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Reinterpreting Qur'anic Educational Goals in Dialogue with National and Modern Education

Menafsirkan Kembali Tujuan Pendidikan Qur'ani dalam Dialog dengan Pendidikan Nasional dan Pendidikan Modern

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Abstract

Islamic education faces the challenge of maintaining its relevance amid moral, social, and ecological crises in contemporary society. While previous studies have examined Islamic educational philosophy, character education, and curriculum development, limited attention has been given to the objectives of Islamic education derived from the Qur'an in relation to national education and modern educational theories. This study aims to reinterpret Qur'anic educational goals through a thematic-comparative library research approach. Data were collected from relevant Qur'anic verses, educational documents, tafsir literature, and contemporary scholarly works. The findings reveal that Qur'anic educational goals integrate faith, piety, knowledge, morality, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship within a tawhid-based framework. The study further demonstrates substantial convergence between Islamic education, national education, and modern educational theories in promoting holistic human development, while highlighting the distinctive contribution of Islamic education through its transcendental and ethical orientation. This framework offers a conceptual basis for enriching contemporary educational discourse and strengthening national educational objectives.

Keywords: Qur'anic Educational Goals; Islamic Education; Tawhidic Framework; National Education; Holistic Education

Abstrak

Pendidikan Islam menghadapi tantangan untuk mempertahankan relevansinya di tengah krisis moral, sosial, dan ekologis masyarakat kontemporer. Meskipun berbagai penelitian telah mengkaji filsafat pendidikan Islam, pendidikan karakter, dan pengembangan kurikulum, kajian mengenai tujuan pendidikan Islam yang bersumber dari Al-Qur'an dalam hubungannya dengan pendidikan nasional dan teori pendidikan modern masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menafsirkan kembali tujuan pendidikan Qur'ani melalui pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan dengan analisis tematik dan komparatif. Data diperoleh dari ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, dokumen pendidikan, literatur tafsir, dan karya ilmiah terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tujuan pendidikan Qur'ani mengintegrasikan iman, takwa, ilmu pengetahuan, akhlak, tanggung jawab sosial, dan kepedulian lingkungan dalam kerangka berbasis tauhid. Penelitian ini juga menemukan adanya titik temu yang kuat antara pendidikan Islam, pendidikan nasional, dan teori pendidikan modern dalam pengembangan manusia seutuhnya, sekaligus menegaskan kontribusi khas pendidikan Islam melalui orientasi transendental dan etisnya.

Kata Kunci: Tujuan Pendidikan Qur'ani; Pendidikan Islam; Kerangka Tauhidik; Pendidikan Nasional; Pendidikan Holistik



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is ideally designed to cultivate individuals who possess faith (*īmān*), piety (*taqwā*), noble character (*akhlāq al-karīmah*), knowledge, and the capacity to fulfill their roles as servants of Allah (*‘abd Allāh*) and vicegerents (*kehalifah*) on earth.¹ From the perspective of the Qur'an, education extends beyond the development of intellectual competence and encompasses the formation of spiritual, moral, social, and ecological consciousness.² The principle of *tawhīd* serves as the foundational framework that integrates the relationship between human beings and Allah, fellow human beings, and the natural environment. Through this foundation, Islamic education seeks to nurture individuals who are capable of maintaining a balance between worldly life and the hereafter. Such a holistic educational framework demonstrates the enduring relevance of Islamic education in addressing contemporary human needs while preserving a value-oriented vision grounded in divine guidance.

Nevertheless, contemporary educational realities present increasingly complex challenges. Rapid social transformation, technological advancement, digitalization, moral crises, and shifting societal values require Islamic education to adapt without compromising its foundational principles.³ Educational practices frequently prioritize academic achievement and technical competencies while giving less attention to character formation and moral development.⁴ Munawarsyah argues that the era of Industry 4.0 has generated substantial ethical and moral challenges, necessitating the reinforcement of sincerity, respect for teachers, and character education among learners.⁵ At the same time, national education and Islamic education are often perceived as separate domains, resulting in a persistent dichotomy between religious and secular sciences. This separation potentially hinders the realization of an integrated educational process capable of fostering the holistic development of human beings.

Previous studies have consistently highlighted the significant role of Islamic education in shaping moral character and personal identity. Maidugu and Isah emphasize that Islamic education contributes substantially to national character formation through the promotion of honesty, responsibility, justice, tolerance, and social solidarity.⁶ This argument is reinforced by Mujahid, who demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) cultivate moderate character through the internalization of Islamic values and intellectual traditions that respond

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- 1 S. Suyadi, Samsul Susilowati, and Triyo Supriyatno, "Islamic Character Education for Student of Public Higher Education in Indonesia," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Engineering, Technology and Social Science (ICONETOS 2020)*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210421.086>.
 - 2 Muh Syaifudin, Muhammad Adam, and Abdullah Affandi, "Qur'anic Edu-Theology as a Framework for Holistic Education: A Critical Examination of Pedagogical Values in Surah Al-Fātiḥah," *QOF* 9, no. 2 (December 18, 2025): 261–78, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v9i2.3282>.
 - 3 Rinat A. Zhanbayev et al., "Demoethical Model of Sustainable Development of Society: A Roadmap towards Digital Transformation," *Sustainability* 15, no. 16 (2023): 12478, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151612478>.
 - 4 Kelum A. A. Gamage, D. M. S. C. P. K. Dehideniya, and Sakunthala Y. Ekanayake, "The Role of Personal Values in Learning Approaches and Student Achievements," *Behavioral Sciences* 11, no. 7 (July 16, 2021): 102, <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs11070102>.
 - 5 Muzawir Munawarsyah, "Islamic Education in the Modern Era: Analysis of Student Character and Their Role in Facing the Challenges of Industry 4.0," *HEUTAGOGLA: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 141–54, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2023.32-01>.
 - 6 Umar Abdullahi Maidugu and Adamu Tanko Isah, "Islamic Education and Its Value," *Bulletin of Islamic Research* 2, no. 4 (2024): 725–44, <https://doi.org/10.69526/bir.v2i4.165>.

constructively to the challenges of globalization.⁷ Furthermore, Liana contends that humanistic and constructivist approaches can strengthen Islamic character through active, reflective, and experiential learning processes. Similarly, Syamsuriah et al. maintain that humanistic and constructivist curriculum models are highly relevant to Islamic Religious Education because they encourage learners to become active participants in the learning process while fostering both spiritual and social awareness.⁸

Despite these valuable contributions, existing studies remain limited in scope. Most previous research has focused on character education, *tawhīd*-based curricula, *pesantren*, humanistic and constructivist approaches, or the educational philosophies of particular scholars. For example, Ikhsanto et al. primarily examined Islamic educational concepts through a comparative analysis of the educational thought of Syed Naquib al-Attas and Mahmud Yunus, whereas Indarsih explored the relationship between the foundations of Islamic education and national education.⁹ Although these studies offer important insights, relatively few have specifically examined the objectives of Islamic education as derived from the Qur'an and systematically compared them with the objectives of national education and contemporary educational theories. Consequently, a significant research gap remains concerning the points of convergence, divergence, and potential contributions of these three educational perspectives toward the development of a comprehensive educational framework.

In light of these circumstances, a more comprehensive investigation is required to explain how the objectives of Islamic education rooted in the Qur'an relate to the objectives of national education and modern educational theories. The central issue concerns the extent to which these three perspectives share common goals, differ in their philosophical foundations, and can be integrated to foster individuals who are religious, rational, humanistic, and socially responsible. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the objectives of Islamic education based on the Qur'an and compare them with the objectives of national education and modern educational theories through a library-based approach employing thematic and comparative analyses. This study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to strengthening Islamic education by demonstrating how Qur'anic values, national educational goals, and contemporary educational theories can be integrated into a coherent framework that remains faithful to *tawhīd* while addressing the educational demands of contemporary society.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design.¹⁰ This approach was chosen because the study focused on examining the concepts, values, and objectives of Islamic education as derived from the Qur'an and their relevance within the context of contemporary education. Rather than relying on field data, the research was based on the analysis of various written sources related to Islamic education, national educational objectives, and modern educational theories. Through this approach, the study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the normative, philosophical, and theoretical foundations underlying the objectives of Islamic education.

7 Imam Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 185–212, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212>.

8 Syamsuriah Syamsuriah et al., "Relevansi Model Kurikulum Humanistik Dan Konstruktivistik Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum PAI," *Sulawesi Tenggara Educational Journal* 5, no. 1 (April 30, 2025): 340–49, <https://doi.org/10.54297/seduj.v5i1.1116>.

9 Nur Eko Ikhsanto, Muthoifin, and Triono Ali Mustofa, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam (Studi Perbandingan Pemikiran Syed Naquib Al Attas Dan Mahmud Yunus)," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 02 (2023): 1775–92.

10 Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

The data sources consisted of both primary and secondary materials. Primary sources included Qur'anic verses related to education, human nature, knowledge, faith (*īmān*), piety (*taqwā*), morality, responsibility, and the role of human beings as *khalīfah*, as well as official documents concerning the objectives of national education. Secondary sources were obtained from *tafsīr* literature, books on Islamic education, scholarly journal articles, previous research findings, and literature discussing modern educational theories, particularly humanistic, constructivist, character-based, and holistic education. Sources were selected purposively based on their relevance and suitability to the research focus. Data were collected through documentation techniques involving the identification, review, recording, and categorization of literature according to the themes of the study.

Data were analyzed using a thematic-comparative approach. Thematic analysis was employed to identify, classify, and interpret the major themes related to the objectives of Islamic education in the Qur'an, including faith, piety, morality, knowledge, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. Subsequently, comparative analysis was conducted to examine the similarities, differences, and potential points of integration between the objectives of Islamic education, national education, and modern educational theories. This approach enabled the study to explore the distinctive contributions of Qur'anic educational objectives within broader educational discourses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Objectives of Islamic Education from the Qur'anic Perspective

Islamic education, from the perspective of the Qur'an, is founded upon the understanding that human beings are not merely biological entities who require knowledge and skills to survive, but spiritual beings endowed with a divine purpose and moral responsibility. Consequently, education is not limited to the development of intellectual capacities; it also encompasses the cultivation of character, social awareness, and a profound relationship with Allah.¹¹ This paradigm differs from many contemporary educational approaches that tend to regard academic achievement, productivity, and professional competence as the primary indicators of educational success. Within the Qur'anic framework, education is expected to shape individuals who understand the meaning of life, possess a clear moral orientation, and utilize their knowledge for the benefit of society. Therefore, the objectives of Islamic education are inherently holistic, integrating spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, and ecological dimensions within a unified worldview.

The most fundamental objective of Islamic education is the cultivation of faith (*īmān*) and piety (*taqwā*) as the guiding principles of the entire educational process. The Qur'an affirms that human beings were created to worship Allah, making education essentially a means of strengthening this consciousness of servitude.¹² In this context, education is not merely intended to produce intellectually capable individuals but also individuals who are able to ground their thoughts and actions in divine values. This perspective is particularly significant in light of contemporary moral crises, which demonstrate that intellectual achievement does not necessarily correspond to ethical integrity. An educational system that focuses exclusively on knowledge acquisition without nurturing faith risks producing academically competent individuals who lack moral direction in the application of their knowledge and expertise.

11 Harikumar Pallathadka et al., "The Study of Islamic Teachings in Education: With an Emphasis on Behavioural Gentleness," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (February 24, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8193>.

12 Muhammad Faiz, "Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān and Human Development: Reflections on Qur'ānic Objectives and Prophetic Practices," *MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 4 (October 17, 2025): 446–64, <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v3i4.195>.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“ And I did not create the jinn and humankind except that they may worship Me. [56] ” –
Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt (51)

Alongside the cultivation of spiritual awareness, the Qur’an places the pursuit of knowledge at the center of educational objectives. This emphasis is reflected in the first revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad, which begins with the command to read, highlighting the central role of intellectual activity in human life. Unlike perspectives that separate knowledge from moral values, the Qur’an presents knowledge as a means of knowing Allah, understanding reality, and contributing to the well-being of humanity. Knowledge, therefore, is not viewed as an end in itself but as a tool for enhancing human life and fulfilling ethical responsibilities. This perspective demonstrates that Islamic education does not reject scientific and technological advancement; rather, it seeks to direct such advancements within a framework of ethics and human welfare.¹³ The integration of faith and knowledge thus represents a distinctive characteristic of Islamic education that differentiates it from secular educational models.

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (٢) أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (٣) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ
بِالْقَلَمِ (٤) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (٥)

“ Read in the name of your Lord who created. [1] He created humankind from a clinging clot. [2] Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, [3] who taught by the pen, [4] taught humankind what they did not know. [5] ” Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96)

The distinctive strength of Islamic education lies not only in its emphasis on faith and knowledge but also in its recognition of morality as a primary indicator of educational success. From a Qur’anic perspective, educational failure is not merely the result of insufficient knowledge but rather the inability to connect knowledge with moral responsibility. For this reason, character formation occupies a central position within the objectives of Islamic education. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, responsibility, and social concern are not regarded as supplementary outcomes but as core educational goals. An individual who possesses extensive knowledge but lacks ethical conduct cannot be considered truly educated from an Islamic standpoint. This perspective underscores that human excellence is measured not only by what one knows but also by how that knowledge is translated into behavior and contributes to the common good.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

“ Indeed, you are of an exalted standard of character. [4] ” Sūrah al-Qalam (68)

Another dimension that enriches the objectives of Islamic education is the Qur’anic concept of human beings as *khalifah* (vicegerents) on earth. This concept broadens the purpose of education beyond personal development to encompass social and ecological responsibility. The Qur’an does not envision individuals who are personally pious yet indifferent to societal and environmental challenges. Rather, education is expected to produce individuals who contribute to justice, social harmony, and the responsible stewardship of natural resources.¹⁴ In a global context marked by social inequality and environmental degradation, the concept of *khalifah*

13 Eziuddin Elmahjub, “Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Islamic Ethics: Towards Pluralist Ethical Benchmarking for AI,” *Philosophy & Technology* 36, no. 4 (December 1, 2023): 73, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-023-00668-x>.

14 Savita Jangde and Md. Afjal Ahmad, “Integrating Sustainability into Equal Education Opportunities,” in *Environmental Landscape and Sustainable Biodiversity for Healthy Green Growth*, 2025, 97–103, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75405-0_10.

demonstrates remarkable contemporary relevance. Islamic education, therefore, is concerned not only with nurturing personal righteousness but also with fostering the development of a just, sustainable, and civilized society.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“ And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will place upon the earth a vicegerent.’ [30]
 ” Sūrat al-Baqarah (2)

The findings of this study indicate that the objectives of Islamic education derived from the Qur’an can be categorized into several interconnected dimensions. The spiritual dimension is reflected in the cultivation of faith and piety, the intellectual dimension in the development of knowledge and critical thinking, the moral dimension in the formation of noble character, and the social and ecological dimensions in the fulfillment of humanity’s role as *kehalifah*. The interrelationship among these dimensions demonstrates that Islamic education rejects the dichotomy between religion and worldly life, knowledge and morality, or individual interests and social responsibilities. Instead, all dimensions are integrated within the framework of *tamhid*, which places Allah at the center of educational orientation. A summary of the objectives of Islamic education based on the Qur’an is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of the Objectives of Islamic Education Based on the Qur’an

Dimension	Qur’anic Basis	Educational Orientation
Spiritual	Qur’an 51:56	Cultivation of faith, piety, and consciousness of worship
Intellectual	Qur’an 96:1–5	Development of knowledge and intellectual capacities
Moral	Qur’an 68:4	Formation of noble character and personal integrity
Social	Qur’an 2:30	Promotion of social responsibility and leadership
Ecological	Qur’an 2:30	Responsible stewardship and environmental sustainability

Source: Author, 2026

As illustrated in Table 1, the objectives of Islamic education based on the Qur’an constitute an educational framework that extends beyond academic achievement to encompass the formation of individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, morally upright, and socially responsible. These findings suggest that Islamic education offers a more comprehensive educational model than approaches that focus exclusively on a single dimension of human development. Through the framework of *tamhid*, all educational objectives are integrated into a unified orientation aimed at enabling individuals to dedicate their knowledge, abilities, and actions to both the service of humanity and devotion to Allah. This integrative character explains why Islamic education remains highly relevant in addressing the moral, social, and ecological challenges confronting contemporary societies.

Comparison and Contributions of the Objectives of Islamic Education to National Education and Modern Educational Theories

One of the enduring debates in educational discourse is the assumption that Islamic education is less relevant to contemporary society because it is perceived as overly normative and primarily concerned with spiritual matters. In contrast, modern education is often regarded as more progressive due to its emphasis on science, technology, creativity, and competency development. At first glance, this argument appears convincing. However, it becomes increasingly problematic when moral crises, intolerance, corruption, environmental degradation,

and the misuse of technology continue to emerge within societies that are becoming more formally educated. This reality raises a fundamental question: are today's educational problems truly caused by a lack of knowledge and skills, or do they stem from the absence of a clear moral orientation within the educational process?¹⁵ Addressing this question is essential for understanding the respective roles of Islamic education, national education, and modern educational theories in responding to contemporary challenges.

The findings indicate that the objectives of Islamic education share more common ground with national education than is often assumed. Indonesia's National Education System explicitly identifies faith, piety, and moral character as central educational goals. This demonstrates that the national education system is not founded upon a fully secular paradigm. The real issue lies not in the formulation of educational objectives but in the gap between normative aspirations and educational practices. In many cases, educational success is measured primarily through academic performance, competitive achievement, and employability rather than through the quality of students' character.¹⁶ Consequently, the moral and spiritual dimensions that should constitute the core of education are frequently reduced to administrative requirements with limited transformative impact on learners and society.

This convergence between Islamic and national education suggests that the dichotomy between religious and general education is largely historical and administrative rather than philosophical. Both seek to cultivate knowledgeable, ethical, and socially responsible individuals. Nevertheless, educational practices that prioritize examination scores and cognitive achievement have reinforced the perception that education is primarily a mechanism for producing human resources rather than shaping human beings. In this regard, the critique offered by Islamic education remains highly relevant. Education should not be confined to meeting labor market demands and economic objectives; it must also address the growing moral and humanitarian challenges confronting contemporary societies.¹⁷ Without such a balance, educational institutions risk producing technically competent graduates who lack the ethical foundations necessary to navigate complex social realities.

Despite these similarities, Islamic education and national education differ significantly at the philosophical level. National education derives its legitimacy from constitutional principles, national values, and the practical needs of society.¹⁸ Islamic education, by contrast, is grounded in divine revelation and the principle of *tawhīd*. This distinction represents more than a difference in sources of authority; it reflects fundamentally different understandings of human nature and the purpose of life. National education primarily seeks to prepare responsible citizens capable of contributing to society, whereas Islamic education views human beings as entities who bear both social responsibilities and transcendent obligations toward Allah.¹⁹ Consequently, Islamic education addresses not only how individuals should live within society but also why they exist and toward what ultimate purpose their lives should be directed.

15 Lukas Weidener and Michael Fischer, "Teaching AI Ethics in Medical Education: A Scoping Review of Current Literature and Practices," *Perspectives on Medical Education* 12, no. 1 (October 16, 2023): 399–410, <https://doi.org/10.5334/pme.954>.

16 Christopher Byrne, "What Determines Perceived Graduate Employability? Exploring the Effects of Personal Characteristics, Academic Achievements and Graduate Skills in a Survey Experiment," *Studies in Higher Education* 47, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 159–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1735329>.

17 Abhishek Anand and Pankaj Singh, "Interdisciplinary Studies," in *Integrating Personalized Learning Methods Into STEAM Education* (IGI Global, 2025), 233–60, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-7718-5.ch011>.

18 Moh. Ferdi Hasan, "Educational Authority and Regulatory Legitimacy: Comparing Normative Systems in Pesantren and Public Schools in Indonesia," *Legal Pluralism and Critical Social Analysis* 57, no. 2–3 (September 2, 2025): 182–206, <https://doi.org/10.1080/27706869.2025.2556586>.

19 Ayman Agbaria, "Education for Religion: An Islamic Perspective," *Religions* 15, no. 3 (February 29, 2024): 309, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15030309>.

These differing foundations inevitably shape educational goals in distinct ways. Within national education, success is commonly associated with an individual's ability to participate productively in social, economic, and civic life. While this objective is undeniably important, it does not fully address humanity's deeper existential concerns. Islamic education offers a broader perspective by conceptualizing human beings as both *'abd Allāh* (servants of Allah) and *kehalifah* (vicegerents on earth).²⁰ From this standpoint, knowledge, skills, and social achievement are not ends in themselves but instruments through which individuals fulfill their divinely entrusted responsibilities. This perspective provides a deeper meaning to education by connecting learning activities to spiritual purposes that transcend purely worldly ambitions and material success.

A similarly revealing pattern emerges when Islamic educational objectives are compared with humanistic educational theories. Both perspectives emphasize the importance of developing human potential in a comprehensive manner. However, a crucial difference often overlooked in educational discussions concerns the ultimate orientation of such development. Humanistic education generally places the individual at the center of personal growth and self-actualization, whereas Islamic education situates *tawhīd* at the center of all educational endeavors. This distinction is far from trivial because it determines how human potential is ultimately directed and utilized. Personal development that lacks a clear moral framework may produce highly creative and capable individuals who nevertheless remain indifferent to social justice, environmental sustainability, or the common good. In this respect, Islamic education offers a corrective perspective to the individualistic tendencies that can emerge within certain humanistic approaches.

A comparable relationship can be observed in constructivist educational theory, which emphasizes learners' active participation in constructing knowledge through experience, reflection, and interaction with their environment. Such principles are often presented as hallmarks of modern education. Yet a closer examination of the Qur'an reveals repeated encouragements for human beings to think critically, observe carefully, reason deeply, and derive lessons from the world around them.²¹ The key difference lies in the ultimate purpose of these intellectual activities. In contemporary constructivism, knowledge is frequently understood as a product of human interpretation and experience. In Islamic education, however, intellectual inquiry extends beyond understanding reality; it serves as a means of recognizing the signs of Allah and generating actions that contribute to human welfare.²² Islamic education therefore does not reject constructivist principles but enriches them by providing a moral and spiritual direction for the learning process.

The growing prominence of character education over recent decades further illustrates important shifts within modern educational thought. After decades of prioritizing academic achievement as the primary indicator of educational success, many educational systems have begun to recognize that intellectual excellence alone does not necessarily produce ethical individuals. Corruption, violence, intolerance, and the misuse of technology demonstrate that advances in knowledge do not automatically lead to moral maturity.²³ In this context, character

20 Nurul Indana and Ali Mustofa, "The Concept of Islamic Education in the Perspective of Imam Al Ghazali and Its Relevance in the Contemporary Era," *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 13, no. 2 (October 20, 2024): 242–56, <https://doi.org/10.54437/urwatulwutsqo.v13i2.1351>.

21 Wildan Fahdika Ahmad. "Emha Ainun Nadjib: Tadabbur Al-Qur'an as a Manifestation of Qur'anic Epistemology in Reading Reality," *Theosynesis: Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis* 2, no. 1 (2026): 39–51, <https://doi.org/10.20625/theosyn.v2i1.107>.

22 Fella Lahmar, "Islamic Education: An Islamic 'Wisdom-Based Cultural Environment' in a Western Context," *Religions* 11, no. 8 (August 7, 2020): 409, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11080409>.

23 Olive Etsula, "Approaching Transcendence: A Conceptual Discussion on Procurement Fraud, Education, Professionalism Maturity, Ethics and Implications," *Journal of Public Procurement* 24, no. 4 (November 13, 2024): 433–64, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOPP-08-2022-0038>.

education is moving toward a domain that has long been central to Islamic educational thought. The crucial distinction is that Islamic education does not regard character merely as a set of socially desirable behaviors. Rather, moral conduct is understood as the manifestation of faith, ethical consciousness, and spiritual accountability before Allah.²⁴

A similar observation applies to the rise of holistic education, which emphasizes the integration of cognitive, emotional, social, and affective dimensions within the learning process. Although this approach is frequently presented as a contemporary innovation, the findings suggest that the integration of multiple dimensions of human development has long been embedded within the objectives of Islamic education. The Qur'an does not separate intellectual growth from moral formation, spirituality from social responsibility, or humanity's relationship with Allah from its relationship with the natural world.²⁵ In this sense, Islamic education articulated a holistic vision of human development long before holistic education became a widely recognized concept in modern educational discourse.

These findings indicate that the relationship between Islamic education and modern education cannot be adequately understood through a simplistic opposition between tradition and modernity. Modern educational theories have made significant contributions to pedagogy, educational psychology, and learner-centered instructional approaches.²⁶ However, they often focus more on how people learn than on why they learn. This limitation can lead education toward a pragmatic orientation in which success is measured primarily by productivity, efficiency, and competence. Within such a context, Islamic education contributes something fundamentally different: a moral and spiritual framework capable of guiding the use of knowledge, technology, and power in ethically responsible ways.

Table 2. Comparison of the Objectives

Aspect	Islamic Education	National Education	Modern Educational Theories
Foundation	Qur'an and <i>tawhīd</i>	Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution	Scientific theories and educational philosophy
Orientation	' <i>Abd Allāh</i> and <i>kehalīfah</i>	Responsible citizenship	Individual development
Primary Focus	Faith, knowledge, morality, and action	Character, knowledge, and citizenship	Personal potential and competencies
Spiritual Dimension	Central educational objective	One of several objectives	Relatively limited
Ultimate Goal	Success in this world and the hereafter	Social and national development	Self-actualization and personal achievement
Main Contribution	Moral and spiritual orientation	Social and national integration	Pedagogical innovation and learning development

Source: Author, 2026

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- 24 Ihin Solihin, Aan Hasanah, and Hisny Fajrussalam, "Core Ethical Values of Character Education Based on Islamic Values in Islamic Boarding Schools," *International Journal on Advanced Science, Education, and Religion* 3, no. 2 (July 20, 2020): 21–33, <https://doi.org/10.33648/ijoaser.v3i2.51>.
- 25 Ahmad Farid Fanani, Rifat Syauqi Efendi, and Shofiyullah Muzammil, "Tazkiyah Al-Nafs in Al-Ghazali's Thought: A Sufi Framework for Enhancing Mental Resilience among Generation-Z," *Tasfiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (2026).
- 26 Muhammad Yusuf Pratama et al., "Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia: Roles, Implementation, and Methods in Shaping Islamic Character in the Modern Era," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Educational Review* 2, no. 3 (October 13, 2025): 282–92, <https://doi.org/10.58230/ijier.v2i3.422>.

As shown in Table 2, the principal differences among these three perspectives do not lie in their shared commitment to human development but in their sources of values and ultimate educational orientations. National education provides the social framework necessary for civic life, while modern educational theories offer increasingly sophisticated pedagogical approaches. Nevertheless, both may lose their sense of direction when detached from a strong moral foundation. In this regard, the primary contribution of Islamic education is not its rejection of modernity but its capacity to provide an ethical orientation for the advancement of knowledge, technology, and social life.

Based on the overall findings, it can be argued that Islamic education is not merely compatible with national education and modern educational theories but occupies a strategically important position as a source of values capable of strengthening both. National education requires a stronger spiritual foundation to avoid excessive pragmatism, while modern educational theories require a clearer moral orientation to prevent an overemphasis on competence and technological advancement. Within this context, Islamic education offers a *tawḥīd*-based framework that integrates faith, knowledge, morality, and social responsibility into a coherent whole. This contribution positions Islamic education not simply as an alternative educational model but as a conceptual resource capable of enriching both national education and modern educational thought in the face of contemporary moral, social, and ecological challenges.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that the objectives of Islamic education derived from the Qur'an encompass the development of faith (*īmān*), piety (*taqwā*), knowledge, morality, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship within an integrated framework of *tawḥīd*. This study reveals that Islamic education shares substantial common ground with both national education and modern educational theories in promoting holistic human development, character formation, and social responsibility. However, the analysis also shows that Islamic education differs fundamentally in its philosophical foundation and ultimate orientation. While national education is primarily directed toward preparing responsible citizens and modern educational theories focus on individual development and learning processes, Islamic education situates all educational activities within the broader purpose of servitude to Allah and the fulfillment of humanity's role as *khalīfah*. Consequently, Islamic education provides a more comprehensive educational framework by integrating spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, and ecological dimensions into a unified vision of human development.

The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that Islamic education should not be viewed merely as compatible with national education and modern educational theories, but as a source of moral and spiritual values capable of strengthening both. By positioning *tawḥīd* as the central educational foundation, this study offers a conceptual framework for integrating religious values, national educational goals, and contemporary pedagogical approaches. Nevertheless, this research is limited by its conceptual and literature-based nature, which prevents direct examination of how these educational objectives are implemented in actual educational settings. Future studies are therefore encouraged to employ empirical approaches in schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), and higher education institutions to investigate how Qur'anic educational objectives can be translated into curricula, instructional practices, character development programs, and educational policies. Such research would provide a stronger basis for assessing the practical effectiveness of integrating Islamic educational values with national and contemporary educational demands.

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