



## The Ethic Of Spiritual And Material Balance (*Tawāzun*) In Classical Islam As A Solution To The Value Crisis Of Modern Education

Mohammad Nu'man<sup>1</sup>, Junaedi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Email [buya.numan@gmail.com](mailto:buya.numan@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Email [junaedi@uinsa.ac.id](mailto:junaedi@uinsa.ac.id)

Corresponding Author : Email [buya.numan@gmail.com](mailto:buya.numan@gmail.com)

### Abstract:

**Background**, Modern education, despite its excellence in science and technology, faces an alarming value crisis, marked by moral degradation and widespread mental health issues among students. This crisis is rooted in an imbalanced paradigm: fragmentation due to the dichotomy of knowledge, a pragmatic-materialistic orientation, and the penetration of hedonistic values in the digital era.

**Aim**, This research aims to offer the ethic of balance (*tawāzun*) from the intellectual treasury of classical Islam as a transformative solution.

**Method**, Using a qualitative library research method.

**Results**, this study analyzes the primary works of Muslim thinkers such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Al-Mawardi. The analysis reveals that *tawāzun* is an ontological principle (personal, communal, cosmic) that rejects the world-hereafter dichotomy. Al-Ghazali emphasizes inner purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*). Ibn Miskawaih maps the psychological balance of the soul, and Al-Mawardi offers a socio-ethical framework.

**Conclusion**. This concept is highly relevant for contemporary holistic education. Its implementation demands transformation on three levels: curriculum integration, innovation in affective-spiritual pedagogy, and the development of a balanced school culture.

**Implication**. This reconstruction is expected to form the *insān kāmil* (the perfect human) who is intellectually intelligent, morally robust, and spiritually mature.

**Keywords**: Ethic of Spiritual, Value Crisis, Crisis Modern, Material Balance



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## INTRODUCTION

Modern education has achieved extraordinary progress in science and technology, producing innovations that have changed the face of human civilization (Hidayat & Abdillah, 2019). The ability to decode the genetic code, explore outer space, and create

artificial intelligence are clear testaments to the intellectual prowess cultivated by contemporary educational systems. However, behind this glittering achievement lies a worrying paradox: the higher the academic attainment, the deeper the value crisis that plagues the world of education (Nugroho, 2020). There is a sharp dissonance between material progress and moral decline, between cognitive intelligence and spiritual fragility.

The phenomenon of moral degradation among students—ranging from bullying and brawls to disrespect for teachers and the spread of consumptive and hedonistic behavior—serves as a warning signal that something is amiss in the foundation of our education system (Lessy et al., 2022). The root of this problem can be traced to a systemic imbalance in educational orientation. On one hand, there is a tendency towards secularization that separates the spiritual dimension from the learning process, reducing education to a mere transfer of knowledge without character transformation (Lugg, 2018). The dominant pragmatic-materialistic paradigm has reduced the noble goal of education to merely preparing a workforce and pursuing measurable academic achievements (Tilaar, 2012). The obsession with rankings, grades, and economic competitiveness has created excessive academic pressure, which in turn triggers stress, anxiety, and even burnout among students (Nabila & Hidayati, 2024). On the other hand, an overly ascetic approach that rejects the world also fails to provide a solution, as it ignores the reality that humans live in the world with all its material needs (Suharto, 2011).

This condition is exacerbated by the strong currents of globalization and the digital revolution, which bring unfiltered values of consumerism, extreme individualism, and hedonism into the lives of the younger generation (Lessy et al., 2022; Safitri & Husnaini, 2025). Consequently, a state of meaninglessness occurs, where students lose their orientation about "why they learn" and "who they really are." They may be intellectually bright but are morally fragile and spiritually dry (Langgulung, 2008).

Facing the complexity of this crisis requires a solution that is not merely a patchwork but is transformative and holistic (Azra, 2012). The intellectual treasury of classical Islam offers an alternative paradigm that has proven philosophically and applicatively robust for centuries: the ethic of balance, or *tawāzun* (Nata, 2013). This principle teaches the harmonization between spiritual and material dimensions, between knowledge and action, and between worldly orientation and otherworldly consciousness (Al-Attas, 2010). Classical Muslim thinkers such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Al-Mawardi have elaborated this concept into an integral and comprehensive system of character education (Anwar, 2010).

The urgency to rediscover and actualize this *classical* wisdom in the context of contemporary education is becoming increasingly pressing (Mastuhu, 2007). This is not about a nostalgic return to the past, but about finding solutions rooted in spiritual identity while remaining responsive to the challenges of the times (Wan Daud, 2013). This is the essence of this research: to bridge the wisdom of the past with the needs of the present, reconstructing education on a foundation of balance that can produce a generation that is intelligent, characterful, and meaningful.

Based on the background above, this research seeks to answer three fundamental questions: First, what is the concept of the ethic of spiritual and material balance in classical Islamic thought, particularly according to philosophers like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Al-Mawardi? Second, what are the manifestations and root causes of the value crisis in the modern education system, and how does this crisis affect students psychologically and morally? Third, how is the concept of classical Islamic balance ethics relevant as a solution to the value crisis in modern education, and what are the strategies for its implementation in a contemporary educational context?

In line with these research questions, this study aims to comprehensively describe the concept of the ethic of spiritual and material balance (*tawāzun*) in the treasury of classical Islamic thought, along with its theological and philosophical foundations. Furthermore, this research seeks to analyze the phenomenon of the value crisis in modern education, identifying its manifestations, causal factors, and impact on students. Finally, this study aims to examine the relevance and construct an implementation model of classical Islamic balance ethics as a transformative solution to overcome the value crisis in the contemporary education system.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a library research method with a qualitative-descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected from primary sources, namely the classical works of Muslim scholars such as *Ihyā' 'Ulūmuddīn\** (Al-Ghazali), *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (Ibn Miskawaih), and *Adab al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn* (Al-Mawardi), as well as secondary sources in the form of books, scientific journals, and relevant articles. The data analysis techniques used are content analysis, comparative analysis, and synthesis analysis to formulate an applicable implementation model. It is hoped that this research can enrich the scientific treasury in the

field of Islamic educational philosophy and provide practical references for education stakeholders in designing holistic and value-based curricula and learning methods.

## **DISCUSSION**

The world of modern education, despite achieving rapid progress in science and technology, now faces a fundamental crisis that erodes its essence: a crisis of values (Nugroho, 2020). This crisis is not a singular phenomenon but a complex syndrome whose manifestations are felt from the classroom to the digital space, affecting the behavior, mental health, and future direction of the younger generation (Lessy et al., 2022). To formulate an effective solution, a deep diagnosis is needed that not only identifies the symptoms but also uncovers the philosophical roots that underlie them.

### **Dual Symptoms: Moral Degradation and a Mental Health Emergency**

The value crisis in modern education manifests in two interconnected dimensions: externally visible moral degradation and internally felt mental health emergencies (Lessy et al., 2022). Both are faces of the same problem: the failure of the education system to nurture a whole human being.

#### **External Manifestations (Moral Degradation)**

The most visible manifestation of the value crisis among students is the alarming escalation of deviant behavior (Lessy et al., 2022). Phenomena such as bullying, student brawls, and increasing cases of disrespect and even violence towards teachers and parents are becoming more common. Empirical data in Indonesia confirms this disturbing trend. The Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) noted a significant increase in bullying cases at schools, from 21 cases in 2022 to 30 cases in 2023. The majority of cases (80%) occurred in schools under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, with the junior high school level being the most vulnerable (50% of total cases) (Annur, 2023). Furthermore, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported approximately 3,800 bullying cases throughout 2023, with nearly half occurring in educational institutions (Elaine, 2024). KPAI data up to August 2023 also showed that out of 2,355 cases of child protection violations, 861 occurred within educational units, indicating that schools have become one of the most vulnerable locations for children (Vasudewa & Setuningsih, 2023). These behaviors are indicators of a deeper erosion of

ethics and manners, signaling a systemic failure in the process of internalizing prevailing social values and norms (Lessy et al., 2022).

### **Internal Manifestations (Mental Health Emergency)**

Behind the disruptive behavior lies significant internal suffering (Nabila & Hidayati, 2024). There is a strong causal relationship between excessive academic pressure—a hallmark of achievement-oriented modern education—and the rise in mental health problems among students (Nabila & Hidayati, 2024). The latest data from the Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) in 2022 paints a grim picture: one in three Indonesian adolescents (34.9%), equivalent to 15.5 million, experienced mental health problems in the last 12 months (Center for Reproductive Health et al., 2022). More seriously, one in twenty adolescents (5.5%), or about 2.45 million, had a diagnosed mental disorder in the same period (Center for Reproductive Health et al., 2022). Anxiety disorders were the most common type of disorder experienced.

Heavy workloads, high expectations, and a highly competitive environment are major triggers for stress, anxiety, depression, and extreme fatigue (burnout) (Rahmita et al., 2019). Academic pressure is one of the main factors affecting adolescent mental health, alongside others such as social media pressure, family environment, and bullying (Nabila & Hidayati, 2024). Thus, this value crisis has a dual dimension: externally visible moral degradation and an internally felt mental health emergency, both of which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

### **Three Imbalanced Paradigms: An Analysis of the Root Causes**

The symptoms of the crisis described are not isolated issues (Nugroho, 2020). They are products of the paradigms that underpin the modern education system, which collectively create an ecosystem vulnerable to value fragility (Azra, 2012). Three main, mutually reinforcing paradigms can be identified as the root causes.

#### **Fragmented Educational Paradigm**

Historically, one of the most significant developments that shaped modern education is the separation between religious and general sciences, a phenomenon known as the dichotomy of knowledge (Nata, 2013). This dichotomous view has created a dualism in the education system, which philosophically contradicts the Islamic concept that views

knowledge as integral and universal (Al-Attas, 2010). The impact of this dichotomy is far deeper than just the separation of subjects. It creates what is called a "split personality," where students are accustomed to separating the spiritual domain from their intellectual and material lives (Mastuhu, 2007). Consequently, general sciences like science and social studies are taught as if they are sterile from divine values, while religious studies seem alienated from the realities and challenges of the modern era (Suharto, 2011). This process, known as the secularization of education, inherently neglects or marginalizes moral and spiritual aspects (Lugg, 2018). When education focuses only on rational and empirical aspects, it creates a spiritual aridity that becomes a major trigger for the emergence of amoral behavior (Langgulung, 2008).

### **Pragmatic-Materialistic Orientation**

The second paradigm that exacerbates the crisis is the highly pragmatic and materialistic orientation of education (Tilaar, 2012). In this system, the noble goal of education to form whole and characterful human beings is often reduced to an instrumental function to meet the demands of the job market and drive economic growth (Nugroho, 2020). Education is no longer seen as a process of humanization but as a production line for competent labor (Azra, 2012). The focus on measurable outcomes—such as exam scores, rankings, and employment rates—creates a highly competitive learning environment and is a major source of academic pressure (Rahmita et al., 2019).

Ironically, this excessive pressure is counterproductive. The stress and anxiety arising from relentless performance demands can negatively impact students' mental health, which in turn reduces their concentration, motivation, and academic performance (Rahmita et al., 2019). An education system obsessed with academic achievement creates psychological conditions (stress, anxiety, burnout) that hinder the achievement of its primary goals. This empirically proves that separating cognitive development from affective and spiritual guidance is not only philosophically flawed but also practically ineffective.

### **The Challenge of the Digital Era and Globalization**

The meaning vacuum created by a fragmented and pragmatic education becomes increasingly vulnerable amidst the currents of globalization and the digital era (Safitri & Husnaini, 2025). The unfiltered flow of information and culture from abroad enters the daily lives of students, promoting values that often conflict with local wisdom (Lessy et al., 2022).

Values such as consumerism, hedonism, and extreme individualism erode the foundations of national values and social solidarity (Safitri & Husnaini, 2025). Specifically, the hedonistic lifestyle—which defines happiness as momentary pleasure and material possessions—has permeated the mentality of the younger generation, driven by the images of success displayed on social media and in popular culture (Safitri & Husnaini, 2025). This lifestyle is characterized by excessive consumptive behavior, egoism, indifference to the suffering of others, and a constant sense of dissatisfaction (Safitri & Husnaini, 2025).

Systemically, these three paradigms work in synergy. Education fragmented by the dichotomy of knowledge creates a spiritual and meaning vacuum. The pragmatic orientation then replaces the fundamental question "why do I learn?" with the instrumental question "what will I get from learning?". This meaning vacuum is then filled by the materialistic answers offered by global culture. This is not just a "value crisis" in the sense of a lack of values, but a crisis of meaning where there is a systemic replacement of noble, transcendental values with shallow, transient ones.

To summarize the fundamental conflict between the dominant paradigm of modern education and the framework needed to address this crisis, the following comparison can be made.

Aspect	Dominant Modern Education Paradigm	Classical Islamic Balance Paradigm
Source of Values	Rationalism, Humanism, Pragmatism	Revelation (Qur'an & Sunnah) interpreted by reason
Primary Goal	Academic excellence, job readiness, and professional competence	Formation of <i>Insan Kamil</i> (the perfect human), happiness in this world & the hereafter
Concept of Human	Rational-biological being, often fragmented	Holistic unity of body ( <i>basyar</i> ) and spirit ( <i>insan</i> )
Curriculum Focus	Cognitive, mastery of general sciences (science & technology)	Integration of <i>aqliyyah</i> (rational) and <i>naqliyyah</i> (revealed) knowledge
Potential Crisis	Crisis of meaning, academic stress, moral degradation, spiritual alienation	Stagnation if rationality is rejected, ritual formalism without substance

**Tawazun:** The Paradigm of Balance in Classical Islamic Epistemology

As an antithesis to the fragmented paradigm of modern education, the intellectual treasury of classical Islam offers an integral and holistic framework centered on the concept of the ethic of balance, or *tawāzun* (Nata, 2013). This paradigm does not view life as separate compartments but as a harmonious unity where spiritual and material dimensions support and give meaning to each other (Al-Attas, 2010). *tawāzun* is not merely a moral

recommendation but an ontological principle—a fundamental law underlying the nature of creation and life itself.

### **Theological and Ontological Foundations: Personal, Communal, and Cosmic Balance**

The theological foundation for the principle of *tawāzun* can be found at various levels in the Qur'ān, indicating that balance is a universal law inherent in God's creation.

#### **Personal Balance (World-Hereafter)**

The words of Allah SWT in the Qur'ān (28:77) serve as a primary guide for individual balance:

وَأَتَّبِعْ فِي مَآءِ انْتِكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا

"But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world." (Qur'ān 28:77)

This verse explicitly commands humans to use material and worldly gifts as a means to achieve happiness in the hereafter, without having to deny or forget the permissible worldly pleasures (Dompert Dhuafa, 2024). This is a divine formula for balancing spiritual aspirations and material needs, rejecting extremism in the form of either pure materialism or world-rejecting asceticism (Anwar, 2010).

#### **Communal Balance (*Ummatan Wasāṭan*)**

At the community level, Allah SWT states in the Qur'ān (2:143):

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

"And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people." (Qur'ān 2:143)

The term *ummatan wasāṭan* has a rich meaning, signifying not only moderate but also just, chosen, and best (Asmani et al., 2021). This "middle" position places the Muslim community as a model and witness for all of humanity, showing a way of life that is not trapped in the extremes of materialism or world-rejecting spiritualism (Lubis, 2015). This principle becomes the basis for religious moderation (*wasatīyyah*) that rejects all forms of extremism (Asmani et al., 2021).

### Cosmic Balance (*Al-Mīzān*)

This principle of balance even applies on a cosmic scale. In the Qur'ān (55:7-9), Allah SWT says:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (٧) أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (٨) وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (٩)

"And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. (7) That you not transgress within the balance. (8) And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance. (9)" (Qur'ān 55:7-9)

These verses affirm that balance (*al-mīzān*) is a universal law inherent in God's creation. Humans, as vicegerents on earth, are commanded to maintain and uphold this balance in all aspects of their lives, from economic transactions to social justice. An analysis of these three levels of balance—personal, communal, and cosmic—reveals that *tawāzun* is not just an ethical rule but a fundamental principle of reality. An education system that ignores this fundamental principle is essentially educating its students to live against the very order of the universe.

### Spiritual-Material Harmonization: The World as a Field for the Hereafter

Based on the principle of *tawāzun*, the Islamic worldview fundamentally rejects the secular dichotomy that rigidly separates the sacred from the profane, or the spiritual from the material (Al-Attas, 2010). Spirituality in Islam does not demand the rejection of the world but requires its ethical and responsible use as a means to achieve higher goals (Nata, 2013). The world is seen as a "field for the hereafter" (*ad-dunyā mazra'atul ākhirah*), where humans perform deeds to reap their results in the afterlife.

A powerful analogy to understand this relationship is the parable of the body and the soul. Material civilization is likened to the body, while spiritual civilization is its soul. No matter how beautiful and strong a body is, without a soul, it is just a lifeless corpse. Similarly, material progress without a foundation of spiritual values will result in a civilization that is empty, dark, and directionless. The material dimension derives its life, meaning, and purpose from the spiritual dimension.

In this framework, science and spirituality are not in conflict. On the contrary, the study of the universe (*\*āyāt kawniyyah\**) is seen as one way to contemplate the greatness and wisdom of the Creator, which in turn strengthens faith. The Qur'ān itself encourages humans to use their reason to reflect on His creation. Thus, in Islam, science and spirituality

are two sides of the same coin, an inseparable integral unity that becomes the foundation for an integrated curriculum (Nata, 2013).

### **Architects of the Soul's Balance: Reconstructing the Thought of Classical Muslim Philosophers**

The principle of *tawāzun* was not just a theological concept; it was deeply elaborated by classical Muslim philosophers and thinkers into a structured system of character education (Anwar, 2010). They were the architects who designed the balanced and sturdy structure of the human psyche. Three of the most representative figures in this regard are Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Al-Mawardi, each offering unique yet complementary contributions, forming a complete model of holistic education.

#### **Al-Ghazali: Inner Purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*) as the Foundation of Knowledge and Action**

Imam Al-Ghazali, through his magnum opus *Iḥyā' 'Ulūmuddīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), places the inner state as the axis of all human activity. He analyzes the concept of the *qalb* (heart) not merely as a biological organ but as the spiritual center, the very essence of humanity (Musrifah, 2019). According to him, the goodness or badness of all outward actions (*ẓāhir*) is determined by the condition of the heart (*bāṭin*) (Aslami, 2016). Based on this premise, Al-Ghazali builds his educational theory on the foundation of soul purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*) (Musrifah, 2019).

For him, the primary prerequisite for a seeker of knowledge (*\*ṭālib al-'ilm\**) is not just intellectual brilliance but the purity of the heart from spiritual diseases such as arrogance, envy, and love of the world (Musrifah, 2019). He uses the analogy that knowledge is a light from Allah, and this sacred light will never enter a vessel (the heart) that is dirty and dark. This process of soul purification is carried out through three sequential stages (Musrifah, 2019):

1. *Takhallī* (Emptying): The first stage is to empty or cleanse the soul of all blameworthy traits (*akhlāq madhmūmah*) and diseases of the heart (Aslami, 2016). This is the process of "uninstalling" bad behaviors such as envy, greed, and anger, which are gateways for Satan to enter the heart (Aslami, 2016). Without this emptying process, all good deeds will be imperfect as they are still mixed with bad qualities (Aslami, 2016).

2. *Taḥallī* (Adorning): After the soul is emptied of bad traits, the next stage is to adorn it with praiseworthy traits (*akhlāq maḥmūdah*) (Musrifah, 2019). This is the "installation" process of good habits through continuous spiritual exercises (*riyāḍah*), such as repentance, patience, gratitude, sincerity, and trust in God (Anwar, 2010). This stage aims to instill noble behaviors until they become ingrained habits (Aslami, 2016).
3. *Tajallī* (Manifestation): This is the pinnacle of the spiritual journey, where the veil between the servant and their Lord is lifted (Aslami, 2016). When the processes of *\*takhallī\** and *\*taḥallī\** are well-executed, the heart becomes pure and bright, thus capable of receiving divine light and witnessing the presence of Allah inwardly (Musrifah, 2019).

For Al-Ghazali, moral education and inner purification are not just supplementary subjects but the absolute foundation for the entire process of acquiring knowledge and performing good deeds (Musrifah, 2019).

### **Ibn Miskawaih: A Psychological Map of the Soul and the Ethics of the Middle Path**

If Al-Ghazali provides the spiritual foundation, then Ibn Miskawaih, in his work *\*Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq\** (The Refinement of Character), provides a detailed psychological framework for understanding and building character (Rosyid, 2024). He maps the human soul into three main faculties:

1. *Al-Quwwah an-Nāṭiqah* (The Rational Faculty/Intellect): The highest faculty, called the "royal" faculty, centered in the brain. It enables humans to think, understand knowledge, and distinguish between right and wrong (Sa'diyah & Hariadi, 2020).
2. *Al-Quwwah al-Ghaḍabiyyah* (The Irascible Faculty/Spirit): The faculty called the "beast of prey" faculty. It drives humans to defend themselves, feel anger, be courageous, and seek honor (Sa'diyah & Hariadi, 2020).
3. *Al-Quwwah as-Shahwāniyyah* (The Appetitive Faculty/Desire): The faculty called the "animal" faculty, centered in the liver. It is related to bodily desires and passions such as eating, drinking, and other biological needs (Sa'diyah & Hariadi, 2020).

According to Ibn Miskawaih, noble character (virtue) is not achieved by suppressing any of the soul's faculties, but by creating a state of balance and harmony among the three. This balance is achieved when the rational faculty (*al-quwwah an-nāṭiqah*) successfully becomes a wise leader for the other two faculties (Sa'diyah & Hariadi, 2020). When one

faculty becomes excessive (*ifrāt*) or deficient (*tafrīt*), blameworthy traits arise. The ideal balance among these three faculties gives rise to the four cardinal virtues that are the pillars of human character (Sa'diyah & Hariadi, 2020):

1. Wisdom (*Hikmah*): Born from the balance of the rational faculty.
2. Courage (*Shajā'ah*): Born from the balance of the irascible faculty, guided by reason.
3. Temperance (*Iffah*): Born from the balance of the appetitive faculty, controlled by reason.
4. Justice (*Adālah*): The highest virtue, resulting from the harmony of the previous three virtues.

For Ibn Miskawaih, the goal of character education is a systematic and continuous process of soul-training (*riyāḍah an-naḥs*) to achieve this "middle path" (*al-wasat*).

### **Al-Mawardi: Integrating Worldly and Religious Ethics in Socio-Ethical Life**

While Al-Ghazali focuses on the vertical-spiritual dimension and Ibn Miskawaih on the internal-psychological dimension, Al-Mawardi, through his book *Adab al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn* (The Ethics of the World and Religion), provides a framework for socio-ethical application (Jaelani, 2016). His work serves as a practical guide for integrating and balancing ethics in worldly affairs (social, economic, political) with ethics in religious matters.

Al-Mawardi emphasizes that reason (*al-'aql*) is a divine gift that is the foundation of religion and the pillar of worldly life (Jaelani, 2016). However, he insists that reason must always be under the guidance of revelation so as not to be led astray by desires (Jaelani, 2016). In his view, education is the process of training and empowering reason to understand and apply the guidance of revelation in the reality of daily life. In the broader social context, Al-Mawardi introduces the concept of "functional morality," where the welfare and happiness of society can only be realized if there is a harmonious balance and integration between economic morality (how humans earn a living) and religious morality (ethical principles from revelation) (Jaelani, 2016).

The thoughts of these three figures, though different in emphasis, are not contradictory. Instead, they form three complementary pillars of a complete and solid structure of character education. Al-Ghazali provides the spiritual foundation (vertical dimension: relationship with God). Ibn Miskawaih provides the psychological framework (internal dimension: balance within the soul). Al-Mawardi provides the socio-ethical application (horizontal dimension: manifestation of character in society). A comprehensive

and effective character education program must be able to integrate these three dimensions synergistically.

### **Reconstructing Holistic Education: A Contemporary Implementation Model of tawāzun**

The philosophical ideas of classical Muslim thinkers on the ethic of balance offer a solid framework for reconstructing modern education (Anwar, 2010). Its implementation does not mean rejecting the progress of the age but integrating the wisdom of the past to heal the ailments of the present (Azra, 2012). This reconstruction process demands a holistic approach, touching upon the curriculum, teaching methods, and the entire school culture (Rojii et al., 2019). There is a strong conceptual parallel between the principle of tawāzun in Islam and the call for holistic education in the modern era, both of which reject reductionist approaches and aim to develop the whole person (Rojii et al., 2019).

### **Curriculum Integration: Demolishing the Dichotomy of Knowledge**

The first and most fundamental step is to dismantle the artificial barriers between religious and general sciences (Nata, 2013). This means integrating spiritual and ethical values into all subjects, not just burdening Islamic Religious Education (PAI) with this task (Rojii et al., 2019). This approach directly counters the negative effects of the dichotomy of knowledge, showing students that spirituality is relevant in every aspect of life and knowledge. Some practical examples of this integration include:

- Science: Lessons about the universe can be enriched with discussions on the greatness, order, and balance of God's creation (*al-mīzān*), fostering a sense of awe and gratitude. For instance, when studying ecosystems, teachers can link it to the concept of preserving nature as a trust and a form of gratitude to Allah, referring to Qur'ānic verses about nature.
- Mathematics: Mathematical concepts such as order, patterns, and logic can be connected to the order of the universe as evidence of God's oneness and wisdom (\*tawhīd\*) (Hikmah, 2018). Honesty in solving problems can be linked to the Sharia value of truthfulness, and the concept of sets can be used to explain God's attribute of justice.
- Physical Education: Physical health is viewed as a trust that must be maintained. Sports are not only for fitness but also for character building, such as discipline,

sportsmanship, hard work, and honesty, all of which are Islamic values (Hidayat et al., 2023). A strong believer (\*al-mu'min al-qawiyy\*) is more beloved to Allah, providing a spiritual basis for physical activity.

- History and Economics: Besides learning facts and chronology, students are encouraged to draw moral lessons (\*'ibrah\*) from the rise and fall of civilizations. Economic concepts like profit and efficiency are taught alongside Islamic business ethics, such as honesty, justice, and the prohibition of usury.

This model has been implemented in various Integrated Islamic Schools (SIT) in Indonesia, which consciously blend the national curriculum with Islamic values in every subject and school activity (Rojii et al., 2019).

### **Pedagogical Innovation: Activating the Affective-Spiritual Domain**

Curriculum changes must be accompanied by innovations in teaching methods (pedagogy). Character education cannot be effective if it is only delivered through lecture methods that focus on the cognitive domain (knowledge). Methods that are intentionally designed to touch and develop the affective (attitudes, values, emotions) and spiritual domains of students are needed (de Souza, 2011). Some applicable methods include:

- Reflection-Based Learning: Inviting students to reflect on their experiences and connect them with ethical and spiritual values.
- Moral Dilemma Case Studies: Presenting problematic situations that challenge students to think critically and make decisions based on moral principles.
- Service-Oriented Project-Based Learning: Assigning students to projects that provide direct benefits to the community, fostering empathy and social responsibility.
- Value Clarification Technique: Helping students to identify, analyze, and strengthen the values they believe in (Sobry & Fitriani, 2022).

These methods shift the focus from merely "knowing good" to "feeling and practicing good." The role of the teacher is crucial in this regard. Teachers no longer function only as *mu'allim* (teacher of knowledge) or *mudarris* (deliverer of lessons), but must transform into a *murabbī* (Yudistira, 2024). A *murabbī* is an educator who guides, nurtures, and develops all of a student's potential—intellectual, emotional, and spiritual—with affection and by example (Zuhri, 2018). The role of a *murabbī* emphasizes moral cultivation

and soul purification, making the teacher a living role model (*uswah ḥasanah*) whose words and actions become a source of inspiration for students.

### **Building School Culture: Creating a Balanced Ecosystem**

An integrated curriculum and affective pedagogy will only thrive in a supportive ecosystem or school culture. Building a positive school culture where the principle of balance is a core value is the responsibility of the entire school community. This culture can be realized through concrete practices, such as:

- Role Modeling (*Uswah Ḥasanah*): Educators and school staff must be models or exemplars in applying balanced, honest, and noble behavior (Anwar, 2010). The principal must be a just and wise leader, building two-way communication and a culture of appreciation.
- Habituation (*Ādah*): Implementing routine activities that consistently foster spirituality and character. Examples include congregational Dhuha and Zuhr prayers, charity programs, a culture of greeting and smiling, an honesty canteen, and Qur'ān literacy activities before lessons begin (Muhaimin, 2008).
- Supportive Policies: Implementing school policies that consciously balance academic targets with the emotional well-being of students. This could include healthy management of homework loads, promotion of non-academic extracurricular activities, and providing easy access to guidance and counseling services.

By creating an environment where Islamic values are not only taught but also lived, the school becomes a miniature of a civilized and balanced society, where noble character can grow naturally.

### **Navigating Challenges, Seizing Opportunities**

The implementation of this balance-based education model is not without its challenges, especially in the modern era. Realistically identifying these challenges is the first step toward formulating effective strategies.

The main challenges can be categorized as internal and external (Triatmanto, 2010). Internal challenges originate from within the education system itself, including:

1. Curriculum and Mindset: An overly dense curriculum oriented towards cognitive targets often leaves no room for deep character building (Triatmanto, 2010). Furthermore, the

mindset among policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and even parents often prioritizes academic scores and rankings over moral development.

2. **Teacher Competence:** Many general subject teachers may not have an adequate understanding of *thaqāfah islāmiyyah* (Islamic knowledge) to authentically and meaningfully integrate Islamic values into their lessons (Rojii et al., 2019). Continuous professional development and training are needed to equip them with this competence.
3. **Resource Limitations:** Schools, especially in certain regions, may lack the facilities, integrated teaching materials, and qualified teaching staff to implement character education programs effectively.

Meanwhile, external challenges come from the environment outside the school, especially:

1. **Influence of the Digital Era:** The flood of information from social media and digital content promoting values of hedonism, consumerism, and extreme individualism is the biggest challenge. This content often directly contradicts the values that schools aim to instill (Safitri & Husnaini, 2025).
2. **Cultural and Religious Diversity:** In the diverse context of a nation like Indonesia, the implementation of character education based on Islamic values must be done wisely so as not to appear exclusive and to continue to respect pluralism and tolerance.

Although these challenges are real, they can be turned into opportunities if faced with the right strategies. Technology, if used wisely, can be a very effective tool for character education. Schools can develop positive digital content, such as animated videos of exemplary stories, interactive apps about ethics, and use social media for campaigns of kindness. In addition, the curriculum also needs to include material on digital etiquette and media literacy, equipping students with the ability to filter information and use technology responsibly and ethically.

## CONCLUSION

This research has revealed that the value crisis plaguing modern education is not a superficial phenomenon that can be overcome with partial interventions, but a systemic crisis rooted in a fundamentally imbalanced paradigm. In essence, it is a crisis of balance—a disharmony between the development of the cognitive dimension and the cultivation of the affective-spiritual dimension, between worldly orientation and otherworldly consciousness,

and between individual achievement and communal responsibility. The manifestations of this crisis are clearly visible in the escalation of deviant behavior, moral degradation, and the spread of mental health problems among students.

As an antithesis to this imbalanced paradigm, the intellectual treasury of classical Islam offers a transformative solution: the ethic of balance, or *tawāzun*. This concept is not merely a moral exhortation but an ontological principle rooted in divine revelation and deeply elaborated by Muslim philosophers. The Qur'ān affirms the principle of balance on three levels: personal (world-hereafter), communal (*ummatan wasaʿatan*), and cosmic (*al-mīzān*), showing that balance is a fundamental law inherent in the order of creation.

Classical Muslim philosophers—Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Al-Mawardi—constructed *tawāzun* into an integral and comprehensive system of character education. Al-Ghazali emphasized inner purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*) as the spiritual foundation. Ibn Miskawaih provided the psychological framework for the balance of the soul. Al-Mawardi completed it with a socio-ethical application framework. These three thoughts form three complementary pillars: the vertical (spiritual), the internal (psychological), and the horizontal (social) dimensions.

## IMPLICATION

The relevance of the *tawāzun* concept to the needs of contemporary education is very strong, in line with the holistic education movement that also desires the development of the whole person. The implementation of the ethic of balance in modern education requires a comprehensive transformation on three synergistic levels:

1. Curriculum Level: Integration of spiritual values into all subjects to overcome the dichotomy of knowledge (Nata, 2013).
2. Pedagogical Level: Adoption of affective-spiritual learning methods that touch the domains of the heart and behavior (de Souza, 2011).
3. School Culture Level: Building an educational ecosystem that supports the values of balance through role modeling, habituation, and policies that support holistic well-being (Anwar, 2010).

Although this implementation faces challenges—such as entrenched paradigms and the strong negative influence of social media—these are not insurmountable obstacles. What is needed is commitment, creativity, and collaboration from all education stakeholders.

Ultimately, returning to the principle of balance is not a regression but a progression towards a more humane, meaningful, and sustainable education. By reconstructing the education system on the foundation of *tawāzun*, we can hope to produce a future generation that is not only intellectually intelligent and professionally competent but also spiritually mature, morally robust, and wise in navigating the complexities of the modern world. This is the true manifestation of the noble goal of Islamic education: to form *\*insān kāmil\**—the perfect human who is a mercy to all the worlds (*rah̄matan lil 'ālamīn*).

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