

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC CIVILISATION: FROM THE GOLDEN AGE TO THE PRESENT

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Abstract

Islamic civilisation has come a long way, from its golden age in the 8th to 14th centuries, when it was the world's centre of knowledge and innovation, to its current state of challenge but also potential. During the golden age, Islamic civilisation made significant contributions in the fields of science, mathematics, medicine and the arts. However, after this period, the Islamic world experienced setbacks due to internal and external factors such as political conflicts and colonisation. Nonetheless, the Muslim intellectual tradition survived and continues to be revived by new generations of scholars. Today, the Islamic world faces modern challenges but is also engaged in technological advancement, the global economy and intercultural dialogue. It is important for Muslim countries to continue reforms, innovations in education, and strengthen international collaboration in order to contribute significantly to the global community in the future.

Keywords: Development, Islamic Civilisation, Golden Age to the Present

Introduction

Islamic civilisation has played a significant role in the history of the development of world culture and science. Islamic civilisation refers to the totality of cultural achievements, sciences, arts, laws, and social traditions that developed under the influence of Islamic religious teachings and Muslim societies since the 7th century AD. It is renowned for its extensive contributions in fields such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, architecture and literature, as well as the development of centres of learning such as Madrasahs and large libraries in cities such as Baghdad, Cordoba and Damascus (SHEEHAN, 2024). Islamic civilisation not only integrated knowledge from other civilisations such as the Greeks, Romans, Persians and Indians, but also created a new science that became an important foundation for the scientific renaissance in Europe and the development of civilisation in the world as a whole (Anjum & Khubaib, 2021).

Starting from the time of the Prophet and his companions, this civilisation reached its peak during the Abbasid Caliphate, often referred to as the 'Golden Age of Islam' (approximately 8th to 13th centuries AD). During this time, the Islamic world became the intellectual centre of the world, with cities like Baghdad and Cordoba flourishing as centres of learning and research. Muslim scholars not only mastered the Greek and Roman traditions of science, but also made significant contributions in fields

such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy and literature (Irhamisyah & Anshor, 2023).

Islamic civilisation has great significance in world history because of its extensive and diverse contributions to the development of global science, art and culture. During the Islamic Golden Age, around the 8th to 13th centuries AD, the Islamic world became the intellectual centre of the world, where Muslim scholars mastered, translated and developed various disciplines from Greek, Roman, Persian and Indian civilisations (Apriyanto, 2020). These contributions spanned the fields of mathematics (including the development of algebra and the decimal number system), medicine (with important works such as the 'Canon of Medicine' by Ibn Sina), as well as astronomy (improved astrological observations and knowledge). The existence of large libraries such as the Bayt al-Hikmah in Baghdad, which served as a centre for translation and research, became an important symbol of Islamic civilisation's dedication to knowledge and learning (Mitha, 2020).

In addition to science, Islamic civilisation has had a profound impact on art, architecture and culture. Islamic architecture is renowned for the beauty of mosques, madrasas and palaces complemented by the decorative arts of calligraphy, mosaics and Islamic geometry, which can be seen in buildings such as the Great Mosque of Cordoba and the Taj Mahal. In literature and philosophy, works such as 'One Thousand and One Nights' and the contributions of philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Ibn Rushd have enriched the global heritage (Alfaizi et al., 2023). Extensive trade and economic networks between the Islamic world and other regions have also facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas and technologies, fuelling the spread of knowledge and accelerating innovation around the world. This intellectual and cultural openness made Islamic civilisation one of the important foundations for the scientific renaissance in Europe and the development of human civilisation as a whole (Mastori et al., 2024).

However, over time, Islamic civilisation experienced various challenges, including external invasions, internal divisions, and colonisation by foreign nations. Entering the modern era, many Muslim-majority countries were faced with the challenges of globalisation, colonialism and neo-colonialism, which affected their political, economic and social dynamics (Nadlifah & Latif, 2024).

Today, while many Muslim countries are demonstrating economic growth and social progress, political instability, regional conflicts, and socio-economic disparities remain significant challenges. At the same time, there is a resurgence of global interest in the contribution of Islamic influences in history, including in art, culture, and science, prompting renewed reflection on the role of Islamic civilisation in the modern world (Rull, 2021).

The problems faced by the Muslim world today raise important questions about how the legacy of the Golden Age can be integrated with contemporary challenges and opportunities. Faced with global and local shifts, it is necessary to understand the

dynamics of Islamic civilisation from the golden age to the present, as well as how its historical contributions can be used to address modern challenges and formulate an inclusive and sustainable vision of the future.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method, or literature review, is a research approach that aims to identify, analyse, and evaluate written sources that are relevant to the topic or research problem being studied. This method involves data collection activities from various types of sources such as books, journal articles, dissertations, research reports, and other related documents (Sukmadinata, 2009); (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). Researchers use this method to understand how far previous research has been conducted, identify gaps in existing knowledge, as well as build a strong theoretical foundation for further research. A systematic and comprehensive approach in literature research includes the process of organising and synthesising information so that the results can provide deep insights, create a structured conceptual framework, and inform the formulation of relevant hypotheses or research questions and assist in the development of subsequent study methodologies (Moleong, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Key Periods in Islamic Civilisation

The early period of Islamic civilisation began with the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 AD and continued until the time of the Khulafaur Rashidin (the first four caliphs). During this period, there was a rapid development of Islam that spread from its original cities, Mecca and Medina, to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. The first caliph, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, and his successors, Umar bin Khattab, Usman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib, played an important role in expanding the territory of Islam. They succeeded in establishing a government based on the principles of justice and united the various Arab tribes under the banner of Islam. This period was also marked by the codification of the Qur'an, which became the sacred text for Muslims (Erhamwilda, 2021).

The Umayyad dynasty marked the transition from a government led by the close companions of the Prophet Muhammad to a dynasty managed by the Bani Umayyah. The capital of the government was moved from Medina to Damascus by Caliph Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan. This period was characterised by a massive expansion of Islamic territory that covered large parts of Persia, North Africa, and even reached Spain (Masood & Arshad, 2023). With this vast territory, the Umayyads introduced efficient administration and a more complex bureaucracy, as well as establishing extensive trade networks. However, political and social tensions increased, mainly due to rivalries

between Arabs and non-Arab Muslims that led to the dynasty's downfall (Kusumo, 2024).

The Abbasid dynasty took power after defeating the Umayyad dynasty and established a new capital in Baghdad. This period is often referred to as the Golden Age of Islam, where science, technology, medicine, literature and art flourished. Baghdad became the intellectual and cultural centre of the world, home to great libraries such as Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) where scholars from various backgrounds studied and developed knowledge (Bone, 2024). Scientific works from Greece, Persia and India were translated and absorbed by Muslim scientists, who went on to make significant contributions in fields such as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and medicine. However, amidst these developments, the Abbasids faced internal and external political challenges that eventually weakened their power (Florea, 2022).

The Ottoman Empire is one of the largest and most influential Islamic dynasties in world history. Established in the late 13th century, the dynasty reached its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries under the rule of Sultans such as Suleiman the Magnificent. The Ottoman Empire controlled vast territories from Southeast Europe, West Asia, to North Africa. This period was characterised not only by military might, but also advances in administration, law and culture. Ottoman architecture is represented by magnificent works such as the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque) and Topkapi Palace (Tichi, 2021). As a significant centre of Islamic power, the Ottoman Empire maintained educational institutions, supported arts and culture, and strengthened extensive trade networks. The Sultanate also faced various internal and external challenges that eventually led to its decline and dissolution in the early 20th century (Sujono, 2023).

Islamic civilisation entered the modern era with great challenges and changes. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, Islamic territories experienced a period of colonialism and eventual struggle for independence. New states formed after World Wars I and II sought to modernise and overcome the colonial legacy, with varying degrees of success. Today, the Islamic world is faced with the challenges of globalisation, political conflict, and attempts to renew Islamic identity in the context of the modern world (Shahin, 2022). Nonetheless, Muslim-majority countries continue to play an important role in the global economy, international politics, and as centres of spirituality and culture. The intellectual and cultural contributions of the Muslim community remain relevant and growing in the 21st century, reflecting the dynamism of the rich and complex Islamic civilisation.

Contributions of Islamic Civilisation in Various Fields

Islamic civilisation has made significant contributions in various fields, including science, technology, art, literature, and more. During the Islamic Golden Age (8-14 CE), Muslim scholars were actively involved in translating, preserving and disseminating knowledge from various cultures and civilisations, including Greece, Persia and India

(Ogunbado, 2020). This process not only saved classical works from destruction, but also enriched Islamic culture with new ideas and concepts that were further developed (Abdurahman & Badriza, 2021).

In the field of science, Muslim scientists such as Al-Khwarizmi are known as the 'Father of Algebra' for his highly influential work in mathematics. In addition, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) made major contributions to medical science and philosophy, with books such as 'The Canon of Medicine' becoming major references in European universities for centuries. The use of empirical and experimental methods encouraged by Muslim scientists laid the foundation for the development of modern science (Shahin, 2022).

In the field of architecture and art, Islamic civilisation produced unique and beautiful architectural styles, as seen in mosques and other buildings throughout the Islamic world. Geometric motifs, calligraphy, and intricate designs adorn various buildings, demonstrating high aesthetic beauty and complexity. Famous examples include the Alhambra Mosque in Spain and the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Azizah et al., 2024).

Literature also progressed rapidly with literary works produced by Muslim authors. Poetry and prose flourished with inspiration from Arabic, Persian and other languages. Authors such as Jalaluddin Rumi, Omar Khayyam, and Al-Mutanabbi created works that are still appreciated today, not only in the Islamic world but also in the West. The books and manuscripts of these authors played an important role in the formation of literary and philosophical thought in Europe (Lim, 2021).

In addition, the fields of economics and banking also saw important innovations from Islamic civilisation. Islamic financial principles, such as the prohibition of usury (interest) and the application of zakat as a form of wealth redistribution, influenced the way the economy was managed in Muslim societies (Kasdi et al., 2022). Institutions such as Waqf (waqf) became important in supporting social services, education, and health, demonstrating how this economic system was organised for the welfare of Society (Rusydi, 2023).

Thus, the contributions of Islamic civilisation cover various aspects of life and have left a deep imprint in human history. The knowledge and innovations generated by Islamic civilisation not only impacted the Islamic world itself, but also the development of global civilisation.

Current Challenges and Developments in the Islamic World

The Islamic world today faces a number of complex and diverse challenges, ranging from political, economic, social to religious. In many Muslim countries, issues such as political instability, corruption and internal conflict are major obstacles to development and prosperity. For example, prolonged conflicts in countries such as

Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan have caused severe humanitarian crises, destroyed infrastructure, and hindered access to education and healthcare (Shao, 2022).

On the other hand, economic challenges also play a significant role in shaping the current state of the Islamic world. Many Muslim countries face high unemployment rates, economic inequality, and dependence on the export of natural resources such as oil and gas. This often impacts the ability of these countries to invest in other sectors such as education, technology and health that are essential for sustainable development. Efforts to diversify the economy are a must to reduce dependency and increase economic resilience (Jackson, 2022).

Meanwhile, social challenges including issues such as education, human rights, and women's empowerment are also a major concern. Low literacy rates and access to education in some Muslim countries affect the ability of the younger generation to compete in the global economy. Human rights-related issues, such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and treatment of minorities, are often a source of criticism from both domestic and international communities (Knutson et al., 2022).

On the other hand, many Muslim countries have also experienced positive developments and significant progress. For example, some Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have managed to develop strong and diverse economies, with large investments in infrastructure, technology and education. Some countries such as Malaysia and Turkey have also made progress in improving living standards and creating economic opportunities for their citizens. In addition, reformist movements aiming to improve government systems and uphold democratic principles are increasingly gaining support from youth and intellectuals (Hashemimehr & Memariani, 2023).

However, the development of digital technologies and businesses is also one of the pillars of the future of the Islamic world, which further emphasises the importance of global collaboration. Countries such as Indonesia and Pakistan are developing vibrant startup ecosystems, which offer great potential for innovation and economic growth. Efforts to improve digital literacy and adoption of advanced technologies are necessary for the Islamic world to compete in today's globalised digital age (Shahin, 2022).

Overall, the Islamic world today faces a number of formidable challenges, but also shows great potential for progress and sustainable development. International co-operation, domestic reforms, and investment in education and technology will be key to a brighter future for Muslim countries. By addressing these challenges and harnessing their potential, the Islamic world can play an increasingly important role in the global order.

Conclusion

Islamic civilisation has come a long way from the golden age to its current state, demonstrating the adaptability and innovative capacity of Muslims throughout history. In the golden age, around the 8th to 14th centuries, the Islamic world was a centre of knowledge and innovation, where science, mathematics, medicine and the arts experienced rapid growth. Muslim intellectuals contributed important discoveries, which not only influenced the Islamic world but also provided the basis for later Western science. Such progress was made possible by an environment that encouraged tolerance, acceptance of different cultures, and support for education and scholarship.

However, after this golden age, Islamic civilisation faced a period of decline due to internal and external factors, including political conflicts, colonisation, and closure to scientific development. Nonetheless, the contributions of the Muslim intellectual tradition survived and found a way to flourish through a new generation of scholars and reformers who sought to revive the spirit of the golden age. Over time, the Islamic world has shown flexibility and resilience, with a number of countries gradually recovering and making significant progress in various fields.

Today, the Islamic world is faced with modern challenges, but is also enjoying advances that reflect the great strength and potential of its civilisation. Muslim countries are increasingly engaged in the global economy, information technology and intercultural dialogue, although political instability and socio-economic challenges still loom large. It is important for the Islamic world to continue to reform, innovate in education and strengthen international collaboration in order to contribute more to the global community. By harnessing its rich resources and rich intellectual tradition, Islamic civilisation has the potential to become an important pillar in building a peaceful and prosperous future for all humanity.

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