

## Islamic Education in the Ottoman Turkish Era from a Critical Historical Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to critically examine the development of Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire as a significant component of the Islamic civilization's resurgence. The research focuses on the dynamics of the educational system, the state's role in shaping educational policies, and the contributing factors behind its advancement and decline. A qualitative method with a historical-critical perspective is employed, involving stages of heuristic analysis, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Data are derived from secondary sources such as books, historical documents, and related academic writings. The findings reveal that Islamic education under the Ottomans evolved through three main phases: the expansion phase, the golden age, and the decline phase. During the expansion period, education was centered on spreading Islam by establishing madrasahs and implementing a religious-based curriculum. The golden age was characterized by the advancement of scientific knowledge, improved teacher quality, and the transformation of Istanbul into a center of Islamic learning. Conversely, the decline phase witnessed the deterioration of educational quality due to political and economic instability, which led to educational reforms by incorporating elements of Western education. This study highlights that Islamic education during the Ottoman era was not only religious in nature but also deeply embedded in political, social, and cultural dimensions. It contributes to a deeper understanding of Islamic education as a dynamic historical process responsive to societal changes

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## INTRODUCTION

During the reign of the Abbasid and Umayyad Dynasties, the Muslim ummah reached the pinnacle of glory (Muttaqin, M. R., Qadam, I. U., & Ridwan, 2023). During that time, prominent Islamic intellectuals emerged whose ideas are still being discussed to this day. They even serve as an important foundation for contemporary Islamic education scholars or thinkers, whether in the context of education, religion, or general fields. Then the golden peak of the Muslim ummah collapsed with the fall of Baghdad during the Abbasid Dynasty by the Mongol Roman army with Hulagu Khan as commander (Karim, 2018).

Likewise, there was a decline in achievement in the field of Islamic education and knowledge as an effort to develop *human resources*. This marked the end of the glorious era of the Muslim ummah. Since then, the political condition of the Muslim ummah deteriorated and could only be said to have risen again after the birth of three great caliphates, namely the Mughal caliphate in

India, the Safavid in Persia, and the Ottoman in Turkey (Nata, 2016). However, these three great kingdoms could not restore the glory of the Muslim ummah as it had been during its golden age.

Nevertheless, unlike the Mughal kingdom and the Safavid kingdom, the Ottoman Turkish Kingdom became the first kingdom to be formed and was the largest as well as lasting the longest. The Ottoman Turkish Kingdom in its historical development was able to provide color and become real evidence of the rise of the Muslim ummah from decline. The Ottoman Turkish Kingdom in the history of Islamic development had a very important role, especially in territorial expansion, during the era of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman Turkey was a global power that could defeat Byzantium and overthrow the Eastern Roman Empire as well as conquer Constantinople (Mukhammadiev, 2022).

This also brought brilliance in history in the fields of culture, architecture, and economics. The Ottoman Turkish Kingdom held power for 6 centuries or 600 years, making it the kingdom with the longest reign in history (Putri, R., Daulay, H. P., & Dahlan, 2021). When viewed from the perspective of a governmental period that can be said to be very long, education certainly became a very crucial aspect in the development of the Ottoman Turkish Kingdom. Especially Islamic education that was integrated into the spirit of struggle of the Ottoman Turkish people, so that it could bring the Ottoman Turkish Kingdom to its golden age.

This is what makes it interesting for the author to analyze how Islamic education was implemented during the Ottoman Turkish era. In the Ottoman Turkish era, Islamic education underwent major changes that were influenced by military factors, migration of intellectual figures, and influences from Western ideology. The imbalance in educational focus, ideological transition, and social impacts of these changes are issues that still need to be studied. This gap could become an opportunity for further, more comprehensive study about the impact of these changes on the overall development of Islamic education in the Ottoman Turkish era. The discussion in this paper focuses on how Islamic education was implemented during the Ottoman Turkish period in the era of expansion, the era of glory, and the era of decline.

## METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a historical method that aims to examine Islamic education during the Ottoman Turkish era in depth and contextually (Syarnubi, 2024). This method was chosen because it is suitable for tracing historical dynamics and analyzing changes in educational systems within a specific time frame. The historical method consists of four main stages, namely: (1) topic determination, (2) heuristics, (3) source criticism, and (4) historiography (Wasino, & Hartatik, 2018). In the topic determination stage, the author chose a theme that is academically relevant and significant, considering the novelty value and urgency in the context of Islamic education. The heuristic stage involves searching for data in the form of primary sources such as authoritative history books and secondary sources in the form of scientific articles relevant to Islamic education in the Ottoman Turkish era.

The criticism stage is conducted through external and internal criticism of the collected sources. External criticism aims to verify the authenticity of documents, while internal criticism evaluates the truthfulness of content and narrative consistency within those sources, to maintain data validity and reliability. The historiography stage includes the process of systematic and argumentative construction and synthesis of historical narrative. The author connects historical facts from various sources to form logical explanations, and arranges them into a complete and coherent scientific narrative form. This research attempts to minimize subjective bias by prioritizing interconnectedness between data and juxtaposing various perspectives from the sources used (Sugiyono, 2021).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. History of Ottoman Turkey

Ottoman Turkey was a dynasty that was established in 1300 CE (Lazim, 2020), namely in the medieval period after the Abbasid Dynasty in Baghdad was defeated by Mongol army attacks (Yulianti, 2023), and after the Fatimid, Seljuk, Ayyubid, and Mamluk caliphates (Muvid, 2022).

Initially, the Ottoman Turkish Dynasty was founded by Turkish people and Oghuz ethnic groups. The Ottoman Turkish descendants were one of the small groups located in Central Asia. The Turkish nation originated from the Qabey family, which was part of the Al-Ghas Al-Turkey tribe and lived in the Turkistan region (Hasnahwati, 2020).

Under the leadership of Ertoghlul, they converted to Islam around the ninth or tenth century. They gave everything they had to Sultan Seljuk Alauddin at that time, when Sultan Seljuk Alauddin was involved in battles against Byzantium. The assistance from Ertoghlul caused Sultan Alauddin to achieve victory, and as a token of gratitude, Sultan Alauddin gave Ertoghlul a piece of land in Asia Minor that bordered Byzantium. Then the Oghuz people designated Syukut as their capital city and from that time continued to expand their new territory.

In 1289 CE, Ertoghlul passed away and subsequently the leadership relay was continued by his son named Osman bin Ertoghlul. Osman bin Ertoghlul was able to bring the Ottoman Turkish kingdom to become a great dynasty, so he is considered the founder of the Ottoman Turkish kingdom. After the victory over Byzantium, then the Mongol army invaded and destroyed the Seljuk army, which resulted in the death of Sultan Alauddin. Thus the Seljuk sultanate was destroyed after that defeat. Subsequently, the Ottoman Dynasty got its name because Osman bin Ertoghlul declared the establishment of an Islamic dynasty at that time.

Osman bin Ertoghlul identified himself as Padisyah Al-Osman, which means "Great King of the Osman Family." The Ottoman Turkish Kingdom massively expanded its territory, starting with Osman and continued by Orkhan. Thus nearly half of Europe was successfully conquered. In the 16th century, the Ottoman Turkish kingdom reached the peak of its glory when Sultan Selim successfully defeated the Safavid forces and expanded its territory all the way to Egypt and the Hejaz.

After Ottoman Turkey was able to control Egypt, then Sultan Selim ordered the transfer of books and valuable items from Egypt, along with the entire caliph's family and influential dignitaries to the city of Istanbul. The same thing was also experienced by the Abbasid Caliph, after resigning as caliph and surrendering the title of caliph to the Turkish Sultan, then being exiled to Istanbul (Lazim, 2020). Therefore, the Turkish Sultan had two powers, namely the authority to handle state or worldly affairs represented by the title of sultan, and the authority to handle religious or afterlife affairs symbolized by the title of caliph.

Initially, the Ottoman Turkish government was centered in Qurah Hisyar but then moved to Bursa. There are historical innovations in the journey of the Ottoman Turkish Dynasty that separate several periods of Ottoman Turkish power development (Bakri, 2011). Period I was the era of the sultanate from Osman to Bayezid, which was the expansion period. By giving titles to the sultan as *khalifah* (head of government) and *al-fatih* (military leader and expansion).

Furthermore, Period II was the era from Sultan Muhammad I to Suleiman I, which was a period of restoration and relatively rapid growth. Even the Gates of Vienna were opened by Sultan Suleiman, and during Sultan Suleiman's reign there was also quite significant physical Islamization. For example, Hagia Sophia, which was the largest church in Rome, had its function changed to a mosque when the Roman capital Constantinople was successfully captured in 1453 CE. After this, small churches emerged which were eventually converted into mosques.

Constantinople then changed its name to Istanbul, which is translated as "city of Islam." Then the Suleymaniye Mosque was built magnificently. Eastern Europe had begun to take on colors influenced by Islam. There were efforts made to make Islam the dominant religion at that time, symbolized by the crescent moon and star. Likewise, Sultan Selim's staff and Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) cloak that were brought from Cairo became precious treasures in the Ottoman palace.

The Ottoman Turkish Dynasty reached the pinnacle of glory and greatness when under the leadership of Suleiman al-Qanuni. During that time, Ottoman Turkey developed into a great empire that encompassed territories on several continents and enjoyed a relatively long period of rule. This caused the widespread spread of Islam to various regions of the world, including Asia, Africa, and Europe (Sucipto, 2022). Then the third period encompasses the governmental era from Sultan Selim II to Mustafa II. In this period, the caliph's skill in maintaining and defending the

territorial areas that had been controlled by previous leaders was very prominent. The sultanate was able to maintain and secure its territorial power.

In the fourth period, involving the governmental era from Sultan Ahmad II to Mahmud. There were signs of temporary decline, this deterioration began to be seen gradually. Furthermore, the fifth period, which encompasses the governmental era from Sultan Abdul Majid I to Abdul Majid II. In this period, it showed the influence of Western ideas in Turkey. The emergence of secularism views supported by nationalist groups began to be seen, especially in the movement known as the Young Turks (The Young Turks) (Al Hakim, L., & Faiz, 2021).

Based on historical records, the Ottomans ruled for approximately 600 years, which began in 1300 CE when Osman I ascended the throne to replace Alauddin, the last Turkish caliph, and ended when the 40th sultan, Abdul Majid II, abdicated in the early 20th century or 1922 CE (Nata, 2016). Sultan Suleiman Al-Qanun replaced Sultan Selim who was a pioneer of scientific and educational advancement from 1520 CE to 1566 CE.

The peak of the Ottoman Sultanate and the most spectacular progress in history occurred during the reign of Sultan Suleiman. The very extensive territory of power covered three continents, namely Asia, Africa, and Europe. The Ottoman Turkish Kingdom reached the pinnacle of glory under the rule of Sultan Bayezid II and Sultan Suleiman Al-Qanun from 1481-1566 (Wahdiah, W., & Syukur, 2022). Under the direction of Sultan Suleiman I, Turkish territory could be expanded to the Balkan peninsula during the first two centuries. The Sultan directly supervised the tough Turkish soldiers in battle both ethnographically and ancestrally, continuously advancing and spreading Islam.

The conquest of Constantinople, the last fortress of the Eastern Roman Empire's power, was a source of great historical pride. Ottoman Turkey became a formidable power that was revered by Europe and its allies as it increasingly controlled quite extensive territories. From Budapest in the north to Yemen in the south and from Basra in the east to Algeria in the west, the Ottoman Sultanate encompassed vast territories starting from the 16th century. Islam experienced very rapid development and Ottoman Turkey experienced its golden age until the 17th century.

After Sultan Suleiman died, Ottoman glory seemed to fade until it culminated in a power struggle among his sons. Then the Ottoman Turkish Sultanate attempted to regain its glorious era in the early 18th century by carrying out massive reforms. Even under Sultan Selim III (1807-1807) several Ottoman embassies were established in Europe. Subsequently, Mahmud II (1839) carried out reforms inspired by the West in the fields of education, military, economy, and law. History calls this era the "*Reorganization*" era. Until the 20th century, Turkish citizens including clerics, intellectuals, youth, and bureaucrats continued to carry out various reform initiatives.

Subsequently, Ottoman Turkey experienced a period of decline, there were three factors that caused the destruction of Ottoman Turkey. among them; First, the government's ambitious territorial expansion plans became the cause of difficult state administration management because it required a lot of time and resources to be able to maintain state order. This resulted in state administration becoming irregular. Second was the heterogeneity of the population in the vast geographical area, with different ethnic groups, religious beliefs, and cultural practices; regular government organization was needed in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

The excessive burden was borne by the government due to the absence of strong administrative support which resulted in anarchic actions. The third factor was weak rulers, after Suleiman's death, Ottoman Turkey was ruled by weak sultans who did not have the ability to govern their country. This apparently had an impact on the decline of Islam. The abolition of the caliphate title as a sign of the disappearance of the Ottoman Sultanate as a symbol of Islam for the last time from global circulation.

Ottoman Turkey was the last Islamic dynasty in the caliphate which was subsequently successfully overthrown by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk on March 3, 1924 (Basri, M., Sagala, P. H., Nasution, A. K. B., & Mahfudza, 2023). Not long after the Sultan's government ended in 1981 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938), the Caliphate as a religious institution was abolished. Then Mustafa Kemal Ataturk became the first president of the newly

formed Republic of Turkey. Thus ended the history of the glory of all Islamic governments in the world.

## B. Islamic Education in the Ottoman Turkish Era

In its development, Islamic education in the Ottoman Turkish era could not be separated from the cultural background and social as well as political conditions at that time. Ottoman Turkey was a blend of cultures from several countries including Byzantium, Persia, and Arab. From Byzantium it acquired knowledge about government organization and military principles. Meanwhile, from Persian culture it adopted teachings regarding ethics and etiquette in palace life. Whereas from Arab culture it received teachings about economic, social principles, and science (Tohir, 2009). Islamic education in the Ottoman Turkish era can be seen from several phases, namely:

### 1. Islamic Education in the Expansion Phase (Osman – Muhammad I)

Islamic education in the expansion phase occurred during the period from Osman to Muhammad I. Islamic education in the expansion phase of the Ottoman Sultanate showed various characteristics and strategies that supported the spread and strengthening of power as well as Islamic identity. The following are some main points in Islamic education during the expansion phase, namely:

#### a. Establishing Madrasas in Conquered Territories

In this period, madrasas were established in every expansion territory. Madrasas were the only formal educational institutions that focused on religious teaching. Orhan Gazi established the first madrasa located in Iznik (Nicea) (Mukarom, 2015). The main purpose of establishing madrasas was to produce Muslim students who had extensive knowledge and firmly held good and correct moral values. Madrasas were established to create students who were both intelligent and kind-hearted with noble character.

Madrasas only focused on religious education, which resulted in the scope of knowledge becoming more limited and their thinking tended to produce more commentary works than original works. Thus the gradual decline in academic standards over these centuries was related to the lack of books in the madrasa curriculum and limited time for students to understand complex and difficult-to-understand teaching materials. This ultimately led to a learning approach that was more text-based study and emphasized memorization rather than efforts to understand its meaning.

#### b. Islamic-Based Curriculum

Madrasas used a curriculum based on Islamic principles. With emphasis on the study of the Qur'an, tafsir (Quranic interpretation), hadith, fiqh (Islamic law), and other Islamic sciences. In addition, there were also subjects such as history, literature, and philosophy that were taught from an Islamic perspective. During this expansion phase period, religious scholars (ulama) held high positions in the state and society. The Mufti had a position as a high religious official with authority to issue fatwas (religious legal opinions).

Madrasas were colored by Sufi activities, so madrasas developed into *zawiyyahs* to conduct *riyadahah*, which is pioneering the path to return to God under the guidance and authority of Sufi teachers. Thus various *riyadahah* systems developed which were then called *tariqa* (Sufi orders). There were two largest *tariqa* sects, namely Al-Mawlawi and Al-Bektashi. The rulers were greatly influenced by the Al-Mawlawi *tariqa*, while the Janissary soldiers were greatly influenced by the Al-Bektashi *tariqa*.

The memorization method became the teaching system developed in Ottoman Turkey, which encouraged memorizing material even though students did not understand the topic. The books studied were Matan al-Jurumiyah, Matan Taqrib, Matan Alfiyah, Matan Sultan, and others. After students memorized the matan (texts), they could then study the *syarah* (commentaries) sometimes along with the *khashiyah* (glosses). This memorization method is still used today, especially in pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools). Even the Quranic memorization method used by various countries in the world

to this day is called the Ottoman Turkish memorization rules (Zulfiatul Laili, Alfi & Masruroh, 2023).

The Quranic memorization method or what is currently known as the Ottoman Turkish method according to the Al-Quran Educational Institution (2010) in Fuadi et al. (2020) is a memorization method that combines the riwayah method, which is learning directly from a teacher, the method of learning to read the Quran, and the dirayah method, which is interpreting the Quran that originates from the results of thought (Fuadi, F., Ibrahim, D., & Erlina, 2020).

c. Adaptation to Local Culture

Ottoman Turkey adapted their educational system by considering local culture in the territories they controlled. This could include the language of instruction used in teaching, emphasis on certain relevant cultural aspects, as well as integration of local elements into the curriculum.

d. Financial Support from the Government

The Ottoman Turkish government provided significant financial support for Islamic education in newly conquered territories. This included the allocation of funds for the construction of madrasas, stipends for scholars and teachers, and other supporting infrastructure to ensure the smooth running of the education system.

e. Development of the Education Network

During this expansion phase, the Ottoman Empire developed an extensive education network by establishing madrasas in important cities, trade centres, and other strategic areas. This helped spread Islamic values and shape religious and cultural identities across all Ottoman territories.

f. Education for Leadership and Administration

In addition to madrasas that focused on Islamic education, the Ottoman Empire also established special institutions aimed at training prospective administrative and military officials. These efforts included schools for soldiers (sipahi), where they were taught the laws, administration, and military strategies that were important for strengthening the Ottoman Empire's power. The Ottoman Empire established the Yennissery military unit and successfully transformed the newly established Ottoman state into a country with strong military power. However, the centre of the social and political structure of the Daulah was religious life.

2. Golden Age of Islamic Education (Sulaiman I)

The Ottoman Empire reached the peak of its golden age and remarkable progress in its history during the reign of Sultan Suleiman I. The Islamic education system during the golden age of the Ottoman Empire, which generally lasted from the 16th century to the early 18th century, reflected the intellectual and cultural glory of the Islamic world. The following are some of the main points in Islamic education during the golden age, namely:

a. Strengthening Madrasahs and Universities

During its golden age, the Ottoman Empire developed and expanded its network of madrasahs and universities. Madrasahs became the main centres of Islamic education, offering various levels of education. These ranged from primary madrasahs to advanced levels such as aliyah madrasahs and universities. The levels of education in Turkey were as follows: Primary School for 5 years, Secondary School for 3 years, Senior Secondary School for 3 years, and University for 4 years.

b. Islamic-based Curriculum and General Knowledge

During the golden age of the Ottoman Empire, the curriculum in madrasahs remained strongly based on Islamic teachings, covering the study of the Qur'an, tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and other Islamic sciences. Additionally, there was an emphasis on general knowledge subjects such as mathematics, medicine, astronomy, history, literature, and philosophy, which were taught from an Islamic perspective. During the reign of Sultan Suleiman, laws were also enacted to regulate the general objectives of education.

The law states that education aims to understand the mysteries of creation and realise an orderly nation. This is expected to ensure human welfare, sustainability, and order. Another objective is for education to be a means of acquiring wisdom and knowledge. Furthermore, teachers educate their students about virtue, skills, and religion so that they can function properly (Kodir, 2008).

c. Development of Science and Literature

During this period, the Ottoman Empire became an important intellectual centre in the Islamic world. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent encouraged the development of science and literature, and supported scholars in creating works that combined science with Islamic values. During this era, several scholars emerged, including Abdul Baqi, a renowned literary writer, Nedim, Fazuli, and Sheikh Ghalik (Badwi, 2018).

d. The Role of Scholars and Intellectuals

During this golden age, Islamic scholars and intellectuals played a central role in the Ottoman Turkish education system. Islamic scholars and intellectuals were not only teachers at madrasas, but also influential writers and developers of Islamic thought.

e. Financial Support

During its golden age, the Ottoman government provided significant financial support for Islamic education. This included the construction and maintenance of madrasas and universities, as well as subsidies for teachers and scholars to support teaching and research.

f. Influence on Global Islamic Culture

During its golden age, the Ottoman Empire was not only an important centre of Islamic education in the Muslim world, but also influenced the development of Islamic culture and thought globally. The intellectual and cultural achievements of the Ottoman Empire inspired and impacted Muslim communities in various parts of the world.

3. Islamic Education in the Decline Phase (Ahmad II – Abdul Majid II)

The Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century experienced instability and fragmentation. The Ottoman Empire stagnated in the fields of science and technology. Although the Ottoman military was advanced, it lagged behind in the development of science. When Europe succeeded in advancing its weaponry technology, the Ottoman Empire suffered defeat in battles against Europe.

Conflicts in the Ottoman Empire intensified, both in the form of external threats, such as the advances of its old enemy, Europe, and internal threats from rebellions in various regions that wanted independence and separation from Ottoman rule. This was compounded by the decline in the morality of the rulers and the worsening economic conditions of the country (Oktavia, 2022).

The Islamic education system during the decline of the Ottoman Empire, which generally occurred from the 18th century to the early 20th century, faced various challenges and changes that affected the structure of education and culture in the Ottoman Empire. The following are some of the main points in Islamic education during this period of decline:

a. Financial Crisis and Decline in Educational Support

One of the main factors behind the decline of Islamic education in the Ottoman Empire was the financial crisis that hit the sultanate at that time. The government had difficulty providing adequate financial support for education, including the construction and maintenance of madrasas and allowances for teachers and scholars.

b. Decline in Teaching Quality

The financial crisis and administrative constraints have led to a decline in the quality of teaching in madrasahs and Islamic educational institutions. The lack of resources and incentives has caused a decline in teacher motivation and ability. This has had an impact on the quality of education provided to students.

Seeing this, Sultan Mahmud initiated educational reforms by introducing compulsory attendance for students, establishing an open class system, and founding a

special boarding school for orphans. In addition, Sultan Mahmud also improved supervision of teacher quality and school administration, which was handled by Shaykh al-Islam. The Ottoman government firmly established that only those with a licence could become teachers, and then began to implement a class grading system and examinations for students (Mukarom, 2015).

c. Foreign Influence and Modernisation

At the same time, the Ottoman Empire began to be influenced by the presence of foreign powers and ideas of modernisation originating from Europe. This led to debates and changes in the education curriculum. Some parties supported a more secular and scientific approach, while others continued to uphold the traditional Islamic approach.

This situation then led to the emergence of three reform movements in the development of education: first, a group oriented towards Western modern education; second, a group oriented towards pure Islamic sources; and third, a group oriented towards nationalism (Kodir, 2008).

d. Social and Political Changes

Social and political changes in the sultanate, including the development of nationalism among the people and internal power struggles, also had an impact on the Islamic education system. Considerations that were deemed increasingly urgent included a focus on national identity and the modernisation of education.

e. Educational Reform at the End of the Period

At the end of the Ottoman Empire's decline, there were efforts to reform Islamic education to adapt to the challenges and developments of the times. This included efforts to modernise the curriculum by adopting Western education (Asari, 2018), improving the quality of teaching, and adapting the education system to global developments. In the newly introduced curriculum, madrasahs began to integrate general subjects. General knowledge and literature madrasahs were established, such as Mekteb-i Ma'arif and Mekteb-i Ulumu Adabiya.

In addition to teaching in Arabic, both madrasahs also offer courses in French, mathematics, geography, history, and political science. The general knowledge madrasah aims to prepare students for administrative roles. Meanwhile, the literary madrasah aims to prepare students to become translators for government purposes. Additionally, medical and surgical schools were established, such as Dar-ul lum-u Hikemiye ve Mekteb-I tibbiye-i Sabane, as well as military and technical schools (Lazim, 2020).

These schools also provided literature on philosophy and other general knowledge. The existence of these schools signified the emergence of contemporary concepts that contradicted the long-held fatalistic views prevalent in Turkish society. Sultan Mahmud II took action by sending his students to Europe to pursue more advanced education (Lazim, 2020). The establishment of these schools came as a surprise to Turkish scholars in the 19th century.

During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, several reforms were implemented in the education system: first, Islamic education was placed under the control of scholars. Second, military and naval schools were established. Third, educational institutions were established for bureaucrats, diplomats, translators, and state administration. Fourth, developing a comprehensive education system plan from primary to higher education under the Ministry of Education, along with a plan for full assistance for village-level education (Oktavia, 2022). Sultan Mahmud II sought to spread schools or madrasahs throughout remote villages in both large and small cities (Afkari, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The Ottoman Empire became a symbol of the revival of Islam from its decline following the fall of the Abbasid Dynasty, and its historical journey reflects the dynamics of Islamic education in three main phases: expansion, golden age, and decline. During the expansion phase, Islamic

education served as a tool for spreading the religion and strengthening the Ottoman cultural identity across its territories. The golden phase marked a high commitment to the development of science, teacher quality, and advances in Islamic architecture and educational institutions, making Istanbul the intellectual centre of the Islamic world. During the decline phase, despite economic and political pressures and the influence of Western secularisation, efforts were made to reform education, bringing about a renewal of the Islamic education system towards a more modern form.

Academically, this research makes an important contribution to understanding the transformation of Islamic education within the context of the rule of great dynasties and demonstrates that education is a strategic pillar in shaping Islamic civilisation. These findings also offer critical reflections for the development of the current Islamic education system, especially in facing the challenges of modernisation and globalisation without losing its historical roots and fundamental Islamic values.

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