



Reconstructing Islamic Character Education Through Islamic Religious Education: A Critical Literature Review

Luthfi Rachman*

Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah, Pasuruan, Indonesia

Email: luthfirachman@uidalwa.ac.id

*Corresponding Author

<p>Article Information: Received: 16 April 2026 Revised: 3 July 2026 Accepted: 6 July 2026 Published: 8 July 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Islamic Character, Character Education, Contextual Learning, Moral Values.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>This study critically examines and reconceptualizes the role of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) in strengthening Islamic character (<i>akhlak</i>) among students in Indonesian educational institutions. Employing a qualitative library research methodology grounded in systematic content analysis, the study draws upon classical Islamic educational theory, contemporary pedagogical literature, and national education policy frameworks. The findings reveal that PAI functions as a strategic instrument of moral, spiritual, and social formation through three interconnected pillars: integration of moral values (<i>akhlak</i>) into curriculum design, teacher role modeling (<i>uswah hasanah</i>), and value-based contextual learning. The reconstruction of Islamic character education demands synergy among school, family, and community as a holistic value-education ecosystem. This article argues that PAI transcends mere transmission of religious knowledge to become a transformative process of forming students who are faithful (<i>iman</i>), pious (<i>taqwa</i>), and morally excellent (<i>akhlak al-karimah</i>), fully aligned with the national education vision and the Islamic principle of <i>rahmatan lil 'alamin</i>. Grounded in the classical thought of al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Ibn Sina, as well as contemporary scholars, this study offers a three-dimensional conceptual model philosophical, pedagogical, and sociological as a framework for PAI-based character strengthening in the modern educational context.</p>
--	--

How to Cite this Article: Rachman, Luthfi. "Reconstructing Islamic Character Education Through Islamic Religious Education: A Critical Literature Review." *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 2 (2026): 250–61. <https://doi.org/10.38073/jpi.4696>.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and deliberate effort to develop human beings fully spiritually, morally, intellectually, and socially. In the Indonesian national context, character strengthening has emerged as a primary policy priority, as explicitly articulated in Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on the Strengthening of Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK). Among all subject areas, Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) holds a uniquely strategic role in the formation of Islamic character among students across educational levels. The integration of religious values with character development is not a secondary concern but a foundational mission of Islamic pedagogy, making PAI a critical site for national character-building efforts.

The contemporary era, characterized by rapid globalization and digital transformation, presents increasingly complex moral challenges for younger generations. Empirical evidence from Indonesian educational research indicates an observable decline in ethical standards among students, reflected in growing intolerant behavior, digital technology

misuse, and erosion of social manners (Muhtifah et al., 2021). These trends underscore an urgent need to rethink and reconstruct PAI not merely as a normative religious subject, but as a comprehensive process of spiritual formation and contextual character building. Halstead (2007) has argued that Islamic values provide a distinctive and comprehensive framework for moral education that goes beyond secular Western models, particularly because of its integration of divine accountability with ethical conduct a perspective that has gained renewed scholarly attention in recent years.

The philosophical roots of Islamic character education run deep. Classical scholars such as Ibn Miskawaih, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina developed sophisticated theories of moral formation that continue to inform modern Islamic pedagogy. Their works establish that character (*khuluq*) is not innate but is cultivated through sustained practice (*riyadhah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), and purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). These foundational concepts have been integrated into contemporary discussions of character education in Islamic educational institutions, generating a rich body of literature at the intersection of classical Islamic ethics and modern pedagogy. In the Indonesian *pesantren* tradition, this integration finds particular expression through the embodied transmission of values from teacher (*kyai/ustadh*) to student (*santri*), a pedagogy of presence that resists reduction to formal curriculum alone.

However, despite its theoretical richness, PAI implementation in formal schools frequently falls short of its character-formation potential. Five recent studies have shown that PAI and Islamic character education in Indonesian school contexts still require stronger pedagogical reconstruction. Gunawan et al. (2023) found that PAI learning needs to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains more consistently. Nasrullah et al. (2023) emphasized that PAI teachers play a central role in developing students' discipline and moral values, although this process is still constrained by inconsistent school practices and limited parental involvement. Arif et al. (2024), through a systematic literature review, showed that character education in Islamic schools must be supported by curriculum design, learning media, mentoring, and school culture. Sugiarti and Ozay (2022) demonstrated that moderate Islamic values can strengthen students' tolerant, inclusive, and national character through structured school programs. Masturin (2023) further argued that PAI materials based on religious moderation are effective in shaping students' character when supported by active learning strategies. These findings indicate a persistent gap between PAI's normative ideals and its actual pedagogical implementation. Therefore, a systematic reconstruction of PAI's conceptual and pedagogical foundations is not merely an academic exercise but a practical necessity for advancing Islamic character education in Indonesia.

This study aims to: (1) delineate the concept of Islamic character education from the perspective of classical and contemporary Islamic educational literature; (2) analyze the strategic role of PAI learning in character strengthening; and (3) propose a three-dimensional conceptual reconstruction model for PAI-based Islamic character formation. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing scholarly conversations about the relationship between religious education, moral pedagogy, and national character development in Muslim-majority educational contexts (Rachman et al., 2023; Khasanah, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative library research methodology (*kajian pustaka*) guided by a descriptive-analytical approach. Library research is an established methodology in Islamic educational scholarship that enables systematic analysis of conceptual and theoretical dimensions of educational phenomena through rigorous engagement with primary and secondary sources (Adlini et al., 2022). This approach is particularly appropriate for the present study given its focus on reconstructing conceptual foundations rather than generating new empirical data.

Data were collected through structured literature searches across multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, and institutional repositories. The search terms employed included Islamic character education, *akhlak* education, PAI and moral values, contextual learning and Islam, and character education Indonesia. Selection criteria prioritized: (a) peer-reviewed articles published between 2012 and 2024; (b) Scopus-indexed sources for theoretical grounding; (c) Indonesian-language policy documents and pedagogical literature; and (d) classical Islamic texts of foundational relevance to moral education.

The analytical process followed four sequential stages. First, key concepts were identified across the literature: Islamic character, *akhlak*, PAI methodology, and character formation theories. Second, thematic categorization was performed, organizing sources under three thematic clusters: classical Islamic theories of character; contemporary PAI pedagogical strategies; and national character education policy. Third, content analysis was conducted following established qualitative procedures (Miles & Huberman, 2014), tracing conceptual relationships, identifying convergences and tensions, and situating findings within both Islamic and global educational frameworks. Fourth, synthesis and reconstruction produced the three-dimensional model of Islamic character strengthening through PAI presented in the findings section. Theoretical triangulation across classical, contemporary, and national policy sources was employed to ensure analytic rigor and trustworthiness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Religious Education and the Goal of Character Formation

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) occupies a constitutionally mandated place in the Indonesian national curriculum, functioning not merely as religious instruction but as a comprehensive instrument of human development. Its philosophical foundation is closely related to the Islamic concept of *al-insān al-kāmil*, which emphasizes the integration of rational, spiritual, moral, and practical dimensions in human formation. This idea can be traced to classical Islamic ethical thought, particularly al-Ghazali's discussion of spiritual purification and moral refinement in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Ibn Miskawayh's theory of character discipline in *Tabdhīb al-Akhlāq*, and Ibn Sina's educational reflections in *Kitāb al-Siyāsah*. These classical perspectives position education as a process of cultivating knowledge, virtue, self-discipline, and social responsibility rather than merely transmitting cognitive content. In the contemporary digital context, the function of PAI also extends to strengthening students' religious media literacy. Hanifansyah et al. (2025) show that religious representations in digital

and cinematic media can shape public perceptions of Islamic authority, spiritual manipulation, and moral judgment. Therefore, PAI should not only transmit doctrinal knowledge but also cultivate critical, ethical, and media-literate religious understanding among students.

Contemporary Indonesian educational policy has operationalized this holistic vision through the national curriculum framework, which articulates religious education as encompassing cognitive (knowing), affective (feeling), and psychomotor (acting) dimensions. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the goal of national education includes developing students into faithful, pious, and noble (*akhlaq al-karimah*) human beings a formulation that directly mirrors classical Islamic educational objectives. This alignment between Islamic educational philosophy and national policy creates a favorable institutional environment for PAI-based character formation, provided that teaching practice moves beyond cognitive transmission to genuine values internalization.

Scholars of Islamic education have repeatedly emphasized this distinction between knowledge transmission and values formation. The former transfer of knowledge is necessary but insufficient for character development; the latter transfer of values requires pedagogical approaches that engage students' emotional, volitional, and spiritual capacities (Khasanah, 2024). The reconstruction of PAI must therefore address both its content and its methodology, ensuring that instructional design facilitates the movement from moral knowing to moral feeling to moral action a progression that resonates with both classical Islamic pedagogy and Lickona's (1991) influential framework of character education.

Classical Islamic Theories of Character Formation

The intellectual heritage of Islamic moral philosophy offers a rich and underutilized resource for contemporary PAI pedagogy. Three classical scholars stand out as foundational theorists of Islamic character formation: Ibn Miskawaih, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina. Their contributions, though composed in medieval contexts, retain profound relevance for modern educational theory and practice.

Ibn Miskawaih (932–1030 CE), in his seminal work *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* (The Refinement of Character), articulated a theory of moral formation grounded in the doctrine of the mean (*al-wasat*). He argued that virtuous character (*khuluq*) is neither innate nor immutable but is acquired through sustained moral habituation (*ta'wid*) and practical exercise (*riyadhal*). A person does not become virtuous merely by knowing what virtue is, but by repeatedly performing virtuous acts until they become second nature an insight that prefigures modern behavioral and social learning theories. Ibn Miskawaih's model is fundamentally pedagogical: it assigns to educators the task of designing environments and practices that scaffold the formation of virtuous habits in students.

Al-Ghazali (1058–1111 CE), widely regarded as the most influential theorist of Islamic moral education, grounded character formation in the spiritual purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). In the *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, he argued that the heart (*qalb*) is the seat of moral agency and that lasting character change requires not only behavioral modification but transformation of inner dispositions (*nijyah*, *tambah*, and *iblas*). Al-Ghazali's model is inherently integrative: it links spiritual states to ethical conduct and situates moral education within the broader project of drawing closer to God (*taqarrub ilallah*). Contemporary scholars

have argued that al-Ghazali's framework provides Islamic character education with a theological depth that secular character education programs lack (Maksudin, 2023).

Ibn Sina (980–1037 CE) approached character from a philosophical-psychological perspective, viewing moral development as the harmonization of human rational and appetitive faculties under the governance of reason. His educational philosophy, articulated in the *Kitab al-Siyasa*, emphasized the importance of early education in shaping character dispositions and the role of the teacher as both moral exemplar and intellectual guide. The synthesis of these three classical thinkers reveals a shared emphasis on habituation, spiritual cultivation, and teacher exemplariness as the three pillars of Islamic character formation pillars that remain fully relevant to contemporary PAI pedagogy.

Character Education in National and Global Perspectives

The concept of character education has been extensively theorized in global educational scholarship. Lickona (1991), in his foundational work *Educating for Character*, identified moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action as the three essential components of character development a tripartite model that has been widely adopted in both Western and non-Western educational contexts. His framework emphasizes that genuine character formation requires more than knowledge of moral principles; it demands emotional engagement with those principles and consistent behavioral expression of them. This model aligns closely with the Islamic educational framework's emphasis on *'ilm* (knowledge), *iman* (faith), and *'amal* (action) as the interconnected dimensions of Islamic moral formation.

In the Indonesian national policy context, the Strengthening of Character Education (PPK) program identifies five core character values religious, nationalist, independent, cooperative (*gotong royong*), and integrity as the foundation of national character development (Kemendikbud, 2017). These values are not alien to Islamic ethics but find precise equivalents in Islamic moral vocabulary: religious values correspond to *iman* and *taqwa*; integrity corresponds to *shidq* (honesty) and *amanah* (trustworthiness); and cooperativeness corresponds to *ta'awun* (mutual assistance). This convergence between national and Islamic values frameworks creates a powerful basis for PAI to function as the primary vehicle of PPK implementation in Indonesian schools.

A critical distinction must nonetheless be maintained between secular Western character education models and Islamic character education. Halstead (2007) has argued that Islamic values constitute a 'distinctive framework for moral education' precisely because they are grounded in a theocentric worldview that links moral agency to divine accountability. In the Islamic framework, character is not merely a social virtue but a form of worship (*ibadah*): treating others with justice, honesty, and compassion is simultaneously an act of obedience to God and a contribution to social harmony. This theological grounding gives Islamic character education a motivational depth and cosmic significance that secular models cannot replicate, and it constitutes PAI's unique contribution to national character formation efforts.

Integration of Moral Values in PAI Curriculum and Instruction

The strengthening of Islamic character through PAI must begin with intentional curriculum design. Every core competency in the PAI curriculum carries implicit moral content that can be made explicit through thoughtful instructional planning. For example, the study of *tawhid* (monotheism) can be linked to the development of sincerity (*ikhlas*) and

humility (*tawadu*); fiqh instruction on worship (*ibadah*) can cultivate discipline and attention to moral order; and *sirah nabawiyah* (prophetic biography) can model virtues such as patience, forgiveness, and social justice. The challenge for PAI educators is to move from implicit to explicit moral content, designing lessons that systematically develop both religious knowledge and its corresponding character dispositions.

Research on effective PAI pedagogical approaches highlights several instructional strategies that facilitate moral internalization. Value clarification techniques encourage students to examine their own values and their alignment with Islamic principles; problem-based learning situates moral decision-making in realistic contexts that require students to apply Islamic values to contemporary dilemmas; and project-based learning creates opportunities for students to practice Islamic values generosity, cooperation, justice in community-oriented projects (Rachman et al., 2023). These approaches share a common orientation toward active, reflective, and contextually embedded learning that moves beyond passive reception of moral information. The International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research has documented that the application of religious ethical learning models in Indonesian junior high schools significantly improved students' religious ethical character by engaging the processes of knowing, doing, and being (Subiyantoro, 2022).

Curriculum integration also requires attention to the hidden curriculum the implicit values communicated through classroom routines, teacher-student relationships, and school culture. Research consistently shows that students learn moral values as much from how they are taught as from what they are taught (Suleymanova, 2015). A PAI classroom in which the teacher models patience, fairness, and respect communicates Islamic values far more powerfully than one in which these values are merely discussed as abstract principles. Curriculum reconstruction must therefore address both formal (explicit) and informal (implicit) dimensions of the PAI learning environment.

Teacher Role Modeling as Moral Agency

Perhaps the most consistently emphasized factor in PAI-based character formation is the role of the teacher as a moral exemplar. The concept of *uswah hasanah* (beautiful example), derived from the Quranic description of the Prophet Muhammad as a 'beautiful example' (Quran 33:21), establishes the teacher's personal character as a primary pedagogical instrument. In the Islamic educational tradition, teaching is inseparable from being: the teacher communicates values not only through instruction but through every dimension of their conduct, demeanor, and relationship with students.

Contemporary research on PAI teacher effectiveness confirms the enduring importance of this classical insight. Studies in Indonesian educational contexts have consistently found that students' moral development is significantly influenced by their perception of their PAI teacher's personal integrity and moral exemplariness. Abdullah (2021) documented that students who perceived their PAI teachers as embodying Islamic values patience, honesty, compassion showed significantly higher levels of value internalization than those who perceived their teachers as primarily knowledge transmitters. This finding aligns with Pring's (2019) argument that education is fundamentally a moral practice in which the character of the educator is itself pedagogical.

The implications for teacher preparation and professional development are substantial. If PAI's effectiveness as a character-formation instrument is critically dependent on teacher modeling, then teacher education programs must prioritize the moral and spiritual formation of pre-service teachers alongside their academic and pedagogical preparation. This requires a reconceptualization of PAI teacher education that moves beyond competency-based frameworks to include attention to *tarbiyah al-rub* (spiritual formation) and *tazkiyat al-nafs* (soul purification) as dimensions of professional development. Educational Sciences (MDPI) has published recent scholarship emphasizing that Islamic teacher education must address spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions rooted in Islamic principles a challenge that existing teacher education programs have yet to fully meet.

Contextual and Reflective Value-Based Learning

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers a particularly promising framework for PAI-based character formation because it situates learning in the concrete realities of students' lives, making Islamic values personally relevant rather than abstractly normative. In contextual PAI instruction, for example, the study of zakat al-mal (obligatory almsgiving) is connected to contemporary poverty and social justice issues in students' communities; the study of *amanah* (trustworthiness) is linked to real-world examples of institutional corruption and its consequences; and the study of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) is grounded in students' experiences of community, conflict, and solidarity. This contextualizing move transforms moral instruction from abstract principle to lived reality.

The theoretical basis for contextual learning in PAI finds support in both Islamic educational philosophy and contemporary pedagogical research. Al-Ghazali's insistence on the integration of knowledge and practice that '*ilm* without '*amal* is like a body without a soul anticipates modern constructivist insights about the importance of meaningful, situated learning for genuine understanding. Contemporary educational research confirms that value-based contextual learning significantly enhances moral reasoning and behavioral change among adolescent students (Muhtifah et al., 2021). The IJLTER study on character education in Indonesian junior high schools during the pandemic era demonstrated that learning models emphasizing the progression from knowing to doing to being produced measurable improvements in students' religious ethical character.

Reflective learning practices complement contextual approaches by creating structured opportunities for students to examine their own character development against Islamic values benchmarks. Reflective journals, value-based discussions, portfolio assessments of character-related projects, and narrative autobiography exercises can all serve as instruments of moral self-awareness and growth. These practices operationalize the Islamic concept of *mubasabah* (moral self-accounting) a practice strongly recommended in prophetic tradition within formal educational settings, bridging the gap between formal religious instruction and students' inner moral lives.

Synergy of School, Family, and Community in Islamic Character Formation

Islamic character formation cannot be accomplished by school alone. The Islamic tradition has consistently emphasized the family as the primary site of moral formation the *madrasah al-ula* (first school) in which children receive their foundational moral and spiritual orientations through direct experience of parental love, discipline, and example. Research

consistently confirms that parental modeling of Islamic values and active parental involvement in religious education significantly enhance the effectiveness of PAI instruction in school (Syarifuddin et al., 2024). When school and family communicate consistent value frameworks, students experience moral coherence rather than the dissonance that can occur when school-taught values are not reinforced or are actively contradicted in the home environment.

The community dimension of Islamic character formation is equally important. Islamic social ethics is fundamentally communal: the concept of *amar ma'ruf naby munkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil) is a collective moral responsibility, not merely an individual one. Schools embedded in communities with strong Islamic moral cultures benefit from an environment in which students' classroom learning is continuously reinforced by community norms, religious practices, and social expectations. Conversely, schools in morally fragmented community environments face the challenge of forming character against the grain of dominant cultural influences a challenge that no school alone can overcome.

This ecological understanding of character formation suggests that effective PAI-based character education requires deliberate strategies for school-family-community partnership. Parent education programs that align family practices with PAI values; community service learning projects that connect classroom moral learning to neighborhood needs; and mosque-school partnerships that integrate Friday sermon content with PAI curriculum themes all exemplify possible strategies for creating the coherent moral ecosystem that genuine character formation requires. A recent Scopus-indexed study confirms that strong partnerships between schools and families in Islamic educational contexts produce significantly better outcomes in students' character development and religious practice (Syarifuddin et al., 2024).

Comparing Western and Islamic Character Education Frameworks

A comparative analysis of Western and Islamic frameworks for character education illuminates both the distinctive strengths of the Islamic approach and the areas in which productive dialogue is possible. Western character education theory, exemplified by Lickona's (1991) tripartite model of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, provides a useful analytical framework that can be mapped onto Islamic educational concepts. However, the Western framework operates within a largely secular moral epistemology that derives ethical norms from reason, social contract, and universal human values, without reference to divine revelation or accountability.

Islamic character education, by contrast, is fundamentally theocentric. Moral norms derive from divine revelation (the Quran and Sunnah) and are given cosmic significance by their connection to the Islamic doctrine of khalifah (human vicegerency): human beings are charged with the responsibility of maintaining justice and harmony on earth as God's trustees. This theological grounding gives Islamic character education a transcendent motivation that secular frameworks cannot provide: students are motivated to develop good character not merely because it benefits society or enhances personal flourishing, but because it fulfills their fundamental religious obligation and their relationship with God.

At the same time, the Islamic character education framework encompasses and transcends the Western model's emphasis on cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of moral development. The Islamic framework adds a spiritual dimension (*rubbiyyah*) the cultivation of God-consciousness (*taqwa*) through worship, dhikr, and reflection that is absent from secular character education theories. This spiritual dimension is not an optional addition to Islamic character education but its very foundation: without *taqwa*, moral behavior risks becoming merely social conformism rather than genuine virtue. The integration of these dimensions cognitive, affective, behavioral, and spiritual constitutes the comprehensive character ideal (*akhlaq al-karimah*) that PAI is called to cultivate.

A Three-Dimensional Model for Islamic Character Strengthening Through PAI

Drawing on the foregoing analysis, this study proposes a three-dimensional model for the conceptual reconstruction of PAI-based Islamic character formation. This model is intended to provide educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers with an integrative framework that is simultaneously grounded in classical Islamic educational philosophy, responsive to contemporary pedagogical research, and aligned with national character education policy.

The first dimension is philosophical, establishing the foundational principles of PAI-based character education. The philosophical foundation is tawhid the affirmation of God's unity and sovereignty over all aspects of existence. All character values cultivated through PAI must ultimately be traceable to their divine source and their relationship to the human being's status as khalifah (God's vicegerent) on earth. This tawhidic foundation integrates moral, spiritual, and social dimensions of character into a unified vision of human excellence, preventing the fragmentation of character education into disconnected skills or virtues. It also provides the motivational foundation for sustained moral development: students who understand their character formation as a form of worship (*ibadah*) are equipped with intrinsic moral motivation that transcends external reward and punishment.

The second dimension is pedagogical, specifying the instructional approaches through which Islamic character formation is most effectively pursued. Effective PAI pedagogy must emphasize internalization (through reflective and affective engagement), habituation (through consistent practice and community reinforcement), and exemplariness (through teacher modeling and mentoring). Instructional methods should be active, contextual, and reflective, connecting Islamic values to students' lived realities and providing structured opportunities for moral practice. Assessment should attend to character development alongside academic knowledge, employing authentic assessment instruments that capture students' moral reasoning, affective engagement, and behavioral expressions of Islamic values.

The third dimension is sociological, recognizing that character formation is fundamentally a social and communal process rather than merely an individual one. The effective school, from this perspective, functions as a community of values (*jam'iyat al-qiyam*) in which all stakeholders teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students collectively embody and communicate the Islamic values that PAI seeks to cultivate. This sociological dimension demands intentional attention to school culture, family-school partnerships, and community-school relationships as dimensions of the character formation environment. It

also situates PAI-based character education within the broader social mission of Islamic education as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all creation) a mission that calls Islamic educational institutions to contribute to social justice, intercultural harmony, and human flourishing beyond the walls of the school.

The three dimensions of this model philosophical, pedagogical, and sociological are mutually reinforcing. The philosophical foundation provides the values and motivations that pedagogical approaches seek to cultivate; the pedagogical dimension operationalizes the philosophical vision in concrete learning experiences; and the sociological dimension sustains and contextualizes the pedagogical process within a supportive moral community. Together, they constitute a comprehensive framework for PAI-based Islamic character formation that is both theoretically grounded and practically actionable.

CONCLUSION

This critical literature review has demonstrated that the reconstruction of Islamic character education through PAI is both theoretically compelling and practically urgent. PAI possesses a unique combination of theological depth, pedagogical richness, and cultural embeddedness that positions it as the primary instrument of Islamic character formation in Indonesian educational institutions. The classical Islamic educational tradition, particularly the works of Ibn Miskawaih, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina, provides enduring philosophical foundations for character formation that contemporary scholarship has productively developed and contextualized.

The three pillars of effective PAI-based character education, integration of moral values in curriculum and instruction, teacher role modeling as moral agency, and value-based contextual learning require deliberate and sustained attention from educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. Beyond these pedagogical pillars, the ecological dimension of character formation the school-family-community partnership must be recognized as a structural precondition for PAI's effectiveness as a character-formation instrument.

The three-dimensional model proposed in this study philosophical, pedagogical, and sociological offers an integrative framework for the reconceptualization of PAI-based Islamic character formation. This model bridges classical Islamic educational theory, contemporary pedagogical research, and national policy frameworks in a way that is both academically rigorous and practically applicable. Future research should empirically test this model in diverse Indonesian school contexts, including *pesantren*-based institutions and mainstream public schools, to assess its effectiveness and identify contextual adaptations. Particular attention should be given to the development of authentic assessment instruments for Islamic character formation and to teacher professional development programs that integrate spiritual formation with pedagogical training.

Ultimately, the reconstruction of PAI as an instrument of Islamic character formation serves the deepest aspirations of Indonesian Islamic education: the formation of human beings who are faithful, pious, and morally excellent, and who contribute to the realization of a just, harmonious, and compassionate society in accordance with the Islamic ideal of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdullah, A. (2021). Keteladanan guru dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di sekolah menengah. *Jurnal Tarbawi*, 18(2), 112–124.
- Adlini, M. N., Dinda, A. H., Yulinda, S., Chotimah, O., & Merliyana, S. J. (2022). Metode penelitian kualitatif studi pustaka. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(1), 974–980. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3394>
- Al-Ghazali, A. H. M. (n.d.). *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Vols. 1–4). Dār al-Ma'rifah.
- Arif, M., Chapakiya, S., & Dewi, A. Y. (2024). Character education in Indonesia Islamic elementary schools: A systematic literature review (2014–2024). *J-PAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.18860/jpai.v11i1.29301>
- Gunawan, G., Yanti, P. R., & Nelson, N. (2023). Methods for achieving cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in Islamic religious education learning: A study at Senior High School in Rejang Lebong. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i1.2793>
- Hanifansyah, N., Arifin, A., Zulpina, Z., Mahmudah, M., & Syaheed, S. M. (2025). Religious drama controversy: The impact of *Bidaah* on Islamic pedagogy and media literacy. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 49(2). <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v49i2.1407>
- Halstead, J. M. (2007). Islamic values: A distinctive framework for moral education? *Journal of Moral Education*, 36(3), 283–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240701643330>
- Ibn Miskawayh, A. ibn M. (1968). *The refinement of character: A translation from the Arabic of Ahmad Ibn Mubammad Miskawayh's Tahdhib al-Akhlāq* (C. K. Zurayk, Trans.). American University of Beirut.
- Ibn Sina, A. A. al-H. ibn A. ibn H. (2007). *Kitāb al-Siyāsah*. Syabakah al-Fikr.
- Kemendikbud. (2017). *Panduan penguatan pendidikan karakter*. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Khasanah, U. (2024). Islamic education as a foundation of character: A case study of the formation of noble morals in students. *JIE (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 8(2), 294–309. <https://doi.org/10.52615/jie.v8i2.541>
- Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Ma'arif, M. A., Muqorrobin, F. M., Kartiko, A., Sirojuddin, A., & Rofiq, A. (2024). Developing Islamic character values through student habituation. *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(1), 337–349. <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v8i1.501>
- Maksudin. (2023). Uncovering the moral nexus: Morality, akhlaq, and character in Islamic Religious Education: A comprehensive conceptual analysis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 20(1), 119–131. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i1.7028>
- Masturin, M. (2023). Development of Islamic religious education materials based on religious moderation in forming student character. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 3(4), 346–355. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v3i4.310>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Muhtar, T., Supriyadi, T., Lengkana, A. S., & Cukarso, S. H. I. (2021). Character education in physical education learning model: A bibliometric study on 2011–2020 Scopus database. *International Journal of Human Movement and Sports Sciences*, 9(6), 1189–1203. <https://doi.org/10.13189/saj.2021.090613>
- Muhtifah, L., Prasojo, Z. H., Sappe, S., & Elmansyah, E. (2021). The theology of Islamic moderation education in Singkawang, Indonesia: The city of tolerance. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 77(4). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6552>
- Nasrullah, A., Salam DZ, A., Haedari, A., & Karim, A. (2023). The role of Islamic religious education teachers in character education: A qualitative study at Mutiara Hikmah Vocational High School (SMK). *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(1), 145–154. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2023.121.145-154>
- Pring, R. (2019). Development of moral education in the UAE: Lessons to be learned. *Oxford Review of Education*, 45(3), 297–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2018.1502169>
- Rachman, A., Kawakip, A. N., Fadhillah, F., Saputra, N., & Zulkifli, Z. (2023). Building religious character of students in madrasah through moral learning. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(1), 78–94. <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v4i1.261>
- Saepudin, A. (2024). Holistic Islamic education: Assessing the impact of integrative curricula on moral and spiritual development in secondary schools. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 6(1), 1072–1083. <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijsoc>
- Subiyantoro. (2022). Effectiveness of countering radicalism through character education. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 28(3), 97–108. <https://doi.org/10.17762/kuey.v28i03.397>
- Sugiarti, R., & Ozay, M. (2022). Integration of moderate Islamic values in character education at Anak Saleh Elementary School Malang. *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism*, 4(2), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v4i2.179>
- Suleymanova, D. (2015). Islam as moral education: Madrasa courses and contestation of the secular in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia. *Religion, State and Society*, 43(2), 150–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2015.1056639>
- Syarifuddin, S., Tahir, A., Abidin, K., & Syarifuddin, F. (2024). School and family partnerships in Islamic education. *Samarah*, 8(3), 1476–1502. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v8i3.22584>