

# 21st Century Skills from the Perspective of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's Epistemological Framework

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## Abstract

*This study aims to conceptually implement the basis of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's epistemological framework to address the theory of 21st-century skills needed to develop the competencies of Muslim students. This study is based on literature reviews using documentation techniques to extract data, particularly from several significant works by Al-Faruqi and 21st-century skills books, along with supporting references. Data analysis is carried out in two stages: analysis during data collection to capture the essence or core of the research focus through collected sources, and analysis of the collected data by determining the relationships between them. The study results show that Al-Faruqi combines two primary sources of knowledge, reason and revelation, an epistemological framework, using tawhid as a basis. This epistemological framework is applied to the four 21st-century skills. The application is focused on: 1) critical thinking skills based on tawhid, 2) communication skills based on tawhid, collaboration skills based on tawhid, and 4) creativity and innovation based on tawhid. By applying Al-Faruqi's epistemological framework, educators can create opportunities to develop 21st-century competencies based on tawhid, thereby enhancing the realization of identity as a Muslim student.*

**Keywords:** Epistemology; Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi; 21st Century Skills

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengimplementasikan secara konseptual basis kerangka epistemologis Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi untuk meninjau teori keterampilan abad ke-21 yang dibutuhkan untuk mengembangkan kompetensi pelajar Muslim. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada tinjauan pustaka dengan menggunakan teknik dokumentasi untuk mengumpulkan data, khususnya dari beberapa karya penting Al-Faruqi dan buku-buku keterampilan abad ke-21, beserta referensi pendukung. Analisis data dilakukan dalam dua tahap: analisis selama pengumpulan data untuk menangkap esensi atau inti fokus penelitian melalui sumber-sumber yang terkumpul, dan analisis data yang terkumpul dengan menentukan hubungan di antara keduanya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Faruqi menggabungkan dua sumber utama pengetahuan yakni akal dan wahyu, sebagai kerangka epistemologis, dan menggunakan tauhid sebagai dasarnya. Basis kerangka epistemologis ini kemudian diterapkan pada empat keterampilan abad ke-21, dan difokuskan pada: 1) keterampilan berpikir kritis berbasis tauhid, 2) keterampilan komunikasi berbasis tauhid, keterampilan kolaborasi berbasis

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tauhid, dan 4) kreativitas dan inovasi berbasis tauhid. Dengan menerapkan basis kerangka epistemologi Al-Faruqi, pendidik dapat menciptakan peluang untuk mengembangkan keterampilan siswa di abad 21 dengan berbasis tauhid, sehingga mampu menguatkan jati diri sebagai seorang pelajar muslim.

**Kata kunci:** Epistemologi; Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi; Keterampilan abad ke-21

## Introduction

21st-century skills are crucial for every individual to adapt and succeed in facing the challenges of fast-paced and dynamic modern life, particularly in education, the workplace, and social life. Among the key 21st-century skills are four essential aspects known as Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration (Trilling and Fadel, 2009; Chusna et al., 2024; Larson & Miller, 2012; Sari & Asmendri, 2020; Mardhiyah, Aldriani, Chitta, & Zulfikar, 2021). Critical Thinking emphasizes a person's ability to analyze information in depth, assess data accuracy, and make logical and wise decisions. Creativity encourages individuals to think innovatively, find new solutions, and create original ideas that benefit personal and environmental progress. Meanwhile, Communication requires the ability to convey ideas clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing, and to adapt communication styles to different situations and audiences. Finally, Collaboration emphasizes the importance of cooperation, tolerance, and the ability to interact with others to achieve common goals. These four skills complement each other and serve as the primary foundation in shaping intelligent, creative, and productive individuals ready to face the complexities of the 21st-century world.

Everyone needs to master these 21st-century skills (Efendi et al., 2023; Mardhiyah, Aldriani, Chitta, & Zulfikar, 2021). This is not solely based on the importance of these skills for achieving success, but also driven by the rapid change in the world today due to technological developments, globalization, and the unlimited flow of information, which demands that every individual be able to adapt, think critically, and continuously learn to stay ahead. In this era, success is no longer determined solely by academic knowledge but also by the ability to think creatively when solving problems, communicating effectively, and collaborating with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Mastering 21st-century skills enables individuals to become flexible and innovative lifelong learners, ready to face increasingly complex and competitive work challenges. Furthermore, these skills also help individuals become socially and emotionally intelligent global citizens, able to contribute positively to society and play an active role in creating solutions to various international problems. In other words, mastering 21st-century skills is crucial for achieving personal success and

building a more adaptive, collaborative, and sustainable future (Asri et al., 2023; Pahrijal et al., 2023).

Mastering 21st-century skills for every Muslim must remain grounded in religious teachings. This is crucial because religion provides moral, ethical, and spiritual values that guide the responsible use of these skills for the benefit of others (Andika, 2022; Nurhayati et al., 2023). Amidst technological advances, globalization, and increasing freedom of information, without a religious foundation, individuals risk misusing critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration for purposes that are detrimental or contrary to human values. Religion instills the values of honesty, justice, hard work, empathy, and a sense of responsibility, which are essential foundations for building character and integrity in the modern era. By adhering to religious principles, a person is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses moral and spiritual intelligence that guides them in making sound decisions, respecting differences, and using their skills for the common good and progress. Therefore, a religious foundation serves as a foundation that strengthens a person's character and direction in life, so that their 21st-century skills not only lead to worldly success but also bring benefits and blessings throughout life.

Muslim figures and philosophers have exemplified the importance of a religious foundation in reviewing various aspects of progress in human life throughout history. This is evidenced by the epistemological framework through which these figures and philosophers convey their ideas (Farihah, 2014; Satrio et al., 2025; Islam, 2023). This is proof that for every Muslim, knowledge and skills are inseparable from Islamic values, which place God as the source of all knowledge. From an Islamic epistemological perspective, knowledge is not merely a tool for achieving worldly progress but also a means of drawing closer to the Creator and fulfilling one's responsibilities as a caliph. Many Muslim philosophers emphasize the importance of balancing reason and revelation in the pursuit and application of knowledge (Fauziah, 2024; Adiasta et al., 2025; Anggraina et al., 2025). Within this framework, mastery of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration is directed towards material interests, technological advancement, and building a civilized, ethical, and monotheistic civilization. A review from the Islamic epistemology perspective helps Muslims not get caught up in the secularisation of knowledge that separates knowledge and moral values. Instead, it makes modern skills a part of worship and an effort to realize the community's welfare. Thus, the integration of 21st-century skills and the epistemological framework of Muslim philosophers will produce intellectually superior, morally upright individuals

capable of contributing to the advancement of the world while adhering to Islamic principles.

One of the contemporary Muslim philosophers widely known for his thoughts on the in-depth integration of science and Islamic values is Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi (Dewi et al., 2025; Sandi et al., 2023; Nur'aini, 2023). Al-Faruqi is a figure who played a significant role in developing the concept of Islamization of Knowledge, namely the idea of the need to rebuild a system of knowledge based on tawhid and Islamic values so that it is not separated from morality and spirituality. Al-Faruqi's thoughts, when connected to the digital era, have been studied by researchers, such as Research on the application of Al-Faruqi's thought revitalization strategy to improve the quality of Islamic education and also equip students with the skills and values necessary to face global challenges (Khairunnisa et al., 2025). In addition, research on how the correlation of Islamization of knowledge according to Al-Faruqi in the era of Society 5.0 has been proven to strengthen human existence as the center of civilization, and become a solution to gaps and strengthen human character (Aristya et al., 2022). Other research concerns the need to reexamine the concept of Al-Faruqi Education and re-implement it in the millennial era (Sa'diyah, 2021). Of these studies, only a limited number attempt to connect Al-Faruqi's epistemological framework with 21st-century skills, particularly how it serves as a basis for mastering 21st-century skills for Muslim students, thereby strengthening their competencies without alienating them from Islamic teachings. Therefore, this research is crucial and strategic in encouraging Muslim students to participate in the global arena while maintaining their Islamic identity.

## Research Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a literature study design (Magdalena et al., 2021), with documentation techniques to dig up data. Documents used in this research include the main works of Al-Faruqi, especially the books: 1) *Islam; sebuah pengantar*, 2) *Tauhid; Implikasinya pada Pemikiran dan Kehidupan*, 3) *Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan*, and 4) *Atlas Budaya Islam; Menjelajah Khasanah Peradaban Gemilang*. In addition, it is supported by books on 21st Century skills, including: *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times* (Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel, 2009), *Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts* (Facione, 1998), and dozens of other articles related to the discussion. Data analysis was carried out in two stages: namely, analysis during collection, and analysis after the data was collected. The study, carried out simultaneously with the process of searching for bibliographic materials, was carried out to assess the relevance of sources to the research focus, identify the main themes,

concepts, or theories from each source, compile initial categories or classifications based on research topics or variables, and eliminate sources that do not support the research objectives. The data analysis carried out after all the library materials deemed relevant were collected focused on: Synthesis and comparison between theories or previous research results, in-depth interpretation of the contents of the literature to answer the problem formulation, and drawing conclusions based on logical relationships between concepts and findings from various sources.

## Result and Discussion

### A. Al-Faruqi's epistemological framework

#### 1. *The nature of knowledge*

The core of religious experience is God, but behind this experience, God is not merely the principled *Causa Prima* and ultimate cause. Still, He is normative, meaning He is the One who rules (Al-Faruqi, 1995). This also entails that being a Muslim means viewing God solely as normative, that is, His will is merely a command, His pattern a creative ethical necessity (Al-Faruqi, 1995). Therefore, God is the ultimate goal, the end to which all finalistic connections lead and terminate. Each goal is pursued to lead to a second goal, leading to a third one. God is a goal; He is the ultimate goal of every will and desire. From the conception of God as the final and ultimate terminal and the axiological basis, it can be concluded that He is unique. A Muslim emphasizes this uniqueness in his confession of faith, "There is no God but Allah" (Al-Faruqi, 1995).

This confession of faith has consequences for Tawhid. Thus, Islam's diversity, richness, history, culture, knowledge, wisdom, and civilization are summarized in the short sentence "There is no god but Allah." This Tawhid is a general view of reality, the world's truth, space and time, human history, and destiny. This conception of Tawhid, at its core, has the following principles (Al-Faruqi, 1995): Duality, Ideationality, Teleology, Human Capacity and Freedom to Manage the Universe, and Responsibility and Accountability.

#### 1. Sources and Methods of Acquiring Knowledge

Islam states that truth is one, just as God is One, and truth can be known to humans through reason and revelation (Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi, 2003). To understand God's will, humans are given a direct revelation of what God desires for humans to realize on earth (Al-Faruqi, 1995). To interpret this revelation, every Muslim is familiar with the term *al-ulum al-syar'iyah*. These sciences attempt to understand the meaning of revelation, including Arabic, the Qur'an, the hadith, and the *shari'a* (Islamic law) (Al-Faruqi, 2000; Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi, 2003). However, in addition to revelation, humans are equipped with sensory

faculties: reason and understanding, intuition, and all the perfections necessary to know the divine will. This will is not only found in the causal realm, but also in human feelings and relationships. It is essential to understand that the privilege of God-given humankind is to live a life full of cosmic dangers with the freedom that God has bestowed upon it, namely, the freedom to will and the freedom to choose (Al-Faruqi, 1995).

In this regard, nature's causal nature requires the honing of a discipline called natural science to discover it. In contrast, the relationship to human feelings and relationships involves the honing of moral and ethical discipline (Al-Faruqi, 1995), so that the critical ability of reason can guide, harmonize, correct and strengthen, and ultimately systematize the knowledge gained and link it to action (Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi, 2003). It is therefore natural that every Muslim then sees nature as an open book, a second revelation from God, which can be read by anyone who develops the necessary knowledge and discipline. Nature must be managed to reveal its secrets and laws through scientific research and experimentation (Al-Faruqi, 1992), with the understanding that nature is a second revelation from God and that humans are given reason; when knowledge emerges, its discoveries and conclusions are uncertain. Always subject to trial and error, to further examination, analysis, and correction through deeper insight. Nevertheless, this search is a possible endeavor, and reason must not despair of reexamining its own previous discoveries, without falling into skepticism and cynicism. Thus, it is possible to discover the divine will through knowledge based on reason, and indeed through revelation (Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, 1995).

## 2. *How to validate knowledge*

Regarding reason and revelation, because the essence of knowledge is directed towards Tawhid, the mechanisms of their operation should automatically follow the following tenets of Tawhid methodology (Al-Faruqi, 1995): *First*, the rejection of anything unrelated to reality (something that truly exists or is real). This principle eliminates lying and deception in Islam, as it makes everything in Islam open to investigation and criticism. Deviation from reality, or failure to relate to it, is sufficient to invalidate an item in Islam, whether it be a law, a principle of personal or social ethics, or a statement about the world. This principle protects Muslims from opinion, that is, making untested and unconfirmed statements about knowledge. A Muslim claims nothing but the truth, even if it risks his life.

*Second*, the rejection of fundamental contradictions. This principle protects a Muslim from contradiction on the one hand and paradox on the other. This principle is the essence of rationalism. Islam teaches that there must be a way out

of every contradiction, a principle or fact superior to the contradictory elements, to the extent that their contradiction can be resolved and their differences harmonized. This also applies to contradictions between reason and revelation. Islam denies the logical possibility of such inconsistencies and guides their resolution if they arise in the understanding. Reason and revelation cannot be superior to one another. This means that if revelation is superior, no principle can be used to distinguish one revelation from another, or between two revealed statements. On the other hand, if a conflict arises between revelation and reason, that is, through rational discovery, investigation, or knowledge, Islam advises the inquirer to reconsider his understanding of revelation, his rational findings, or both. A Muslim is a rationalist because he emphasizes the unity between two sources of truth: revelation and reason.

*Third*, openness to new and/or contradictory evidence. This principle protects Muslims from literalism, fanaticism, and conservatism, which can lead to stagnation. This principle encourages Muslims to embrace intellectual humility, forcing them to include the expression "*wallahu a'lam*" (God knows best) in their affirmations or denials, believing that the truth is greater than anything they can fully grasp, anywhere and at any time.

## **B. Tawhid as the basis for mastering 21st-century skills**

### **1. *Tawhid-based critical thinking skills***

Critical thinking in the 21st century is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and interpret information logically and objectively to make informed decisions when facing complex problems (Ariadila et al., 2023; Mardiyah et al., 2023). Critical thinking has become essential in the current era of globalization and digitalization for everyone, including students, because individuals face a vast and diverse flow of information (Alsaleh, 2020). This ability requires individuals to receive information passively and assess the truth, relevance, and impact. Thus, critical thinking helps individuals become independent and innovative learners, able to adapt and contribute effectively amidst rapid social, technological, and economic change.

Critical thinking skills are essential for everyone in the 21st century, especially students (Ariadila et al., 2023; Mardiyah et al., 2023), who must practice mastering them. This is because critical thinking skills are fundamental to facing life's increasingly complex and dynamic challenges. Amidst the rapid development of technology and information, students are not only required to master knowledge but also to be able to sort, analyze, and assess the accuracy of the various sources of information they receive. Students can make wise decisions, solve problems creatively, and communicate more effectively through

critical thinking. Furthermore, these skills also prepare them to become independent, responsible individuals who can adapt to the ever-changing world of work and global society. Several indicators characterize a person who possesses critical thinking skills. These indicators include: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation (Facione, 1998). Understanding these indicators can at least help distinguish whether or not the skills have been mastered. If not fully mastered, it can open up opportunities to continue practicing with sincerity and commitment.

The process of practicing critical thinking skills for every Muslim student must be grounded in Tawhid. This is intended to ensure that students' thinking skills remain directed towards the values of truth and faith in Allah SWT. With a foundation of Tawhid, students think logically and rationally and consider moral, spiritual, and public welfare aspects in every decision they make. Tawhid guides students to use reason to understand God's creation and seek the ultimate truth, not merely for worldly interests. Thus, critical thinking based on Tawhid will shape wise individuals who possess integrity and can develop science and technology without losing sight of Islamic values. The indicators of critical thinking skills based on Tawhid can be described as follows:

**Table 1.** Indicators of critical thinking skills based on Tawhid

<b>Examples of the foundation of the values of Tawhid</b>	<b>Source of revelation (Wahyu)</b>	<b>Skill Indicators</b>
Believing that only Allah is the source of ultimate truth ( <i>Al-Haqq</i> ).	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 2: 147 Q.S. 10: 32 Q.S. 4: 105	Analyze problems by considering Islamic values (justice, honesty, trustworthiness). Distinguish between facts, opinions, and hoaxes based on the principle of truth.
Using reason as a mandate to examine the verses of Allah ( <i>kauniyah &amp; qauliyah</i> ).	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 3: 190 Q.S. 13: 3 Q.S. 29:43	Make decisions based on Islamic law and scientific evidence. Link the analysis results to Allah's greatness and will. Criticize social phenomena with the intention of improving, not condemning.

Source: Researcher's individual documents

## 2. *Tawhid-based collaboration skills*

21st-century collaboration skills are the ability to work effectively to achieve common goals (Herdiansyah et al., 2025; Pujiati et al., 2022), both in person and virtually. In a globally interconnected world, collaboration means working as a

team and appreciating differences, adapting to various work styles, and utilizing technology to strengthen cooperation. A person with collaboration skills can build open communication, respect the opinions of others, and actively contribute to shared solutions. Thus, collaboration is essential for creating productive, creative work oriented towards mutual progress.

Collaboration skills are essential because today's world demands the ability to work collaboratively across disciplines, cultures, and technologies (Specht & Crowston, 2022; Urcun, 2024). Many complex modern problems cannot be solved individually but require solid teamwork and effective coordination. Individuals can share ideas, broaden their horizons, and create more creative and efficient solutions through collaboration. Furthermore, in an increasingly competitive global workplace, the ability to collaborate demonstrates openness, responsibility, and goal-oriented leadership.

Every Muslim student practicing collaborative skills needs to base their efforts on tawhid (Islamic faith) so that the collaboration they build is not solely oriented towards worldly interests but also carries the value of worship and blessings. With a foundation of tawhid, students realize that every form of collaboration is part of the mandate to help one another in goodness and piety, as taught in Islam. Collaboration based on faith keeps students away from selfishness, putting each other down, or seeking personal gain, and instead fosters a spirit of togetherness, responsibility, and mutual respect. Thus, collaboration results in achievement and strengthens morals and brotherhood among human beings. The indicators of collaborative skills based on tawhid can be outlined as follows:

**Table 2.** Indicators of collaborative skills based on Tawhid

<b>Examples of the foundation of the values of Tawhid</b>	<b>Source of revelation (Wahyu)</b>	<b>Skill Indicators</b>
Believe that God is All-Hearing and All-Knowing of every word.	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 2: 244 Q.S. 41: 36 Q.S. 2 : 256	Expressing opinions with manners, politeness, and honesty. Listening to others as a form of respect for God's creation.
Realize that the ability to communicate is a gift from God that must be used according to His guidance.	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 55: 3 - 4 Q.S. 2 : 83 Q.S. 20 : 44 Q.S. 33 : 70	Using language that builds and spreads goodness ( <i>qaulan ma'rufa</i> ). Able to convey messages appropriately to the context and audience. Using communication as a means of preaching and positive collaboration.

Source: Researcher's individual documents

### 3. *Tawhid-based communication skills*

21st-century communication skills are the ability to convey and receive information, ideas, and feelings effectively through various media and contexts (Hasan et al., 2023; Nurmala & Priantari, 2017). In the digital era, communication is not only conducted orally or in writing, but also through digital platforms, which require clarity of message, language etiquette, and empathy for the audience. Individuals with good communication skills can adapt their speaking style to the situation, listen actively, and build harmonious relationships with others (Bodie, 2023; Aebissa, 2023). These skills are crucial because they form the basis for collaboration, leadership, and problem-solving in a multicultural and dynamic global environment.

Communication skills are crucial because social, academic, and professional interactions are fundamentally influenced by the ability to communicate (Shah, et al., 2020; Sumaiya, et al., 2022). In the digital age and globalization, individuals must be able to convey ideas clearly, persuasively, and ethically through various media, both in person and virtually. This ability also helps build harmonious relationships, avoid misunderstandings, and strengthen cooperation in multiple contexts (Aebissa, 2023; Salamondra, 2021). Effective communication allows individuals to become confident, positively influential, and adapt to a constantly changing multicultural environment.

Every Muslim student who wishes to improve their communication skills must ground them in tawhid (Islamic principle) so that every word and message they convey reflects the values of truth, honesty, and Islamic etiquette. This foundation of tawhid guides students to communicate with good intentions, to guard their tongues, and to avoid words that could incite slander, lies, or hostility. In a digital age filled with the flow of information, communication based on tawhid helps students use technology wisely and responsibly. In this way, they become effective communicators and serve as role models in spreading goodness and maintaining the honor of themselves and others. The indicators for communication skills based on Tawhid can be described as follows:

**Table 3.** Indicators of communication skills based on Tawhid

<b>Examples of the foundation of the values of Tawhid</b>	<b>Source of revelation (Wahyu)</b>	<b>Skill Indicators</b>
Understand that humans were created to help one another in good deeds.	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 5: 2 Q.S. 49 : 10 Q.S. 49 : 13	Working together while respecting the differences and potential of each member.

<p>Collaboration is a form of brotherhood and the responsibility of the caliph on earth.</p>	<p>Some related verses of the Qur'an include:                  Q.S. 2: 30                  Q.S. 3: 103                  Q.S. 5 : 2                  Q.S. 49 : 10, dan 13</p>	<p>Actively participating in the team with the intention of worship and contribution. Prioritizing common goals over personal interests. Give and receive criticism reasonably. Demonstrating empathy, fairness, and advising each other in truth.</p>
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Source: Researcher's individual documents

#### 4. *Creativity and innovation based on tawhid*

Creative and innovative skills are the ability to generate new ideas, solve problems in original ways, and create solutions that benefit life (Virmayanti, et al., 2023; Avci & Durak, 2023). In the 21st century, these skills are key to facing rapid change and the demands of a competitive workplace (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). Creativity encourages individuals to think outside the box, while innovation emphasizes the application of these ideas into tangible and valuable products, services, or strategies. Creative and innovative individuals can see opportunities in challenges, dare to take risks, and continuously learn and adapt to create positive societal change.

Creative and innovative skills are essential in the 21st century because the modern world faces rapid technological, economic, and social changes (Adeoye & Jimoh, 2023). Creativity enables individuals to think outside the box and find new solutions to various challenges, while innovation encourages applying these ideas to something valuable and impactful. In the workplace, creative and innovative individuals can better adapt, create opportunities, and add value to organizations and society (Hussain & Wahab, 2021; Boscari, 2023). Therefore, these skills increase competitiveness and help build a more progressive and sustainable future.

Every Muslim student practicing creativity and innovation in the 21st century needs to ground it in tawhid (Islamic faith) so that every idea and work they produce has value and blessings in accordance with the will of Allah SWT. Tawhid fosters awareness that the ability to think creatively and create is a gift from Allah that must be used for the benefit of the community, not for arrogance or corruption. With this foundation, students will be motivated to innovate ethically and responsibly and oriented toward good values. Creativity based on tawhid produces brilliant work, strengthens spirituality and morals, and contributes positively to society and the environment. The indicators of creativity and innovation based on tawhid can be outlined as follows:

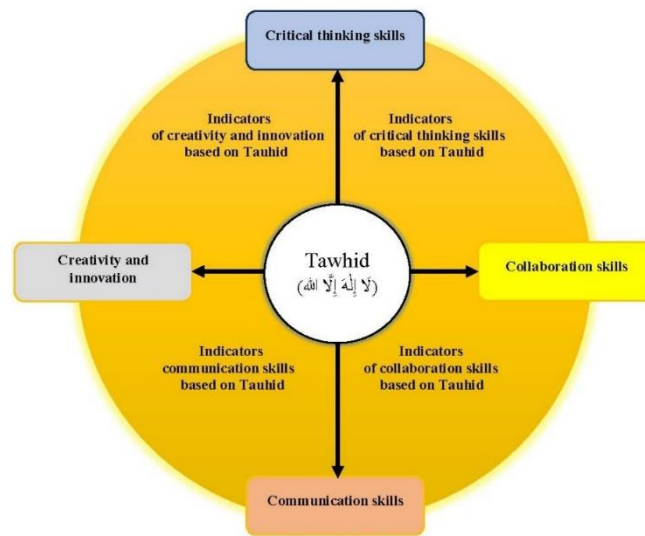
**Table 4.** Indicators of creativity and innovation based on Tawhid

<b>Examples of the foundation of the values of Tawhid</b>	<b>Source of revelation (Wahyu)</b>	<b>Skill Indicators</b>
Recognize that God created humans with unlimited intelligence and potential for creativity.	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 3: 190 Q.S. 2 : 164 Q.S. 95 : 4	Generating new ideas that benefit the community with the intention of worship. Finding creative solutions that do not conflict with Islamic law.
Innovation is part of prospering the earth according to God's will.	Some related verses of the Qur'an include: Q.S. 2 : 30 Q.S. 10 : 5 Q.S. 57 : 25	Demonstrating the courage to try new things responsibly. Developing works that reflect the beauty and order of God's creation. Evaluating and improving works based on Islamic values and morals.

Source: Researcher's individual documents

### **C. Discussion of tawhid as the basis for 21st-century skills and the direction of its development**

A Muslim student must master critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creative and innovative thinking skills based on Tawhid. Tawhid is the primary foundation for shaping direction, intention, and responsibility in every learning activity and work. In critical thinking, Tawhid guides students to seek the truth based on the guidance of Allah SWT, not solely based on human logic or worldly interests (Zuhri, 2025; Wildan, et al., 2024; Sukiman et al., 2024). In communication, Tawhid instills the values of honesty, politeness, and responsibility for every word spoken (Saleh, 2024; Khairunisa, et al., 2025). In collaboration, Tawhid teaches cooperation based on sincerity and mutual assistance in goodness, not unhealthy competition (Saputra, 2022). Meanwhile, in creative and innovative thinking, Tawhid guides students so that every idea and work produced benefits the community and does not violate Islamic values (Hidayat, 2020). Thus, 21st-century skills based on Tawhid will create a generation of intelligent Muslims who have noble morals and can contribute positively to progress in this world and the hereafter. The description of 21st Century skills include: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and innovation, based on Tawhid as follows:



Source: results of the researcher's data processing

**Figure 1.** Indicators of creativity and innovation based on Tawhid

The figure shows that tawhid is central to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. This inspires the emergence of various indicators of these four skills based on tawhid. This indicator is important considering the rapid development of information technology in the 21st century. It can potentially bring negative impacts, such as the risk of losing moral and spiritual direction in using these skills (Jackelén, 2021; Danaher & Sætra, 2022). Critical thinking without faith can give rise to skepticism toward divine truth; communication without etiquette can lead to slander and division; collaboration without proper intentions can degenerate into unhealthy competition; and creativity without a foundation in tawhid can produce innovations that damage morals or the environment. As a result, skills that should be tools for progress can be detrimental to individuals and society. Therefore, 21st-century skills for Muslim students must always be integrated with the values of tawhid (Ardiansyah et al., 2025; Zuairiyah et al., 2025).

These integration models must be continuously developed to equip Muslim students to master these skills. This model development will serve as a key pillar in facing the challenges of the globalization era, which is rife with information flow, competition, and changing values. Without a solid foundation of tawhid, mastery of 21st-century skills risks being detached from moral and spiritual orientation, potentially producing a technologically savvy generation lacking integrity and direction in life (Juita, 2023; Khairunisa et al., 2025). Tawhid is a guiding principle that guides students to use critical thinking skills wisely, communicate with manners and honesty, collaborate based on brotherhood and shared responsibility, and innovate to spread benefits and seek Allah SWT's pleasure. By integrating tawhid values, these skills become a tool for achieving

worldly achievements and developing the character of perfect human beings who are knowledgeable, faithful, and contribute positively to Islamic civilization and humanity.

## Conclusion

Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's epistemological framework combines two primary sources of knowledge: reason and revelation, with tawhid as its foundation. For Al-Faruqi, tawhid not only signifies the theological unity of God but also serves as an integrative principle that unites all branches of knowledge and human activity into a unified meaning oriented toward devotion to God Almighty. This epistemological framework is attempted to be implemented to develop 21st-century skills, which encompass four main aspects: tawhid-based critical thinking skills, namely the ability to reason and evaluate information regarding the values of divine truth. Second, tawhid-based communication skills convey ideas with ethics, honesty, and spiritual responsibility. Third, tawhid-based collaboration skills emphasize cooperation in the spirit of brotherhood and the goal of public welfare. Fourth, tawhid-based creativity and innovation view human creation and works as reflections and manifestations of God's creative nature. Thus, Al-Faruqi's thoughts contribute to the development of holistic competencies of Muslim students, who can synergize scientific rationality with the spirituality of faith in forming individuals with a monotheistic character in the modern era. This will be one way to strengthen the identity of Muslim students, primarily through the positive contributions they make to Islamic civilization and humanity.

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