which are related to the spiritual aspect.

Apart from that, Surah At-Tahrim verse 6 is also an important reference in understanding the concept of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah*. Allah's command to believers to protect themselves and their families from the torment of hell is interpreted as an obligation to educate their families by means of *ta'dîb* (establishing manners) and *ta'lim*. The interpretation quoted by Aṭṭabari, Al Râzî, Ibn Kathir, Al Wâhidî, Al Sa'dî and Al Ghazâlî refers to the words of Ali bin Abi Talib when explaining the meaning of the verse, namely "*addibûhum wa 'allimûhum*" which means form adab [*ta'dîb*] them and teach them knowledge [*ta'lim*] (Aṭṭabari, 2001; Al Râzî, 1420 AH; Ibnu Kathir, 1419 AH; Al Wâhidî, 1438 AH; Al Sa'dî, 1425 AH; Al Ghazâlî, 2011).

*Ta'dîb* and *ta'lim* as an educational process is also mentioned simultaneously in the hadith. Among them, when Jabir bin Abdullah RA was asked by the Prophet SAW why he married a widow, he explained that he needed someone who could educate and teach manners to his younger siblings. He said, "*Fatazawwajtu tsayyiban tu'allimuhunna wa tuaddibuhunna*". Thus, Al Bukhari narrated the hadith (Al Bukhari, 1422 H).

Thus, the *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* process is pursued through *ta'dîb, ta'lim and tazkiyah*, where *ta'dîb* is understood as the teaching and training of the soul and good morals as well as a way to the essence of adab, *ta'lim* as the process of imparting knowledge (science) or make someone knowledgeable (Al Mausuhah Al Fiqhiyyah Al Kuwaitiyyah, 1983) and *tazkiyah* as an effort develop and purify the human soul from all bad traits and temperament, physically and mentally (Abu Arrad, 1424 H). Farida (2024) shows that persuasive Islamic da'wah in digital spaces can counter provocative religious narratives, indicating that Islamic education and da'wah should be grounded

in ethical communication, compassion, and moral responsibility. So, *rabbâniyyah tarbiyah* not only educates cognitive intellectuals, but simultaneously also educates human morals and spirituality holistically.

Based on the perspectives of the aforementioned scholars, *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* can be synthesized as a comprehensive, gradual (*tadarruj*), and divinely oriented Islamic educational process aimed at forming the *insân rabbânî* through the integration of three core dimensions, namely *ta'lim*, *ta'dîb*, and *tazkiyah*. *Ta'lim* functions as a progressive process of knowledge transmission and development, beginning with foundational knowledge and advancing toward more complex levels in accordance with the learners' cognitive capacity, thereby establishing a robust epistemological structure. *Ta'dîb* represents the process of internalizing ethical conduct (*adab*), moral formation, and exemplary modeling, situating knowledge within a moral framework of obedience to Allah, while affirming the educator's role as an *uswah* (exemplary model) who guides learners through prophetic methodology and the tradition of the righteous predecessors (*salaf*). Meanwhile, *tazkiyah* refers to the purification of the soul that fosters spiritual closeness to Allah, strengthens faith, and liberates individuals from base moral traits toward higher levels of moral and spiritual perfection.

These three dimensions operate not independently but in an integrated manner within the framework of *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah*, which balances the development of *afkâr* (cognitive domain), *âthifah* (affective domain), and *sulûk* (psychomotor/behavioral domain). From this perspective, *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* is not limited to knowledge acquisition but extends to the formation of a wise scholarly character, characterized by noble ethics, and the ability to practice and transmit knowledge progressively in accordance with learners' developmental capacity. This process emphasizes the principle of educational gradation, namely the delivery of knowledge from simple to complex, and from foundational principles to deeper realities, thereby preventing epistemological distortion.

Accordingly, *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* may be defined as an Islamic educational system that constructs the *insân rabbânî* through the gradual integration of *ta'lim*, *ta'dîb*, and *tazkiyah*, producing individuals who are knowledgeable, ethically grounded, and spiritually purified, while possessing intellectual competence, spiritual depth, and exemplary social conduct based on revelatory (divine) values.

### ***Tadarruj and Istimrâr***

Literally, *tadarruj* means to rise, progress and increase gradually or gradually, while *istimrâr* means to remain and continue (Al Munawwir, 1997). These two sentences are very close and central to the concept of *tarbiyah rabbâniyyah* based on verse 79 of the letter Ali Imran. Among the meanings of *rabbani* that have been put forward is "الرَّبَّانِيُّ الَّذِي يُرَبِّي النَّاسَ بِصِغَارِ الْعِلْمِ قَبْلَ كِبَارِهِ" which means, *rabbani* is a person who educates humans with "small knowledge" before "big knowledge" (Al Bukhârî, 1422 H). The meaning of this phrase in the book *Sahîh Al Bukhârî* is explained by hadith experts such as Ibnu Hajar Al Asqalani in the book *Fathu Al Bâri* as educating humans through *tadrîj* or *tadarruj* (Al Asqalani, 1379 H).

Meanwhile, the principle of *istimrâr* can be understood from the verb form *mudhârî'* in the letter Ali Imrân verse 79, (بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ), which means, "because you always teach the book and study it!". In addition to showing that the *rabbaniyyah* degree can only be achieved through the path of knowledge, teaching and studying the book of Allah (Al-Razi, 1420 H), the verse with its *mudhari* form of the verb also shows that the learning and teaching process in the concept of *tarbiyah rabbaniyyah* continues continuously without stopping and takes a long time. Because,

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among the meanings contained in the *mudhari* form of the verb is *istimrar*, which indicates the continuity of events that continue. While the *wazan* (فَعْلٌ - يُفْعِلُ - تُفْعِلُونَ) in work (تَعَلُّمٌ) contains the meaning of *takrîr* (repetition), *taktsîr* (increasing) and *talabbuts* (dwelling and staying) which requires the process to be carried out over a period of time that is not short and requires consistency (Al Asfahânî, tt; Al Samurâ'î, 2018).

Thus *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* is an approach to Islamic education through *ta'dîb*, *ta'lim* and *tazkiyah* which is carried out in a *tadarruj* (gradual) and *istimrâr* (continuous) manner. Drawing on the concepts of *tadarruj* and *istimrâr* within *tarbiyah rabbâniyah*, these two principles can be systematically operationalized in the design of Islamic education at multiple levels, including curriculum development, instructional processes, learner development, ulama cadre formation, and the broader paradigm of lifelong learning.

First, in curriculum development, the principle of *tadarruj* requires a hierarchical and staged curriculum structure, beginning with foundational knowledge (*mubtadi'*) and progressing gradually toward intermediate and advanced levels (*mutaqaddim*). This aligns with the pedagogical principle of "teaching small knowledge before large knowledge," indicating that curriculum design should not be abrupt or overly complex at early stages, but instead follow a logical progression that corresponds to learners' cognitive readiness. Its implementation may include the gradual sequencing of core competencies across educational levels, progressive mapping of learning outcomes, and the integration of *ta'lim*, *ta'dîb*, and *tazkiyah* dimensions at each curricular stage.

Second, in instructional stages, *tadarruj* guides a structured learning process that moves from basic conceptual introduction, to comprehension, and subsequently to application and analytical reasoning. Educators are not expected to deliver complex material immediately; rather, they are required to establish cognitive foundations incrementally to prevent conceptual distortion. Meanwhile, *istimrâr* emphasizes that learning is not a temporary activity, but a continuous process characterized by repetition (*takrîr*), reinforcement (*takthîr*), and sustained engagement with knowledge over time.

Third, in learner development, the principle of *tadarruj* necessitates gradual competency formation encompassing cognitive (*afkâr*), affective (*'âthifah*), and psychomotor/behavioral (*sulûk*) dimensions. Learners are not merely required to acquire knowledge rapidly, but to undergo a structured process of value internalization and behavioral habituation. In contrast, *istimrâr* ensures that the development of character, spirituality, and intellectual capacity does not terminate at a specific educational stage, but continues consistently throughout the learner's educational trajectory.

Fourth, in the formation of ulama cadres, *tadarruj* serves as a foundational principle in the process of *taḥqîq al-'ilm* (deepening of knowledge), beginning with mastery of basic religious sciences, advancing to methodological competence in legal reasoning (*istinbât*), and culminating in the capacity for *ijtihād*. This staged progression is essential to produce scholars who are epistemologically grounded and spiritually mature. Meanwhile, *istimrâr* is reflected in continuous processes of *talâqqî* (knowledge transmission) and *murâja'ah* (revision), ensuring that scholarly development does not cease within formal education, but continues through scholarly circles, *da'wah* practice, and lifelong social engagement.

Fifth, the principle of *istimrâr* is also closely aligned with the concept of lifelong learning, which emphasizes that the pursuit of knowledge does not end with formal education but continues throughout all stages of life. Within the framework of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah*, the ideal learner is an

individual who remains in a continuous cycle of learning, teaching, and practicing knowledge across formal, non-formal, and informal contexts.

Thus, the integration of *tadarruj* and *istimrâr* not only strengthens the conceptual foundation of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah*, but also provides a practical contribution to the systematic, sustainable, and adaptive design of Islamic education. This approach affirms that Islamic education is not merely a transmission of knowledge, but a gradual and continuous process of human formation toward the realization of the *insân rabbâni* ideal.

### **The Relevance of *Rabbâniyyah Tarbiyah***

The crisis of moral and spiritual values that hit as a result of an education system that prioritizes cognitive dimensions and technical skills in its paradigm and application can be resolved with the *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* approach. Because, *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* is an approach that integrates knowledge and deeds based on a strong spirituality of faith. The principle of "learning the faith before studying the Koran" which is enshrined in the Prophet's sunnah (Ibnu Majah, 2009) and the principle of "*adab before knowledge*" stated by Imam Malik and other Salaf figures (Al Asbahâni, 1974) is a strong foundation for forming a building of knowledge, so that the knowledge obtained is not just a collection of information that is memorized and collected, but truly becomes '*ilmun nâfi*' (knowledge that provides benefits), namely knowledge that is passed on fear of Allah (Al Tsa'âlibî, 1997), which is manifested in acts of obedience to Allah the Khaliq and good morals towards fellow creatures as well as responsibility and independence towards oneself. A *rabbani* with the qualities of faith and piety makes him have superior spiritual qualities and with the qualities of knowledge, a high quality of *adab* because it combines the meaning of precision and quality of thought, noble morals and compassion for creatures (Ibn Asyur, 1984) he has high moral qualities.

*Rabbanical education* which makes *ta'dîb*, *ta'lîm* and *tazkiyah* in a gradual and continuous manner as its approach method, becoming a solution for the development of a whole person that holistically fosters all aspects of self, both intellectual, moral, spiritual, personal and social. This argument is supported by Noor (2026), who shows that the internalization of moral values in Islamic educational institutions is strengthened through regular habituation, spiritual reflection, and the exemplary role of mentors. Such a process contributes to the formation of honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, emotional maturity, and social maturity among students. Therefore, the concept of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* is relevant as a holistic educational framework that integrates *ta'lîm*, *ta'dîb*, and *tazkiyah* in a gradual and continuous manner to form individuals with intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social excellence. In addition, a teacher with *rabbâni* qualities, in addition to being worthy of being a role model for his students and society, has the ability to form superior scientific quality because in addition to having solid knowledge and understanding of religious knowledge (*râsikh fî al ilmi*), he is also a *murabbî* who has an effective teaching method with a *tadarruj* approach.

If the concept of *tadarruj* in education is elaborated and studied further, it will be able to become the basis of a good curriculum, which can guarantee the formation of a strong *malakah ilmiyyah* for students, especially *ulama* cadres. *Malakah* is a characteristic that is firmly embedded in the soul or a specific readiness of the mind to carry out an action optimally, the existence of which is solid and cannot easily be lost or changed from a person's soul (Al Isawi, 2019). So that *malakah ilmiyyah* can be understood as a scientific quality that is solid and embedded in the human soul, which is not easily lost, which can be spontaneously presented when needed along with analysis, understanding and application in every condition faced. This is in accordance with the interpretation which states that the meaning of *rabbâni* is a *âlim* and *faqîh*, which Al Syatibi defines as someone who has realized knowledge and this knowledge has become an inherent characteristic of him, so that he is able to understand Allah's will from His Shari'a (Al Syâtibî, 2016). This kind of scientific qualification is what the scholars need to have, because they are the place

where humans refer and seek guidance in facing various life problems. So, this concept also offers a solution to the scientific crisis.

The principle of *istimrâr* in the concept of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* is the concept of lifelong learning, as is being promoted by the Indonesian government. Not only that, the goal of national education which wants students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible can be realized with the concept of *tarbiyah rabbâniyah*, even more than that. *Insân rabbâni* with the characteristics of *rabbâniyyah* as stated is a picture of a complete human being who wants to be built and formed in all its dimensions, both intellectual, moral, spiritual, personal and social.

From the perspective of global curriculum development, *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* is also relevant to the concept of a competency-based curriculum enriched with ethical values and spirituality. In this framework, the curriculum is not solely oriented toward academic achievement, but also toward character formation, ethical development, and social responsibility. Consequently, education becomes more comprehensive in shaping individuals who are not only "competent" but also "meaningful" within global social life.

Moreover, in the context of contemporary crises such as moral degradation, digital alienation, and identity fragmentation, *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* offers a constructive solution by presenting the model of *insân rabbâni* as an ideal human being who embodies a balance between intellectual intelligence, spiritual depth, moral maturity, and global social awareness. This model is highly relevant to the demands of the modern world, which requires leaders, scholars, and global citizens who are not only intellectually capable but also ethically grounded and socially responsible.

Thus, *tarbiyah rabbâniyah* functions not merely as a normative concept within Islamic education, but also as a global educational paradigm capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges. The integration of divine values, a holistic approach, and the principle of sustainability positions it as a significant contribution to the development of modern education systems that are more humanistic, ethical, and oriented toward the sustainability of human civilization.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of *insân rabbâni* in Islamic education describes the ideal profile of a believer who has a close relationship with Allah, has a true and deep mastery and understanding of religious knowledge, practices the knowledge he has, has noble morals, wisdom and plays a role in society through *ishlâh* (improvement) activities, especially by teaching knowledge and preaching and other social concerns. At a minimum, a *rabbani* must meet the criteria of *al imân*, *al ilmu al wâjib* (obligatory knowledge), *al amal al wâjib* (obligatory charity) *al ta'lim wa al da'wah al wâjiban* (obligatory teaching and preaching).

*Rabbaniyah* is a high degree of close relationship with Allah and steadfastness in holding Islamic religious values which are based on *al imân* (faith), *al taqwâ* (piety), *al 'ibâdah* (worship), *al rusûkh fi al ilmi* (mastery of knowledge), *al amal* (charity), *al hilmu* (noble morals), *al ishlâh bi al tarbiyah al da'wah* (improvement through education and da'wah), *al qiyâdah al ijtimâ'iyah* (social leadership) and *al hikmah* (wisdom). All of this is rooted in the learning and teaching of God's revelation which is carried out *tadarruj* (gradually) and *istimrâr* (continuously).

*Rabbanical education* is an educational approach that offers a holistic framework that integrates the dimensions of *rûhâniyah*, *ma'rifiyyah*, *akhlâqiyyah*, and *ijtimâ'iyah*. Through three

main pillars, namely *ta'dîb* (adab education), *ta'lîm* (teaching of knowledge), and *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) *tarbiyah* rabbâniyah aims to form *insân rabbânî*, namely a human profile that excels in spirituality, morals, intellectuals and socially. The principles of *tadarruj* (graduality) and *istimrâr* (continuous) are important foundations in ensuring the effectiveness and positive impact of the educational process carried out.

This study confirms that *tarbiyah* rabbâniyah is relevant in answering the problems faced by modern education. In addition to offering solutions to moral and spiritual crises, this approach provides an educational framework that is able to produce individuals who are in line with Islamic values and are competitive in the contemporary era. By integrating Islamic values in education, *tarbiyah* rabbâniyah can become an educational model that combines the development of science, character building, and social improvement. Further research that elaborates the principle of *tadarruj* in the concept of *tarbiyah* rabbâniyah is part of the recommendations of this research to obtain a clearer and more applicable educational framework.

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