



The Philosophical Foundations of Akhlaq as the Fundamental Pillar of Islamic Education

Hasrah^{1*}, Surni Kadir²

¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Negeri Datokarama Palu, Indonesia

¹hasrahpgra@gmail.com*, ²surnikadir@uindatokarama.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Morality (akhlaq) constitutes the core of Islamic education, positioning moral and spiritual values as the primary foundation for the formation of the insan kamil (the complete human being). However, existing studies tend to examine akhlaq either from a classical normative-theological perspective or from contemporary pedagogical approaches, without offering an integrative philosophical synthesis that bridges both traditions. This study addresses this gap by providing a systematic reconstruction of akhlaq as a philosophical foundation of Islamic education through a critical synthesis of classical and contemporary scholarship. This study aims to examine in depth the position of akhlak within the philosophical framework of Islamic education by employing a library research method based on articles, academic journals, and both classical and contemporary literature. By comparatively analyzing classical thinkers and contemporary educational discourses, this research develops a novel conceptual synthesis that repositions akhlaq not merely as a moral teaching component, but as the ontological, epistemological, and axiological core of Islamic education. The findings indicate that akhlak is not merely a supplementary component, but rather the very spirit of Islamic education that guides its objectives, methods, and practical implementation. The principal contribution of this study lies in articulating a coherent philosophical model that integrates classical moral philosophy with contemporary educational challenges, thereby offering a renewed theoretical framework for understanding akhlaq in modern Islamic education. Therefore, Islamic education oriented toward akhlak is expected to address the challenges of moral degradation in the modern era while fostering a generation that excels in faith, knowledge, and righteous action.



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education, since its inception, has positioned akhlaq (moral character) as its primary objective. Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Khaldun emphasized that the essence of education lies in the formation of virtuous character. However, contemporary research tends to focus predominantly on cognitive aspects, learning methodologies, and educational technology, resulting in the role of akhlaq being reduced to a marginal component within the curriculum (Mutamakin, 2024). It is therefore essential to restore the focus on character education in order to produce individuals who are not only academically competent but also possess integrity and strong moral values. This perspective aligns with the views of Islamic thinkers who underscore the importance of character education in fostering ethical and responsible societies (Paul Tan Istandar, 2022).

Historically, Islamic education has not merely emphasized cognitive development but has encompassed moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. This approach is consistent with the views of classical scholars who asserted that the ultimate goal of Islamic education is the formation of insan kamil the complete human being who embodies a balance between faith (iman), knowledge ('ilm),

and righteous action (*‘amal*) (Fatihatun Nadliroh, 2024). A growing body of literature demonstrates that contemporary studies increasingly reaffirm the urgency of *akhlaq* in Islamic education. For instance, research by Syukri et al. published in the *Journal of Administration and Educational Management (ALIGNMENT)* indicates that the moral crisis among younger generations is largely attributable to the diminishing emphasis on moral education within formal educational institutions (Mukhlis, 2025a; Mukhlis & Saidah, 2025). An educational orientation that prioritizes academic achievement has displaced *akhlaq* from its position as a central educational concern (Syukri et al., 2024). Further reinforcement of the importance of moral education is found in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Cultivation of Character (*Penumbuhan Budi Pekerti*) (Kemendikbud, 2015).

The phenomenon of moral degradation among young people in the era of globalization serves as tangible evidence of the fragile moral foundations within contemporary education. The rise of deviant behavior, hedonism, and crises in digital ethics highlights a growing imbalance between academic achievement and moral quality. These conditions intensify the need for Islamic education to reaffirm *akhlaq* as its principal pillar (Salsabila et al., 2024). Character education grounded in Islamic moral values can serve as an effective solution to these moral challenges by instilling strong ethical principles from an early age (Putri Pramesti et al., 2024).

Social realities in Indonesia and the broader Muslim world reveal serious moral challenges faced by younger generations. Advances in digital technology, cultural globalization, and shifts in social values have significantly influenced moral behavior. These phenomena further emphasize the necessity for Islamic education to re-center *akhlaq* as its foundational principle (Yusnita et al., 2023). Several observable social facts illustrate this condition:

1. Moral Degradation among the Younger Generation

Reports from various research institutions indicate a rise in deviant behavior among students at both secondary and higher education levels. Bullying, student brawls, drug abuse, and increasing rates of early marriage serve as clear indicators of a moral crisis. The shift in educational orientation toward academic achievement has diminished attention to moral development, resulting in a generation that is intellectually capable yet spiritually and morally fragile (Abdul Manap et al., 2025).

2. The Impact of the Digital Era on Ethics

The development of digital technology presents an ambivalent impact: while it expands access to knowledge, it simultaneously introduces serious moral challenges. Cyberbullying, hate speech, misinformation, and social media addiction have emerged as new social problems closely linked to weak moral education. Research confirms that without a strong moral foundation, young people are more susceptible to consumptive and hedonistic behaviors and tend to lose self-control in their use of technology (Malyuna, 2024).

3. Crisis of Integrity and Corruption

Another alarming social phenomenon is the high prevalence of corruption and abuse of power across various sectors. This reality indicates that years of education, including higher education, have failed to cultivate honesty and integrity. Abdullah (2021) argues that this failure stems from educational practices that prioritize the transmission of knowledge over the internalization of moral values as the foundation of life (Abdullah, cited in Harahap & Isgiyarta, 2023).

4. Radicalism and Intolerance

Additionally, religious radicalism and intolerance have emerged among segments of the younger generation. Rahman's (2022) research demonstrates that one of the root causes of radicalism is the weakness of moral education that emphasizes balance between knowledge, faith, and action. When *akhlaq* is not positioned as a central pillar, religious education is vulnerable to rigid and narrow interpretations, fostering exclusivist and intolerant attitudes (Rahman, cited in Riyawi & Febriansyah, 2023).

5. Shifting Values in a Global Society

Cultural globalization has also significantly influenced the lifestyles of young people. The influx of foreign values through mass media and popular culture often conflicts with Islamic principles. Westernization and hedonism present serious challenges to the cultivation of noble character. Studies indicate that without strong moral education, learners are easily influenced by global values that are predominantly materialistic and secular (Fandra & Rambe, 2025).

6. The Weakening Role of Family and Social Environment

Beyond educational institutions, families and social environments face significant challenges in fostering moral development. Economic mobility, individualistic lifestyles, and parental busyness have reduced supervision and guidance for children. Mulyana emphasizes that moral education must be a collective responsibility shared by families, schools, and communities. Neglect by any of these elements results in imbalanced character formation (Mulyana, 2024).

Based on the analysis of these social phenomena, it can be concluded that the primary challenge facing contemporary Islamic education lies in the gap between academic achievement and students' moral quality (Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, & Zulbaidah, 2025; Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, Zulbaidah, et al., 2025). This indicates that Islamic education has lost its philosophical orientation, which places akhlaq as its central pillar. If moral degradation, crises of integrity, radicalism, and the impacts of globalization are not addressed through an akhlaq-based educational approach, the objective of forming *insan kamil* will remain difficult to achieve.

This article aims to reaffirm the position of akhlaq within the philosophy of Islamic education by drawing upon both classical and contemporary literature. Such reaffirmation is crucial, considering that throughout Islamic intellectual history, akhlaq has been regarded as the soul of education, yet in modern educational practice it is often reduced to a standalone subject or an auxiliary curricular component. Through a critical examination of relevant literature, this study seeks to restore akhlaq to its rightful philosophical position as the foundation that guides the direction, objectives, and methods of Islamic education.

Specifically, this study pursues several objectives:

1. To identify and examine the concept of akhlaq from the perspectives of classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Khaldun, and to analyze how these concepts form the basis of Islamic educational goals.
2. To review contemporary literature addressing akhlaq in education, particularly studies highlighting moral degradation, digital ethical crises, and the challenges of value globalization, thereby ensuring that the study is not merely historical-normative but also responsive to contemporary contexts.
3. To analyze the gap between the ideal philosophy of Islamic education and current educational practices. While Islamic education aspires to produce *insan kamil*, its implementation often prioritizes cognitive outcomes and academic performance. Through literature analysis, this study evaluates the extent to which akhlaq remains a central priority in curricula and educational praxis.
4. To present a comprehensive synthesis on the urgency of akhlaq within the Islamic education system. This synthesis not only summarizes previous findings but also constructs a renewed understanding that akhlaq should not be viewed as an auxiliary component, but rather as the pillar supporting the entire educational system.

Ultimately, the practical objective of this research is to contribute to educators, policymakers, and Islamic educational institutions in rearticulating akhlaq-based educational strategies. By reaffirming akhlaq as the primary pillar, Islamic education is expected to address contemporary moral challenges while nurturing a generation balanced in faith, knowledge, and action.

Previous studies on Islamic education have largely emphasized instrumental aspects such as curriculum development, learning strategies, educational technology utilization, and methodological innovation (Ikhwana et al., 2023). Similar research has been conducted by Abdul Aziz Romdhoni, who focused on pedagogical methods in Islamic education (Abdul Aziz Romdhoni, 2023). Such studies have indeed contributed significantly to educational practice, particularly in improving

teaching and learning processes in the modern era (Afriana et al., 2022). However, an excessive focus on technical-instrumental aspects often results in insufficient attention to the philosophical dimensions of Islamic education especially concerning the role of akhlaq.

For example, some studies examine the implementation of character education in schools or madrasahs, emphasizing technical strategies such as value integration into subjects, active learning methods, or competency-based curriculum design (Mukhlis, Maryam, et al., 2023; Mukhlis et al., 2024). While these approaches are important, they rarely explore the philosophical foundations explaining why akhlaq should occupy a central position in Islamic education rather than being treated as an additional competency (Rahmat Lutfi Guefara et al., 2023).

Moreover, discussions of akhlaq in Islamic education are often limited to normative-theological analyses, such as Qur'anic exegesis or classical scholars' perspectives. While doctrinally valuable, these approaches tend to lack philosophical analysis linking akhlaq to social realities and contemporary challenges. As emphasized by Abdullah (2021), the philosophy of Islamic education should address not only "what" and "how" education is conducted, but also "why" akhlaq must serve as its foundational principle (Mustadi Mustadi & Qomaruddin Qomaruddin, 2023).

Another notable gap is that contemporary literature often responds to issues of globalization, digitalization, and modernization without adequately connecting these phenomena to akhlaq as the soul of education. For instance, many studies address digital ethics among students but fail to situate these issues within a comprehensive framework of Islamic moral philosophy (Ahirin et al., 2024). Consequently, a disconnect emerges between complex social problems and the philosophical solutions offered by Islamic education.

Based on this literature review, several research gaps can be identified:

1. The limited number of studies positioning akhlaq as the philosophical foundation of Islamic education rather than merely a practical or instructional component.
2. The scarcity of research integrating classical thought and contemporary literature to rearticulate the urgency of akhlaq in modern educational contexts.
3. The lack of studies linking contemporary social challenges—such as moral degradation, crises of integrity, radicalism, and digital ethics—to the position of akhlaq within the philosophy of Islamic education.

This study seeks to address these gaps by offering a comprehensive synthesis that examines classical thought, analyzes contemporary literature, and relates both to current social realities. In doing so, this research is expected to contribute meaningfully to the development of an Islamic educational philosophy that is relevant, contextual, and capable of responding effectively to moral crises in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative approach. The research is conducted by reviewing, collecting, and analyzing various literature sources relevant to the research topic. These sources include books, journal articles, research reports, classical manuscripts, and contemporary scholarly publications. To ensure methodological transparency, the literature selection followed explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria. Sources were selected based on three primary criteria: (1) direct relevance to the philosophical discourse on akhlaq and Islamic education; (2) scholarly credibility, indicated by publication in peer-reviewed journals, reputable academic publishers, or recognized classical authorities; and (3) representation of both classical Islamic moral philosophy (e.g., foundational scholars in Islamic ethics) and contemporary educational scholarship. Sources that discussed morality in general without clear engagement with Islamic educational philosophy, or that lacked academic rigor, were excluded from the analysis.

The literature search was conducted using academic databases and library catalogues with keywords such as "akhlaq," "Islamic moral philosophy," "philosophy of Islamic education," and "Islamic character education." To minimize selection bias, the study adopted a balanced sampling

strategy by proportionally including classical and contemporary works and by cross-checking arguments across multiple authors rather than relying on a single dominant perspective.

According to Jackie Stapleton's study (2020), the analytical techniques that can be applied in library research include:

1. Content Analysis: examining the substance of the literature related to the concepts of akhlaq (moral character) and Islamic education.
2. Comparative Analysis: comparing classical and modern perspectives on akhlaq in education.
3. Synthesis: integrating the findings to generate new perspectives on the role of akhlaq as a fundamental pillar of Islamic education (Stapleton et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion aims to demonstrate that akhlaq (moral character) is not merely an additional component of Islamic education, but rather its spirit and philosophical foundation that must permeate the entire educational system. To achieve this understanding, the study integrates classical literature that serves as a conceptual foundation with contemporary literature that documents the challenges of Islamic education in the modern era. Each subsection presents the perspectives of classical scholars, findings from contemporary research, and critical analysis based on previously identified research gaps.

The results of this study consist of an analytical examination of the theoretical foundations of akhlaq from both classical and contemporary perspectives.

1. The Concept of Akhlaq in the Islamic Perspective

- In classical literature, Al-Ghazali explains: "Akhlaq is a condition of the soul from which actions arise spontaneously, without the need for prior deliberation or conscious consideration." (Ihya' Ulumuddin, Vol. III) (Al-Ghazali, cited in Rizki, 2021). This quotation indicates that akhlaq is not merely outward behavior, but an internalized moral quality deeply rooted within an individual. In other words, moral education cannot rely solely on normative instruction; it requires consistent habituation that gradually shapes character.
- Ibn Miskawayh, in Tahdzib al-Akhlaq, states: "Akhlaq is a condition of the soul that drives actions without deliberate rational calculation." According to him, the purpose of moral education is to guide individuals toward al-fadhilah (virtue), namely a balance among rational, emotional, and appetitive faculties (Ibn Miskawayh, cited in Miswar, 2021).
- In contemporary literature, Al Anhar (2025), through the Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD FKIP Universitas Mandiri, emphasizes the relevance of these classical concepts in modern conditions, particularly in addressing the moral crisis of the digital generation (Al, 2025). Tedi Dwi Cahyadi et al. (2025) also stress that classical definitions of akhlaq need to be revitalized as the foundation for Islamic education curricula (Cahyadi et al., 2025).

Analysis:

A clear research gap emerges here: most contemporary studies merely reiterate classical definitions without connecting them to modern challenges. This study argues that the classical understanding of akhlaq as "deeply internalized moral character" is highly relevant in addressing digital ethical issues, as self-control in cyberspace depends more on inner moral strength than on external regulations.

2. The Philosophy of Islamic Education and the Goal of Insan Kamil

- From the classical perspective, the goal of Islamic education is to produce insan kamil (the complete human being). Al-Ghazali states: "The purpose of seeking knowledge is to draw closer to Allah, not merely to attain worldly status." (Ihya' Ulumuddin, Vol. I) (Al-Ghazali, cited in Suban, 2020).

- Ibn Khaldun, in *Muqaddimah*, emphasizes that education is a means of building civilization grounded in moral values, rather than merely serving economic or political purposes (Windu Gumati, 2022).
- Contemporary literature further develops this view. Ahmad (2024) asserts that Islamic educational philosophy differs fundamentally from Western philosophy because it does not separate knowledge from morality (Suryadi, 2024). Ni Kadek Armini (2022), through *Metta: Jurnal Ilmu Multidisiplin*, demonstrates that education integrating akhlaq into the curriculum significantly improves students' character quality compared to curricula focused solely on academic achievement (Armini, 2024).

Analysis:

Many studies tend to focus excessively on curriculum design without emphasizing its philosophical foundation. This research emphasizes that *insan kamil* cannot be achieved through technical curricula alone, but must begin with a philosophical understanding that akhlaq is the core objective of education. Islamic educational philosophy is rooted in an Islamic worldview derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1980), Islamic education is essentially a process of *ta'dib*, namely the formation of a civilized human being who correctly understands God, the self, and the environment (Al-Attas, 1980).

In Western educational philosophy, educational objectives are often divided into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Mukhlis, Janwari, et al., 2023; Mukhlis & Abdullah, 2025). In Islamic education, however, these domains are integrated into a unified concept known as akhlaq. Thus, akhlaq in Islamic education is not merely an affective domain, but an integration of knowledge, attitudes, and actions (Suryadi, 2024). The concept of *insan kamil* in the thought of Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali affirms that Islamic education guides humans toward spiritual and moral perfection. *Insan kamil* is an individual who uses reason to comprehend truth, controls desires through noble character, and devotes oneself to Allah with full consciousness (Suban, 2020).

3. Akhlaq as the Spirit of Islamic Education

- Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, in *The Concept of Education in Islam*, introduces the concept of *ta'dib*, emphasizing the cultivation of proper conduct. He states: "The aim of Islamic education is the realization of a civilized human being, who recognizes God, the self, and the environment in their proper order." (Al-Attas, 1980).
- Rahmi's article titled *Pendidikan Akhlak Sebagai Ruh Pendidikan Islam*, published in *Hikmatuna*, reinforces the argument that akhlaq is not merely a curricular component but the spirit that animates education (Anekasari, 2017).
- Empirically, Wirayanti (2024) shows that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia continue to uphold moral-based education. *Pesantren* not only teach religious knowledge but also emphasize respect toward teachers, fellow students, and the community (Wirayanti et al., 2024). This contrasts with formal schools that prioritize academic examinations. Other studies find that moral-based education serves as a strong safeguard against radicalism among students (Rohman, 2020).

Analysis:

Many studies treat akhlaq merely as a curricular program. This research demonstrates that akhlaq should be understood as the "spirit" that permeates all educational activities, rather than as a standalone competency. Without the spirit of akhlaq, Islamic education loses its identity. Literature consistently places akhlaq at the center of the Islamic educational system. Classical and contemporary scholars agree that Islamic education aims not only to produce intellectually capable individuals but also morally upright personalities. Al-Ghazali (cited in Hasan, 2021) asserts that true education produces knowledgeable and civilized individuals, as knowledge without akhlaq leads only to destruction (Rahayu, 2021). This view is reinforced by Al-Abrasyi (2019), who states that the primary goal of Islamic education is *ta'dib* or moral cultivation, as discussed by Zahra et al. in *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Akademik* under the title *Integration of Tarbiyah, Ta'lim, and Ta'dib: The Main Pillars of Islamic Education* (Zahra et al., 2024). Knowledge is merely a means, while akhlaq is the

ultimate goal. Thus, Islamic education has a clear moral orientation, distinguishing it from secular education that emphasizes cognitive and practical skills.

4. Analysis of Contemporary Literature on Akhlaq

Numerous contemporary studies have addressed the issue of akhlaq using different approaches. For example, Najla Akifah (2025) discusses akhlaq, morals, and ethics from an Islamic perspective and their application in daily life (Akifah & Adami, 2025). Muhammad (2024), in “The Concept of Moral Education from Buya Hamka’s Perspective in Addressing Contemporary Educational Issues” (Arifin, 2024), explores moral education concepts. Didin (2024) examines the moral curriculum in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for seventh-grade junior high school students, focusing on the topic of ghibah (gossip), which, despite its significant impact on social behavior and ethics, is often underemphasized in educational settings (Didin & Nursobah, 2024).

However, the primary weakness of these studies lies in their emphasis on technical aspects, such as methods of integrating akhlaq into subjects or curriculum design. Few studies explicitly position akhlaq as the philosophical foundation of Islamic education.

Analysis:

This research fills that gap by emphasizing that the discourse on akhlaq should not stop at the level of educational instruments. Akhlaq must be positioned as the philosophical foundation guiding the direction of Islamic education, enabling it to respond more comprehensively to contemporary social problems.

5. The Social Relevance of Moral Education in the Modern Era

The era of globalization presents new challenges for Islamic education, particularly the rapid flow of information through digital technology. Social media often promotes hedonistic, individualistic, and materialistic lifestyles that erode moral values. Contemporary social realities reveal a clear moral crisis: rising corruption, moral degradation among youth, misuse of digital technology, and the spread of radicalism (Mukhlis, 2025b; Mukhlis, Suradi, et al., 2023). Many students spend more time on social media than on learning. Additionally, modern education systems tend to prioritize measurable academic achievement, causing moral education to be neglected. Schools focus on accreditation and academic performance while paying insufficient attention to moral development (Suryadi, 2024). This results in declining respect for teachers, weakened communication ethics, and increased consumerist behavior.

Al-Ghazali warned: “Human corruption lies in the corruption of the heart, and the heart is corrupted when moral character is not preserved.” (Ihya’ Ulumuddin, Vol. III) (Al-Ghazali, cited in Asbar & Susanti, 2023).

Contemporary literature reinforces this warning. Asrowi (2025) argues that modern Islamic education has lost its spirit due to excessive imitation of secular systems. Suryadi (2024) emphasizes the urgency of moral education to counter the globalization of values and asserts that moral-based education is effective in preventing intolerance and radicalism.

Analysis:

This research argues that contemporary social problems fundamentally stem from weak moral education. Therefore, solutions cannot rely solely on technical curriculum improvements, but must restore akhlaq to its position as the philosophical pillar of Islamic education. In doing so, Islamic education can return to its true purpose: producing a generation of insan kamil.

6. Strategies for Internalizing Akhlaq in Islamic Education

The literature review identifies several effective strategies for internalizing akhlaq in Islamic education:

a. Role Modeling (Uswah Hasanah)

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the ultimate moral exemplar. Therefore, teachers must serve as tangible role models in attitude, speech, and behavior.

b. Habituation

Akhlaq is not formed through theory alone but through repeated practice. Habitual worship, discipline, and social care instill moral character in students.

c. Curriculum Integration

Moral education must not be separated from other subjects. All fields of knowledge, religious and secular alike, should be connected to moral values.

d. Supportive Educational Environment

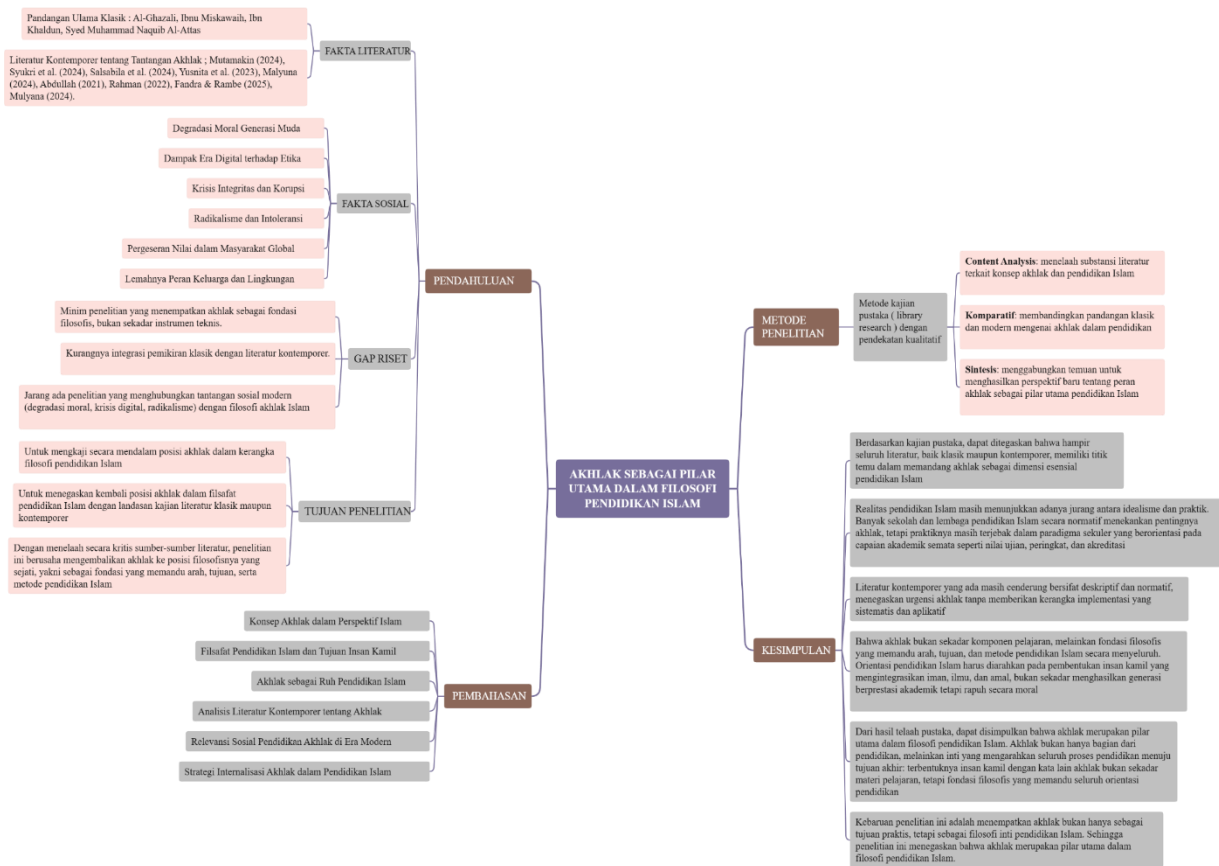
Schools, families, and communities must collaboratively support moral development. Values taught at school should align with those practiced at home and in society.

e. Positive Use of Technology

Digital technology should not be rejected but directed toward supporting moral education through Islamic content, interactive learning, and value-based digital literacy (Hakim et al., 2024).

The concept of insan kamil can only be achieved through comprehensive moral education. Insan kamil is not merely an individual who is knowledgeable, but one who is moral, faithful, and responsible. Such a person integrates knowledge and action, faith and character, and worldly life with the hereafter. Islamic education oriented toward akhlaq produces individuals capable of becoming leaders, protectors, and role models in society. Thus, akhlaq is an indispensable prerequisite for realizing insan kamil. Without akhlaq, insan kamil remains a utopian concept difficult to actualize in educational reality (Suryadi, 2024).

MINE MAP



CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can be asserted that nearly all scholarly works, both classical and contemporary, converge in viewing akhlaq (moral character) as an essential dimension of Islamic education. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Khaldun emphasized that the core of education lies in the formation of character and moral virtues. Meanwhile, contemporary studies indicate that the moral crisis among younger generations, the misuse of technology, and the rise of radicalism are rooted in the weakness of moral education. This demonstrates that akhlaq maintains its relevance across time, both as a philosophical foundation and as a solution to modern social problems.

However, the reality of Islamic education still reveals a gap between idealism and practice. Many Islamic schools and educational institutions normatively emphasize the importance of akhlaq, yet in practice they remain trapped within a secular paradigm that prioritizes academic achievements such as examination scores, rankings, and accreditation. As a result, moral education is often treated merely as a formal supplement rather than as the spirit that animates the entire educational process.

Furthermore, much of the existing contemporary literature remains descriptive and normative in nature, emphasizing the urgency of akhlaq without offering systematic and applicable implementation frameworks. This condition creates an urgent need to develop models of moral education that are more contextual, responsive to the challenges of globalization, and adaptive to the development of digital technology.

Thus, it can be concluded that akhlaq is not merely a component of instruction, but a philosophical foundation that guides the direction, objectives, and methods of Islamic education as a whole. The orientation of Islamic education should be directed toward the formation of insan kamil (the complete human being) who integrates faith (iman), knowledge (ilm), and action (amal), rather than merely producing academically successful yet morally fragile generations. Strategies for

strengthening akhlaq may be implemented through exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), habituation, curriculum integration, the creation of a conducive educational environment, and the positive utilization of digital technology.

The challenges of globalization and digital disruption should not be regarded as threats that weaken the role of akhlaq, but rather as catalysts for strengthening value-based education. The novelty of this study lies in reaffirming that akhlaq does not function merely as practical learning material, but constitutes the main pillar and core philosophy of Islamic education. Future research should therefore focus on developing applicable and technology-based models for the implementation of akhlaq, so that Islamic education can genuinely produce generations that are intellectually capable, spiritually strong, and morally upright.

From the literature review, it is evident that almost all scholars agree on the importance of akhlaq. Nevertheless, in practice, Islamic education continues to face a dilemma between idealism and reality. Many Islamic schools emphasize moral values, yet simultaneously remain confined within a secular educational paradigm that pursues rankings, examination scores, and accreditation. In addition, most existing studies remain normative, highlighting the importance of akhlaq without offering applicable implementation models. Therefore, further research should be directed toward the development of moral education models that are aligned with the needs of the digital era, for instance through character-based learning approaches that utilize technology in a positive manner.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that akhlaq is the main pillar of the philosophy of Islamic education. Akhlaq is not merely a part of education, but its very essence, guiding the entire educational process toward its ultimate goal: the formation of *insan kamil*. In other words, akhlaq is not simply subject matter, but a philosophical foundation that directs the overall orientation of education. Islamic education must place akhlaq as its primary orientation, integrate it into the curriculum, and instill it through exemplary conduct, habituation, and a conducive environment. The challenges of globalization should not serve as a justification for neglecting akhlaq; instead, they should become a driving force for strengthening Islamic moral education. Islamic education that positions akhlaq as its spiritual core will produce generations that are not only intellectually intelligent, but also noble in character. The novelty of this study lies in positioning akhlaq not merely as a practical objective, but as the core philosophy of Islamic education. Thus, this study reaffirms that akhlaq constitutes the principal pillar in the philosophy of Islamic education.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest associated with the publication of this article. This study was conducted independently through library research and was not influenced by any financial, institutional, or personal interests that could have affected the objectivity or integrity of the research.

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