

Islamic Education Based on Philosophy of Knowledge: Developing Ethical, Intellectual, and Competitive Muslim Generations

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Abstract

Islamic education in the era of globalization faces complex challenges in the form of an ethical crisis, fragmentation of knowledge, and demands for global competitiveness. This study aims to examine Islamic education based on the philosophy of science as a foundation for developing an ethical, intellectual, and competitive Muslim generation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method (library research) through analysis of classic and contemporary books, as well as scientific journal articles discussing the philosophy of Islamic science, Islamic education, ethical formation, intellectual strengthening, and the competitiveness of the Muslim generation. The results show that Islamic philosophy of science provides a comprehensive ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundation for the development of holistic Islamic education. Knowledge from an Islamic perspective is understood as a unity between revelation, reason, and empirical experience that is rich in values and oriented towards the benefit. Islamic education plays a crucial role in the formation of ethics and intellectuality in an integrated manner, where the development of reason is guided by moral values, resulting in intelligent and moral individuals. Furthermore, the competitiveness of the Muslim generation in Islamic education is interpreted as the ability to contribute professionally and dignifiedly in global society without losing its Islamic identity. This research also emphasizes the importance of integrating ethics, intellectualism, and competitiveness as an inseparable whole within the Islamic education system. Thus, Islamic education based on the philosophy of science offers a relevant, transformative paradigm to address the challenges of modern education and shape a generation of Muslims who are civilized, superior, and globally competitive.

Keywords

Islamic education
philosophy of science
ethics
intellectualism
competitiveness of the Muslim generation

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Introduction

Islamic education has played a strategic role in shaping civilization and the quality of Muslim generations throughout history. In Islamic tradition, education is not simply understood as a process of transferring knowledge, but rather as a conscious and systematic effort to shape whole human beings who are faithful, knowledgeable, and virtuous. However, amidst the dynamics of globalization, technological advances, and increasingly fierce global competition, Islamic education faces serious challenges, particularly in maintaining a balance between intellectual development, ethical formation, and the readiness of the Muslim generation to compete globally (Fauzi et al., 2025).

One fundamental problem facing contemporary Islamic education is the dichotomy of knowledge, namely the separation between religious knowledge and general knowledge. This dichotomy has resulted in the birth of a generation that excels technically and academically but is weak in ethics and spirituality, or conversely, possesses ritual piety but lacks intellectual and professional competitiveness (Duryat, 2021). This situation demonstrates that Islamic education requires a strong philosophical foundation to holistically integrate knowledge, values, and educational practices.

The philosophy of knowledge from an Islamic perspective offers a crucial conceptual framework to address this issue. In Islam, knowledge is not understood as a value-free entity, but rather as a means to draw closer

to God and realize the welfare of humanity. The primary goal of Islamic education is to instill adab, namely the recognition and recognition of the proper order of reality and truth (Rijal et al., 2025). Thus, Islamic philosophy of science addresses not only how knowledge is acquired (epistemology), but also the nature of knowledge (ontology) and the purposes for which it is used (axiology).

An Islamic educational approach based on the philosophy of science becomes increasingly relevant when linked to the need to develop a generation of ethical, intellectual, and competitive Muslims. Ethics in Islam is rooted in the concept of akhlaq, which reflects the harmony between knowledge, faith, and behavior. Education that ignores the ethical dimension has the potential to produce intelligent individuals who lack moral responsibility towards themselves, society, and the environment (Abdurahman et al., 2025). Therefore, Islamic education must be able to systematically internalize moral values through the curriculum, learning methods, and the role models of educators.

In addition to ethics, intellectual development is also a key pillar of Islamic education. The history of Islamic civilization demonstrates that the progress of the Muslim community was greatly supported by a strong, critical, and open scientific tradition, open to various sources of knowledge. Classical Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Khaldun integrated revelation, reason, and empirical experience in the development of science (Dewi & Pulungan, 2024). However, in current Islamic educational practices, the development of critical thinking and intellectual traditions is often not a top priority, leaving students ill-prepared to face the complexities of modern issues.

On the other hand, global demands place competitiveness as an indispensable aspect. The Muslim generation is required to possess academic, professional, and social competencies to actively participate in the global community without losing its Islamic identity. The concept of competitiveness in Islam is not interpreted as exploitative competition, but rather as a striving for goodness (fastabiqul khairat) and a positive contribution to humanity (Rahmayanti et al., 2025). Therefore, Islamic education needs to be designed to equip students with 21st-century skills that align with Islamic values.

Based on this description, it is clear that Islamic education based on the philosophy of science is highly urgent in addressing the challenges of contemporary education. This approach enables the integration of science and values, intellectuality and spirituality, and personal piety and social responsibility. By establishing the philosophy of science as a foundation, Islamic education is expected to produce a generation of Muslims who are not only knowledgeable but also possess noble ethics and global competitiveness. Therefore, the study of Islamic education based on the philosophy of science is crucial to develop as a theoretical and practical contribution to the renewal of Islamic education in the modern era.

Methods

Research methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study (library research). The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on the study and interpretation of Islamic educational concepts based on the philosophy of science, particularly in efforts to develop a generation of ethical, intellectual, and competitive Muslims. This research does not aim to measure phenomena quantitatively, but rather to deeply understand the ideas, values, and thoughts contained in the scientific literature related to Islamic education and the philosophy of science.

Literature study was used as the primary method because the object of this research is conceptual and theoretical. Research data were obtained from various relevant written sources, both classical and contemporary works, allowing the researcher to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework for Islamic education based on the philosophy of science.

Research Data Sources

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from the works of prominent Islamic thinkers and educational philosophers who discuss the concepts of knowledge, education,

and human development, such as Al-Ghazali, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. These works serve as the primary foundation for understanding the paradigm of knowledge and education in Islam.

Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and other academic publications discussing Islamic education, the philosophy of science, ethics, intellectual development, and the competitiveness of the Muslim generation in the global era. Data sources were selected based on the relevance of the topic, the credibility of the authors, and their contribution to the research discussion.

Data collection technique

Data collection in this study was conducted through a systematic literature search and review. The researcher identified, collected, and selected various written sources related to the research focus. This process included in-depth reading, noting main ideas, and grouping data based on themes relevant to the research objectives.

The literature search was conducted through physical and digital libraries, including national and international scientific journals, to obtain a broad and up-to-date perspective. Using this technique, the data obtained is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the concept of Islamic education based on the philosophy of science.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method. The collected data were classified based on key themes, such as the philosophy of science in Islam, the concept of Islamic education, ethical development, intellectual strengthening, and the formation of the competitiveness of the Muslim generation. Each theme was then analyzed in depth to identify conceptual links and their relevance to the research objectives.

The analysis process was not only descriptive but also interpretive and synthetic. The researcher connected various perspectives and theories from different literatures to develop a comprehensive and critical understanding of Islamic education based on the philosophy of science in the context of modern educational challenges.

Data Validity

The validity of the data in this study was ensured through source triangulation, which involves comparing various literature from different authors and perspectives. The researchers also reviewed both classical and contemporary literature in a balanced manner to avoid bias. Furthermore, consistency of argumentation and accurate interpretation of reference sources served as the primary basis for ensuring the validity and credibility of the research results.

Results and Discussion

Islamic Philosophy of Science as the Foundation of Holistic Education

Islamic philosophy of science provides a solid conceptual foundation for formulating a holistic and integrative Islamic education. From an Islamic perspective, science is not understood merely as a collection of information or technical skills, but as knowledge imbued with values, goals, and a divine orientation. Islamic education grounded in the philosophy of science seeks to shape the whole person by integrating spiritual, intellectual, and moral dimensions (Rochbani, 2025). This approach is crucial in responding to the crisis in modern education, which tends to emphasize cognitive and utilitarian aspects, while often marginalizing ethical and spiritual dimensions.

Ontologically, Islamic philosophy of science views reality as a unity between material and nonmaterial aspects. Humans are understood as physical and spiritual beings possessing the potential of reason, heart, and soul. This ontological perspective emphasizes that Islamic education cannot be reduced solely to the development of intellectual intelligence but must also be directed toward the development of personality and spiritual awareness. Education that ignores this ontological dimension risks producing individuals who excel academically but lose their orientation toward values and the meaning of life (El-Yunusi et al., 2023).

Epistemologically, Islamic philosophy of science emphasizes the integration of sources of knowledge, including revelation, reason, and empirical experience. Revelation is the primary source providing direction and truth, while reason and experience serve as means for understanding and developing knowledge in real life (Indah, 2025). This epistemological integration demonstrates that Islam does not reject rationality and science, but rather encourages the optimal use of reason within the framework of divine values. In the context of education, this paradigm encourages the development of critical, reflective, and scientific thinking without stripping students of the values of faith.

Islamic philosophy of science also makes a significant contribution to the formation of an educational paradigm oriented toward a balance between knowledge and morality. Holistic Islamic education aims not only to produce individuals who are intellectually intelligent but also possess noble character and social responsibility. The educational process is directed at instilling an awareness that knowledge has moral and social consequences. Thus, educational success is not solely measured by academic achievement, but also by students' behavior, attitudes, and contributions to social life.

Axiologically, Islamic philosophy of science emphasizes that knowledge must be devoted to the welfare of humanity and the development of a just civilization. Knowledge should not be used for purposes that undermine human values or create social inequality. Islamic education, grounded in this axiological foundation, strives to shape a generation with social sensitivity, moral responsibility, and a commitment to the value of justice. In the context of globalization, this axiological orientation is highly relevant in equipping the Muslim generation to compete globally without losing ethical integrity and Islamic identity (Wijayanti, 2025).

Islamic Education in the Formation of Ethics and Intellectualism

Islamic education plays a fundamental role in shaping students' ethics and intellectuality in an integrated manner. Within the Islamic educational paradigm, ethics and intellectuality are not understood as separate domains, but rather as interconnected entities. Knowledge in Islam aims not only to enhance thinking skills but also to guide human behavior to align with divine and human values (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Therefore, Islamic education is directed at producing individuals who are both knowledgeable and moral, so that knowledge is not limited to the cognitive level but is manifested in concrete attitudes and actions.

The formation of ethics in Islamic education is rooted in the concept of akhlaq, a mental state that motivates a person to behave consistently and well without coercion (Sumanto & Ramona, 2024). Classical Islamic education literature emphasizes that morality is not sufficiently taught through lectures or memorization of norms but must be formed through a process of internalization of values, habituation, and role modeling. Islamic education views educators as central figures in shaping students' ethics, as moral role models have a stronger influence than verbal delivery. Thus, Islamic education places the ethical dimension at the core of the entire educational process.

On the other hand, Islamic education also places great emphasis on intellectual development. The tradition of Islamic scholarship since classical times demonstrates that Islam encourages its followers to think critically, rationally, and reflectively. Intellectual development in Islamic education is not understood merely as mastery of knowledge, but as a process of sharpening the mind to understand reality, distinguish between right and wrong, and make responsible decisions (Lupiah & Sugiharto, 2025). Islamic education, based on the philosophy of science, views reason as a gift from God that must be used optimally within the framework of revealed values.

The integration of ethics and intellectuality is a hallmark of holistic Islamic education. Intellectualism without ethics has the potential to produce intelligent individuals who lack moral orientation, while ethics without intellectual strengthening can hinder an individual's ability to adapt and contribute to modern society. Islamic education seeks to balance these two aspects through a curriculum that integrates moral values into every subject and learning methods that encourage ethical reflection and critical thinking simultaneously.

Furthermore, Islamic education's focus on developing ethics and intellectuality has broad social implications. Students are prepared not only for academic success but also to become individuals with social responsibility, empathy, and concern for others. The knowledge gained is directed towards the common good, not merely personal gain. Thus, Islamic education serves as a means of social transformation, instilling the values of justice, honesty, and responsibility in community life.

Developing the Competitiveness of the Muslim Generation Based on Islamic Values

Developing the competitiveness of the Muslim generation in Islamic education cannot be separated from the foundation of Islamic values. Competitiveness, from an Islamic perspective, is not interpreted solely as the ability to excel academically or professionally, but as an individual's readiness to contribute positively and meaningfully to social, economic, and civilizational life. Islamic education views competitiveness as part of the mandate of knowledge, whereby acquired knowledge and skills must be used for the benefit of humanity and to strengthen the values of justice and ethics.

In Islamic education literature, the competitiveness of the Muslim generation is closely linked to the mastery of knowledge and skills relevant to current developments (Rohman et al., 2024). Islamic education based on the philosophy of science encourages the integration of mastery of Islamic knowledge and modern science, so that students do not fall into exclusive attitudes or fall behind in global competition. Mastery of science, technology, and 21st-century skills is seen as part of the intellectual obligation of Muslims, as long as it is developed within the framework of monotheistic values and noble morals.

Developing the competitiveness of the Muslim generation also requires the formation of strong and ethical character. Literature shows that competitive advantage not accompanied by moral integrity has the potential to give rise to unethical practices in professional and social life (Edy & Sumarta, 2025). Islamic education strives to instill values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and hard work as the primary foundation of competitiveness. These values not only shape individual character but also enhance social and professional trust, which are essential assets in global competition.

Furthermore, the concept of competition in Islam is guided by the principle of fastabiqul khairat, which means competing in goodness. This principle provides an ethical perspective on competitiveness, where competition is not understood as a destructive effort to defeat others, but rather as motivation to continuously improve one's quality and social contribution. Islamic education facilitates this understanding by instilling an awareness that individual success is inseparable from social responsibility and concern for others.

Developing the competitiveness of the Muslim generation requires an educational approach that is contextual and adaptive to global change. Islamic education is required to respond to the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and a dynamic job market by updating the curriculum, learning methods, and developing student competencies. However, this renewal must remain rooted in Islamic values so that the competitiveness built does not erode Islamic identity, but rather strengthens it in a global context (Khomsinuddin et al., 2024).

Integration of Ethics, Intellectualism, and Competitiveness in Islamic Education

The integration of ethics, intellectualism, and competitiveness is at the heart of a holistic Islamic education paradigm. These three aspects are not understood as standalone goals, but rather as interrelated and mutually reinforcing dimensions in the process of developing the whole person. Islamic education positions ethics as a moral foundation, intellectualism as a means of developing intellectual potential, and competitiveness as the ability to play an active and productive role in social and global life (Juariah, 2023). This integration

reflects the goal of Islamic education, which is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward character development and social responsibility.

From an Islamic educational perspective, ethics serves as a value compass that guides the use of knowledge and skills. The literature confirms that intellectual development without an ethical foundation has the potential to lead to misuse of knowledge and moral crisis. Therefore, Islamic education emphasizes the importance of internalizing moral values in every aspect of learning. Ethics is not taught as a separate subject but is integrated throughout the educational process, so that students develop moral awareness in developing and applying their knowledge (Karya Utami et al., 2025).

Intellectualism in Islamic education is viewed as the ability to think rationally, critically, and reflectively, rooted in the values of revelation. Islamic education encourages students to develop scientific and creative thinking skills to understand complex and dynamic realities. However, this intellectual development is not separated from moral and social responsibility. Thus, intellectualism in Islamic education produces not only intelligent individuals but also wise individuals in decision-making and action.

Meanwhile, competitiveness in Islamic education is directed at the ability to contribute positively and with dignity to the global community. The literature shows that Islamic education does not reject competition but rather guides it toward the principle of *fastabiqul khairat*, namely competing in goodness. The competitiveness fostered through Islamic education is not destructive or exploitative, but rather oriented toward improving personal quality, professionalism, and social contribution based on Islamic ethics and values.

The integration of these three aspects requires a systematic and contextual educational design. The Islamic education curriculum needs to be designed integratively, linking mastery of knowledge, character building, and the development of 21st-century skills. Learning methods are aimed at encouraging ethical reflection, critical dialogue, and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts (Taufiq et al., 2025). Furthermore, educators serve as moral and intellectual role models, demonstrating how ethics, intellect, and competitiveness can coexist in everyday life.

Discussion

Islamic philosophy of science plays a fundamental role as a foundation for building a holistic Islamic education. These findings confirm that Islamic education cannot be separated from a philosophical framework that integrates the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of science. In this discussion, Islamic philosophy of science is understood not merely as a theoretical foundation, but as a paradigm that guides the goals, processes, and orientation of Islamic education. Education that stems from Islamic philosophy of science avoids reducing education to a mere transfer of knowledge and instead aims to develop civilized individuals who recognize the meaning of knowledge in its relationship with God, humanity, and nature.

The discussion of Islamic education in the formation of ethics and intellectuality demonstrates that these two aspects are inseparable. Research findings indicate that Islamic education ideally integrates moral development and intellectual strengthening within a single educational process. This aligns with the view that knowledge in Islam carries moral responsibility, and therefore, intellectual intelligence without ethics has the potential to create a values crisis (Sumarni & Rochbani, 2025). This discussion emphasizes that Islamic education needs to position ethics as the core of learning, not as an add-on. Thus, intellectual development is directed toward fostering critical, reflective, and scientific thinking skills that are always grounded in the values of justice, honesty, and responsibility.

Furthermore, findings regarding the development of competitiveness in the Muslim generation based on Islamic values demonstrate that competitiveness in Islamic education has a unique meaning. This discussion demonstrates that competitiveness is not interpreted as individualistic free-wheeling competition, but rather

as a readiness to contribute professionally and with dignity in global society. Islamic education plays a role in equipping the Muslim generation with academic competencies and 21st-century skills, while remaining within the framework of monotheistic values and morals. With this approach, competitiveness does not pose a threat to Islamic identity but rather serves as a means of actualizing Islamic values in a global context.

The integration of ethics, intellectuality, and competitiveness, as found in the research findings, demonstrates that Islamic education requires a comprehensive and systemic approach. This discussion emphasizes that these three aspects are interdependent and cannot be developed in isolation. Ethics provides moral direction for the use of knowledge, intellectuality provides analytical and critical skills, while competitiveness ensures the relevance and empowerment of Islamic education graduates in real life. When one aspect is neglected, education has the potential to lose its balance, producing either intelligent but immoral individuals, or individuals with good morals but lacking competitiveness.

In the context of implementation, this discussion demonstrates that the integration of ethics, intellectualism, and competitiveness demands reform in curriculum design, learning methods, and the role of educators. Islamic education curricula need to be designed integratively, linking science, moral values, and skills development contextually. Learning methods should not focus solely on memorization or the transmission of knowledge, but rather encourage critical dialogue, ethical reflection, and the application of knowledge in real life. Meanwhile, educators are positioned as moral and intellectual role models who play a strategic role in shaping the character and mindset of students.

Conceptually, this discussion confirms that Islamic education based on the philosophy of science offers a solution to the crisis of modern education, which tends to be fragmented. By integrating the dimensions of values, rationality, and competence, Islamic education can develop a generation of Muslims who are holistic, civilized, and adaptive to changing times. This finding strengthens the argument that strengthening the philosophy of Islamic science is not only an academic need, but also a practical need in the effort to build an Islamic education system that is relevant, transformative, and oriented towards the welfare of the community.

Conclusion

Islamic education based on the philosophy of science is a strategic foundation in developing an ethical, intellectual, and competitive Muslim generation amidst the challenges of globalization and modernity. Islamic philosophy of science provides a complete conceptual framework through the integration of ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions, so that Islamic education is not reduced to a mere process of knowledge transfer, but functions as a means of forming a complete human being. The results of the study indicate that understanding science as a value-laden entity oriented towards monotheism places Islamic education in a position capable of balancing spiritual, moral, and intellectual development. Islamic education plays a significant role in the formation of students' ethics and intellectuality in an integrated manner, where the development of reason is guided by moral values so that intellectual intelligence is inseparable from moral and social responsibility. Furthermore, this study confirms that the competitiveness of the Muslim generation from an Islamic perspective is not interpreted as individualistic, value-free competition, but rather as the ability to contribute professionally, productively, and dignifiedly in a global society based on the principle of *fastabiqul khairat*. The integration of ethics, intellectuality, and competitiveness is the main key to realizing an Islamic education that is holistic and relevant to the needs of the times. These three aspects cannot be developed in isolation, as ethics provides moral direction for the use of knowledge, intellectualism provides critical and reflective thinking skills, and competitiveness ensures graduates' empowerment in facing global dynamics. Thus, Islamic education based on the philosophy of science offers a transformative paradigm capable of overcoming the fragmentation of modern education and shaping a generation of civilized Muslims, intellectually superior, with strong character, ready to contribute to the development of a just and sustainable civilization.

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