

**Epistemology, Ontology, And Axiology In Islamic Education:
A Philosophical Study Of The Nature Of Muslim Education**

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Abstract

This study aims to philosophically analyze the relationship between epistemology, ontology, and axiology in Islamic education as a comprehensive paradigm for building a holistic Muslim education system. The study employs a library research method using philosophical, conceptual, and historical approaches. Data were collected through a documentary study of primary sources, including the Qur'an, hadith, and works by prominent figures in Islamic education, as well as secondary sources such as reputable scholarly articles, books, conference proceedings, and relevant dissertations. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, philosophical analysis, comparative analysis, and synthetic analysis. The research findings indicate that the epistemology of Islamic education is grounded in the integration of revelation, reason, the senses, and intuition as complementary sources of knowledge. This epistemological foundation forms the ontology of Islamic education, which views human beings as 'abd Allāh and khalīfah fī al-ard, while knowledge is understood as a divine trust aimed at shaping the insān kāmil. Furthermore, this ontology gives rise to an educational axiology oriented toward adab education, character education, and the development of civilization. The novelty of this study lies in the formulation of an integrative model that positions epistemology as the foundation of ontology and ontology as the basis of the axiology of Islamic education, thereby producing a tauhid-based paradigm of Islamic education relevant to the development of curriculum, instruction, and educational policy in the Society 5.0 era.

Keywords: *Islamic education, Educational environment, Qur'an and Hadith, Integrative epistemology, Society 5.0.*

A. Introduction

Islamic education, within the context of the academic system, is built upon a philosophical foundation that serves as the basis for formulating the goals or orientation of educational values. The philosophy of Islamic education occupies a strategic position in building an integrated and sustainable Islamic education system amid the tide of educational modernization, serving as a guide so that all processes in education can direct the formation of al-Insan al-Kamil, while remaining within its normative boundaries and epistemological identity.¹

Conceptually, the philosophy of Islamic education rests on three main pillars: epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Epistemology addresses the sources and methods of acquiring knowledge, which, from an Islamic perspective, are rooted in revelation, reason, and empirical experience. Ontology examines the nature of reality, including the nature of human beings as subjects of education who possess both physical and spiritual dimensions. Meanwhile, axiology focuses on the values and goals of education, namely the development of character and morality in harmony with Islamic teachings. These three aspects are interrelated and form a unified paradigm in Islamic education.²

The urgency of studying epistemology, ontology, and axiology in Islamic education is increasingly relevant amid contemporary challenges marked by a moral crisis, a loss of moral compass, and the dominance of secular educational paradigms. Education that emphasizes only cognitive aspects without being supported by a strong ontological and axiological foundation tends to produce individuals who are intellectually intelligent but lacking in spiritual and moral strength. Therefore, the integration of these three philosophical dimensions is essential to ensure that Islamic education not only imparts knowledge but also shapes well-rounded personalities with noble character.³

Furthermore, the study of the philosophy of Islamic education makes a significant contribution to building a robust theoretical framework for the development of an Islamic education system that remains relevant to the changing times. Through a philosophical approach, Islamic education can formulate a paradigm that is oriented not only toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward the transformation of values and the shaping of civilization. This demonstrates that the philosophy of Islamic education is not

¹ Andre Bahrudin et al., "Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi," *Jurnal Ilmiah Dikdaya*, 2025.

² Muhammad Qadafi et al., "Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Ontologi, Epistemologi dan Aksiologi," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Kebudayaan dan Agama*, 2024.

³ Rahmaniah et al., "Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi dalam Filsafat Islam sebagai Fondasi Pendidikan Moral," *Journal Sains Student Research*, 2025.

merely abstract but has practical implications for curriculum design, teaching methods, and educational policy.

Thus, the study of epistemology, ontology, and axiology in Islamic education is crucial as a conceptual foundation for building an integral educational system. The integration of these three aspects enables the creation of an education system that is not only oriented toward the mastery of knowledge but also toward the development of divine and humanistic values. Consequently, this research is essential for an in-depth examination of the role of philosophy in Islamic education, with the aim of producing a holistic, integrative educational paradigm oriented toward the formation of individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and of noble character.

B. Methods

This study employs a library research approach aimed at conducting an in-depth examination of the epistemological, ontological, and axiological concepts of Islamic education through a review of various relevant scholarly sources. A literature review was chosen because the objects of study consist of ideas, concepts, theories, and philosophical thoughts found in both classical and contemporary literature; thus, the analysis is based on data derived from written documents without conducting field research. The approaches used include a philosophical approach to examine the nature of knowledge, reality, and values in Islamic education; a conceptual approach to examine key concepts regarding epistemology, ontology, and axiology based on the thoughts of prominent figures in Islamic education; and a historical approach to understand the development of Islamic educational philosophy from the classical to the contemporary period.⁴

Data collection was conducted through documentation, specifically by cataloging, classifying, and analyzing various scholarly documents related to the research focus. Primary data sources include the Qur'an, hadith, and the works of prominent figures in Islamic education such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, and Hasan Langgulung. Secondary data sources were obtained from scientific journal articles published in the last five years, books on the philosophy of Islamic education, seminar proceedings, dissertations, and other academic publications relevant to the research theme.⁵ Data analysis was conducted using content analysis to identify the main themes in the literature, which were then explored in greater depth through philosophical analysis to uncover the

⁴ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2023), 22–29.

⁵ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 145–168; Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, edisi revisi (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021), 247–264.

ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of the concept of Islamic education. Furthermore, comparative analysis was used to compare various figures' perspectives on the nature of Islamic education, which were then synthesized through a synthesis analysis to arrive at a comprehensive conceptual framework regarding the philosophy of Islamic education as the foundation for the development of Muslim education in the contemporary era.⁶

C. Results

1. The Nature of Islamic Philosophy of Education

Islamic philosophy of education is a branch of philosophy that critically, systematically, and thoroughly examines the nature of education based on the Islamic worldview, which is rooted in the Qur'an, the hadith, and the thought of Muslim scholars and philosophers. This field of study not only addresses conceptual issues regarding the goals, educators, learners, curriculum, methods, and evaluation of education, but also examines the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations that underpin the practice of Islamic education.⁷ Therefore, the scope of the philosophy of Islamic education encompasses discussions on the nature of human beings as the subjects of education, the nature of knowledge, the goals of education, educational values, the learning process, the relationship between revelation and reason, and the relevance of Islamic education in addressing the challenges of social change and contemporary scientific developments.⁸

The primary objective of the philosophy of Islamic education is to establish a conceptual framework for education capable of developing the full potential of the human being (*insān kāmil*), thereby fostering individuals who are faithful, God-fearing, of noble character, knowledgeable, and capable of fulfilling their roles as servants of Allah (*'abd Allāh*) and vicegerents on earth (*khalīfah fi al-ard*). Thus, Islamic education is not only oriented toward the attainment of intellectual intelligence but also toward the balanced cultivation of spiritual, moral, and social development, as well as a sense of humanitarian responsibility.⁹

From an Islamic perspective, the essence of humanity is viewed as a creation of Allah the Almighty that possesses the mutually integrated dimensions of the physical body, intellect, soul, heart, and innate nature (*fitrah*). The Qur'an describes human beings as creatures created in the best of forms (*ahsani taqwīm*) and

⁶ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2019), 24–38; Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2022), 41–60.

⁷ Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2022), 12–24.

⁸ Hasan Langgulung, *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al Husna, 2020), 35–58; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2021), 1–18.

⁹ Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan* (Herndon, VA: IIIT, 2020), 15–39.

endowed with the faculties of hearing, sight, and the heart as instruments for acquiring knowledge and fulfilling the trust of khilafah.¹⁰

Therefore, the philosophy of Islamic education views human beings as multidimensional beings who possess the freedom to develop their potential through an educational process grounded in the values of tawhid, so that all educational activities are directed toward the attainment of happiness in this world and the hereafter (*sa'ādah al-dārayn*).¹¹

2. The Epistemology of Islamic Education

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of knowledge, the sources of knowledge, the methods of acquiring knowledge, and the criteria for truth in a given field of study. From an Islamic perspective, epistemology does not rely solely on rationality and empiricism as developed in the Western philosophical tradition, but is built upon the paradigm of tawhid, which integrates revelation, reason, empirical experience, and spiritual intuition as a single, mutually complementary whole. Revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah) is positioned as an absolute source of knowledge and serves as the normative foundation for all scholarly activity; reason functions as an instrument for critical, analytical, and argumentative thinking in understanding reality; the senses serve as a means of acquiring empirical knowledge through observation of the universe (*āyāt kauniyyah*); while intuition (*kasyf* or *dzauq*) is knowledge obtained through the purification of the soul and spiritual experiences developed within the Sufi tradition.¹²

Based on these sources, the Islamic intellectual tradition has produced three primary methods for acquiring knowledge: *bayānī*, *burhānī*, and *'irfānī*. The *bayānī* method emphasizes the interpretation of revealed texts through a linguistic approach and the authority of the text; the *burhānī* method employs logical demonstration, rationality, and empirical proof; whereas the *'irfānī* method emphasizes inner experience, intuition, and spiritual purification as the path to acquiring knowledge.

Recent studies indicate that these three methods are not mutually exclusive systems but rather form an integrative Islamic epistemological framework capable of producing a comprehensive understanding of reality.¹³ On this basis, the integration of revelation and reason becomes the defining characteristic of

¹⁰ Al-Qur'an, QS. At-Tin [95]: 4; QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30; QS. An-Nahl [16]: 78.

¹¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, 19–34; Hasan Langgulong, *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam*, 71–96.

¹² Frida Rohmatika, Eva Dewi, dan Afini Nurul Hidayah, “Epistemologi dalam Konsep Islam: Epistemologi Bayani, Burhani, dan 'Irfani,” *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 2 (2025).

¹³ Fenny Erdiyani, Zainuddin Syarif, Mahfida Inayati, dan Eliyatul Fitriyah, “Integrasi Epistemologi

Islamic educational epistemology, as revelation provides value orientation and purpose, while reason develops scientific reasoning to actualize the messages of revelation in various spheres of life. This paradigm simultaneously critiques the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge which emerged as a legacy of colonialism and the dualism of modern education. From an Islamic perspective, all knowledge originates from Allah, so the classification of knowledge should be functional, not dichotomous.¹⁴

Therefore, the epistemology of contemporary Islamic education is moving toward an integrative-interconnected paradigm that harmonizes revelation, rationality, empiricism, and spirituality in curriculum development, research, and learning. This paradigm not only produces students who excel academically but also possess moral integrity, spiritual depth, critical thinking skills, and the readiness to face global challenges without losing their Islamic identity.¹⁵

3. The Ontology of Islamic Education

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of reality or everything that “*exists*” (*being*); thus, in the context of Islamic education, ontology seeks to explain the nature of humanity, knowledge, education, educators, learners, and the learning process based on the Islamic worldview. The study of Islamic educational ontology is grounded in the tauhid paradigm, which views human beings as creatures of Allah SWT who hold a dual status: as *'abd Allāh* (servant of Allah) obligated to worship Him, and as *khalīfah fi al-ard* (steward on earth) tasked with fostering prosperity in accordance with divine values. This orientation guides the educational process toward shaping the *insān kāmil* that is, a complete human being who develops holistically across the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, and physical dimensions.¹⁶

The essence of knowledge in the ontology of Islamic education is understood as light (*nūr*) and a trust from Allah that must be utilized to achieve the common good; thus, knowledge is not value-neutral but is always bound by the ethics and responsibilities of monotheism. Therefore, the essence of education is not merely a process of knowledge transfer, but rather a process of *tarbiyah*, *ta'līm*, and *ta'dīb* aimed at

(Bayani, Burhani, dan Irfani) dalam Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer,” *Kartika: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 5, no. 3 (2025).

¹⁴ Astrid Veranita Indah, “Epistemologi Pendidikan Islam: Analisis Konseptual terhadap Integrasi Wahyu dan Akal dalam Pembentukan Karakter Muslim,” *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (2025).

¹⁵ Rumina, “Integrasi Epistemologi Islam dalam Metode Pendidikan: Pendekatan Filsafat Pendidikan Islam,” *Inovatif: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, Agama, dan Kebudayaan* 11, no. 2 (2025);”

¹⁶ Zikratul Fittri, “Kajian Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi dalam Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Suatu Analisis Aplikatif,” *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 3 (2025).

developing the full potential of human nature so that individuals can fulfill the functions of servitude and stewardship in a balanced manner.¹⁷

Within this framework, educators are viewed as *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, and *mu'addib* as well as moral role models tasked with guiding the development of students, while students are individuals endowed with innate nature and intellectual, spiritual, and moral potential that must be developed through a continuous educational process. Thus, the learning process in Islamic education is not only oriented toward the attainment of academic competencies but is also a process of value transformation, the internalization of adab, character building, and the actualization of human fitrah through a dialogical interaction between revelation, reason, experience, and exemplary conduct, thereby producing Muslim individuals who are knowledgeable, faithful, and of noble character in accordance with the goals of contemporary Islamic education.¹⁸

4. The Axiology of Islamic Education

Axiology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of values, ethics, morality, and the purpose of applying knowledge in human life. From the perspective of Islamic education, axiology places divine values as the foundation of all educational activities, so that knowledge is not only directed toward developing intellectual abilities but also toward shaping individuals who are faithful, God-fearing, and of noble character. Values in Islamic education are derived from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and human nature (fitrah), which give rise to the principles of honesty, justice, trustworthiness, responsibility, compassion, moderation (*wasatiyyah*), and the public good as the guiding principles of education. Based on these values, the goal of Islamic education is directed toward the formation of the *insān kāmil* that is, a person capable of integrating the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and professional dimensions into both their personal and communal lives.¹⁹

This is implemented through character education that instills the habit of doing good; etiquette education that fosters politeness and respect for knowledge, teachers, and fellow human beings; and civilization

¹⁷ Andre Bahrudin, Ismail Sukardi, Mardiah Astuti, Muhammad Bustomi, dan Afriansyah, "Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi," *Jurnal Ilmiah Dikdaya* 15, no. 1 (2025): 44–51.

¹⁸ Nanang Abdillah, "Studi Ontologi, Epistemologi dan Aksiologi dalam Filsafat Pendidikan Fikih," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 8, no. 3 (2024): 48974–48982.

¹⁹ Sehat Sultoni Dalimunthe, Siti Apriani, Tammat Harahap, dan Riska Rahmadani Nasution, "Aksiologi Pendidikan Islam," *Journal of Social and Economics Research* 7, no. 2 (2025).

education that builds a culture of knowledge, social responsibility, leadership, and the ability to adapt to changing times while remaining grounded in Islamic values.²⁰

Within the Islamic axiological paradigm, all learning activities are viewed as part of worship (*'ibādah*), because seeking knowledge is both a form of submission to Allah and a means of fulfilling the trust as His vicegerents on Earth. Therefore, Islamic education is not only oriented toward worldly success but also toward achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter (*sa'ādah al-dārayn*), so that every learning process must produce beneficial knowledge (*'ilm nāfi*) that is put into practice for the welfare of the individual, society, the nation, and human civilization.²¹

5. The Integration of Epistemology, Ontology, and Axiology in Islamic Education

The paradigm of Islamic philosophy of education is built upon the inseparable relationship between epistemology, ontology, and axiology as a unified system of thought grounded in tawhid. The epistemology of Islamic education explains that the sources of knowledge stem from revelation, reason, and the senses, which work integrally to understand reality. Revelation serves as the source of absolute truth that provides normative guidance, while reason functions to develop scientific reasoning and the senses serve as a means of obtaining empirical facts about the universe. These three sources of knowledge are then enriched by the intuitive (*irfānī*) dimension through the purification of the soul, thereby producing holistic knowledge. Recent studies indicate that contemporary Islamic education no longer views revelation and reason as two opposing poles, but rather as complementary epistemological foundations in building an integrative body of knowledge. This paradigm simultaneously serves as a critique of the tradition of scientific dichotomy that separates religious and secular knowledge, since all knowledge ultimately originates from Allah SWT and is directed toward the welfare of humanity.²²

This epistemological foundation further gives rise to an ontological perspective on the nature of humanity, knowledge, and education. From an Islamic perspective, human beings are understood as *'abd Allāh* servants of Allah who bear the responsibility of devotion to Him and simultaneously as *khalīfah fi al-ard* stewards on Earth tasked with building civilization through knowledge and righteous deeds. Thus, knowledge is not viewed merely as a value-neutral accumulation of information, but as a divine trust that

²⁰ Zainal Abidin, "Aksiologi Pendidikan Islam: Sumber, Hierarki, dan Implementasi Nilai dalam Tradisi Pesantren," *Pojok Guru: Jurnal Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan* (2025).

²¹ Zikratul Fitri, "Kajian Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi dalam Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Suatu Analisis Aplikatif," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 3 (2025).

²² Astrid Veranita Indah, "Epistemologi Pendidikan Islam: Analisis Konseptual terhadap Integrasi Wahyu dan Akal dalam Pembentukan Karakter Muslim," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2025): 118–132

must be used to realize the common good and social justice. This perspective implies that the essence of Islamic education lies in the processes of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib*, which aim to develop the full potential of the human being in an integral manner until the stage of *insān kāmil* is attained. Within this ontological paradigm, educators serve as *murabbi* and moral role models, while students are viewed as individuals possessing innate nature (*fitrah*) and intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social potential that must be developed through a dialogical, transformative, and values-based learning process. Various recent studies indicate that the reconstruction of the ontology of Islamic education serves as a crucial foundation for addressing the educational challenges of the 21st century, which demand a balance between academic competence, spirituality, and character.²³

The integration of epistemology and ontology culminates in the axiological dimension of Islamic education, which positions the goal of education as the formation of a civilized human being (*insān kāmil*) capable of bringing benefit to life. Therefore, the axiology of Islamic education does not stop at the attainment of academic competencies but is realized through *adab* education, character education, and civilization education as manifestations of the values of *tawhid* in real life. *Adab* education fosters proper relationships between human beings and Allah, fellow human beings, knowledge, and the universe; character education internalizes the values of honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, justice, moderation (*wasatīyyah*), and social concern; while civilization education guides students to develop knowledge, technology, and culture oriented toward the progress of humanity. Thus, the conceptual novelty (*novelty*) of this article lies in the formulation that the epistemology, ontology, and axiology of Islamic education are not three separate fields of study, but rather constitute a hierarchical and integrative philosophical system, in which epistemology (revelation–reason–senses) shapes ontology (the nature of humanity, knowledge, and education), while ontology serves as the foundation for the emergence of the axiology of Islamic education, which is oriented toward the formation of civilized, principled, and cultured individuals. This integrative model can serve as a conceptual paradigm in the development of Islamic education curricula, instruction, and policies in the Society 5.0 era without losing the epistemological identity of Islam rooted in *tawhid*.²⁴

D. Conclusion

This study affirms that epistemology, ontology, and axiology are three inseparable philosophical pillars in constructing an Islamic educational paradigm. The epistemology of Islamic education positions

²³ Andre Bahrudin, Ismail Sukardi, Mardiah Astuti, Muhammad Bustomi, dan Afryansyah, “Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Dikdaya* 15, no. 1 (2025): 44–51

²⁴ Sehat Sultoni Dalimunthe, Siti Apriani, Tammam Harahap, dan Riska Rahmadani Nasution, “Aksiologi Pendidikan Islam,” *Journal of Social and Economics Research* 7, no. 2 (2025): 1738–1750

revelation, reason, the senses, and intuition as complementary sources of knowledge within the framework of tawhid. This paradigm demonstrates that knowledge in Islam does not arise solely through rational or empirical approaches but also derives its normative legitimacy from revelation as the highest source of truth. Thus, Islamic education possesses an epistemological foundation distinct from secular paradigms because it harmoniously integrates the divine and scientific dimensions.

This epistemological foundation further shapes an ontological perspective on the nature of humanity, knowledge, and education. Human beings are understood as *'abd Allāh* and *khalīfah fi al-arḍ*, entrusted with the responsibility to develop their full innate potential through the educational process. Therefore, Islamic education functions not merely as a process of knowledge transfer, but as a process of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dīb* that holistically develops the spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions. The essence of knowledge is positioned as a trust that must be put into practice for the common good, while educators and students are equally engaged in the process of shaping civilized human beings.

Based on this ontological foundation, the axiology of Islamic education is directed toward establishing educational goals that produce not only intellectually intelligent individuals but also those who are faithful, possess noble character, and are capable of building civilization. The implementation of this axiology is realized through adab education, character education, and civilization education grounded in the values of tawhid. Education is understood as a form of worship and a means of achieving the common good, so that its ultimate orientation is the attainment of *sa'ādah al-dārayn* (happiness in this world and the hereafter). Thus, the success of Islamic education cannot be measured solely by academic achievement but must also be assessed through the moral and spiritual qualities, as well as the social contributions, of the students.

The primary contribution of this research is to offer a conceptual model that positions epistemology, ontology, and axiology as a hierarchical and integrative philosophical system. Epistemology (revelation–reason–senses–intuition) serves as the foundation for ontology (the nature of humanity, knowledge, and education), while ontology gives rise to axiology in the form of the goals of Islamic education, which are realized through education in adab, character, and civilization. This integrative model represents a novelty in this research and provides both theoretical and practical implications for the development of curricula, learning strategies, educational evaluation, and Islamic education policies that remain rooted in the tauhid paradigm while remaining adaptive to global challenges and societal developments in the Society 5.0 era.

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