



## **Literature Review: The Contribution of The Concepts Of *Tarbiyah*, *Ta'lim*, and *Ta'dīb* to the Character Formation of Students in the Contemporary Era**

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### ABSTRACT

This study is a systematic literature review that aims to analyze the contribution of the concepts of tarbiyah, ta'lim, and ta'dīb to character formation in students during the contemporary era. The focus lies on how these three concepts can be integrated as the main pillars of Islamic education, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions holistically. Data were obtained through the selection of scholarly articles indexed in Google Scholar and Scopus from 2014–2024, analyzed using a thematic approach based on the PRISMA protocol. The findings indicate that tarbiyah functions as holistic personality development, ta'lim serves as the transmission of value-laden knowledge, and ta'dīb plays a crucial role in instilling adab and ethics. When implemented integratively, these three elements can address the challenges of Islamic education in the digital era and strengthen the development of students' religious, ethical, and adaptive character. This study emphasizes the need for an Islamic education framework that focuses not only on knowledge acquisition but also on shaping the complete human being (insān kāmil) through the harmony of intellect, heart, and action.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The character crisis among students has become one of the major challenges in contemporary Islamic education, growing increasingly complex in the era of globalization and digitalization. Phenomena such as a lack of honesty, weak social responsibility, and rising intolerance reflect the failure of educational systems to shape holistic human beings. Education tends to focus solely on the cognitive dimension, neglecting the development of affective and spiritual aspects. In this context, Islamic education faces a significant challenge—not only to produce intelligent individuals but also to cultivate civilized human beings. This perspective aligns with Malik Bennabi's critique that the Muslim community is experiencing a “post-civilizational crisis” due to its neglect of spiritual personality formation. Therefore, an educational approach that can respond to this value crisis is urgently needed—one that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and ethical dimensions in a comprehensive manner (Al-Attas, 1980; Bennabi, 1991).

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In classical Islamic literature, education is not merely understood as the transmission of knowledge, but as a process of human perfection (Ibn Sīnā, in Azra, 2012). *Tarbiyah* is defined as the nurturing of human nature (*fitrah*) toward maturity; *Ta 'līm* as the systematic teaching of knowledge; and *Ta 'dīb* as the internalization of values and proper conduct within both social and spiritual structures (Al-Ghazālī, 2000; Al-Attas, 1991). However, in contemporary Islamic educational practice, these three concepts are often applied in a disproportionate and disconnected manner. Studies by Hashim (2005) and Sahin (2018) do emphasize the importance of morality and ethics in Islamic education, yet they fall short of presenting a comprehensive conceptual integration of the three. Meanwhile, research by Ibda & Wijayanti (2023) reveals that Islamic educational approaches today tend to be ceremonial in nature and fail to deeply address character transformation. This indicates a conceptual gap that calls for a new integrative framework.

Amid the strong currents of globalization and digitalization, Islamic Religious Education, for instance, faces significant challenges in fulfilling its role as an instrument of character formation. Several studies reveal that although character education has been mainstreamed within the national education system, its implementation in PAI learning remains suboptimal—both conceptually and methodologically (Ibda & Wijayanti, 2023). Technological advancements also demand that PAI learning undergo digital transformation, requiring innovative media and value-based approaches that align with the context of today's generation (Huda, Arif, Rahim, & Anshari, 2024). In this context, value-based PAI instruction has shown a significant impact on enhancing ethical awareness, religiosity, and students' social skills (Huda, Shahrill, & Nasir, 2021; Imron et al., 2025). However, a gap still exists between the ideal goals of Islamic education and its practical implementation in the field—particularly in terms of integrating spiritual and social values into a curriculum that tends to be formal and academic in nature (Nasution & Rahayu, 2020; Pitri et al., 2025).

In line with this, contemporary theoretical studies highlight the importance of epistemological reconstruction in Islamic education—one that does not rely solely on *ta 'līm* as the process of knowledge transmission, but is also accompanied by *tarbiyah* as the nurturing of human nature, and *ta 'dīb* as the internalization of proper conduct (*adab*) (Zahrah et al., 2024; Sulwana et al., 2025). This integrative approach is considered capable of addressing the problem of value disorientation in Islamic education and overcoming the dichotomy between knowledge and morality. Husain & Ulum (2020) emphasize that the integration of knowledge and values within the Islamic education system offers a solution to contemporary problems arising from the fragmentation of knowledge and the secularization of education. In practice, the integration of Islamic values through school culture has also proven effective in instilling character holistically, as demonstrated by Zakiyah et al. (2024) and Rokhman et al. (2023) in the context of modern Islamic schools. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate an approach that is not only philosophical but also practical in realizing the primary goal of Islamic education, as emphasized by Hidayat (2020)—namely, to shape a complete human being in harmony with intellect, heart, and action.

This paper aims to reexamine the concepts of *Tarbiyah*, *Ta 'līm*, and *Ta 'dīb* from the perspective of Islamic character education and to propose an integrative approach that is both theologically grounded and contextually relevant. The integration of these three concepts is believed to provide a foundational framework for Islamic education—one that not only imparts knowledge but also shapes the moral character and *adab* of students. This is particularly important considering that one of the primary goals of Islamic education is the formation of *insān kāmil*, the complete human being who embodies a balance of intellect, soul, and action. This study seeks to strengthen both the theoretical and practical foundations of Islamic

education, asserting that without *Ta‘dīb* to frame *Tarbiyah* and *Ta‘līm*, Islamic education risks losing its direction and identity (Sulwana, 2025; Fatimah, 2023; Hidayat, 2020; Al-Attas, 1980; Azra, 2012).

The main argument of this paper is that Islamic-based character education must be integrative—it is not sufficient to focus solely on knowledge acquisition (*ta‘līm*) or general personal development (*tarbiyah*); rather, it must be grounded in the cultivation of *adab* (*ta‘dīb*). Without *adab*, the knowledge transmitted tends to become value-neutral and prone to misuse. Therefore, this paper not only seeks to provide a descriptive explanation but also aims to conceptually demonstrate that the integrated framework of *Tarbiyah–Ta‘līm–Ta‘dīb* is capable of shaping learners who are spiritually, ethically, and intellectually whole. In this way, the paper contributes to enriching the discourse on Islamic character education through a framework rooted in classical Islamic scholarship while remaining relevant to the needs of contemporary education.

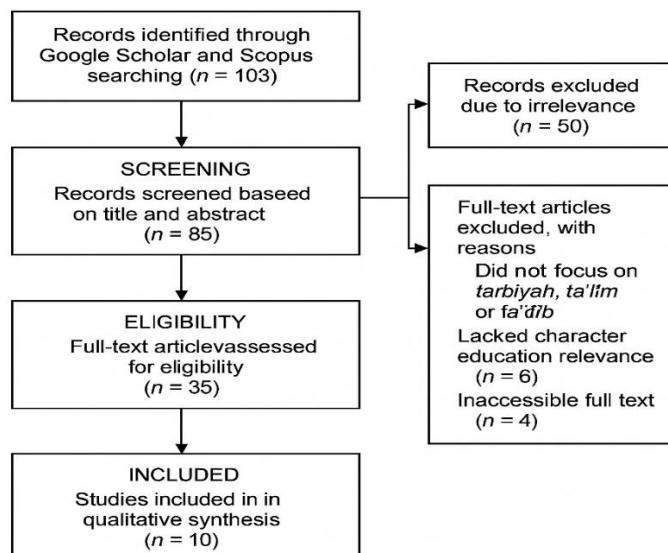
## METHOD

### Data Source

This research is a systematic literature review that focuses on the contribution of the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta‘līm*, and *ta‘dīb* to the character formation of students in the contemporary era. The data sources were obtained from scholarly articles published in reputable journals indexed by Google Scholar and Scopus within the period of 2014–2024. The reviewed articles include publications in both Indonesian and English that are relevant to the theme of Islamic character education.

### Article Search and Selection Procedure

The search process was conducted using keywords such as “*tarbiyah*,” “*ta‘līm*,” “*ta‘dīb*,” “*Islamic education*,” “*character education*,” and “*moral formation*,” combined with Boolean operators (“AND,” “OR”) to enhance the relevance of the results. The selection followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol, consisting of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. From an initial search result of 103 articles, only 10 articles met the inclusion criteria.



**Figure 1. Flow diagram of article selection**

The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) Articles that explicitly discuss the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'līm*, and/or *ta'dīb* in the context of character education; (2) Articles based on conceptual, philosophical, or empirical approaches in the field of Islamic education; (3) Articles published between 2014 and 2024 and available in full-text access. The exclusion criteria included articles that only discuss character education in general without linking it to the three core concepts.

### **Data Analysis**

All selected articles were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic approach. The researcher categorized the findings into three main themes: (1) The contribution of *tarbiyah* to character formation, (2) The role of *ta'līm* in transmitting moral values, and (3) The urgency of *ta'dīb* in instilling *adab* as the foundation of character. The data were analyzed using a literature review matrix that recorded the author, year, research method, and thematic contribution to the research topic.

## **RESULTS**

The literature review of the 10 systematically selected articles reveals that the integration of *tarbiyah*, *ta'līm*, and *ta'dīb* values within the education system faces several challenges, yet it still holds significant potential in strengthening students' character.

## **DISCUSSION**

The review of ten literature articles reveals that the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'līm*, and *ta'dīb* form the foundational pillars of Islamic education, complementing one another in shaping students' character. These three concepts play distinct yet synergistic roles: *tarbiyah* as holistic development, *ta'līm* as the transmission of value-laden knowledge, and *ta'dīb* as the process of instilling *adab* and morality. A summary of the findings from these articles is presented in Table 1 below:

**Tabel 1. Summary of the Reviewed Literature**

No	Author(s) (Year)	Methodology	Key Contribution
1	Syarif (2023)	Conference Proceeding: AICIEL	Defines <i>tarbiyah</i> , <i>ta'līm</i> , and <i>ta'dīb</i> as foundational concepts in character education
2	Fakhrurrozi et al. (2023)	Qualitative-descriptive	Effective integration of Islamic <i>tarbiyah</i> in building students' social character
3	Arif et al. (2024)	Systematic Literature Review (2014–2024)	The role of <i>tarbiyah</i> and mentoring in character education at the elementary (MI) level
4	Hidayat & Bujuri (2020)	Case Study	Implementation of character values through an integrated pesantren curriculum
5	Ramatni et al. (2023)	Literature Review	Management of Islamic character learning based on <i>adab</i> and <i>tarbiyah</i> principles
6	Kulsum & Muhid (2022); Qowim et al. (2024)	Literature & analytical	Integration of moral values into the digital/modern curriculum
7	Karimullah (2023)	Theoretical analysis	A Sufi perspective on Islamic character education in the modern era
8	Taisir et al. (2025)	Integrative model (khidmah + tarbiyah)	Combines social service and character education in pesantren-based settings

9	Al-Hayat (2023)	Literature review & conceptual	Islamic character education in the Industry 5.0 era through the integration of classical Islamic values
10	Komalasari & Yakubu (2023)	Descriptive-analytical	Islamic religious education as the primary instrument in forming students' character

As shown in Table 1, the *tarbiyah* approach is consistently portrayed as the central pillar in comprehensive character development. Syarif (2023) asserts that the three concepts are not separate entities but are mutually reinforcing. This is supported by Fakhrurrozi et al. (2023), who demonstrate the effectiveness of *tarbiyah Islamiyah* in shaping students' social character within Islamic educational institutions.

Furthermore, the dimension of *ta 'līm* is clarified through the study by Arif et al. (2024), which highlights the importance of mentoring in primary education as an effective means of delivering value-based knowledge. Meanwhile, *ta 'dīb* holds a key position in shaping students' *adab* and ethics, as illustrated in the studies by Ramatni et al. (2023) and Karimullah (2023). These two articles emphasize that the success of character education cannot rely solely on cognitive development; it must be accompanied by continuous cultivation of *adab*.

There is also an integration of classical values into modern contexts. For instance, Kulsum & Muhid (2022) and Qowim et al. (2024) stress the importance of incorporating Islamic moral values into digitally-based curricula. Al-Hayat (2023) conceptually aligns *tarbiyah*, *ta 'līm*, and *ta 'dīb* with the challenges of education in the era of Industry 5.0.

In addition, from an institutional perspective, studies from UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Lampung (2020) highlight the success of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in implementing Islamic character values into integrated curricula. Komalasari & Yakubu (2023) further affirm that Islamic religious education remains a primary vehicle for character formation when contextualized appropriately.

Thus, this discussion illustrates that integrative Islamic character education—combining *tarbiyah* as personality development, *ta 'līm* as the transmission of value-laden knowledge, and *ta 'dīb* as the habituation of *adab*—remains highly relevant for shaping students who are religious, ethical, and adaptable to the changing times.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the integration of the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta 'līm*, and *ta 'dīb* constitutes a fundamental pillar of Islamic character education that remains highly relevant to the challenges of the contemporary era. *Tarbiyah* emphasizes the holistic development of personal character, *ta 'līm* focuses on the transmission of knowledge infused with values, while *ta 'dīb* serves as the foundation for instilling ethics, manners, and moral integrity. These three concepts complement one another in shaping the *insān kāmil*—a complete human being who embodies a balance of intellectual capacity, spiritual depth, and ethical conduct. This integrative approach offers a viable solution to the current value crisis in modern Islamic education and serves to bridge the gap between educational idealism and practical implementation in the field.

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