

## REFORMULATING THE DESIGN OF CHARACTER EDUCATION BASED ON “SPIRITUAL-RELIGIOUS VALUES”

**Sri Haryanto\***

Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an Central Java in Wonosobo

\*Email: [sriharyanto@unsiq.ac.id](mailto:sriharyanto@unsiq.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

Character education is the process of developing *fitrah* (basic potential) of human beings by instilling moral and spiritual values in students. Combining moral and spiritual values with piety to God and religious teachings is the core of education and is the way to bring human functions to their human origins. Education institutions often neglect character building and focus more on students' academic achievement and competence. They emphasize intellectual intelligence (cognitive domain) yet ignore moral, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. Thus, it is necessary to reformulate character education to answer the era's challenges and changes and solve various problems modern humans face. In the sense of improvement, changes must cover all levels and aspects based on the concept, curriculum, quality of human resources, institutions, and organizations so human beings can adapt to the flow of globalization and socio-cultural changes in modern society. These all are constructed to suit the global era and the socio-cultural changes of modern civilization. Reformulation must be based on basic human characteristics and universal moral values from religious teachings (the golden rule) and consider the potential of human nature as a bio-psycho-spiritual-religious creature. The development of character education must also be based on the basic principles of Islam, namely *tawhid*. The concept of *tawhid*, or the greatness of God, needs to be applied and elaborated in the character education model.

### KEYWORDS

reformulating, character education, spiritual-religious

### INTRODUCTION

The concept that humans cannot grow and develop on their own without the help of others is the basis of educational praxis; it means that the focus of education is on humans and all their human potential (humanities). From this point of view, education must aim to guide human mental-emotional-spiritual development holistically and integrally to carry out the function of total devotion (complete submission) to Allah SWT. Education seeks to produce a person who is faithful and devoted to God Almighty, capable, noble, knowledgeable, healthy, independent, and creative—a person capable of realizing a democratic nation and becoming a responsible citizen (Nasional, 2003).

Nevertheless, the education ideal has not been fully achieved. Our education system faces problems because it emphasizes more on the cognitive domain and less on emotional intelligence, empathy, and a sense of belonging. This system has only produced fragile, empty humans who have lost their meaning and orientation in life. In transpersonal psychology, humans like this experience existential-spiritual problems (Imawan, 2002).

A moral and spiritual decline in contemporary society (Mubarok, 2000) strikes at the heart of the education system, a system that should produce a generation of well-educated and spiritual individuals. Those who have an overly simplistic view of the current situation, who blame education as the cause of moral decline, believe that the form of education most needed today is education that integrates character development (moral education) with efforts to maximize the growth of all dimensions of students' physical and socio-emotional as well as creative and spiritual abilities.

Based on the above thought, this paper proposes the desired character education design to provide a strategic solution to control the moral-spiritual decline of students—a character education design that can be a win-win solution to the moral and spiritual crisis (moral-spiritual crisis) of modern humans today.

### THE GRAND THEORY OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education has reflected this process since the beginning of 1990. Thomas Lickona is widely regarded as the originator of the term, especially when he published a book entitled “The Return of Character Education”, followed by his book “Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility” (Lickona, 2009). These books discuss the benefits and importance of character education in the western world. In this context, there are several theories about character education, including the following:

**Table 1. Theory of Character Education**

No	Expert	Theory of Character Education
1.	Thomas Lickona	Character education has three main parts: knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (Lickona, 2009). He furthermore asserts, “Character so conceived, has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good habits of the mind, heart, and action” (Lickona, 2009).
2.	Ki Hadjar Dewantara	Dewantara stated that the foundation of education is guided by the Javanese terms: “ <i>ngemong</i> ” and “ <i>momong</i> ”. The purpose of the intermediary system ( <i>perantara</i> ) is to develop students into human beings who have faith and piety, independence and spirituality, noble character, intelligence, skills, and physical and mental health to become contributing members of society, independent citizens responsible for the welfare of others (Dewantara, 1977).
3.	The Ministry of the National Education of Indonesia	Every major entity within the national education stakeholder environment participates in all aspects of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling the quality of character education. Character education aims to create an environment and method that empowers potential and fosters students to grow different personal and/or group personalities as citizens. This is a deliberate and planned effort (Kemendiknas, 2010).

Islamic character education is unique and differs from the one practiced in the western world. The main difference is the existence of Allah’s revelation as the source and guideline for character education; thus, Islamic character education is run doctrinally and dogmatically with an approach emphasizing the teaching of right and wrong (Majid, 2012).

### The Scientific Philosophy of Spiritually-based Character Education

Scientific philosophy starts from what will be written (ontology) (Tafsir, 2003), how to write it (epistemology), and what are the benefits of writing scientific papers (axiology) (Rizal & Munir, 2006). Following the philosophical understanding, the formulation of the philosophical foundation of spiritually based character education can be described as follows:

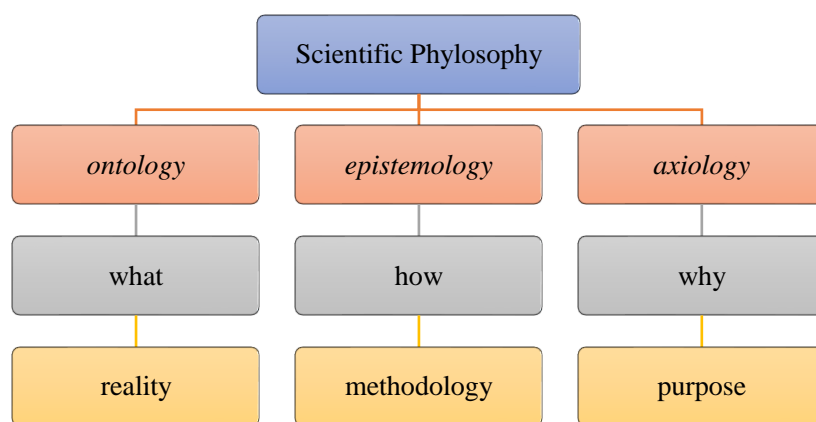


Figure 1. The Scientific Philosophy of Spiritually based Character Education

#### Ontological Foundation

The basic principles for character development in Indonesia are formulated in the functions and goals of the National Education System in Article 3 Law Number 20 of 2003:

“The National Education functions to develop the capability, character, and civilization of the nation for enhancing its intellectual capacity and aims to develop learners’ potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values, who are faithful and pious to one and only God, with morals and noble character, who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and as citizens, are democratic and responsible.”

Character education is a variation of the configuration of the National Education system. It is expected to prepare future generations since they will determine the direction of the nation’s progress in the future. Future generations must be noble, religious, resilient, tolerant, and independent, show good moral and intellectual ability, and be democratic—they are a mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy generation ready to enter the global era (Zuriah et al., 2018).

Character education is an effort to change the *nafs* (human personality as a personal figure) from the typical *amarah* (evil personality) and *lawwamah* (unstable personality) to become a *mutmainnah* personal figure (a strong and calm person in peace blessed by Allah SWT). Character education is a process of developing human nature (basic

potential) that cannot be separated from the cultivation of the moral and spiritual values of students. Awareness of the importance of moral and spiritual values that combine faith and piety aligns with the essence of education to return human functions to become human (Yunus, 2007).

In its implementation, character education still faces various problems and obstacles. A dilemma in education is between achieving the target score of exams or being more inclined to shape character. The National Examination is an example of various issues regarding character education. The inculcation of character values in education units is often forgotten; schools focus more on targeting test results and students' academic competence. Intellectual intelligence (cognitive) is prioritized, while moral, emotional, and spiritual intelligence is neglected.

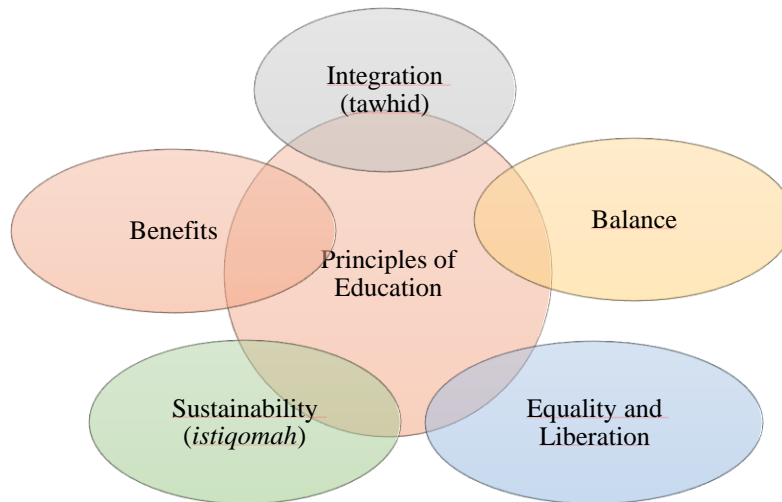
In learning, subjects related to character education (such as Religious Education and Pancasila Education) emphasize memorization. Character building must be carried out systematically and continuously involving aspects of knowledge, feeling, loving, and acting (Lickona, 2009) so that individuals (students) not only know the virtues (knowing the good) but also feel (feeling the good), loving (loving the good), wanting (desiring the good), and doing good (acting the good) (Zuriah et al., 2018).

This situation results in the need for reformulation of the character education model to answer the character education to answer the era's challenges and changes and solve various problems modern humans face. The changes, in this case, are an improvement, must cover all aspects and levels, from concepts, curriculum, quality, human resources, institutions, and organizations. These all are constructed to suit the global era and the socio-cultural changes of modern civilization. In the sense of improvement, changes must cover all levels and aspects based on the concept, curriculum, quality of human resources, institutions, and organizations; these all are constructed to suit the global era and the socio-cultural changes of modern civilization. (Tilaar, 1998).

Reformulation must be based on basic human characteristics and universal moral values from religious teachings (the golden rule) and consider the highest potential of human nature as a bio-psycho-spiritual-religious creature. The development of character education must also be based on the basic principles of Islam, namely *tawhid*. The concept of *tawhid*, or the greatness of God, needs to be applied and elaborated in the character education model.

### **Epistemological Foundation**

Exploring the epistemological foundation of spiritually-based character education can be started by tracing the nature and principles of education guided by the values of the Qur'an and As-Sunnah (Roqib et al., 2003). The principles of education in Islam that can be used as an epistemological basis for developing a spiritually-based character education model are described in the following sections:



**Figure 2. The Principles of Spiritually based Character Education**

*Tawhid* is the foundation of character education based on Islamic teachings. *Tawhid* is defined as a model of human freedom in the theory of character education, both external and external, apart from Allah SWT; this opens a perspective that education does not discriminate against people (Karim, 1991). Human and natural values (cosmology, anthropo-sociology) serve as ethical and operational foundations for education in a monotheistic view (Naim, 2017). In addition, the spiritually-based character education model is also guided by the view that humans are unique, complex, and multidimensional holistic beings. Humans are creatures born with the gift of having great potential (*fitrah*), which can be developed optimally. Thus, spiritually-based character education must lead to two dimensions, namely the vertical submission dimension and the horizontal dialectical dimension (Saefuddin, 1987).

Specifically, spiritually-based character education is guided by the fundamental values of Islam (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) seen in the personal characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad. He shows noble moral values as examples of human life. Surah Al-Ahzab Verse 21 mentions that: "*In the Apostle of Allah, there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly.*" (QS. Al-Ahzab: 21)

Allah SWT creates human beings for moral perfection—the mission is impossible if they have no noble character. The source of noble character comes from the attitude and example of the Prophet Muhammad, which is manifested in his behavior and attitudes in his daily life, namely *shiddq* (honest), *amanah* (trusted), *tabligh* (transparently conveying), and *fathânah* (intelligent). These four main qualities are priorities in spiritually-based character education (Hidayatullah & Rohmadi, 2010).

### **Axiological Foundation**

Spiritually-based character education is a character education design that is always related to divine values in fostering and developing all human potential as the basis for

carrying out divine duties as servants and mandates of God on earth (Halik, 2020). It is an educational design created in the unity (integration) between *aqliyah*, *naqliyah*, and *qalbiyah* education, focusing on the view that humans are holistic beings (bio-psycho-spiritual-religious) with unique and multidimensional characteristics.

Spiritually-based character education places humans in their position as the best creatures (*ahsana taqwim*) with various noble potentials (highest potential) that still need to be improved so that humans can become genuinely humane, holistic human beings understanding of self, life, and Allah as the Creator. In Islamic literature, humans who are obedient, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent, graceful in morals, and commendable in action are called *insan kamil*.

The spiritually-based character education model may become the answer to the moral decline we see today. Students are taught to cultivate intelligence in thinking and practice related to their relationship with Allah SWT, other people, themselves, society, and nature (Zubaedi, 2011). In addition to overcoming the moral-spiritual decline, spiritually based character education aims to restore noble qualities such as honesty, politeness, togetherness, and religiosity, which are continuously destroyed by foreign cultures with the hedonistic, materialistic, and individualistic views.

It is time for spiritually-based character education to be developed and applied in education, including in Indonesia. The spiritually-based character education has great potential and is believed to shape students' character to become humane individuals having a good attitude. The students will become individuals who understand their existence, are emotionally and spiritually intelligent, are fond of doing good deeds, and practice good morals to realize the natural potential they are born with.

## CONCLUSION

We now have to think about combining character education (moral) with education to maximize the development of all aspects of children (cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, creativity, and spiritual). Education must be projected toward shaping children into great human beings with awareness and understanding of the substance, essence, existence, and orientation of life as unique and multidimensional bio-psycho-spiritual beings. An educational design is intended to meet basic human needs, which is expected to be a win-win solution to a moral and spiritual crisis, namely spiritually-based character education. It is character education based on the unification (integration) of *qalbiyah*, *aqliyah*, and *naqliyah* education and based on the belief that humans are unique and multidimensional holistic (bio-psycho-spiritual-religious) creatures that must be educated.

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