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CONSTRUCTING TAWHID THROUGH SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MUHAMMAD IBN ABD AL-WAHHAB'S *KITAB AL-TAWHID*

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Abstrak

Penelitian terdahulu mengenai Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab cenderung menitikberatkan pembahasan pada biografi, gerakan pembaruan, dan klasifikasi teologisnya, sementara struktur argumentasi dalam *Kitab al-Tawhid* belum banyak dikaji secara mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana susunan bab serta penggunaan dalil Al-Qur'an dan hadis membangun argumentasi teologis mengenai pemurnian ibadah dan batas konseptual antara tauhid dan syirik. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif interpretatif melalui analisis tekstual terhadap *Kitab al-Tawhid* edisi bahasa Inggris terbitan Dar-us-Salam tahun 1996, yang diperiksa silang dengan edisi bahasa Indonesia terbitan Darul Haq tahun 2017, literatur syarah, dan penelitian akademik terkait. Analisis difokuskan pada judul bab, dalil skriptural, proposisi doktrinal, serta praktik keagamaan yang dibahas dalam teks. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi tiga tahapan argumentatif yang saling berkaitan, yaitu pembentukan landasan teologis dan keutamaan tauhid; penetapan batas konseptual terkait ibadah, perantaraan, dan kausalitas; serta perluasan implikasi tauhid terhadap sikap spiritual, otoritas keagamaan, dan ungkapan kebahasaan. Selain itu, klasifikasi tauhid menjadi *rububiyyah*, *uluhiyyah*, dan *al-asma wa al-sifat* dapat digunakan sebagai kerangka interpretatif, tetapi bukan merupakan struktur pengorganisasian yang dinyatakan secara eksplisit dalam teks. Penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian teologi Islam melalui rekonstruksi struktur argumentasi *Kitab al-Tawhid* serta pembedaan antara proposisi teks utama, interpretasi dalam literatur syarah, dan sistematisasi teologis kontemporer.
Kata Kunci: Tauhid; Kitab al-Tawhid; Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab; Argumentasi Skriptural; Analisis Tekstual.

Abstract

Previous studies on Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab have primarily emphasized his biography, reformist movement, and theological classifications, while the argumentative structure of *Kitab al-Tawhid* remains insufficiently examined. This study investigates how chapter organization and Qur'anic and hadith evidence construct theological arguments concerning the purification of

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worship and the conceptual boundaries between *tawhid* and *shirk*. Employing an interpretive qualitative approach, the study conducts textual analysis of the 1996 Dar-us-Salam English edition, cross-referenced with the 2017 Darul Haq Indonesian edition, exegetical commentaries, and relevant academic literature. The analysis focuses on chapter headings, scriptural evidence, doctrinal propositions, and religious practices discussed in the text. The findings reveal three interconnected argumentative stages: establishing the theological foundations and virtues of *tawhid*; defining boundaries related to worship, mediation, and causality; and extending the implications of *tawhid* to spiritual dispositions, religious authority, and linguistic expressions. Furthermore, the conventional classification of *tawhid* into *rububiyyah*, *uluhiyyah*, and *al-asma wa al-sifat* provides an interpretive framework but does not constitute the text's explicit organizational structure. The study contributes to Islamic theological scholarship by reconstructing the argumentative architecture of *Kitab al-Tawhid* and distinguishing its textual propositions from subsequent commentarial interpretations and contemporary theological systematizations.

Keywords: Tawhid; Kitab al-Tawhid; Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab; Scriptural Argumentation; Textual Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Tawhid occupies a foundational place in Islamic theology because it concerns the oneness of God and the proper orientation of worship. Kitab al-Tawhid by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab became one of the most influential concise texts associated with the eighteenth-century Najdi reform movement and with later Salafi pedagogies. Its literary form is distinctive: rather than presenting a continuous scholastic treatise, the book proceeds through short chapters whose headings function as propositions, followed by Qur'anic verses, hadith reports, and brief lists of issues to be inferred from the evidence (Abd, 1996). This evidence-centered structure matters for interpretation. A reading that extracts only a definition of tawhid or reconstructs the author's biography can miss how the book progressively defines legitimate worship, marks practices viewed as compromising exclusive devotion, and extends theological discipline into intention, reliance, speech, and authority. The interpretive problem is therefore not merely what the author believed about tawhid, but how the book's organization makes that belief operational through a sequence of textual boundaries.

Scholarship on Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab has produced sharply different representations of his theology and historical significance. DeLong-Bas emphasizes reform and a return to scriptural sources(DeLong-Bas, 2004), Commins foregrounds the alliance between religious mission and political power (Commins, 2016), and Bunzel follows the subsequent institutional development of Wahhabi thought. Recent studies show that these debates remain active across global and Indonesian contexts (Bunzel, 2023). Agustono examines the institutionalization of the reformist ideology (Agustono,

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2023), Parawatidiscusses the later global diffusion of Wahhabism through Saudi religious influence (Parawati, 2024), and Firdaus analyze contemporary contestation over Sunni orthodoxy in which Wahhabism is explicitly debated (Firdaus et al., 2024). These works are valuable for historical context, but they also demonstrate a recurring problem: movement history, later geopolitical expansion, and present-day polemics can easily be projected backward onto an eighteenth-century text. A direct analysis of Kitab al-Tawhid is therefore necessary to distinguish what the book itself argues from what later institutions, critics, and adherents have made of it.

A second problem concerns conceptual attribution. Contemporary presentations frequently summarize Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's theology through the three categories of *tawhid al-rububiyyah*, *tawhid al-uluhiyyah* and *tawhid al-asma wa al-sifat* (Ahmad et al., 2025). This taxonomy is also visible in contemporary educational discussions of tawhid, although its pedagogical use varies across institutions and authors (Amin, 2023),(Hamdi et al., 2023),(Hidayat, 2024),(Nst et al., 2025). The categories can be analytically useful, but their widespread use does not by itself establish that Kitab al-Tawhid was composed as an explicit three-part system. That question must be tested against the organization of the primary text. The present study therefore treats the taxonomy as a secondary interpretive lens rather than as a predetermined finding. It asks whether the book's chapter sequence, repeated scriptural evidence, and boundary-making concepts support that later systematization, while preserving a distinction between the historical author's text and contemporary theological or educational appropriations of tawhid.

This study addresses that gap by asking: How do the organization of chapters and the use of scriptural evidence in Kitab al-Tawhid construct an argument for the purification of worship and the boundary between tawhid and shirk? The objective is not to produce another biography of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab or a history of the later movement, but to reconstruct the internal logic of the principal text and then position that reconstruction within relevant scholarship. The analysis makes three contributions. First, it maps the chapter sequence as an argumentative architecture rather than as a collection of isolated rulings. Second, it differentiates claims directly traceable to the primary text from explanations supplied by commentators and from the researcher's own thematic synthesis. Third, it treats contested terminology with analytical distance, allowing supportive and critical scholarship to clarify where interpretation is debated. This approach is intended to produce a more transparent account of the text and to reduce chronological, bibliographic, and conceptual conflations that can arise when biography, movement history, and theology are treated as a single level of evidence

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LITERATURE REVIEW

The historical literature establishes why Kitab al-Tawhid must be read with both textual focus and contextual restraint. DeLong-Bas treats Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's writings as central evidence for interpreting his reform project and argues against reducing the eighteenth-century scholar to later political or militant developments (DeLong-Bas, 2004). Commins, by contrast, foregrounds the interaction between religious mission and political power (Commins, 2016), while Bunzel traces the development of Wahhabi thought and institutions across generations (Bunzel, 2023). More recent studies extend the discussion to institutionalization, global diffusion, and contested Sunni identity (Agustono, 2023),(Parawati, 2024),(Firdaus et al., 2024). Burdah (2023), from a critical Indonesian perspective, analyzes the social consequences he associates with Wahhabi influence. These works differ substantially in interpretation, but they converge on one methodological lesson: claims about the historical author must be separated from later movements and political contexts (Burdah, 2023). Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab died in 1792, so events such as the 1802 Karbala raid belong to subsequent movement history and cannot be presented as his personal actions. Historical studies are therefore used here to delimit context, not to substitute movement history for analysis of the book.

Research focused more directly on doctrine demonstrates that the concept of tawhid has already been examined from multiple angles. Muhammad Hanif bin Abd Patah compared the treatment of tawhid by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad Abduh, using their writings to identify similarities and differences in theological method (Abd Patah, 2008). Ahmad and Mamat compared the foundations of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's creed with their understanding of the Salaf (Basir & Mamat, 2018), while Abdoulaye and Rozy analyzed his engagement with Qur'anic verses related to theology (Abdoulaye & Rozy, 2024). Amin presents the familiar threefold taxonomy as a central feature of his thought (Amin, 2023). Hidayat, studying tawhid education in Pesantren Persatuan Islam, additionally shows that contemporary Indonesian teaching may combine or differentiate Salafi and Ash'ari orientations (Hidayat, 2024). Collectively, these works show that a revised article cannot claim novelty simply by describing tawhid or naming its categories. The contribution must instead lie in a more precise textual question, a transparent corpus, and a traceable interpretive procedure. That requirement motivates the present focus on chapter organization, evidence selection, and boundary construction within Kitab al-Tawhid.

Recent scholarship also demonstrates that tawhid is increasingly operationalized as an educational, epistemological, and character-forming principle. Studies discuss tawhid-based curriculum, the integration of tawhid with science and technology, and

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religious character formation (Hamdi et al., 2023),(Prayogo et al., 2023),(Nuryanti et al., 2024),(Nst et al., 2025),(Aulia et al., 2025),(Rohma & Prasetiya, 2026). Research published in IJIERM likewise provides a relevant educational context, Dalimunthe emphasize the ontological, epistemological, and axiological integration of Islamic education (Dalimunthe et al., 2024), Monika and Sirait identify faith and tawhid among the educational values derived from Qur'anic interpretation(Monika & Sirait, 2025), Salsabila and Satriyadi examine the internalization of Islamic educational values in character formation (Salsabila & Satriyadi, 2025), and Masrianto and Panjaitan analyze a pesantren model oriented toward ta'abbud mutawahhidiyyah (Masrianto & Panjaitan, 2026). These studies establish contemporary relevance, but they are not evidence of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's historical intent. The present article therefore uses them as reception and educational-context literature while reserving claims about Kitab al-Tawhid itself for direct textual evidence.

The literature also records substantial disagreement over the theological judgments associated with early Wahhabism. Fata and Ismail examine eighteenth-century Hanbali refutations and identify disputes involving uluhiyyah, tabarruk, tawassul, ziyara, and istighatha (Fata & Ismail, 2022). Their analysis is important not because it settles those debates for the present article, but because it shows that vocabulary must be handled with precision and attribution. The primary text contains chapters on seeking blessing through trees and stones, sacrificing or vowing to other than God, seeking refuge or aid from other than God, intercession, exaggeration regarding righteous persons, and worship at graves (Abd, 1996). Recent Indonesian debates over Salafi and Sufi education further show that these categories continue to be contested rather than interpreted uniformly (Talibo et al., 2025). A responsible analysis should therefore report the categories used by the text and avoid automatically equating all forms of grave visitation or mediation. The distinction between describing an author's normative position and endorsing that position is essential to maintaining scholarly distance in theological research.

Indonesian scholarship on Salafism further demonstrates that later reception should not be projected backward onto the eighteenth-century text. Earlier studies examined ritual negotiation, prophetic medicine, schools, women's religious groups, ideological competition, and social-media dissemination (Jahroni, 2018),(Jahroni, 2020),(Husein, 2021),(Makruf & Asrori, 2022),(Nursyabani, 2024),(Ananda et al., 2024),(Naldi & Damanik, 2025),(Ilhamsyah & Ramli, 2024),(Maharani, 2025). More recent work shows an increasingly differentiated field. Aidulsyah traces urban Salafism through social media and youth popular culture (Aidulsyah, 2023), while Tabroni and Idham document transformations within Indonesian Salafist movements (Tabroni & Idham,

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2023). Jahroni analyzes the rise of tahfiz schools associated in part with Salafi networks (Jahroni, 2024). Digital studies examine the circulation of Salafi thought and authority on social media, including competing theological, pluralism, and political discourses (Alam et al., 2025; Billah et al., 2025; Ahmad et al., 2025; Talibo et al., 2025). Institutional and gender-focused studies further show negotiation with national ideology and digitally mediated piety (Basya et al., 2026; Rofhani & Biyanto, 2026). This diversity confirms that contemporary Salafism is a field of reception and adaptation, not a transparent proxy for the meaning of Kitab al-Tawhid.

Based on this scholarship, the analytical framework of this article distinguishes four levels of evidence. The first is the primary text, where chapter headings, scriptural citations, and authorial propositions are treated as the strongest evidence for claims about Kitab al-Tawhid. The second is translation, which makes the text accessible but can introduce lexical choices that require cross-checking. The third is commentary, represented here by the Indonesian edition and a modern sharh by al-Uthaymin, which is useful for understanding later systematization but is not conflated with the historical author's voice (Al-Uthaymin, 2017). The fourth is academic scholarship, including historical, theological, educational, and reception studies. Recent work on tawhid in curriculum and Islamic education (Dalimunthe et al., 2024),(Nst et al., 2025),(Aulia et al., 2025),(Rohma & Prasetiya, 2026) is therefore treated differently from scholarship reconstructing Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's historical theology. This layered approach is consistent with the broader insight that his thought has been continuously interpreted, institutionalized, criticized, and adapted (DeLong-Bas, 2004),(Commins, 2016),(Bunzel, 2023). The threefold taxonomy is consequently tested against the book's actual sequence rather than imposed as an assumption.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs an interpretive, library-based qualitative design with textual analysis as its principal method. It is not a systematic literature review and therefore does not use PRISMA or claim exhaustive database coverage. The primary corpus is Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's Kitab At-Tawhid, The Book of Monotheism, published by Dar-us-Salam in 1996 in English translation by its Compilation and Research Department. The entire chapter sequence was mapped, with close attention to chapter headings, Qur'anic verses, hadith reports, brief explanatory statements, and the 'important issues' attached to chapters. The 2017 Indonesian Darul Haq edition, Kitab Tauhid: Pemurnian Ibadah Kepada Allah, was used as a parallel translation for lexical checking. Al-Uthaymin's (2017) Syarah Kitab Tauhid was treated as commentary rather than as the primary author's text. Historical and contemporary academic studies were

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used to contextualize interpretive questions and identify areas of agreement or dispute. This hierarchy resolves the earlier ambiguity created by citing different editions without specifying their analytical function.

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, the chapters were indexed by their stated topic and page location in the 1996 working edition. Second, meaning units were coded according to (a) the scriptural authority invoked, (b) the act or disposition being evaluated, (c) the relationship to worship, causality, mediation, authority, or divine names and attributes, and (d) the type of boundary drawn between tawhid and shirk. Third, related codes were grouped into broader themes and compared across the sequence of the book, following qualitative coding and thematic principles described by (Miles et al., 2020),(Saldaña, 2021),(Braun & Clarke, 2021),(Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023), and (Flick, 2022). Fourth, interpretations were checked against the parallel Indonesian translation, commentary, and academic studies, including sources that contest early Wahhabi readings. Negative or complicating evidence was retained when it challenged an initial theme. Because the working analysis depends substantially on translations, the findings are framed as a textually traceable interpretation rather than a definitive Arabic philological reconstruction.

Table 1. Analytical Corpus and Source Hierarchy

Level	Source Function	Materials	Analytical use
1	Primary corpus	Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1996), full chapter sequence	Direct evidence for chapter organization, scriptural citations, and authorial propositions
2	Parallel translation	At-Tamimi (2017)	Cross-checking Indonesian terminology and avoiding dependence on one translation
3	Commentary	Al-Uthaymin (2017)	Later explanation and systematization; not treated as identical to the primary author
4	Academic scholarship	Historical, theological, and reception studies (2004-2026)	Context, comparison, contestation, and evaluation of alternative interpretations

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Argumentative Architecture of Kitab al-Tawhid

The first result is structural. Kitab al-Tawhid is not organized as a systematic theology that begins by announcing a formal taxonomy and then assigning each chapter to a category. Instead, the 1996 edition presents a cumulative sequence of short, evidence-centered chapters. Chapters 1-6 establish the meaning, virtue, protection, invitation, and testimony of tawhid Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, pp. 17-42 (Abd, 1996) . Chapters 7-30 then move through concrete practices involving amulets, blessings, sacrifice, vows, refuge, requests for aid, intercession, graves, sorcery, divination, omens, astrology, and attribution of rain (pp. 43-113). Later chapters extend the inquiry into love, fear, trust, security, patience, showing off, worldly motivation, obedience to scholars or rulers, divine names and attributes, oaths, expressions of will, destiny, and forms of speech (pp. 114-187). This sequence supports reading the book as an applied program of boundary formation: a positive theological center is established first, followed by progressively wider tests of how exclusive devotion is maintained in practice, intention, causality, authority, and language.

Chapters 1-3 function as the positive foundation of that architecture. The opening chapter assembles scriptural material connecting human purpose with worship and the prophetic call to worship God while avoiding taghut, while the Mu'adh tradition is used to frame God's right over servants and the servants' promised reward Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, pp. 17-22 (Abd, 1996). Chapter 2 shifts from definition to the virtue and consequences of tawhid, and Chapter 3 associates the fullest realization of tawhid with reliance that is not displaced by superstitious or intermediary practices (pp. 23-31). The argument therefore begins neither with biography nor with a philosophical proof of divine existence. It begins with worship as a demanded relationship and with scriptural evidence as the primary warrant. This supports Abdoulaye and Rozy's observation that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's theological method privileges Qur'anic evidence over speculative kalam, but the present analysis adds that the book's composition turns this scriptural orientation into a pedagogical progression from principle to practice (Abdoulaye & Rozy, 2024).

Chapters 4-6 sharpen the transition from affirmation to boundary. Chapter 4 introduces fear of shirk and includes the problem of showing off as a lesser form of associational corruption, while Chapter 5 turns to the obligation of calling others to the testimony of divine oneness and Chapter 6 explains the meaning of tawhid and the testimony of faith through accumulated evidence Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 1996, pp. 32-42. These chapters show that tawhid is not treated as a purely cognitive proposition. It is a norm governing intention, preaching, and the meaning of worship. The placement is

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significant: the text first establishes tawhid, then warns that it can be compromised, then directs the believer to communicate it, and finally consolidates the testimony. This chapter sequence provides stronger support for the book's internal logic than a biographical narrative can provide. It also explains why the study's unit of analysis must include chapter order as well as isolated doctrinal statements.

Chapters 7-16 operationalize the boundary through objects, ritual acts, and assumptions about causality. The text treats rings and cords, ruqya and amulets, seeking blessing through trees or stones, sacrifice, vows, refuge, and requests for help as cases requiring theological evaluation Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 1996, pp. 43-70). The common analytical question is not whether material means exist, but whether a practice assigns to a created thing a religious efficacy, devotion, or dependence that the text reserves for God. This distinction is important because the book does not simply reject every causal means. Rather, it repeatedly directs attention to the theological status attributed to a means and to the act of devotion attached to it. The result is an applied doctrine of causality: the created world can be used instrumentally, but it must not become an independent object of religious reliance or worship. Modern commentarial explanations often make this causal logic more explicit (Al-Uthaymin, 2017), yet the primary chapter sequence itself already supplies its textual basis.

Chapters 17-18 address intercession and guidance and therefore refine, rather than eliminate, the category of mediation. Chapter 17 distinguishes forms of intercession by subordinating legitimate intercession to divine permission and approval, while Chapter 18 emphasizes that even prophetic concern cannot independently produce guidance Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 1996, pp. 71-77. This is analytically important because it prevents an inaccurate summary in which all mediation is treated as conceptually identical. The text's logic is conditional: the problem is mediation imagined as autonomous or independent of God's authorization. The same need for precision applies to contemporary disputes. Fata and Ismail document Hanbali criticism of early Wahhabi positions concerning tawassul and istighatha, demonstrating that historical Muslim scholars disagreed over where particular practices should be located(Fata & Ismail, 2022). The present study does not resolve those normative disputes; it instead identifies the internal criterion by which Kitab al-Tawhid evaluates mediation and distinguishes that criterion from later polemical generalizations.

Chapters 19-23 concentrate on righteous persons, graves, and the risk that veneration can become worship Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 1996, pp. 78-95. The chapter headings move from excessive devotion to righteous figures, to worshipping God at graves, to exaggeration regarding graves of righteous persons, to safeguards around tawhid, and finally to the possibility of idolatry within the Muslim community. The

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sequence is best described as an escalation argument: the author presents excessive veneration as a pathway by which a commemorative or devotional practice may cross into the category of worship. This does not justify equating every instance of ziyara with shirk. Grave visitation, supplication for the deceased, seeking intercession, requesting aid from the deceased, and worship at a grave are analytically distinct acts whose status is debated in the wider tradition. By keeping these terms separate, the revised analysis responds to the criticism that earlier wording collapsed contested religious practices into a single undifferentiated category (Fata & Ismail, 2022).

Chapters 24-30 broaden the argument from ritual objects to knowledge claims and invisible causation. Sorcery, forms of divination, fortune-telling, omens, astrology, and attributing rain to celestial causes become tests of whether unseen power and knowledge are assigned in ways compatible with tawhid Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 1996, pp. 96-113. These chapters reveal an epistemic dimension to the book: theological discipline regulates not only whom one worships but also how one explains events and who may claim access to the unseen. The movement from amulets to omens and astrology links practical ritual with causal explanation. This makes the book more than a catalogue of prohibited acts. Its repeated procedure is to take a familiar practice, pair it with scriptural evidence, and re-describe the practice according to the theological relation it implies. Such evidence-first organization helps explain why later Salafi pedagogy often treats textual proof and purification as mutually reinforcing educational principles (Makruf & Asrori, 2022),(Ilhamsyah & Ramli, 2024).

The next cluster, beginning with chapters on love, fear, and trust, relocates the boundary into inward dispositions. Love of God, fear of God, reliance on God, security from divine planning, patience with divine decree, showing off, and action for worldly motives demonstrate that the text evaluates intention as well as outward conduct Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 1996, pp. 114-129. The doctrinal implication is significant: exclusive worship cannot be secured merely by removing visible objects associated with contested ritual. It also requires regulating the affective and motivational orientation of the believer. This finding clarifies why the early chapters on tawhid and the later chapters on inward states belong to one argumentative arc. Tawhid is constructed as a comprehensive discipline of devotion. In this respect, the book's organization supports a concept broader than a technical taxonomy, because it integrates creed with moral psychology and practice. Haris identifies a similar connection between belief and exemplary conduct in Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's educational thought, although his study addresses a different textual problem (Haris, 2021).

Subsequent chapters examine obedience, judgment, divine names and attributes, oaths, expressions involving God's will, and other forms of religious speech Ibn Abd al-

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Wahhab, 1996, pp. 130-187. Here the boundary expands again: theological meaning is carried through language and authority. The chapter on taking scholars or rulers as lords is not a rejection of learning or governance as such; it is framed around obedience that rivals divine authority. Likewise, chapters concerning God's names and attributes show that the text includes affirmations about divine description alongside its dominant concern with worship. The later chapters therefore complicate any attempt to reduce Kitab al-Tawhid to only one dimension. The book contains material relevant to lordship, worship, and divine names and attributes, but it weaves those issues through practical cases rather than arranging them under three formally declared headings. This observation is central to evaluating the tripartite taxonomy often associated with the author's theology.

The analysis consequently finds that rububiyyah, uluhiyyah, and al-asma wa al-sifat are a useful systematic lens but not the explicit macro-structure of Kitab al-Tawhid. Studies such as Ahmad and Mamat and Amin employ a threefold scheme to summarize Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's creed (Basir & Mamat, 2018),(Amin, 2023) and modern commentaries frequently reinforce this presentation (Al-Uthaymin, 2017). The primary text, however, proceeds chapter by chapter through acts, beliefs, evidences, and consequences. Its strongest organizing emphasis is the exclusivity of worship, accompanied by assumptions about divine lordship and specific affirmations concerning names and attributes. The distinction matters methodologically. A researcher may reconstruct the material under three categories, but should identify that move as analytical systematization rather than quote it as though the book announces the classification on its opening pages. This revision therefore separates three levels: what the primary text explicitly states, how later commentators organize it, and how contemporary scholarship reconstructs the doctrine. That separation directly strengthens the traceability of the article's central claim.

A second major result concerns the text's scriptural method. Across the book, short chapter headings are followed by selected Qur'anic verses and hadith materials, with comparatively little discursive exposition. The argumentative force therefore depends heavily on selection, juxtaposition, and sequencing. The author does not merely cite scripture after presenting a developed theory; in many chapters the scriptural evidence effectively constitutes the chapter's reasoning. This format supports the description of Kitab al-Tawhid as an evidence-centered pedagogical text. Abdoulaye and Rozy similarly find that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's approach to theological questions is strongly grounded in Qur'anic verses (Abdoulaye & Rozy, 2024). Azahra demonstrate this at the level of the first two chapters. Extending the analysis across the entire sequence shows that the same method is used to move from general principles to increasingly specific

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boundary cases (Azahra et al., 2026). The book's brevity is therefore not an absence of structure, its structure is carried by the relation between heading, evidence, and inferred issue.

The relationship to earlier Hanbali and Salafi authorities should likewise be stated with greater precision than in the previous manuscript. Historical scholarship identifies Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim as important intellectual antecedents for later Wahhabi doctrine, particularly in debates over worship, intercession, and veneration (DeLong-Bas, 2004),(Bunzel, 2023). Yet intellectual influence should not be demonstrated by inserting long biographies of those scholars. The relevant question is conceptual continuity: which arguments or distinctions are shared, and how are they redeployed? Because the present corpus is centered on Kitab al-Tawhid rather than a paired edition of Ibn Taymiyya or Ibn al-Qayyim, this article limits itself to acknowledging scholarly evidence of continuity rather than claiming a line-by-line derivation. That limitation is analytically preferable to presenting influence as a biographical fact. It also leaves room for disagreement, since Fata and Ismail show that eighteenth-century Hanbali critics contested claims that the new movement straightforwardly represented the inherited Hanbali tradition (Fata & Ismail, 2022).

The revision also changes the treatment of evaluative and polemical language. Terms that condemn groups as ignorant, evil, or unjust are not used here as the researcher's unqualified descriptions. Where such language belongs to the primary author, a later commentator, or a critic, it is attributed accordingly. This distinction is especially important because contemporary Indonesian studies show that Salafi identity is internally diverse and publicly contested. Research documents urban youth cultures and social-media outreach (Aidulsyah, 2023), movements toward religious moderation in some Salafist networks (Tabroni & Idham, 2023), digital dissemination and changing religious authority (Alam et al., 2025), theological debate between Sufi and Salafi educators (Talibo et al., 2025), and Salafi women's negotiation of piety and representation online (Rofhani & Biyanto, 2026). Other studies identify exclusivist framings of pluralism in particular digital accounts (Billah et al., 2025) or tensions between the curriculum of selected Salafi institutions and aspects of Indonesia's national ideology (Basya et al., 2026). These findings should not be generalized to every Salafi community; rather, they reinforce the need for precise attribution when connecting a historical theological text to contemporary religious actors.

Historical chronology provides a further safeguard against conceptual overreach. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab was born in Uyayna in Najd in the early eighteenth century and died in 1792, modern historical studies distinguish his lifetime from subsequent phases of the Saudi-Wahhabi movement (DeLong-Bas, 2004),(Commins,

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2016),(Bunzel, 2023). The previous manuscript's attribution of the 1802 Karbala attack directly to the scholar is therefore chronologically untenable. The present article removes that attribution and treats later political-military events as part of reception and institutional history rather than direct evidence for the meaning of Kitab al-Tawhid. This correction also resolves the inconsistent birthplace forms previously given as Unaizah and Uyainah, the revised manuscript consistently uses Uyayna. Agustono and Hamidah remain useful for understanding the reform movement's historical framing, but movement narratives are no longer allowed to determine textual findings without direct evidence from the book (Agustono, 2023),(Hamidah, 2020).

Finally, the book's contemporary significance is best understood through reception rather than anachronistic projection. Indonesian Salafi networks, schools, online communities, and public debates continue to employ themes of scriptural authority, purification, and tawhid, but they do so in changing institutional and media environments (Makruf & Asrori, 2022),(Aidulsyah, 2023),(Jahroni, 2024),(Nursyabani, 2024),(Ahmad et al., 2025; Alam et al., 2025),(Basya et al., 2026) . At the same time, tawhid has been developed in broader Islamic educational contexts as a curricular, epistemological, scientific, and character-forming principle (Hamdi et al., 2023),(Prayogo et al., 2023),(Nuryanti et al., 2024),(Dalimunthe et al., 2024),(Monika & Sirait, 2025),(Nst et al., 2025),(Aulia et al., 2025),(Salsabila & Satriyadi, 2025),(Masrianto & Panjaitan, 2026),(Rohma & Prasetiya, 2026). This wider reception confirms that the educational meaning of tawhid cannot be reduced to a single movement. The contribution of the present close reading is therefore narrower but more defensible: it clarifies the architecture and evidentiary logic of Kitab al-Tawhid so that subsequent historical, educational, and reception studies can state more precisely which claims derive from the primary text and which arise from later interpretation.

Table 2. Chapter Clusters and Their Analytical Function in the 1996 Working Edition

Chapter cluster	Approx. pages	Dominant concern	Interpretive function
1-6	17-42	Foundation, virtue, fear of shirk, call, testimony	Establishes the positive center of exclusive worship
7-18	43-77	Amulets, blessing, sacrifice, vows, refuge, aid, intercession, guidance	Tests worship and mediation through concrete practices

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19-30	78-113	Righteous persons, graves, sorcery, divination, omens, astrology, rain	Extends boundaries to veneration, unseen knowledge, and causality
31-44	114-142	Love, fear, trust, patience, intention, authority, oaths, expressions of will	Extends tawhid to inward disposition, authority, and speech
Later chapters	143-187	Names, attributes, destiny, divine greatness, safeguards	Completes theological and linguistic regulation without a formal three-part macro-outline

CONCLUSION

This study finds that Kitab al-Tawhid constructs its argument through a cumulative chapter sequence rather than through a formally announced three-part taxonomy. The opening chapters establish tawhid as exclusive worship grounded in Qur'anic and hadith evidence. The middle chapters test that principle against practices involving blessing, sacrifice, vows, mediation, graves, sorcery, divination, omens, and causal attribution. The later chapters extend the same concern into love, fear, reliance, intention, obedience, divine names and attributes, oaths, destiny, and religious language. The answer to the research question is therefore structural: purification of worship is produced by repeatedly connecting specific acts and dispositions to scriptural evidence and asking whether they preserve or compromise exclusive devotion to God. Chapter organization is not incidental; it is one of the principal mechanisms through which the book turns a theological affirmation into an applied set of boundaries.

The study's interpretive contribution lies in distinguishing the primary text from later systematization. Rububiyyah, uluhiyyah, and al-asma wa al-sifat remain useful categories for summarizing themes present in Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's wider theology, and they are common in modern scholarship and commentary. However, the 1996 working text of Kitab al-Tawhid does not explicitly organize the whole book under those three headings. Its dominant compositional movement is from foundational worship to boundary cases and then to inward, epistemic, linguistic, and authoritative dimensions of devotion. This distinction allows the article to avoid presenting a researcher's reconstruction as a direct quotation from the historical author. It also supports more precise treatment of contested terms such as ziyara, tawassul, tabarruk,

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istighatha, intercession, and worship, whose meanings and evaluations have generated disagreement in the broader Islamic scholarly tradition.

The study has limitations. Its close reading relies primarily on the 1996 Dar-us-Salam English translation and a 2017 Indonesian parallel edition; it is therefore not a substitute for a critical Arabic philological edition or manuscript study. The article also does not attempt to resolve the normative validity of every disputed devotional practice, nor does it infer the historical author's intent from later Salafi movements. Future research should compare Arabic editions and major commentaries line by line, examine the transmission of specific chapter clusters into curricula and preaching, and test whether the threefold taxonomy emerges differently across the author's broader corpus. Such work would further clarify the relationship among primary wording, commentarial tradition, doctrinal systematization, and contemporary reception.

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