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Muhammad Hamdi Yazır's contributions to Islamic education in modern Türkiye: A cultural anthropology perspective

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Abstract

The transition from the Ottoman Empire to the secular Republic of Türkiye significantly impacted Islamic education, as madrasahs were closed and a secular education system was adopted. This study analyzes the intellectual contribution of Muhammad Hamdi Yazır, who played a pivotal role in reconciling Islamic philosophy with modern secularism in moderating traditional Islamic education with the secularism orders through his work, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*. Yazır's approach integrated rational knowledge (*ulum al-aqliyah*) and religious knowledge (*ulum al-naqliyah*) to maintain Islamic teachings within the secular framework. This study uses the lens of cultural anthropology to analyze Yazır's contribution as mentifacts (intellectual heritage), sociofacts (social structures), and artifacts (educational materials). Unlike previous studies that focused more on theological and philosophical aspects, this study reveals how Yazır's ideas are not only in the form of ideas but are also influenced by social structures and manifested in educational materials. The analysis demonstrates how Yazır's intellectual efforts adapt Islamic education to modernity without negating its essence, ensuring its relevance in contemporary Turkish society. This study provides new insights into the transformation and sustainability of Islamic values in the secular education system and recommends further comparative studies to explore similar dynamics in other Islamic contexts.

Keywords: Intellectual history, Islamic education, Muhammad Hamdi Yazır, secularism in Türkiye, cultural anthropology.

Introduction

The socio-political transformation in Türkiye from the Ottoman Empire to the secular Republic of Türkiye had a significant impact on Islamic education, especially with the closure of madrasahs and the implementation of a secular education system by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Akturk, 2015; Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). In this context, Muhammad Hamdi Yazır (1878–1942), a renowned scholar and theologian whose ideas still influence Islamic philosophy in Türkiye (Albayrak, 2003; Gökkir, 2012), played an important role in maintaining the relevance of Islamic education through his work, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili,* written in Turkish to make it accessible to the new generation who no longer received formal religious education (Demirbaş, 2021; Mısır, 2020). Yazır attempted to align Islam with modernity through an approach that balanced rational knowledge (*ulum al-aqliyah*) and religious knowledge (*ulum al-naqliyah*), so that Islamic education remained in the secular system (Esen, 2008). His interdisciplinary approach shows that Islamic education is not just a matter of theology but also closely

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related to culture, politics, and social structures (Fantini & Fantini, 1997; Riss & Magenheim, 2014). Yazır's work is not only a religious source but also a cultural artifact that allows Islam to remain relevant in the modern education system, providing insight into how Turkish Muslims navigate their identities amidst social change (Olson, 2018; Gökkir, 2012) Thus, Yazır's contribution to modern Islamic education is an important study in understanding the adaptation and sustainability of Islamic values amidst the currents of secularization and modernization (Brett, 2002; Kelley, 2002).

Yazır's contribution to the transformation of modern Islamic education in Türkiye is demonstrated in various previous studies. Albayrak (2003) examines the concepts of *muhkam* and *mutashābih* in the interpretation of *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, which bridges traditional Islamic studies with the needs of modern Turkish society. Gökkir (2012) discusses state policies in the existence of modern interpretations, showing how Yazır's interpretation functions as a bridge between traditional Islam and secularization. Esen (2008) highlights his method of interpretation in *ulūm al-Qur'an*, while Demirbaş (2021) discusses logic in his interpretation to support Islamic education in a modern academic context. Mısır (2020) highlights the use of *asbab al-nuzul*, emphasizing the importance of understanding verses in the secular context of Türkiye. Tombuş and Aygenç (2017) discuss post-Kemalism secularization policies and Yazır's role in maintaining Islamic education. Dag (2018) examines the Imam-Hatip school as a model of integrating Islam and secularism, while Pak (2004) examines the boundaries between secularism and Islamism in education. Uçar (2019) highlights the spiritual aspects of Yazır's interpretation, and Şahingöz (2014) discusses the methodology of his interpretation. All these studies emphasize Yazır's role in navigating secularization with an intellectual approach that maintains Islamic values.

Previous studies have focused more on the theological and philosophical aspects of Yazır's thought. However, the relationship between Islamic intellectual history and cultural anthropology, primarily through the concepts of mentifact, sociofact, and artifact, has not been widely discussed (Wickberg, 2001; Wrage, 1947). This study fills this gap by analyzing how Yazır's thought is not only in the form of ideas (mentifacts) but is also influenced by social structures (sociofacts) and manifested in the form of educational materials (artifacts) (Fantini & Fantini, 1997). In addition, most previous studies only discuss Yazır's interpretation, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, from a theological and philological perspective without examining more deeply how socio-political changes, such as secularization in the era of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, shaped Yazır's intellectual thoughts and strategies in maintaining Islamic education (Akturk, 2015; Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). Previous studies also tend to highlight Yazır's interpretation as a text without considering how the text is used in the Islamic education system in modern Türkiye (Esen, 2008; Uçar, 2019). This study closes this gap by examining the role of Yazır's interpretation as an educational artifact that helps maintain Islamic values in an increasingly secular education system (Gökkir, 2012; Demirbaş, 2021). In addition, these studies have concentrated more on Yazır's theological thoughts but have not sufficiently highlighted how he integrated rational sciences (*ulum al-aqliyah*) and religious sciences (*ulum al-*

naqliyah) in Islamic education (Mısır, 2020; Özden, 2024). Thus, this study proposes a new perspective by examining Yazır's approach to bridging Islamic tradition with modern sciences in the education system, thereby enriching the discourse on the transformation of Islamic education in Türkiye in the context of modernization and secularization.

This study attempts to understand Yazır's intellectual contribution to Islamic education in modern Türkiye using the approaches of intellectual history and cultural anthropology. This study examines how Yazır's thoughts remain relevant amidst socio-political changes using the concepts of mentifact, sociofact, and artifact, which reflect the interaction between ideas, social structures, and material heritage in the transmission of Islamic education. Through his interpretation of *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, Yazır attempts to adapt Islamic values in the context of modern Türkiye, making Turkish the primary medium to strengthen the relevance of Islamic education amidst the country's secularization. The hypotheses tested in this study include the assumption that Yazır's thoughts play a role in maintaining the existence of Islamic education by adapting to secular policies and that the concept of cultural anthropology can explain how his intellectual heritage survives and develops. Thus, this study formulates an adaptation strategy for Islam in the face of modernization and confirms that Islamic education can survive and develop in drastic socio-political changes.

Literature Review

In this study, the concept of mentifact becomes a significant aspect in understanding the intellectual legacy of Muhammad Hamdi Yazır in Islamic education. Mentifact refers to ideas, beliefs, and values inherited in culture, including theological interpretations and educational thoughts developed by Yazır to adapt Islam to modernity and secularism in Türkiye. One of his most significant contributions is the commentary *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili,* which aims to present an understanding of the Qur'an in Turkish to make it more accessible to secular society. This concept of mentifact is closely related to intellectual studies in the history of Islamic education that trace how ideas develop and survive in changing times (Brett, 2002). In intellectual literature, this concept is associated with the thoughts of Julian Huxley and Leslie White, who explain that mentifact includes beliefs, norms, and values that shape the cognitive aspects of a society's culture (Huxley, 1942; Mandelbaum, 1965). The investigation of the formation, transmission, and preservation of ideas within cultures is significantly enriched by merging intellectual history and cultural anthropology (Wickberg, 2001; Wrage, 1947). As a thinker who lived during the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the secular Republic of Türkiye, Yazır asserted that Islam can adapt to social changes without losing its essence.

In line with this idea, Yazır's approach to mentifact can be analyzed through the lens of Paulo Freire's critical educational theory, which emphasizes the importance of social awareness in the education system (Budnyk et al., 2023; Roberts, 2021/2022). Yazır not only maintains the Islamic heritage through his interpretations but also uses a pedagogical

approach that allows Muslims in Türkiye to continue to understand Islamic values amidst increasingly strong secularization. Yazır's approach can also be compared to the theory of constructivism, where learning is not only passive but involves active participation in understanding Islamic texts and traditions (Nardo, 2021; Newman & Latifi, 2021). Thus, Yazır did not simply translate the text into Turkish but also contextualized it to keep it relevant for Muslims facing rapid social change. This concept emphasizes that mentifact is not only about abstract ideas but also about how these ideas can be adapted to changing social contexts such as manuscripts, printed books, and digital media.

In addition, the concept of sociofact explains how social structures and institutions contribute to the spread and sustainability of Islamic education amidst Türkiye's secularization reforms. Yazır understands that institutions such as *madrasa* and *halaqa* have an important role in maintaining Islamic teachings, even though they are faced with state policies that increasingly eliminate Islamic elements from the formal education system. With an adaptive approach, Yazır does not oppose change directly but tries to find strategies to maintain Islamic values in the new system. In literature studies, sociofact is often associated with forming social institutions, laws, and community norms that support the sustainability of a culture (Fantini & Fantini, 1997; Riss & Magenheim, 2014). This study highlights how Yazır used his tafsir as a social tool to maintain Islamic values in a society undergoing drastic changes. In an intellectual context, Yazır's sociofact can also be analyzed through the sociology of knowledge approach, as Ringer (1990) explained, which emphasizes that ideas do not develop independently but are influenced by the underlying social and political structures. Thus, the social structures and organizations, including educational institutions like madrasas, mosque-based study circles (*halaqa*), and, more recently, Islamic universities, control interpersonal interactions (Fantini & Fantini, 1997). Islamic education has historically evolved, emphasizing how ideas are shaped, preserved, and transmitted within specific cultural and social contexts (Brett, 2002; Gilbert, 1971).

The sociofact approach in Yazır's work also reflects the concept discussed by Kelley (2002) in his study of intellectual history, which states that thought cannot be separated from the social and political context in which the thinker lived. Yazır lived when madrasas began to close, Arabic began to be abandoned in education, and the state separated religion from the formal education system. In such a situation, Yazır's tafsir became a tool that allowed society to adhere to Islamic values, even though they studied in a secular education system. In addition, Yazır's sociofact approach can be seen in LaCapra's historiographic theory (1980), which emphasizes how ideas are inherited through various social structures. Yazır not only relied on interpretation as an intellectual medium but also saw how it could be used to maintain the social structures underpinning the continuity of Islam in a changing Turkish society.

Meanwhile, the artifact in this study refers to the results of intellectual works that are tools for disseminating knowledge in Islamic education, especially *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*. As a cultural artifact, this interpretation is not only a product of theological thought but

also a pedagogical tool that allows the understanding of Islam to remain relevant in modern society. Yazır's decision to write this interpretation in Turkish is a strategy to maintain Islamic heritage amidst secularization policies that limit religious teaching in Arabic. In literature, artifacts are often associated with material cultural products that are the primary medium for disseminating societal knowledge and beliefs (Gilbert, 1971; Wickberg, 2001). Yazır understands that without material forms such as books, religious thought will be difficult to persist in an education system increasingly prioritizing secular knowledge. Therefore, his interpretation becomes a form of artifact that supports the sustainability of Islamic thought in the era of secularism, allowing society to remain connected to Islamic values even though they are in an education system undergoing significant transformation.

As a form of artifact, Yazır's interpretation is also in line with the approach explained by Brett (2002) in the study of intellectual history, where intellectual texts often act as a bridge between the past and the present. Yazır's interpretation not only acts as a source of Islamic reference but also as a tool that ensures Islamic values remain alive amidst changes in educational policy in Türkiye. Using the concept of artifact, it can be understood how Yazır's text not only functions as an intellectual heritage but also as a tool that maintains Islamic education in an increasingly secular environment. In line with this, Roberts (2021/2022) emphasizes that in education, intellectual artifacts relate the current generation with the legacy of thought that has developed previously. Therefore, Yazır's Qur'anic interpretation becomes more than just a book of interpretation; it is a medium that enables the continuity of Islamic education in an increasingly changing context.

Thus, these conceptual frameworks provide a holistic understanding of Yazır's intellectual heritage. Mentifact explains how Yazır's ideas remain relevant and develop in the context of Islamic education; sociofact highlights how his thought interacts with social and political structures; while artifact shows how his interpretations act as material tools that ensure the continuity of Islamic education. Using a multidisciplinary approach that combines intellectual history, cultural anthropology, and modern educational theory, this study provides a deeper understanding of how Yazır's thought remains alive and influential in the dynamics of modern Islamic education. In addition, these also resonate with other educational theories, such as Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and constructivist theories of learning. Critical pedagogy fosters socio-cultural awareness in educational systems to challenge oppression and empower learners (Budnyk et al., 2023; Roberts, 2021/2022). Similarly, constructivism highlights the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through interaction with their environment (Nardo, 2021; Newman & Latifi, 2021).

Method

This study adopts a cultural anthropology approach using the framework of mentifacts, sociofacts, and artifacts. Data were collected through a textual analysis of Yazır's primary work, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (1992), supplemented by secondary literature. The

analysis involved three stages: 1) identifying Yazır's key theoretical concepts (mentifacts); 2) analyzing the socio-cultural contexts shaping these ideas (sociofacts); and 3) evaluating Yazır's written works and material contributions (artifacts). This methodology was chosen to capture Islamic education's complex interplay between ideas, social structures, and material culture. The qualitative research methodology analyses the historical records, writings, and occurrences associated with Yazır's cognitive growth and the broader socio-political shifts in his day (Khan, 2014a; Khan, 2014b). Analyzing Yazır's writings or educational resources (artifact), his concepts (mentifact), and his role in creating Islamic education (sociofact). This study employs historical texts and instructional materials as part of this library-based research project, which strongly focuses on textual analysis (Beins, 2018; Haven & Grootel, 2019).

Yazır's interpretation of the Qur'an will be the main text in this study, highlighting his intellectual accomplishments. The basic materials are taken from *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*. Concurrently, secondary materials encompassed biographies, scholarly investigations on Yazır and his ideas, and works on cultural anthropology, namely those that address the relationship between mentifact, artifact, and sociofact in educational contexts. Regarding the data collection method, this study uses close reading and analysis of Yazır's significant works, particularly his interpretation of the Qur'an, to pinpoint important concepts and teaching points (mentifacts). Furthermore, you will analyze how he shaped the socio-cultural setting of Islamic education (sociofact) and pinpoint the educational artifacts that resulted from his efforts.

Data analysis will be conducted in stages like data categorization. Data were categorized using thematic analysis, focusing on Yazır's writings (mentifacts), social roles (sociofacts), and educational materials (artifacts). Criteria included relevance to Islamic education and interaction with secular reforms. The cultural anthropology framework categorized the data into three groups (Khan, 2014a; Twining et al., 2017). Firstly, determining and categorizing Yazır's major theoretical concepts for Islamic education; secondly, analyzing Yazır's participation in various social networks, organizations, and connections, particularly during the secular transition; and thirdly, Yazır's publications, instructional materials, and other concrete outputs to determine how his ideas have influenced Islamic education. In addition, this research utilizes thematic analysis (Holmqvist et al., 2014) to identify significant themes and trends in Yazır's compositions and the historical background. In the final section, a thorough understanding of how Yazır's ideas were developed, expressed, and applied within Islamic education is provided by applying cultural anthropology theory to connect intellectual ideas (mentifact), social structures (sociofact), and educational artifacts; thus, it is done by cross-analysis with cultural anthropology.

Result and Discussion

The Dimensions of Yazır's Intellectual Contribution to Islamic Education in Türkiye

The concept of mentifact in cultural anthropology provides an important perspective for analyzing Muhammad Hamdi Yazır's contribution to Islamic education in modern

Türkiye. As one of the three main components of cultural transmission—along with artifacts and sociofacts—mentifacts represent the intangible intellectual and ideological foundations that shape people's beliefs. Yazır's theological interpretations, especially in *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili,* serve as a vivid example of this dimension by preserving and adapting Islamic knowledge in an increasingly secularized Turkish society. His approach integrates rational sciences (*ulum al-aqliyah*) with religious sciences (*ulum al-naqliyah*), asserting that Islamic education can adapt to modernization. Rather than rejecting secular reforms outright, Yazır designed a framework that allowed Islamic teachings to coexist with contemporary knowledge systems. This balance between tradition and modernity affirms the mentifact aspect of his intellectual legacy, ensuring that Islamic values remain central to education while interacting with the evolving socio-political landscape in Türkiye.

Table 1. ***Yazır's Contributions to Islamic Education in Modern Türkiye***

No.	Dimension	Contribution	Relevance	Evident	Description
1	Mentifacts	Bridging Islamic tradition with modernity by integrating rational sciences (*ulum al-aqliyah*) and religious sciences (*ulum al-naqliyah*)	His theological interpretations provided a framework that made Islamic teachings accessible in a secularizing society.	*Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* is a tafsir in the Turkish language as a mentifact bridging Islam and modernity, incorporating both rational and religious sciences.	Yazır's tafsir provided an intellectual response to secularization by presenting Islamic knowledge in a way that remains relevant to modern Turkish society.
2	Sociofacts	Adapting Islamic education to fit within Türkiye's secular policies while maintaining Islamic identity through alternative frameworks and Islamic values through a contextual tafsir approach.	Maintaining Islamic educational institutions through works that strategically integrated Islamic values within the secular system.	Yazır's engagement with secular education advocates for a balanced approach between Islamic values and state policies.	Through sociofact adaptation, Yazır found ways to integrate Islamic education into a secular framework without direct opposition to state policies.
3	Artifacts	Creating a material tool (*Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*) in the Turkish language as an educational tool preserving Islamic teachings amid the secular system.	His tafsir became a vital educational resource, preserving Islamic thought while adapting to modern educational structures.	*Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* as an artifact ensuring the accessibility of Islamic teachings in a secular educational environment.	By writing in Turkish, Yazır created an educational artifact that ensured the survival of Islamic teachings despite structural changes in education.

In cultural anthropology, the idea is one of three components: artifacts or tangible cultural artifacts and sociofacts or the institutions and social structures that con-

struct society (Gilbert, 1971; LaCapra, 1980; Wrage, 1947). Theological interpretations, Qur'anic exegesis, and philosophical concepts that shaped Yazır's intellectual legacy would be considered mentifacts regarding him and his contributions to Islamic education. During a considerable socio-political transformation in Türkiye, his works, such as *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili,* represent artifacts that embody the fundamental ideals he aimed to preserve and express. To ensure that Muslims can grow intellectually in a modern, secular society, he advocated for merging rational sciences (*ulum al-aqliyah*) with religious sciences (*ulum al-naqliyah*). Yazır promoted an adaptive method incorporating religious and secular knowledge without compromising the fundamental tenets of Islam; therefore, his educational vision was dynamic rather than rigid (Esen, 2008).

Yazir states that the interaction of Islam and secularism evolves dynamically. He believed Islamic education was essential to maintaining Islamic morality and identity in Turkish society (Demirbaş, 2021). He was extremely worried about how the state's attempts to secularize education might undermine Islamic principles. His writings served as an academic defense of the Qur'an and Islamic teaching, especially during a period when the Turkish government was attempting to downplay the significance of Islam in society.

According to Yazır, teaching secular disciplines like physics, philosophy, and mathematics is acceptable if combined with Islamic teachings to help students form a comprehensive worldview. The dynamic interplay between Islam and secularism is reflected in this way. He stated that modern education should not be sacrificed for Islamic principles, even if he acknowledged its necessity (Dag, 2018; Mursyid, 2020; Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). An intellectual attempt to maintain Islamic ideas while modifying them for a secular setting may be observed in his Qur'anic interpretation. This dimension was central to his intellectual contributions, particularly in moderating Islamic education with modern secular ideologies. Yazır's *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* exemplifies this by interpreting the Qur'an in contemporary Turkish, making religious teachings accessible to a secularizing population. Yazır's advocacy for integrating *ulum al-aqliyah* with *ulum al-naqliyah* reflects his belief in the dynamism of Islamic education, adapting to modernity without negating foundational Islamic values.

His work mediated the gap between secular reforms and traditional Islamic values by providing a theological foundation that could coexist with the secular framework imposed on Turkish society. Yazır's *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* was more than a translation; it was a mentifact that shaped the intellectual identity of Islamic education by aligning it with the needs of a modern, secularizing world while ensuring that Islamic teachings remained central. From the standpoint of mentifact, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* was designed to make the Qur'an understandable to the secular Turkish populace; this work served as both an exegesis and an instructional resource. The attempt to reconcile Islamic teachings with modernity and rationalism gaining traction during the shift to a secular state was evident in his phrasing of the Qur'an (Gökkir, 2012). Thus, the concepts of Islamic education held by Yazır acknowledged the need to adapt to modernity without negating the

fundamentals of Islam, even as his idea of Islamic education was based on traditional Islamic ideals.

Yazır made significant intellectual and social achievements. However, his contributions must be viewed in the larger context of early Republican Türkiye when the relationship between religion and the state underwent drastic changes. After the Ottoman Empire fell and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, the new Turkish government aimed to secularize all aspects of public life, including education (Akturk, 2015; Kocamaner, 2019; Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). The Turkish government carried out broad secular reforms, including outlawing madrasas (religious institutions), instituting state-run secular education, and banning religious symbols from public life. One of the most crucial fronts in this endeavor was education, essential to creating a contemporary secular Turkish identity. The new curriculum aimed to replace Western-oriented, secular knowledge with less Islamic impact on education.

Yazır had to balance upholding Islamic tradition with adjusting to contemporary social circumstances due to the complicated social dynamic caused by the conflict between the religious populace and the secular state. Yazır's sociofacts become evident in this context since his writings show a deliberate attempt to uphold the social function of Islamic education in response to the state's forced secularization (Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). Instead of openly rejecting the state's educational changes, he worked to find methods to incorporate Islamic ideas into the new structure. Part of a more significant attempt to bring Türkiye into line with Western patterns of governance and culture was the shift from Ottoman Turkish, which was based on Arabic script, to Latin script in the 1920s and 1930s. Since many of the old religious texts were no longer readily available to the younger generation, this linguistic change profoundly affected the dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

From the standpoint of sociofact, understanding his reflection on the more significant institutional and societal problems religious organizations (Riss & Magenheim, 2014) encountered in trying to hold onto their identity in a society that was becoming more and more oriented toward secular ideals. Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasas, were progressively marginalized as secular educational institutions gained prominence. Yazır modified Islamic education to conform to the changing social structure, as evidenced by his involvement with contemporary teaching techniques and his readiness to accept some modern ideas, such as scientific knowledge (Esen, 2008). To fulfill the orders of modern society, he thought Islamic education should change, but it must do so in a way that upholds Islam's fundamental teachings.

Yazır's attempts to preserve religious knowledge and cultural identity in the face of a shifting social environment are reflected in the sociofact of his contributions to Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic transition. The conflict between secularism and Islam is highlighted by his position as a scholar and educator, as well as by his capacity to explain an Islamic educational philosophy that might coexist peacefully with the new secular framework. During this crucial period, Yazır's approach

demonstrated a sociofact-oriented strategy by creating alternative educational frameworks and resources outside the formal state apparatus.

Moreover, Yazır's ability to harmonize Islamic education with secular knowledge was not just an intellectual stance but a pragmatic response to the societal shifts occurring during the early Republic. By integrating rational sciences into Islamic education, Yazır positioned himself as a mediator between two conflicting worldviews—secularism and Islam—creating a space for Islamic education to remain relevant and effective in a modernizing society. Yazır's decision to write in Turkish rather than Arabic was a strategic move that allowed his interpretations to reach a wider audience, particularly those educated under the new secular system. In this way, Yazır's works were not just theological texts; they were sociofacts that ensured the continuity of Islamic education through alternative means, adapting to the time's changing social and political landscape.

The artifact dimension refers to the material results of Yazır's contributions to knowledge, especially his written works, which have directly impacted Islamic education. The most important artifacts that contributed significantly to the preservation and advancement of Islamic education under the demands of modernization and secular reforms were Yazır's literary and intellectual works, particularly when Islam and secularism were transitioning in Türkiye.

The most important artifact belonging to Yazır is his well-known tafsir, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (Demirbaş, 2021; Özden, 2024; Şahingöz, 2014; Tuğut, 2009). It plays a significant role in his intellectual legacy and has influenced Islamic education in Türkiye. This interpretation is the culmination of Yazır's endeavors to translate and construe the Qur'an in contemporary Turkish, employing a language comprehensible to the general public, particularly in the recently secularized nation of Türkiye. This text is significant because it serves two purposes: first, it is religious literature that teaches the teachings of the Qur'an to the Muslim community; second, it is a cultural artifact created in reaction to the secularization of public education. By acting as a link between the new, secular Turkish state and the ancient world of Ottoman Islamic education, his tafsir ensured that Islamic knowledge would always be available and significant to upcoming generations. Through his writings in modern Turkish and his engagement with current issues, Yazır produced artifacts that allowed Islamic education to progress and be retained in the face of modernity.

At a period when religious education was threatened by the modernizing and secular reforms of the Turkish Republic, Yazır made Islamic knowledge more accessible by writing his tafsir in Turkish; it serves as an important artifact in the history of Islamic education. It was especially crucial following the shutdown of the leading Islamic educational institutions, madrasas, and other traditional sites of religious study. Yazır ensured that the Qur'an remained relevant and could be studied by future generations receiving their education in a secular state by presenting it in a more modern language (Özden, 2024).

Furthermore, Yazir provides a pedagogical approach to Qur'anic Exegesis regarding educational philosophy. Yazır took a pedagogical approach to Qur'anic exegesis. He

addressed current challenges while interpreting the Qur'an for a modern audience and offering in-depth explanations based on traditional Islamic scholarship. His tafsir became a didactic tool that could be applied in both formal and informal educational contexts (Gökkir, 2012), in addition to being a religious artifact, according to this educational philosophy. The translating process itself is another facet of his tafsir as an artifact. In the transitional period, Yazır's artifacts—especially his philosophical works and tafsir—were essential in explaining the relationship between Islam and secularism. Yazır's *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* is a critical artifact, bridging traditional Islamic education and modernity. By translating and interpreting the Qur'an in Turkish, Yazır made religious teachings accessible to a broader audience, ensuring their relevance in a secularized society. This work and his other writings served as educational tools for preserving Islamic thought and facilitating intellectual engagement in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

The artifact dimension of Yazır's works highlights their role as education and cultural preservation tools. As secular institutions increasingly marginalized Islamic education, Yazır's tafsir became a critical educational tool, helping to preserve and transmit Islamic teachings in a form that the public could more easily access. His tafsir was not only an intellectual product; it was a cultural artifact designed to ensure the survival of Islamic thought in a rapidly changing world.

Factors and Implications of Yazir's Intellectual Strategy

From a cultural anthropology perspective, several important factors underlie Yazir's intellectual contributions to Islamic education in Türkiye. First, socio-political changes, especially the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the secular Republic of Türkiye, greatly affected the educational and religious landscape. The secular reforms initiated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, including the closure of madrasa and the implementation of a secular education system, created a context in which Yazir worked to reconcile Islamic education with modern secular principles (Akturk, 2015; Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). Second, Yazir's intellectual approach to integrating rational and religious sciences demonstrates his attempt to bridge the Islamic tradition and the needs of the modern state (Esen, 2008; Mısır, 2020). His works, such as the commentary *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, serve as cultural artifacts that preserve Islamic teachings while making them accessible in Turkish, essential in maintaining Islamic knowledge in a society shifting towards a secular education system (Demirbaş, 2021).

Yazır's educational philosophy and pedagogical approach also influence how Islamic teachings remain relevant in modern Turkish education (Brett, 2002). Finally, his efforts in integrating Islamic education with secular values demonstrate his ability to counterbalance preserving Islamic identity and adapting to a secular framework, thus reinforcing the coexistence of religious traditions in modern and secular contexts (Gökkir, 2012; Uçar, 2019). These factors collectively highlight the dynamic interplay between intellectual contributions, cultural settings, and educational practices that characterize Yazır's work, which was crucial in ensuring that Islamic values persisted through education amidst the secularization and modernization of early 20th century Türkiye.

In the context of this study, some implications of Yazır's thinking include a new understanding of the efforts to integrate rational science with religious science (Demirbaş, 2021). It suggests the possibility of religious education to adapt to modernity without losing its traditional essence, which is very important in Muslim countries that face similar tensions between traditional values and the needs of modernity (Esen, 2008). Yazır's efforts to maintain Islamic teachings amidst this secularization also emphasize the importance of maintaining cultural and religious identity, which has significant implications for educational policies and curriculum development in secular countries (Gökkir, 2012).

In addition, Yazır offers insights into curriculum adaptation that combines religious values with secular knowledge relevant to the needs of contemporary society (Mısır, 2020). Yazır's work in providing a modern Turkish interpretation of the Quran also shows the importance of educational tools that can maintain the continuity of Islamic teaching through social and political changes (Özden, 2024). It shows the need to continue developing educational tools (artifacts) to maintain the relevance of religious education (Şahingöz, 2014). The transformation of Yazır's work into an educational instrument reflects the need to create learning resources that are more inclusive and accessible to young generations who may not have a formal religious education background (Tuğut, 2009). The implications of Yazır's work may also influence policy-making in countries with significant Muslim populations, encouraging the development of policies that support more adaptive and inclusive integration of Islamic education (Akturk, 2015). Thus, these implications encourage new thinking in developing curricula, learning strategies, and educational policies that support diversity and inclusion in an increasingly complex global context (Brett, 2002).

Yazır's Crucial Role in Navigating Islamic Education in Türkiye

Therefore, Yazır played a crucial role in the intellectual development of contemporary Türkiye, especially during the transformative period that saw the Ottoman Empire become the Republic of Türkiye. His efforts to harmonize traditional Islamic scholarship with contemporary ideas are seen in his life and work. Yazır was born in Antalya in the late Ottoman era and grew up in turbulent intellectual and political conditions (Albayrak, 2003; Gökkir, 2012). He had a thorough education in religious and rational sciences at the madrasas, where he learned about traditional Islamic disciplines and was exposed to contemporary intellectual currents. He studied logic, philosophy, tafsir, and Islamic jurisprudence, fusing classical Islamic study with an increasing understanding of contemporary issues facing the Muslim world (Çilingir, 2015). He is well-known for his tafsir, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili,* which aimed to translate the teachings of the Qur'an into a language understandable to a contemporary Turkish-speaking audience (Atik, 2016).

Yazır's scholarly journey unfolded amid a period of profound transformation, marked by the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the secular Turkish Republic led by Atatürk. The establishment of secular policies, such as the dissolution

of the caliphate and the closing of madrasas, profoundly changed the institutional structure of Islamic education. Yazır's literary creations signify an endeavor to maintain Islamic philosophical customs inside this novel secular structure. Yazır's tafsir was composed in reaction to the increasing secularization of Türkiye's governmental and educational structures due to the reforms implemented by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. At a period when the dominance of Arabic and Persian was being reduced, Yazır sought to make the Qur'an more understandable for Muslims who spoke Turkish by presenting it in their language and offering in-depth (Demirbaş, 2021; Mısır, 2020).

His contemporary tafsir acted as a link between Islamic tradition and contemporary Türkiye. Regarding intellectual legacy and education, Yazır trained in the madrasa system, a fundamental aspect of Ottoman Islamic education. It demonstrated a solid foundation in Islamic philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence (mentifacts). His body of work, particularly his commentary on the Qur'an, was an important source of knowledge about Islam that was passed down to a new generation of Turks living under secular authority (Brett, 2002).

The establishment of severe secular reforms by the newly formed Turkish Republic at the beginning of the 20th Century included closing madrasas and other places of worship. It was up to Yazır and the intellectual elite to manage these shifts. Yazır adopted a moderate approach, acknowledging the inevitable nature of some reforms while working to preserve Islam's intellectual purity. His studies sought to maintain Islamic ideas within Türkiye's new secular framework in response to the strong urge to secularize. He was aware of the necessity to engage with the goals of the contemporary Turkish state while simultaneously providing an academic defense of Islamic ideals (Şahingöz, 2014; Tuğut, 2009; Uçar, 2019).

Yazır's commentary underscores the importance of integrating traditional Islamic values with modernity. These findings are relevant for contemporary Islamic education, where integrating moral values with modern scientific knowledge remains a critical challenge. Yazır's approach can be compared to the efforts of Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, who similarly sought to reconcile traditional thought with modernity to address secularization. Using traditional Ash'ari and Maturidi religious frameworks, Yazır supported the movement known as Islamic modernism, which aimed to reinterpret Islamic teachings in the context of contemporary science, rationality, and social advancement. Despite having a strong foundation in traditional Sunni theology, he sought to demonstrate how Islamic teachings could coexist with contemporary social structures and scientific discoveries because he thought Islam had the intellectual capacity to confront the problems of modernity (Mursyid, 2020).

Yazır's scholarly contributions offer an example of how Islamic education can conform to contemporary political structures without compromising its essential religious principles. The reformist movement within Islam, which aimed to integrate traditional Islamic knowledge with the demands of modern life, may be traced back to Yazır's work. Although reformist intellectuals such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh

have been thoroughly examined, Yazır's contributions in the Turkish context have received less attention in the literature to date.

Comparatively, his work mirrors the reformist intellectual efforts of figures like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, who sought to reconcile Islamic thought with modernity. For instance, like Abduh, Yazır viewed Islamic teachings as dynamic and adaptable to new contexts. However, he differed in grounding this adaptability in the Ash'ari and Maturidi theological frameworks, emphasizing logical reasoning alongside revelation. While Muhammad Abduh used Arabic to unify the Muslim world linguistically, Yazır's choice of Turkish exemplifies a localized adaptation strategy that aligns with the sociopolitical goals of the early Turkish Republic. To further position Yazır within the broader intellectual tradition, comparisons could be drawn with the works of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, whose writings emphasized pan-Islamism, and Muhammad Abduh, who focused on educational reforms. Yazır's emphasis on written tafsir in the vernacular differentiates his approach, making his contributions particularly significant in modern Turkish Islamic education. Because Yazır maintained that faith and reason were not mutually exclusive but complementary, Muslim intellectuals looking for a medium ground between secular materialism and dogmatic traditionalism found resonance in his writings.

Conclusion

Yazır's thought contributed significantly to modern Islamic education in Türkiye. Yazır bridged traditional Islamic education with modern needs through his tafsir, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili,* which is in Turkish, making it easier for the increasingly secular Turkish society to access. Through a cultural anthropology approach, focusing on the concept of mentifact, Yazır integrated rational sciences (*ulum al-aqliyah*) and religious sciences (*ulum al-naqliyah*), showing that Islamic education can adapt to modernization. His approach ensures that Islamic values remain relevant in education while interacting with the evolving socio-political landscape in Türkiye. Meanwhile, in facing the secularization policy, as a sociofact, Yazır did not openly oppose the changes in the state's education policy but sought ways to integrate Islamic education within the secular framework. It shows Yazır's adaptation to maintaining Islamic education through institutions that changed due to secular reform. Additionally, as an artifact, his tafsir became an important reference in Islamic education, making it relevant in a secular education system. His works serve not only as religious concerns but also as educational sources that maintain Islamic teachings in a changing society.

The contribution of this study lies in the in-depth analysis of Yazır's role in modern Islamic education in Türkiye, highlighting how Islamic education can be adapted to meet the needs of the modern era without sacrificing core values. By integrating rational and religious sciences, Yazır has succeeded in maintaining the relevance and vitality of Islamic teachings in an increasingly secular society. This study also shows how Yazır's work has made Islamic teachings more accessible to new generations, which supports

the continuity of Islamic education in a secular education system. Furthermore, Yazır's efforts in maintaining Islamic identity through strategic adaptation to secular policies offer a model for how religious education can survive and thrive despite social changes and government policies. This study, using a cultural anthropology framework, not only explores the interaction between Islamic intellectual history and social structures but also highlights the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in understanding the dynamics of religious education in a modern context.

However, this study has some weaknesses that may serve as recommendations for further research. First, the study focuses heavily on the Turkish context and does not consider how similar dynamics might play out in other regions. Future research could take a comparative approach, comparing the situation in other Islamic countries undergoing secularization. Second, the study primarily uses a textual analysis of Yazır's works and does not utilize empirical data that could provide a more in-depth perspective on his influence on modern Islamic education. Third, while some modern educational theories have been touched upon, there is scope for integrating more educational theoretical frameworks into the analysis. Fourth, the study would have benefited from a broader interdisciplinary perspective, including sociology and political science, to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Fifth, Yazır's influence on secular education policy in modern Türkiye, particularly in curriculum development, could be explored in more depth to explore the practical applications of his theories in the current education system.

Author Contribution Statement

Author contributions to this article: Titis Thoriquttyas contributed as initiator and drafter of the article; Nurul Ahsin contributed as data analyzer and interpreter; M. Nabil Khasbulloh as validator of data and analysis results as well as contributed to collecting data and critically revising the article. All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of this work.

Statement of Interest

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