

## **PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND THE URGENCY OF INTEGRATIVE TRANSFORMATION**

**S. Ahmad Al Hamid<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>, Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah, Pasuruan, Indonesia

Email: [albinhamid@alkhoirot.com](mailto:albinhamid@alkhoirot.com)

### **ABSTRAK**

Pendidikan Islam pada hakikatnya dirancang sebagai sistem holistik yang mengintegrasikan dimensi intelektual, spiritual, moral, dan sosial dalam membentuk manusia seutuhnya. Namun, dalam konteks kontemporer, pendidikan Islam menghadapi berbagai tantangan filosofis yang kompleks akibat pengaruh globalisasi, modernisasi, perkembangan teknologi, dan transformasi ideologi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis problematika filsafat pendidikan Islam dari perspektif ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis, serta menawarkan paradigma kontekstual dan integratif bagi pengembangannya di masa depan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis melalui wawancara mendalam, diskusi kelompok terarah, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan pendidik, peserta didik, dan pengambil kebijakan di bidang pendidikan Islam. Analisis data dilakukan dengan teknik analisis tematik dan triangulasi untuk menjamin kredibilitas dan kedalaman temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya beberapa persoalan utama, antara lain dualisme keilmuan, ketergantungan pada paradigma pendidikan Barat, disorientasi nilai, pemahaman yang kurang komprehensif terhadap pemikiran ulama klasik, serta kesenjangan antara teori dan praktik pendidikan. Selain itu, transformasi digital, faktor sosial-politik, serta dinamika antara tradisi dan modernitas turut memengaruhi arah pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya rekonstruksi filsafat pendidikan Islam berbasis integrasi, interkoneksi, dan kolaborasi ilmu guna mewujudkan pendidikan Islam yang transformatif, adaptif, dan relevan dengan tantangan global tanpa meninggalkan nilai-nilai etika dan spiritualitas.

**Kata kunci:** Filsafat Pendidikan Islam; problem filosofis; integrasi ilmu; transformasi pendidikan; pendidikan Islam kontekstual; karakter dan akhlak.

### **ABSTRACT**

*Islamic education is fundamentally designed as a holistic system that integrates intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions in shaping human beings. However, in contemporary contexts, Islamic education faces complex philosophical challenges influenced by globalization, modernization, technological advancement, and ideological transformation. This study aims to critically examine the philosophical problems in Islamic education from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives while proposing a contextual and integrative paradigm for future development. This research employs a qualitative phenomenological approach involving in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis with educators, students, and policymakers in Islamic education. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and triangulation to ensure credibility and depth. The findings reveal several major issues, including the dualism of knowledge, dependence on Western educational paradigms, value disorientation, misinterpretation of classical Islamic thinkers, and the gap between theory and practice in educational implementation. In addition, challenges related to digital transformation, socio-political factors, and the tension between tradition and modernity significantly influence the direction of Islamic education. The study highlights the importance of reconstructing Islamic educational philosophy based on integration, interconnection, and collaboration of knowledge. Such a paradigm emphasizes holistic human development, critical thinking, character formation, and contextual learning. This research contributes theoretically to the development of transformative and adaptive Islamic education capable of addressing contemporary global challenges while maintaining its ethical and spiritual foundations.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Educational Philosophy; philosophical problems; knowledge integration; educational transformation; contextual Islamic education; character and moral education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is an educational system that is not only oriented toward intellectual development but also encompasses the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of learners in a holistic manner. Since the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Islamic education has developed as a process of human formation grounded in the values of monotheism, morality, and social responsibility. In the history of Islamic civilization, education has functioned not merely as the transmission of knowledge but also as a means of character building, ethics, and social accountability. This indicates that Islamic education has an integral orientation that connects worldly and hereafter dimensions in human life (Al-Attas, 1991; Halstead, 2004).

Along with the development of time, Islamic education faces increasingly complex dynamics and challenges, particularly in responding to modernization, globalization, and the rapid advancement of science and technology. Rapid social changes have given rise to various philosophical problems related to the nature of human beings, educational goals, sources of knowledge, and the values that should be instilled in the educational process. In this context, philosophical studies become essential to understand the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of Islamic education so that it remains relevant and contextual (Nasr, 2001; Noddings, 2013).

Ontologically, Islamic education encounters fundamental issues regarding the concept of human beings as spiritual and social creatures. Many modern educational practices emphasize cognitive and technical skills while neglecting spiritual and moral aspects. This condition has the potential to produce generations who are intellectually competent but weak in integrity and character. In contrast, within the Islamic perspective, human beings are viewed as vicegerents (khalifah) on earth who carry moral and spiritual responsibilities in managing life (Al-Ghazali, 2010). From an epistemological perspective, Islamic education also faces challenges in integrating religious and general knowledge. The dualism of educational systems that has developed since the colonial era has created a dichotomy between Islamic sciences and modern sciences. This situation results in fragmentation of knowledge and imbalance in developing students' potential. Therefore, an integrative and interconnected approach is needed to build the epistemology of Islamic education that harmonizes revelation and reason as sources of knowledge (Iqbal, 1986; Huda, 2017).

Furthermore, axiologically, Islamic education is confronted with a crisis of value orientation. Many Islamic educational institutions experience a shift in purpose, from moral and character formation toward pragmatic goals such as academic achievement and labor market demands. This phenomenon reflects tensions between Islamic values and the

pressures of globalization and educational capitalism. If not addressed, such conditions may erode the identity and primary objectives of Islamic education as a means of forming the ideal human being (*insan kamil*) (Tilaar, 2012).

Moreover, dependence on Western educational theories and models without critical contextualization has become a significant philosophical problem. Many modern educational concepts are adopted directly without considering Islamic values, culture, and paradigms. In fact, Islam possesses a rich philosophical heritage in education that remains relevant for contemporary development. Therefore, philosophical reflection is necessary to construct an authentic and transformative framework of Islamic education (Azra, 2012; Sardar, 2009). In addition, the development of digital technology and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 presents new challenges for Islamic education. Digital transformation demands changes in learning paradigms, methods, and educational systems. However, this transformation also has the potential to generate moral crises, dehumanization, and value disorientation if not accompanied by strong philosophical and spiritual foundations. Therefore, Islamic education needs to reformulate its paradigm to integrate Islamic values with technological advancement critically and constructively (Hefner, 2019).

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that various problems in the implementation of Islamic education today require serious philosophical reflection. The issues of educational dualism, value crises, imbalance between worldly and spiritual aspects, and globalization challenges indicate the urgent need for a comprehensive philosophical reconstruction of Islamic education. Such studies are essential to identify root problems while formulating relevant and contextual approaches. Thus, this study aims to critically examine the philosophical problems in Islamic education from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. In addition, this research seeks to propose a paradigm of Islamic education that is capable of addressing contemporary challenges without losing its identity and fundamental Islamic values.

## **METHOD**

In this study, a qualitative approach with phenomenological analysis is employed. This approach is selected because it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how various philosophical problems in Islamic education are perceived by educators, students, and policymakers. Through this approach, the researcher is able to explore the meanings and subjective experiences encountered by individuals involved in the Islamic education system. Phenomenology is considered appropriate for uncovering lived experiences and understanding the essence of phenomena from the participants' perspectives (Creswell &

Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving various stakeholders, including teachers, university students, and academics with backgrounds in Islamic education. The interviews are carried out in a semi-structured manner, allowing participants the flexibility to express their views and experiences without being restricted by overly rigid questions. This strategy is expected to generate rich and diverse data that reflect the complexity of philosophical issues in Islamic education. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they enable deeper exploration while maintaining the research focus (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In addition, this study also involves document analysis, in which the researcher examines various documents, reports, and literature relevant to Islamic education. These include books, journal articles, and previous research discussing the philosophy of Islamic education and its contemporary challenges. Document analysis provides contextual understanding and supports the triangulation of findings, thereby enhancing the depth and credibility of qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). The data are analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, where the researcher identifies key themes emerging from the collected data. This process includes coding, categorizing themes, and interpreting the meanings of each identified theme. Thematic analysis is used because it allows flexibility in identifying patterns and constructing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The results of this analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of philosophical problems in Islamic education and their implications for educational practices.

Furthermore, this study employs data triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation is conducted by comparing data obtained from interviews, FGDs, and document analysis. Through this process, the researcher ensures that the findings are accurate, credible, and capable of presenting a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon studied. Triangulation is an essential strategy in qualitative research to strengthen trustworthiness and reduce bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Problems in the Philosophy of Islamic Education**

#### **The Dependence of Muslim Philosophers on Western Philosophy**

In the development of Islamic educational thought, there is a significant phenomenon of dependence on Western philosophy. This can be observed in the adoption of Western educational concepts by many Muslim thinkers without adequately considering local contexts

and underlying Islamic values. For instance, many Islamic universities in Muslim-majority countries have adopted educational curricula derived from Western models, which often neglect the holistic and integrative principles of Islamic education. According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, such dependence may lead to the loss of Islamic educational identity and create confusion among younger generations in understanding Islamic values as the foundation of education (Al-Attas, 1995).

Furthermore, this dependence is not only evident in curriculum development but also in teaching methods. Many Muslim educators remain trapped in secular educational paradigms that emphasize mastery of science and technology while neglecting moral and spiritual dimensions. Reports from UNESCO indicate that education systems in many Muslim countries focus more on academic achievement than character development, which is a core objective of Islamic education (UNESCO, 2017). This situation highlights the urgent need to reformulate educational approaches aligned with Islamic values.

A concrete example can be found in higher education systems in Indonesia and Malaysia, where English is widely used as the medium of instruction and credit-based systems are adopted from Western educational frameworks. Research by Mulyadi (2019) shows that students often struggle to integrate Islamic values into their academic studies, leading to identity crises among young Muslims. Therefore, educators must not only adopt but also adapt and integrate Islamic values into educational curricula.

In this context, it is essential to question whether such dependence is appropriate. Critics argue that excessive reliance on Western philosophy may lead to the loss of uniqueness and richness in Islamic educational traditions. Rahman (2018) emphasizes that Islamic education has great potential to produce ethical and responsible leaders if its framework is properly developed. Thus, collective efforts are required to develop educational models grounded in Islamic values while addressing contemporary challenges. As an initial step, it is crucial to conduct in-depth studies of classical Islamic educational thought. For instance, the works of Ibn Khaldun and Al-Ghazali emphasize the importance of moral and character education in learning. Through adaptation of these ideas, more contextual and relevant solutions for Islamic education in the modern era can be developed.

### **Means to Discover the Essence of Islamic Education**

In seeking the essence of Islamic education, appropriate and relevant tools are required. One essential approach is an in-depth study of primary Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Many Muslim scholars have contributed to developing educational concepts

based on these sources. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of knowledge and education, as stated in Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1-5), which encourages reading and learning (Qur'an, 96:1-5). In addition to literature studies, seminars and academic discussions are effective means of exploring the essence of Islamic education. These forums enable scholars and practitioners to exchange ideas and develop educational concepts aligned with Islamic values. Reports from the World Conference on Islamic Education highlight that international academic forums have generated significant recommendations for curriculum development and pedagogical innovation (Halstead, 2004).

Information technology can also serve as a vital tool in this process. Internet access has made educational resources more accessible. Studies from Pew Research Center show that a large percentage of Muslims globally use digital platforms to access religious and educational knowledge (Pew Research Center, 2018). This indicates the importance of digital transformation in Islamic education. For example, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta has developed online learning systems that integrate Islamic values into academic subjects. These initiatives facilitate access and promote contextual understanding of Islamic education. Finally, creating supportive academic communities is essential. Collaborative networks among lecturers, students, and practitioners can contribute to developing a comprehensive and applicable philosophy of Islamic education.

### **Islam's Early Advancement in Educational Civilization**

Historically, Islam achieved remarkable progress in various aspects of life, particularly education, long before many other civilizations. During the Islamic Golden Age (8th-14th centuries), the Muslim world became a center of knowledge and education. Institutions such as madrasas and hospitals were established in major cities like Baghdad, Córdoba, and Cairo. According to UNESCO, the world's oldest existing university, University of al-Qarawiyyin, was founded by Fatima al-Fihri, reflecting Islam's commitment to education (UNESCO, 2015). Islamic education during this period included not only religious studies but also mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy. Scholars such as Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Razi, and Ibn Sina significantly contributed to global scientific advancement. The system was structured, inclusive, and accessible. Education was often free and open to all social groups. This inclusiveness influenced cultural and intellectual development across civilizations. Therefore, revisiting historical Islamic educational principles can inspire contemporary reform.

### **Dominance of Philosophical Schools Emphasizing the Afterlife**

Islamic education has often been influenced by philosophical orientations that prioritize the hereafter over worldly life. Curricula in many Islamic institutions emphasize theology and worship while neglecting practical life skills. Reports from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs indicate that religious content dominates the curriculum in many Islamic schools. This imbalance may result in graduates lacking professional competencies. Research from Badan Pusat Statistik indicates higher unemployment rates among certain religious education graduates. In this regard, Nurcholish Madjid emphasized the importance of integrating spiritual and scientific knowledge. Institutions such as Universitas Islam Indonesia have demonstrated that faith and science are complementary. Therefore, a balanced educational paradigm is necessary.

### **Mistakes in Drawing Conclusions from Renowned Muslim Philosophers**

Misinterpretation of the ideas of prominent Muslim philosophers is a recurring issue in the literature on Islamic education. Many educators and practitioners tend to interpret their thoughts partially and normatively, without considering the historical and socio-cultural contexts in which these ideas emerged. For instance, the thought of Al-Ghazali regarding the relationship between knowledge and faith is often understood as emphasizing faith alone. In reality, he also stressed the importance of rational and empirical knowledge as an integral part of human intellectual development (Al-Ghazali, 2013; Halstead, 2004). This reductionist interpretation leads to a narrow understanding of Islamic educational philosophy and neglects its dynamic and integrative nature.

One of the major errors in this interpretation is the neglect of the critical dimension of Islamic philosophy of education, which actually encourages dialogue between tradition and modernity. In this context, the contributions of Ibn Khaldun particularly his emphasis on sociology, historical consciousness, and experiential learning are often overlooked in contemporary Islamic educational discourse. His perspective highlights that education should be adaptive, contextual, and responsive to social transformation (Ibn Khaldun, 1967; Rosenthal, 2005). Ignoring these insights can result in educational practices that are disconnected from contemporary realities and the needs of modern society.

Empirical evidence also indicates that many Islamic educational institutions still employ traditional curricula that are insufficiently responsive to current challenges. According to a survey conducted by several research and community service institutions in Islamic boarding schools, approximately 60% of the curriculum remains classical in orientation and lacks

integration with digital literacy and contemporary knowledge (Azra, 2015; Abdullah, 2012). This situation demonstrates that misunderstanding classical scholars not only weakens philosophical foundations but also limits the capacity of Islamic education to produce globally competent graduates. A relevant example is the interpretation of Muhammad Iqbal, whose educational philosophy is frequently reduced to moral and spiritual formation alone. In fact, Iqbal strongly advocated creativity, self-actualization, and intellectual dynamism as essential goals of education in the modern era (Iqbal, 2013; Memon, 2009). His concept of *khudi* (selfhood) emphasizes the development of critical thinking, innovation, and moral responsibility, which are crucial in preparing Muslim learners to engage with globalization.

Therefore, it is essential for educators and policymakers to conduct comprehensive and contextual studies of classical and modern Muslim thinkers. Such an approach would enable Islamic education to become more progressive, adaptive, and relevant to contemporary challenges while maintaining its ethical and spiritual foundations (Nasr, 2010; Al-Attas, 1991). By reinterpreting these philosophical traditions holistically, Islamic education can foster balanced individuals who are intellectually competent, morally grounded, and socially responsible in a rapidly changing world.

### **Misunderstanding the Contemporary Philosophy of Islamic Education**

In the development of Islamic education, misunderstandings frequently arise regarding the philosophical foundations that are currently evolving. Many educators are not fully aware that Islamic education is not merely concerned with teaching religious doctrines or textual knowledge, but also encompasses broader aspects that are essential for shaping students' character, critical awareness, and life skills. Research conducted by Universitas Islam Negeri Jakarta indicates that approximately 65% of educators still adhere to the view that Islamic education is limited to the transmission of religious texts and ritual knowledge. This narrow perspective tends to reduce the holistic and transformative nature of Islamic education.

This misconception often leads to the neglect of the development of higher-order thinking skills such as critical, creative, and reflective thinking. In this regard, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasizes that education must aim at producing a "good man" (*insān ṣāliḥ*), who integrates intellectual excellence, spiritual awareness, ethical conduct, and social responsibility. According to him, knowledge in Islam is not value-free but deeply rooted in *adab* (proper conduct), which ensures the balance between intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions (Al-Attas, 1991). Therefore, Islamic education should not only focus on cognitive development but also on moral cultivation and social engagement.

Empirical evidence also shows that many graduates of Islamic educational institutions feel inadequately prepared to face real-world challenges. A survey conducted by the Islamic Education Association reported that about 75% of graduates perceive that they lack sufficient competencies in problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and technological literacy. This finding highlights the urgent need to reform educational paradigms and teaching approaches in Islamic institutions so that they are aligned with the demands of the 21st century and global competitiveness.

One relevant example can be observed in the implementation of project-based learning in several Islamic schools. This model has proven effective in enhancing students' critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative skills. Through real-life and contextual projects, students actively engage in problem-solving, inquiry, and reflection. As a result, learning becomes more meaningful, integrative, and applicable to daily life. Studies also show that this approach strengthens students' sense of responsibility, teamwork, and ethical awareness, which are core values in Islamic pedagogy (Thomas, 2000; Bell, 2010).

In addition, contemporary Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes the integration of knowledge (integration of science), interconnection between disciplines, and collaboration across fields. This paradigm aligns with the global trend of interdisciplinary education while maintaining the Islamic worldview. The integration of religious and general sciences can help students develop comprehensive competencies, including spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and digital literacy. This approach is also relevant in responding to rapid technological advancements and social transformation in the digital era.

Therefore, it is crucial for educators, policymakers, and institutions to develop a deeper understanding of the philosophical foundations of Islamic education. A holistic, integrative, and transformative approach will support the formation of graduates who are not only religiously committed but also competent, adaptive, innovative, and globally competitive. Such reform is essential to ensure that Islamic education continues to contribute significantly to the development of civilization and the welfare of humanity.

### **Contemporary Challenges in the Philosophy of Islamic Education**

One of the fundamental challenges in Islamic education today is the misdirection in determining its ultimate goals. Many Islamic educational institutions still define success in narrow terms, focusing primarily on academic achievement or mastery of religious texts. This limited orientation often overlooks the holistic development of students, including character formation, emotional intelligence, and social competence. Consequently, the philosophy of

Islamic education becomes fragmented and fails to reflect its comprehensive vision as emphasized in classical and contemporary Islamic thought (Halstead, 2004).

This narrow focus on examination outcomes is evident in various institutional practices. Reports from Pusat Penelitian Pendidikan Islam indicate that more than half of Islamic schools prioritize standardized test performance as the main indicator of educational success. Such a paradigm may produce intellectually capable students, but often neglects their ethical awareness, social responsibility, and adaptability in complex modern societies (Sahin, 2018). In the contemporary global context, this imbalance becomes increasingly problematic. The World Economic Forum highlights that collaboration, communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence are among the most essential skills in the future workforce. Islamic education that fails to incorporate these competencies risks producing graduates who struggle to compete in the global labor market (World Economic Forum, 2020).

To address this issue, several Islamic institutions have implemented character education programs that integrate moral and ethical development with academic achievement. These initiatives demonstrate that holistic educational goals can produce graduates who are intellectually competent and ethically grounded. Such an approach reflects the Islamic worldview, which emphasizes balance between intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions of human development (Al-Attas, 1991). Another challenge lies in the tendency to emphasize philosophical discourse without translating it into practical educational strategies. Many educators engage in prolonged theoretical discussions but struggle to implement these ideas in classrooms. Studies conducted by Islamic educational research institutions show that professional training often focuses on abstract theories rather than contextual solutions for real classroom challenges (Azra, 2012).

This gap between theory and practice leads to stagnation in educational innovation. Students frequently perceive Islamic education as irrelevant to their daily lives, which weakens motivation and engagement. Surveys in various Muslim contexts reveal that learners seek contextualized, experiential, and problem-based learning approaches that connect religious knowledge with contemporary realities (Sahin, 2018). One promising model is community-based and project-based learning. These approaches engage students in real-life social projects, strengthening their problem-solving skills, ethical awareness, and civic responsibility. Such methods align with Islamic pedagogical traditions that emphasize experiential learning, reflection, and social contribution as essential aspects of knowledge (Thomas, 2000).

Furthermore, Islamic education faces ideological challenges from diverse philosophical influences, including secularism and liberalism. While engagement with global knowledge is

necessary, uncritical adoption may weaken the spiritual and moral foundations of Islamic education. The key challenge is not rejection but critical integration within an Islamic worldview that maintains ethical and metaphysical principles (Abdullah, 2006). Research conducted in Indonesian higher education contexts indicates that some students increasingly perceive education as independent from religious values. This trend reflects broader global shifts in epistemology and raises concerns about the identity and direction of Islamic education. However, it also presents an opportunity for Islamic institutions to develop more inclusive, dialogical, and intellectually open frameworks (Azra, 2012).

Political and socio-economic factors also significantly influence the development of Islamic educational philosophy. Government policies, funding allocation, and curriculum regulation often shape the direction of religious education. In some contexts, limited institutional support and policy inconsistency hinder innovation and reform in Islamic education systems (Hefner, 2009). Social diversity further complicates the implementation of Islamic education. In pluralistic societies, Islamic institutions must balance religious identity with inclusivity and intercultural dialogue. Failure to do so may reinforce negative stereotypes and reduce public trust in Islamic schooling (Hefner, 2009).

Another major obstacle is the tension between tradition and modernization. Many Islamic institutions struggle to integrate classical scholarship with contemporary sciences and technological advancements. As argued by M. Amin Abdullah, modernization should not mean Westernization but contextual reinterpretation that bridges tradition and contemporary knowledge (Abdullah, 2006). The debate over reform often leads to polarization between conservative and progressive perspectives. This tension can hinder innovation and delay the transformation of Islamic education. However, balanced reform grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and contextual reasoning can create a dynamic and adaptive educational model (Sahin, 2018).

Misinterpretation of Islamic sources related to renewal (*tajdīd*) and development (*taṭawwūr*) also contributes to confusion. Some groups interpret religious texts without considering historical and socio-cultural contexts, which may result in radical or rigid perspectives. This highlights the importance of critical, contextual, and interdisciplinary approaches in Islamic scholarship (Rahman, 1982). Therefore, strengthening Islamic education requires a comprehensive transformation that includes holistic goals, contextual pedagogy, philosophical clarity, political support, and intellectual openness. By integrating tradition and modernity, theory and practice, and spirituality with scientific knowledge, Islamic

education can remain relevant, competitive, and transformative in addressing contemporary global challenges (Halstead, 2004; Sahin, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of philosophical problems in Islamic education highlights that education should not merely function as a transfer of knowledge but also as a process of character and moral formation. Islamic education aims to develop individuals who are intellectually competent while maintaining strong ethical and spiritual values. However, in practice, various challenges remain, including curriculum development, teaching methods, and educational environments. In many contexts, the gap between philosophical ideals and educational practice continues to limit the effectiveness of Islamic education. For instance, despite the growth of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, many institutions still struggle to effectively integrate Islamic values into comprehensive and contextual curricula. Data from the Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia (2020) indicate that a significant proportion of Islamic institutions have yet to implement integrated and holistic educational models aligned with Islamic philosophical principles. This situation reflects a persistent disconnection between theory and practice in Islamic educational reform.

Moreover, the dominance of conventional and teacher-centered pedagogical approaches remains a major concern. Many Islamic schools still emphasize memorization rather than critical and analytical thinking. Research by Nurhadi (2021) demonstrates that students in several madrasahs encounter difficulties in developing higher-order thinking skills due to limited interactive learning. In addition, educational environments, particularly in rural and remote areas, face structural limitations such as inadequate infrastructure, limited learning resources, and insufficient policy support. According to the Badan Pusat Statistik, disparities in educational access between urban and rural regions significantly influence the quality of Islamic education. These challenges underline the urgent need for collaborative and integrative strategies involving government, society, and educational institutions to ensure that Islamic education functions as both intellectual development and moral transformation.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the importance of holistic and integrative paradigms in Islamic education, emphasizing the unity of knowledge, ethics, and spirituality. The integration of character education, critical pedagogy, and contextual learning aligns with contemporary Islamic educational philosophy that seeks to bridge tradition and modernity. Future research should explore innovative curriculum models, technology integration, and community-based learning approaches that can strengthen the relevance and adaptability of

Islamic education in the digital and global era. In addition, comparative and interdisciplinary studies are recommended to examine how Islamic education can respond to global challenges such as technological disruption, pluralism, and socio-cultural transformation while maintaining its ethical and spiritual foundations.

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