

## REVITALIZATION OF THE SOUL OF EDUCATION: THE QUR'ANIC PARADIGM IN CHARACTER FORMATION BASED ON INDONESIAN CULTURAL WISDOM

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### Abstract

The moral crisis in contemporary education demands a return to the spiritual foundations that once shaped the integrity of human character. This study explores the integration of Qur'anic values within Indonesia's diverse cultural framework as a means to revitalize the moral spirit of education. Drawing on the Qur'anic paradigm of *tarbiyah* (education), which emphasizes spiritual growth, ethical awareness, and shared responsibility, this article argues that character development must go beyond cognitive instruction and encompass the formation of moral awareness. In the Indonesian context, the synthesis of Qur'anic teachings with local cultural wisdom, such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), custom (*adat*), and respect (*rasa hormat*), offers a transformative model for education. By contextualizing Islamic moral principles within Indonesia's pluralistic society, this approach promotes harmony, empathy, and social justice across religious and cultural boundaries. Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative-descriptive analysis of Qur'anic verses and Indonesian educational values to develop a conceptual framework for holistic character education. This finding confirms that the revival of the moral and spiritual dimensions of education based on the ethics of the Qur'an and local cultural identity can produce a generation of learners who have good faith and morals, which is very important in maintaining Indonesia's multicultural harmony.

**Keywords:** human character; islamic moral; pluralistic society

### INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, global connectivity, and shifting social landscapes, education faces not only the challenge of preparing students for the job market, but also the deeper and more perennial challenge of nurturing human character, moral integrity, and spiritual awareness (Sagala et al., 2024). The “soul” of education—its capacity to form persons of ethical sensitivity, communal responsibility, and inner flourishing—is too often neglected in favour of measurable outputs, standardized testing, and purely cognitive-skills pedagogy. The moral crisis evident in contemporary schooling underscores the urgency of rethinking what education ought to achieve when the horizon extends beyond mere technical competence to the flourishing of the whole human being (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004).

Against this backdrop, the paradigm offered by the Al-Qur'an — with its holistic understanding of *tarbiyah* (educative formation), *ta'dīb* (moral cultivation), and *ta'līm* (instruction) — offers a timely corrective. Scholars have shown that in an Islamic framework, education is not simply about the transmission of knowledge (*ta'līm*), but about the nurturing of character, soul, and moral consciousness (*tarbiyah*) and the internalization of ethical virtue (*ta'dīb*) (Qodir & Asrori, 2025). The Qur'anic educational paradigm invites us to reflect on education as formation, transformation and stewardship of the self, others and the world.

In the Indonesian context, the multiplicity of cultural traditions, local wisdoms, communal life, and a pluralistic society present both a challenge and an opportunity for educational renewal. The phrase “revitalization of the soul of education” invites a return to spiritual foundations while remaining deeply contextual, sensitive to local memory, culture, and communal rhythms. Indonesia’s cultural wisdom—such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), adat (custom/traditional norms), and rasa hormat (respect)—provides a rich backdrop for embedding moral and spiritual formation in educational practice.

Indeed, to align the Qur’anic paradigm of tarbiyah with local cultural values is to enter a fruitful zone of synergy: an education that acknowledges cognitive growth, emotional maturity, spiritual depth, and social responsibility. As one study argues, Islamic education must move beyond knowledge-centric models to embrace IQ, EQ and SQ (spiritual quotient) simultaneously, so that learners become not only clever, but emotionally attuned and spiritually anchored (Mariani, 2021). The integration of such dimensions speaks directly to character formation.

Furthermore, in Indonesia’s multicultural and multi-religious environment, the fusion of Qur’anic moral principles with indigenous cultural wisdom holds potential for nurturing learners who are empathetic, socially committed, and justice-oriented (Cece, 2018). The values of communal responsibility embedded in gotong royong, the respect inherent in adat, and the ethos of respecting others’ dignity create fertile terrain for the Qur’anic ethical vision of shared responsibility (*tanggung jawab bersama*) and ethical awareness (*kesadaran etis*).

The Qur’anic paradigm also directs attention to the educational environment as an interconnected reality. The text invites human beings to reflect, to journey inward, to act outwardly, and to engage responsibly with their surroundings. This holistic orientation emphasises not just instruction, but transformation—in thought, heart and action (Rahman, 2024). When we speak of the “soul” of education, we mean this holistic vision: that education is not simply about output, but about character, purpose and moral formation.

In the Indonesian educational landscape, however, many schools remain stuck in models that prioritise cognitive achievement, exam results, and technical preparation. The deeper questions of meaning, ethical orientation, spiritual maturity and communal engagement are often neglected. If education is to serve as an engine of social justice, cultural harmony, and human flourishing, then the restorative task is to re-centre the moral and spiritual dimensions of schooling.

Thus, the theme of this study—*Revitalization of the Soul of Education: The Qur’anic Paradigm in Character Formation Based on Indonesian Cultural Wisdom*—seeks to chart a path that moves from crisis (moral, spiritual, social) to renewal, through a conceptual framework grounded both in the Qur’an and in Indonesian cultural wisdom. The study asks: how can the paradigm of tarbiyah drawn from the Qur’anic text be contextualised within Indonesian cultural frameworks (gotong royong, adat, rasa hormat) to foster character formation that is responsive to the demands of our pluralistic society?

Methodologically, this study employs qualitative-descriptive analysis of Qur’anic verses and Indonesian educational values to develop a conceptual framework for a holistic character education. By synthesising the Qur’anic ethic of tarbiyah with local cultural ethos, it proposes an educational model that is both faithful to the Qur’anic vision and responsive to the Indonesian cultural context.

The findings of the investigation suggest that the revival of the soul of education—through the integration of Qur’anic ethics and local cultural identity—can indeed produce learners of good faith and character, individuals equipped not only with knowledge, but with conscience, empathy and a sense of communal responsibility. In doing so, the educational

enterprise becomes a means of sustaining Indonesia's multicultural harmony, nurturing citizens who are morally anchored, socially responsible, and spiritually aware.

Given this context, the big question this research raises is: *How can educators and policymakers operationalise a Qur'anic-inspired paradigm of tarbiyah, embedded in Indonesian cultural wisdom, in the design, implementation and evaluation of character-formation education so as to revitalise the moral and spiritual soul of education in Indonesia?*

## **METHOD**

First, the overall research design adopts a qualitative-descriptive approach. Qualitative descriptive research is appropriate when the goal is to explore and articulate how phenomena are experienced and understood in context, without reduction to numbers or statistical inference. Such an approach has been used in Indonesian Islamic education studies, for example in exploring Qur'anic learning strategies and tarbiyah-based educational environments (Addas et al., 2022). By using this design, the research aims to produce rich narrative data regarding how the Qur'anic paradigm of tarbiyah (educative formation) interacts with Indonesian cultural wisdom (e.g., *gotong royong*, *adat*, *rasa hormat*) in character formation.

Second, the data collection methods combine textual analysis and field-based qualitative methods. On one hand, Qur'anic verses, classical and contemporary tafsir (interpretations), and educational texts about tarbiyah will be analysed thematically to identify core Qur'anic values relevant to character formation. On the other hand, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations will be conducted with educators, cultural practitioners, and learners in selected Indonesian schools or communities that embody local cultural wisdom. In Indonesian studies on Qur'anic education, techniques of observation, in-depth interviews and documentation have been reported (Rohma & Karwadi, 2023). The dual approach permits both theory building (from Qur'anic texts) and contextualisation (in Indonesian cultural settings).

Third, the sampling strategy will be purposive rather than probabilistic. Key informants include: (a) teachers and curriculum planners in Indonesian schools that incorporate character education and local cultural values; (b) cultural elders or community leaders who embody Indonesian cultural wisdom; and (c) students or alumni who have participated in programmes combining spiritual, moral and cultural character education. The research will select several case-study sites representing different cultural regions (for example Javanese, Sundanese, or other local cultures) to ensure diversity of local wisdom contexts. Documentation (such as school policy documents, lesson plans, community rituals) will complement interview data. Cultural-educational sampling in this way ensures the phenomena of interest are richly represented and deeply described.

Fourth, the data analysis procedure will follow thematic-descriptive steps typical of qualitative research: data condensation (reducing and organising raw data from transcripts and documents), data display (organising into themes, categories, conceptual map), and drawing conclusions/verification (reflecting back, triangulating across sources, checking consistency) (Prawanti et al., 2025). For the Qur'anic textual analysis, a thematic-interpretative approach will be used (for example the *maudhu'ī* thematic method) to extract the dimensions of tarbiyah (spiritual growth, ethical awareness, shared responsibility) from the Qur'an (Rahman, 2024). The Indonesian cultural wisdom aspects (e.g., *gotong royong*, *adat*, *rasa hormat*) will then be mapped onto these Qur'anic dimensions, yielding a conceptual framework of character formation. Through descriptive narrative, the study will illustrate how the synergy occurs in practice and what factors support or hinder it.

Fifth and finally, the validity, reliability and ethical considerations are addressed. To ensure trustworthiness, the study will apply triangulation of data sources (textual, interview, observation, documentation) and of methods (analysis of Qur'anic texts, plus field-empirical data). Member checking (sharing findings with participants for validation) and researcher reflexivity (being aware of the researcher's positionality) will also be adopted. Ethical clearance will be obtained from relevant institutions; all participants will be informed of purpose, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and rights to withdraw. Given the religious and cultural sensitivity of the topic, the researcher will engage respectfully with communities and ensure that representation of local cultural wisdom is accurate and not reductive. The combined methodological rigor supports the study's claim of developing a conceptual framework for holistic character education grounded in the Qur'anic paradigm and Indonesian cultural wisdom.

## FINDINGS

The findings of this study confirm that the moral and spiritual crisis in Indonesian education is deeply rooted in the marginalization of *tarbiyah ruhaniyyah*—spiritual formation—in favor of cognitive and technical competencies. This trend has resulted in what Al-Attas (Al-Attas, 2014) calls the “loss of adab,” a dislocation of knowledge from its ethical and metaphysical foundations. The Qur'anic paradigm of education, by contrast, emphasizes the *unity of knowledge, faith, and morality* through *ta'lim* (instruction), *tarbiyah* (nurturing), and *ta'dib* (ethical discipline). These dimensions cannot be separated without diminishing the essence of education as human formation. Within Indonesia's schooling system, this disjunction manifests in moral apathy, weakening of empathy, and a utilitarian view of education that prioritizes credentials over character (Azra, 1999).

A key finding is that the Qur'anic model of *tarbiyah* provides a holistic framework for character formation that integrates intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. Qur'anic verses such as *Al-'Alaq* [96]:1–5, *Luqmān* [31]:12–19, and *Al-Baqarah* [2]:129 articulate an educational vision that begins with the recognition of God (*iqra' bismi rabbik*) and culminates in moral consciousness and social responsibility. This triadic process—*tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *kesadaran etis* (ethical awareness), and *tanggung jawab bersama* (shared responsibility)—forms the core of what some scholars term *tarbiyah Qur'aniyyah*. Such an integrative framework transcends mere moral instruction by cultivating inward transformation that manifests in outward ethical action (Sumatri & Alwizar, 2021).

The findings further reveal that Indonesian cultural wisdom serves as a fertile ground for embodying Qur'anic ethics in daily educational practice. Values like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *rasa hormat* (respect), *tepa selira* (empathy), and *adat* (customary norms) resonate deeply with Qur'anic principles of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ihsan* (benevolence), and *adl* (justice). As Natsir and Rahardjo observe, the historical spread of Islam in the archipelago was characterized by adaptation and cultural dialogue, producing an Islam that is both authentic and contextual (Badri, 2020) (Dafit, 2017). Thus, the integration of Qur'anic ethics and cultural wisdom does not introduce a foreign moral code, but rather reawakens indigenous moral sensibilities aligned with divine guidance.

From this synthesis emerges a four-pillar model of holistic character education: spiritual awareness (*kesadaran ruhani*), moral integrity (*kejujuran moral*), social empathy (*kepedulian sosial*), and cultural rootedness (*kearifan lokal*). This framework extends beyond Indonesia's *Pendidikan Karakter Nasional* by embedding a transcendent moral axis grounded in Qur'anic spirituality. Muhaimin and Zuhdi note that spiritualizing education through Qur'anic ethics fosters the development of *insan kamil*—a person who is intellectually sharp,

morally upright, and spiritually mature. These findings affirm that authentic character formation requires integration between belief, emotion, and action—between knowing what is right, feeling what is right, and doing what is right (Antika & Husni, 2025) (Zuhdi & Dobson, 2025).

Empirical observations from Islamic schools and pesantren adopting Qur’anic-cultural frameworks show promising outcomes: improved moral behavior, greater student empathy, and stronger community engagement (Hidayatulloh et al., 2024). Students exposed to this model demonstrate higher levels of *moral reasoning* and *social participation* compared to those in purely academic systems. This suggests that moral-spiritual revitalization not only shapes individual virtue but also contributes to collective well-being and social cohesion. In the Indonesian context—marked by diversity and pluralism—this finding carries profound implications for fostering harmony and mutual respect among different communities.

Another major finding is that teachers play a decisive role in the success of Qur’anic-based moral education. In this paradigm, teachers are not merely conveyors of knowledge but *murabbi*—nurturers of souls who model ethical conduct. Muslim emphasizes that pedagogical transformation must begin with the spiritual renewal of educators themselves. Their moral integrity, reflective practice, and compassion embody the very values they seek to cultivate in learners. Consequently, teacher training programs must integrate Qur’anic ethics, local cultural understanding, and reflective pedagogy to ensure that educators serve as exemplars of *akhlaq karimah* (Muslim, 2022).

The discussion also highlights that the Qur’anic-cultural revitalization contributes to social harmony and national resilience. By grounding education in the dual sources of divine revelation and cultural heritage, Indonesia can resist both moral relativism and cultural homogenization. This integrative approach aligns with the Qur’anic ideal of *rahmatan lil ‘alamin*—being a mercy to all creation—while strengthening the moral fabric of Indonesia’s pluralistic society. As Rahardjo and Muslim argue, such education promotes *civic piety*—a spirituality that animates public responsibility, compassion, and justice across religious and ethnic boundaries (Dafit, 2017) (Muslim, 2022).

In sum, the findings underscore that revitalizing the soul of education requires reuniting the cognitive, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of learning. The Qur’anic paradigm of *tarbiyah*—when harmonized with Indonesia’s cultural wisdom—offers a sustainable model for moral renewal. This synthesis transforms education from a technocratic enterprise into a sacred trust (*amanah*), aimed at forming individuals of faith (*iman*), virtue (*akhlaq karimah*), and service (*tanggung jawab sosial*). As the data and literature collectively suggest, the future of Indonesia’s education depends not only on what learners know, but on who they become—people who embody wisdom, compassion, and divine consciousness in a plural world (Al-Attas, 2014).

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Rediscovering the Spiritual Foundation of Education

In the modern educational landscape of Indonesia, the emphasis on measurable achievement and utilitarian skills has increasingly overshadowed the deeper moral and spiritual dimensions that once formed the essence of learning. Schools and universities, driven by global competition and the pressure to produce “competent” human resources, have largely adopted technocratic paradigms of education that prioritize academic performance, certification, and employability over inner cultivation. As a result, the *ruh*—the spiritual soul of education—has been marginalized, and with it, the broader vision of forming whole, ethical, and spiritually aware human beings. This condition reflects what Al-Attas termed the *loss of adab*—a

disorientation in the purpose and hierarchy of knowledge, where education degenerates into mere training rather than character formation (Al-Attas, 2014).

The current moral crisis among Indonesian youth, often visible in rising cases of corruption, intolerance, and moral apathy, cannot be divorced from this deeper epistemological problem. When education becomes detached from its spiritual foundations, the moral compass of learners becomes weak, and their intellectual growth proceeds without ethical guidance. As Azra observes, the crisis of Indonesian education is not merely one of system or curriculum, but of *meaning*—a spiritual crisis stemming from the neglect of *iman* (faith) and *akhlaq* (virtue) as central aims of education. The transformation of education into a value-neutral space has led to an imbalance between *ta'lim* (instruction of knowledge) and *tarbiyah* (formation of the soul), producing individuals who are intellectually capable yet spiritually impoverished (Azra, 1999).

In contrast, the Qur'anic paradigm of education offers a profoundly integrative framework that unites intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. Education in the Qur'anic sense is never a purely cognitive process, but a holistic nurturing of the human being (*al-insān*), encompassing both mind and heart. The Qur'an calls for learning that leads to *ma'rifah*—knowledge that transforms and enlightens the self. Verses such as “*Read, in the name of your Lord who created*” (Q.S. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1–5) remind believers that knowledge must always begin with divine consciousness (*taqwā*). Likewise, the story of Luqmān's counsel to his son (Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 12–19) exemplifies the Qur'anic educational pattern: learning intertwined with ethical advice, humility, and awareness of God. These examples illustrate that *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta'dīb*—instruction, nurturing, and ethical discipline—are inseparable components of a unified spiritual pedagogy.

The integration of these three dimensions redefines education not as an industrial process of information delivery but as a sacred trust (*amanah*) for forming human beings who are both intellectually sound and spiritually anchored. According to Al-Attas, the true goal of Islamic education is the realization of *adab*, or right action rooted in knowledge and guided by wisdom (*hikmah*). *Adab* here signifies the proper ordering of the self in relation to God, to knowledge, and to society. When students internalize *adab*, knowledge becomes transformative rather than exploitative, leading them toward ethical awareness and service to others. In this sense, the Qur'anic paradigm restores equilibrium between the intellect (*'aql*) and the heart (*qalb*), countering the modern fragmentation that separates knowing from being (Al-Attas, 2014).

This rediscovery of the spiritual foundation also requires a reinterpretation of educational success. In secular frameworks, success is often measured by grades, degrees, and economic productivity. Yet in the Qur'anic worldview, success (*falāh*) encompasses moral rectitude, social harmony, and nearness to God. The educational process, therefore, must be designed not merely to “produce” workers or professionals, but to *cultivate persons* capable of self-governance, empathy, and moral judgment. This understanding aligns with Indonesia's own educational philosophy—*Pendidikan Nasional*—as articulated in the 2003 National Education System Act, which aspires to develop learners who are “faithful, pious, and noble in character.” However, the challenge lies in operationalizing this vision through curricula and pedagogy that genuinely integrate spiritual and ethical formation rather than treating them as peripheral subjects.

From a historical perspective, Indonesian Islamic education has long embodied this synthesis of intellect and spirituality. Traditional *pesantren* institutions, for example, integrated Qur'anic study with spiritual discipline (*riyādah*), humility, and communal service. The *kyai* (teacher) functioned not merely as an instructor, but as a moral exemplar and spiritual guide,

embodying the *tarbiyah ruhaniyyah* that this study calls to revive. Yet as modern education systems evolved under secular and bureaucratic influences, these spiritual elements were gradually diminished or confined to religious studies classes, rather than infused throughout the curriculum. Scholars such as Daulay (Daulay, 2014) and Muhaimin (Antika & Husni, 2025) argue that re-spiritualizing education requires not returning to traditionalism per se, but recovering the *principle of tawhīd*—the unity of all knowledge under God’s sovereignty—as the ontological basis of learning.

In rediscovering the spiritual foundation of education, it becomes necessary to re-envision the role of teachers as *murabbi* (nurturers) rather than mere transmitters of information. The Qur’an portrays prophets and educators as moral exemplars who cultivate the inner lives of their learners. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified this model by combining instruction (*ta’līm*) with personal mentoring (*tarbiyah*) and ethical correction (*ta’dīb*). Thus, teaching in the Qur’anic paradigm is inherently relational—it involves shaping the student’s inner disposition (*akhlāq*) through example, reflection, and care. In the Indonesian context, such an approach resonates deeply with cultural ideals of *keteladanan* (moral modeling) and *bimbingan batin* (inner guidance), which have long been part of local pedagogical traditions.

Therefore, rediscovering the spiritual foundation of education is not a nostalgic return to the past but a transformative act of re-centring education on its original human purpose. It challenges educators, policymakers, and communities to re-evaluate curricula, pedagogy, and assessment standards through the lens of *tawhīd* and *adab*. As Al-Attas insists, “education in Islam is not for producing good citizens merely, but good men—men who act justly, guided by truth and wisdom.” This statement captures the essence of what revitalizing the soul of education truly means: reclaiming its moral and spiritual essence as a form of worship (*‘ibadah*) and service (*khidmah*) (Al-Attas, 2014).

The marginalization of *tarbiyah ruhaniyyah* in Indonesian education has created a vacuum in moral direction and human integrity. The Qur’anic paradigm, by contrast, offers a comprehensive model that integrates *ta’līm*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta’dīb* as the triadic structure of genuine education. Grounded in faith, infused with ethical consciousness, and contextualized within Indonesia’s cultural wisdom, this rediscovery of the spiritual foundation provides a necessary corrective to the mechanistic tendencies of modern schooling. Only by restoring the *ruh*—the spiritual soul—can education once again become a process of nurturing the whole person: intellectually enlightened, morally upright, and spiritually alive.

## 2. The Qur’anic Paradigm of *Tarbiyah* as Character Framework

The Qur’anic paradigm of *tarbiyah* situates education not merely as the transmission of knowledge but as a comprehensive process of self-formation encompassing spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions. Rooted in the term *rabb*—which signifies nurturing, sustaining, and gradual perfection—*tarbiyah* implies a divinely oriented process of human development. Genuine education, therefore, does not simply equip learners with cognitive skills but cultivates them toward holistic human excellence in which reason (*‘aql*) and heart (*qalb*) harmoniously interact. Al-Ghazālī, in *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, asserts that the ultimate aim of education is “to enliven the heart,” a heart capable of recognizing God and directing all human potential toward goodness (*khayr*) (Al-Ghazali, 2016a)

The Qur’an provides a strong theological foundation for this understanding of *tarbiyah*. In Surah Al-‘Alaq [96]: 1–5, the divine command “*Iqra’ bismi rabbika alladhī khalaq*” (“Read in the name of your Lord who created”) underscores the inseparable link between knowledge and spirituality. Here, “reading” is not only intellectual but also spiritual—interpreting the divine signs (*āyāt*) in nature and within the self. Similarly, the narrative of Luqmān in Surah

Luqmān [31]: 12–19 presents a holistic educational framework: beginning with the affirmation of monotheism (*tawhīd*), progressing to moral and social virtues such as humility, prayer, and kindness toward parents. This sequence reflects that Qur’anic *tarbiyah* proceeds from inner rectification to outward social embodiment.

Conceptually, this study identifies three core pillars of the Qur’anic *tarbiyah* framework for character formation: spiritual purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), ethical awareness, and collective responsibility. The first pillar, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, refers to the purification of the self from blameworthy traits (*madhmūmah*) and the cultivation of praiseworthy ones (*maḥmūdah*). The Qur’an declares: “Indeed, he succeeds who purifies his soul, and he fails who corrupts it” (Q.S. Ash-Shams [91]: 9–10). An education centered on *tazkiyah* thus demands inner awareness, introspection, and continuous spiritual discipline as integral dimensions of personal development.

The second pillar, ethical awareness, emphasizes the organic relationship between knowledge and moral conduct. From the Qur’anic viewpoint, knowledge devoid of moral orientation loses its true value. Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 44 warns: “Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Will you not reason?” This verse affirms the inseparability of cognition and action, highlighting that genuine understanding must manifest as moral behavior. Ethical awareness, therefore, functions as the compass guiding all learning processes so that intellectual achievements align with moral purpose and responsibility (Nasr, 2009) (Al-Attas, 2010).

The third pillar, collective responsibility, derives from the Qur’anic notion of *khalīfah*—that humankind is appointed as God’s vicegerent (*khalīfah fi al-ard*). Within this paradigm, education forms individuals who are not only personally virtuous but also socially conscious. Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 129 recounts Prophet Abraham’s supplication for his progeny to receive a messenger who would recite God’s revelations, purify their souls, and teach them the Book and wisdom. This supplication embodies the social dimension of *tarbiyah*: the cultivation of a faithful community collectively responsible for promoting public good (*maṣlahah*) and justice (Dafit, 2017).

Together, these three dimensions form a holistic framework of character education. In the Indonesian context, *tazkiyah al-nafs* resonates with cultural values such as *ngajeni* (respect) and *andhap asor* (humility), while ethical awareness finds expression in the practice of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) as a form of social morality. Likewise, collective responsibility aligns with the ethos of *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberative consensus), emphasizing the primacy of collective welfare over individual interest. In this way, Qur’anic values find their concrete realization within Indonesian cultural wisdom, producing a contextual and holistic model of *tarbiyah* (Dafit, 2017).

This integrative approach expands the scope of Indonesia’s National Character Education (*Pendidikan Karakter Nasional*), which has largely emphasized external moral conduct such as discipline and responsibility without a deeply rooted spiritual axis. The Qur’an deepens this educational philosophy by introducing a transcendental orientation—asserting that the ultimate goal of education is to guide humans toward becoming both ‘*abd Allāh*’ (servant of God) and *khalīfah fi al-ard* (custodian of the earth). These dual roles demand a balance between ritual devotion and social responsibility (Al-Ghazali, 2016b).

Analysis of *tarbiyah* in the Qur’anic sense also reveals its intrinsic connection to the concept of *ihsān*—acting with excellence and awareness of God’s presence. *Ihsān* elevates the ethical dimension into a spiritual-existential realm. As Al-Attas explains, *ihsān* represents the pinnacle of *adab* (right conduct), for a person acts not merely to conform to social norms but out of deep consciousness of divine supervision (Al-Attas, 2010). Education, therefore, must

aim to awaken this *ihsān*-based consciousness through reflective and transformative learning experiences that engage both intellect and spirit (Umar et al., 2025) (Karimullah et al., 2022).

The Qur'anic *tarbiyah* paradigm thus stands in fundamental contrast to modern secular educational models that privilege instruction (*instruction*) over formation (*formation*). In the Qur'anic model, every act of learning is a form of worship (*'ibādah*), and every acquisition of knowledge carries moral weight. Muslim scholars emphasize that ethical transformation in Qur'anic *tarbiyah* proceeds through sequential stages: *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification), *ta'dīb* (ethical discipline), and *iṣlāḥ al-mujtama'* (social reform). Character formation, therefore, is not a temporary moral project but a continuous spiritual journey aimed at moral and societal restoration (Quran, n.d.).

In educational practice, this paradigm demands a pedagogical reorientation wherein teachers assume multifaceted roles: as *mu'allim* (instructor), *murabbi* (nurturer), and *mu'addib* (moral cultivator). These roles together express the totality of the educator's function in Islam. Teachers are not only conveyors of information but exemplars of virtue who guide students in their intellectual and spiritual growth. Within Indonesia's educational culture, this model resonates strongly with *pesantren* traditions that emphasize mentorship, spiritual formation, and character embodiment (Antika & Husni, 2025) (Daulay, 2014).

Philosophically, *tarbiyah* also reflects the distinctive epistemology of Islam—the unity of revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*'aql*). As Al-Attas argues, true knowledge is that which leads a person toward the recognition of God and responsibility toward creation (Al-Attas, 1980). Education divorced from spiritual and moral values inevitably leads to moral disorientation. The Qur'anic paradigm, conversely, teaches that authentic knowledge originates in *tawḥīd* (divine unity) and bears fruit in *maṣlaḥah* (social good) and justice (Nasr, 2009).

The Qur'anic paradigm of *tarbiyah* as a framework for character formation offers an integrative and contextually grounded educational model for Indonesia. It harmonizes the spiritual (*tazkiyah*), moral (*ta'dīb*), and social (*khilāfah*) dimensions of education, aligning naturally with Indonesia's cultural values of *gotong royong*, respect (*rasa hormat*), and deliberation (*musyawarah*). Through this paradigm, education transcends its instrumental function to become a transformative process aimed at cultivating *insān kāmil*—the complete human being—who embodies faith (*īmān*), noble character (*akhlāq karīmah*), and responsible engagement with humanity and the environment.

### 3. Integration of Qur'anic Ethics with Indonesian Cultural Wisdom

The integration of Qur'anic ethics with Indonesian cultural wisdom represents a dynamic synthesis between divine revelation and local moral traditions. Historically, Islam in Indonesia has not displaced indigenous cultural systems but rather transformed and elevated them through a process of *cultural internalization* (Azra, 2006). This integrative model has given birth to an educational ethos that is both *universal* in its spiritual orientation and *particular* in its cultural expression. In this context, Qur'anic moral principles—such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ihsan* (excellence in conduct), and *adl* (justice)—find resonance in the lived ethics of Indonesian society, particularly in values like *gotong royong*, *rasa hormat*, *tepa selira*, and *adat*.

The cultural value of *gotong royong* or mutual cooperation is one of the most prominent moral identities in Indonesia. It reflects the Qur'anic command for *ta'āwun 'ala al-birri wa al-taqwā*—“cooperate in goodness and piety” (Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 2). This parallel demonstrates that cooperation and solidarity are not merely social conventions but have a sacred dimension rooted in divine injunction. The practice of *gotong royong* in traditional villages and contemporary communities manifests Qur'anic ethical ideals by transforming social obligations into acts of collective worship (*'ibadah ijtima'iyah*). Thus, education that

integrates *gotong royong* into its curriculum does not only preserve cultural identity but also actualizes Qur'anic morality in daily life (Badri, 2020).

Similarly, the value of *rasa hormat*—respect toward parents, elders, and others—embodies the Qur'anic teaching of *birr al-walidayn* (dutifulness to parents) and *ta'zim* (honor). The Qur'an explicitly commands, “*And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy*” (Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 24). This ethos of reverence extends beyond familial relations to teachers, community leaders, and even the natural environment, mirroring the Islamic concept of *adab*—proper conduct guided by awareness of divine order (Al-Attas, 2014). In Indonesian educational practice, the inculcation of *rasa hormat* creates a learning culture rooted in humility (*tawadhu'*) and spiritual awareness.

The indigenous moral concept of *tepa selira*—empathy and sensitivity to others' feelings—closely aligns with the Qur'anic value of *ihsan*, which encourages believers to act with excellence and compassion even toward those who wrong them. Q.S. An-Nahl [16]: 90 states that God commands *justice and ihsan*. *Tepa selira* operationalizes *ihsan* in social interaction, forming the emotional-spiritual core of community harmony. In education, nurturing *tepa selira* means developing emotional intelligence intertwined with moral and spiritual sensibility, ensuring that empathy becomes a reflection of faith rather than mere social etiquette.

Meanwhile, the customary system (*adat*) functions as a moral framework that regulates social behavior within local communities. When harmonized with *shari'ah* ethics, *adat* becomes a cultural vehicle for transmitting Qur'anic moral values. The traditional Minangkabau saying “*adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah*” (custom based on Islamic law, and law based on the Qur'an) epitomizes this harmony. Rahardjo argues that this synthesis between *adat* and Islam shaped a moral civilization that views culture as an extension of revelation rather than its antithesis. Thus, integrating *adat* into character education revitalizes the moral consciousness that unites religion and culture (Dafit, 2017).

From a pedagogical standpoint, the synergy between Qur'anic ethics and Indonesian wisdom can be formulated into a contextual moral pedagogy (*pedagogi kontekstual Qur'ani*). This model grounds abstract moral concepts in the lived experiences and practices of local culture. For instance, lessons about *ukhuwah* can be embodied through collaborative learning and community projects inspired by *gotong royong*. Similarly, teaching *ihsan* may involve service-learning activities that encourage empathy and social responsibility. Such integration transforms moral education from doctrinal instruction into embodied praxis (Quran, n.d.).

Philosophically, this integration aligns with the Qur'anic worldview of *tawhid*—the unity of all dimensions of life under divine guidance. Al-Attas emphasizes that *tawhid* is not only a theological statement but also an epistemological and ethical principle (Al-Attas, 2014). It calls for unity between knowledge and action, faith and culture, revelation and experience. The harmony between Qur'anic ethics and Indonesian cultural wisdom reflects this *tawhidi* vision, presenting education as a process of harmonizing divine values with human creativity.

Furthermore, this integration has sociological significance. Indonesian Islam has historically developed through acculturation rather than confrontation (Azra, 2006). The Walisongo, as early educators and preachers, introduced Islamic values through existing cultural channels—such as art, literature, and communal rituals—without erasing local identity. This historical model demonstrates that the Qur'an's ethical principles can be translated into culturally resonant forms of pedagogy, allowing moral education to be both authentically Islamic and contextually Indonesian (Badri, 2020).

The educational implication of this approach is profound. When students learn that their local customs reflect Qur'anic values, they develop a sense of cultural confidence (*al-thiqah*

*al-thaqafiyyah*). They no longer perceive religion and culture as dichotomous, but as interdependent sources of moral guidance. This reinforces identity formation, nurturing individuals who are spiritually devout, culturally grounded, and socially responsible. According to Muhaimin, such integration strengthens national education by rooting it in moral and cultural foundations that are both local and universal (Antika & Husni, 2025).

In the practical domain, integrating Qur'anic ethics into cultural education demands an experiential and dialogical methodology. Teachers should not merely deliver moral precepts but invite students to explore their embodiment in daily life. Storytelling (*kisah Qur'ani*), community service, and local cultural performances can serve as media to internalize these values. This method aligns with the Islamic educational tradition of *ta'dib*—disciplining the self through lived experience and reflection (Al-Ghazali, 2016b).

However, the integration process must also be critical, distinguishing between cultural practices that align with Islamic ethics and those that contradict them. Not all elements of *adat* are necessarily harmonious with Qur'anic values. Therefore, educational institutions must employ a hermeneutical approach that filters cultural values through the ethical framework of the Qur'an. This ensures that integration becomes a process of *tajdid thaqafi*—cultural renewal—rather than uncritical preservation (Fahmi, 2020).

The integration of Qur'anic ethics with Indonesian cultural wisdom offers a transformative paradigm for character formation. It revitalizes the soul of education by rooting moral development in both divine revelation and indigenous virtue. This synthesis produces a uniquely Indonesian-Islamic educational identity—one that nurtures learners to become *'abd Allah* (servants of God) and *khalifah fi al-ardh* (vicegerents on earth) who embody the harmony of faith, culture, and humanity. As Rahardjo aptly notes, the future of Indonesian education depends on its ability to harmonize the spiritual depth of Islam with the moral richness of its cultural heritage (Dafit, 2017).

#### 4. Toward a Holistic Model of Character Formation

The contemporary educational discourse in Indonesia reveals a persistent tension between moral aspiration and practical implementation. Although the government's *Pendidikan Karakter Nasional* has emphasized the importance of ethics and citizenship, its application often remains fragmented and instrumental—focused on behavioral compliance rather than the internalization of values. The holistic model of character formation derived from the synthesis of Qur'anic ethics and Indonesian cultural wisdom seeks to overcome this limitation by reuniting intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions within a unified pedagogical framework. As Muhaimin argues, genuine character education cannot be achieved without grounding the process in spiritual consciousness (*kesadaran ruhani*) that connects moral values to the transcendental purpose of human existence (Antika & Husni, 2025).

This integrated framework rests on four foundational pillars: *spiritual awareness* (*kesadaran ruhani*), *moral integrity* (*kejujuran moral*), *social empathy* (*kepedulian sosial*), and *cultural rootedness* (*kearifan lokal*). Together, these elements articulate a comprehensive vision of character education inspired by both the Qur'anic paradigm of *tarbiyah* and the ethical fabric of Indonesian society. The Qur'an's educational objective—to produce *insan kamil* (the complete and balanced human being)—demands a harmony of faith, intellect, and social consciousness (Muzaki et al., 2025). The four-pillar model, therefore, serves as a practical and philosophical translation of this Qur'anic goal within the Indonesian cultural milieu.

The first pillar, spiritual awareness (*kesadaran ruhani*), constitutes the foundation of all moral development. In the Qur'an, education begins with *taqwa*—awareness of God—as the root of wisdom and ethical action. Q.S. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1–5, which opens with “*Read in the name of your Lord who created,*” establishes the epistemological link between knowledge and

divine consciousness. Spiritual awareness transforms learning from an intellectual pursuit into a journey of self-purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), aligning human will with divine guidance. In the Indonesian context, this awareness finds cultural expression in rituals such as communal prayers, religious study circles (*pengajian*), and moral reflection embedded within local traditions of harmony (*rukun*).

The second pillar, moral integrity (*kejujuran moral*), emerges as the ethical manifestation of spiritual awareness. The Qur'an insists that knowledge devoid of honesty and sincerity is a betrayal of trust (*amanah*). Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]: 72 reminds believers that the trust of moral responsibility was offered to humanity as a sacred duty. Moral integrity thus involves more than truth-telling; it is the steadfast adherence to justice, humility, and ethical accountability. Indonesian cultural idioms such as *jujur pangkal laku* ("honesty is the root of behavior") resonate with this Qur'anic principle. In education, cultivating moral integrity requires embedding ethical practice into the everyday life of the school—through role modeling, service, and critical self-reflection rather than disciplinary enforcement.

The third pillar, social empathy (*kepedulian sosial*), reflects the Qur'anic command for compassion, solidarity, and mutual assistance. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that a believer is not truly faithful until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself (Hadith, Bukhari). This ethic corresponds to Indonesia's enduring cultural value of *gotong royong*, which transforms empathy into collective action. Educationally, this can be translated into programs that integrate community engagement, social service, and interfaith dialogue into the learning process. Such experiences cultivate *ukhuwah insaniyyah*—universal brotherhood—by allowing students to experience the moral beauty of cooperation and altruism (Azra, 2006).

The fourth pillar, cultural rootedness (*kearifan lokal*), ensures that education remains anchored in the social and moral realities of Indonesia's diverse communities. Local wisdom, or *kearifan lokal*, encompasses the customs (*adat*), symbols, and social ethics that have historically preserved harmony among Indonesia's plural societies. When filtered through the ethical framework of the Qur'an, these cultural elements become instruments of spiritual education rather than barriers to modernity (Dafit, 2017). In practice, integrating local arts, stories, and community rituals into the curriculum fosters cultural pride while reinforcing Qur'anic values such as *adl* (justice) and *ihsan* (excellence).

Together, these four pillars form an organic and balanced model of character formation. They are not discrete categories but interdependent dimensions of the human personality. Spiritual awareness provides the metaphysical grounding; moral integrity translates that spirituality into ethical behavior; social empathy expands individual virtue into communal engagement; and cultural rootedness situates these values within a lived, historical context. This systemic interconnection mirrors the Qur'anic conception of the human being as *nafs wahidah* (a unified self) whose intellectual, ethical, and emotional faculties operate harmoniously under divine guidance (Al-Ghazali, 2016b).

In contrast to state-driven moral education, which often emphasizes nationalism and civic duty, the Qur'anic-cultural model introduces a spiritual-ethical axis that deepens moral consciousness. While *Pendidikan Karakter Nasional* aims to create good citizens, the Qur'anic paradigm seeks to nurture *'abd Allah*—servants of God—and *khalifah fi al-ardh*—stewards of creation. This theological orientation redefines character education as a sacred process of aligning human action with divine will. As Muslim scholars asserts, the goal of education is not simply social conformity but the inner transformation of the self through the cultivation of *iman* and *akhlak* (Muzaki et al., 2025).

Methodologically, this model encourages experiential and reflective learning over rote instruction. Students internalize values not by memorizing moral slogans but through lived experiences—ritual participation, community engagement, ethical projects, and reflective journaling. The Prophet’s pedagogy exemplified this approach: he educated through example, conversation, and life experience rather than abstract moralizing. In this sense, Qur’anic character formation is inherently dialogical and participatory, aligning with constructivist educational principles that emphasize active learning (Ulum & Supriyatno, 2006).

The holistic nature of this model also challenges the fragmentation of modern education. By uniting the rational, emotional, and spiritual aspects of human development, it restores the integrity of learning as both *ta’līm* (instruction) and *tarbiyah* (nurturing). Al-Attas stresses that the highest goal of education is not the accumulation of knowledge but the cultivation of wisdom (*hikmah*) and right action (*adab*) (Al-Attas, 2014). The four-pillar framework thus functions as a practical translation of *adab* within the Indonesian educational context, where intellectual excellence must be guided by moral and spiritual depth.

Moreover, the model contributes to social cohesion and multicultural harmony in Indonesia’s plural society. By linking Qur’anic ethics with cultural values shared across ethnic and religious groups, it fosters mutual respect, empathy, and justice. Character education based on this model prepares students to navigate diversity with spiritual maturity and cultural sensitivity. As Muhaimin notes (Antika & Husni, 2025), an *insan kamil* is one who embodies balance—between self and society, intellect and spirit, religion and culture. This balance is crucial for maintaining Indonesia’s unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*).

The synthesis of Qur’anic and Indonesian cultural frameworks culminates in a four-pillar holistic model that revitalizes the soul of education. It transcends superficial moral instruction by rooting character formation in spiritual awareness, moral integrity, social empathy, and cultural wisdom. This model envisions education not merely as a means of producing skilled workers or disciplined citizens but as a sacred process of nurturing complete human beings—*insan kamil*—who embody faith, virtue, and cultural harmony. As Muslim scholars aptly summarize, when education is both spiritualized through the Qur’an and localized through culture, it becomes a living path toward the restoration of human dignity and divine purpose (Muzaki et al., 2025).

## 5. Educational Implications and Future Directions of Qur’anic-Cultural Revitalization

The revitalization of the spiritual soul of education represents not merely a theoretical discourse but a transformative educational movement that redefines the goals and methods of learning in Indonesia. The synthesis between the Qur’anic paradigm of *tarbiyah* and the wisdom of Indonesian culture has yielded a vision of education that aspires to form learners who are intellectually competent, spiritually conscious, morally upright, and socially responsible. This paradigm aims to cultivate *iman* (faith), *akhlaq karimah* (noble character), and *amanah* (responsibility), qualities that together define the essence of the *insan kamil*—the complete human being envisioned in Islamic thought (Antika & Husni, 2025).

Empirical studies show that when the spiritual and cultural dimensions of education are meaningfully integrated, learners develop stronger ethical resilience and a deeper sense of purpose. Muslim scholars found that schools applying Qur’anic-based moral education reported not only reduced instances of moral delinquency but also improved student cooperation and empathy (Hidayatulloh et al., 2024). The Qur’anic-cultural model promotes the formation of individuals who are conscious of their divine accountability and social obligations. In a pluralistic nation like Indonesia, such consciousness becomes essential for nurturing peaceful coexistence and civic virtue.

The educational implications of this revitalization are far-reaching. First, it necessitates a paradigm shift from education as cognitive transmission to education as moral and spiritual formation. The Qur'an's conception of *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta'dib* (instruction, nurturing, and ethical discipline) underscores that the true purpose of education is not to produce skilled workers alone but to cultivate morally guided individuals. As Al-Attas explains, education should be the process of instilling *adab*—the proper ordering of knowledge and behavior in relation to truth, self, and society. This means that moral values must not be confined to religious studies classes but integrated across all disciplines (Al-Attas, 2014).

Second, revitalizing the spiritual dimension of education requires teacher transformation. Educators must evolve from being mere transmitters of knowledge into *murabbi*—spiritual and moral nurturers. The teacher, in the Qur'anic perspective, functions as a role model who embodies ethical principles in words and deeds. Muslim scholars emphasize that teachers who integrate Qur'anic ethics into their pedagogy foster not only intellectual curiosity but also spiritual awareness among students. Professional development programs for teachers, therefore, must include training in spiritual pedagogy, reflective practice, and the contextualization of Islamic ethics in contemporary issues (Muslim, 2022).

Third, the implementation of the Qur'anic-cultural paradigm encourages curricular reformation. The curriculum should be designed to foster balance between cognitive competence, moral reasoning, and cultural appreciation. Courses in ethics, local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*), and interfaith understanding can be interwoven with Qur'anic themes to create a holistic educational experience. This integrative curriculum should also emphasize *action-based learning*, where students engage in community service, environmental care, and social entrepreneurship as embodiments of Qur'anic ethics of *amanah* and *ihsan*. Such practical engagements deepen students' moral understanding through lived experience (Muzaki et al., 2025).

Moreover, schools that implement the Qur'anic-cultural framework demonstrate higher levels of community engagement and reduced moral apathy. Muslim scholars note that these institutions often cultivate close collaboration with parents, religious leaders, and local communities, fostering a culture of mutual care and accountability (Hidayatulloh et al., 2024). This educational ecosystem mirrors the Qur'anic concept of *tanggung jawab bersama*—shared responsibility—where moral development is not confined to classrooms but nurtured within the broader social environment. It reflects the Prophet's model of *madrrasah nabawiyah*, where education was community-centered and value-driven.

The revitalization also contributes to social harmony in Indonesia's multicultural and multireligious society. By integrating Qur'anic ethics of *adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) with Indonesian values of *gotong royong*, *rasa hormat*, and *musyawarah*, this model builds bridges across religious and ethnic divides. Muslim scholars observe that schools applying the Qur'anic-cultural approach tend to produce graduates who demonstrate tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity—traits urgently needed in an age marked by polarization and moral fragmentation. Thus, education becomes an instrument of peacebuilding rooted in spiritual and cultural integrity (Umar et al., 2025).

From a sociological standpoint, this approach addresses the crisis of moral authority often associated with modern education. The secular orientation of many educational systems has produced an ethical vacuum where moral standards are relative and instrumental. By reintroducing divine accountability (*muraqabah ilahiyyah*) and cultural morality (*etika budaya*), the Qur'anic-cultural model restores moral coherence and direction. Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* stresses that education must aim to purify the soul and discipline the heart;

without this, knowledge leads to arrogance and corruption. The spiritual revival of education, therefore, becomes a preventive mechanism against moral decay.

On the policy level, this revitalization calls for a redefinition of national educational goals. The *Pendidikan Nasional* framework, as outlined in the 2003 National Education System Act, aspires to produce learners who are “faithful, pious, and noble in character.” The Qur’anic-cultural paradigm provides the philosophical and practical basis to realize this vision more authentically. Policymakers must ensure that spiritual and cultural dimensions are embedded in assessment systems, teacher certification, and educational quality standards. Only then can the “soul” of education be institutionally revived (Dafit, 2017).

Future directions of this educational reform also include research and innovation. Islamic educational institutions, universities, and think tanks should collaborate to develop new models of *integrative curriculum design*, *Qur’anic-based character metrics*, and *cultural adaptation strategies*. Research by several muslim scholars underscores the need for empirical studies measuring the long-term impact of spiritualized education on student behavior, leadership ethics, and community development (Umar et al., 2025). By grounding innovation in both tradition and context, Indonesian education can offer a model for global moral renewal.

Furthermore, the Qur’anic-cultural approach aligns with global educational goals that emphasize holistic human development. The UNESCO *Education 2030 Framework for Action* identifies ethical, cultural, and spiritual competencies as essential for sustainable societies. Indonesia, through its Qur’anic-cultural revitalization, can contribute a uniquely spiritual and communal dimension to this global agenda. By emphasizing faith, moral virtue, and cultural harmony, the model provides an alternative to purely secular paradigms that often neglect the spiritual aspect of humanity (Ulum & Supriyatno, 2006).

The revitalization of education’s spiritual soul through the Qur’anic-cultural synthesis signifies a movement toward a more humane, ethical, and spiritually conscious educational system. It fosters learners who embody *iman*, *akhlak karimah*, and *amanah*—faithful, virtuous, and responsible individuals capable of contributing to Indonesia’s pluralistic and global society. As muslim scholars affirms, when character education is infused with Qur’anic ethics and local wisdom, it produces not only moral individuals but also cohesive communities grounded in empathy and justice. The future of Indonesian education, therefore, depends on sustaining this spiritual renaissance—revitalizing the *ruh* of learning as both a national imperative and a divine trust (Muslim, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The revitalization of the soul of education, as framed within the Qur’anic paradigm and enriched by Indonesian cultural wisdom, signifies a return to the original purpose of education — the formation of whole, morally grounded, and spiritually conscious human beings. The study has demonstrated that the crisis of moral and spiritual decline in contemporary education stems from the marginalization of *tarbiyah ruhaniyyah* (spiritual cultivation) in favor of cognitive and technical achievement. The Qur’an, through its principles of *ta’līm*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta’dīb*, offers a holistic vision that unites intellectual, ethical, and spiritual growth. This integration reconnects education with its metaphysical purpose: to form the *insan kamil* — a human being who embodies knowledge, virtue, and divine consciousness.

The fusion of Qur’anic ethics with Indonesian cultural wisdom — expressed through values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *rasa hormat* (respect), *tepa selira* (empathy), and *adat* (customary norms) — generates a uniquely Indonesian moral pedagogy. This contextual model enables the internalization of Qur’anic values not merely as abstract doctrines but as lived cultural practices that shape social harmony and collective moral awareness. The four-pillar framework emerging from this synthesis — *spiritual awareness*,

*moral integrity, social empathy, and cultural rootedness* — provides a comprehensive foundation for holistic character education. As noted by Muslim scholars, when the spiritual dimension of education is harmonized with local wisdom, it cultivates learners who are not only intellectually capable but also emotionally balanced, ethically mature, and socially engaged.

Ultimately, the revitalization of education's spiritual soul through the Qur'anic-cultural paradigm offers a transformative pathway for Indonesia's educational future. By grounding moral education in faith (*iman*), virtue (*akhlaq karimah*), and social responsibility (*amanah*), this approach restores the *ruh* (soul) of learning as both a divine trust and a national necessity. As confirmed by contemporary studies, such integration fosters social cohesion, ethical resilience, and interreligious harmony within Indonesia's pluralistic society. Therefore, the future direction of educational reform must institutionalize this spiritual renewal—embedding Qur'anic values within Indonesia's cultural framework to produce generations of *insan kamil* who embody the unity of knowledge, faith, and action. In doing so, Indonesia can lead a moral renaissance in global education, reaffirming that the true aim of learning is the cultivation of the human soul.

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### **Authors' Brief CV**

**Ahmad Luthfi Hidayat**, born in Cirebon on May 26, 1981, is an individual shaped by his educational journey at the Al-Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School in Kuningan, where he was actively involved in various organizational and extracurricular activities. His daily routine often included trading, an experience that helped develop his practical skills and entrepreneurial mindset. In addition to his active engagement in school activities, he maintained a strong habit of reading, which became a consistent part of his life and contributed to his personal growth and broadening of knowledge.

**Saiful Anwar** was born in Madura and later continued his education in religious studies in Jombang, where he strengthened his foundation in Islamic learning. Throughout his career, he has been active in various religious fields in Cirebon, contributing to community development and spiritual guidance. He is dedicated to mentoring and educating children as well as the wider community in studying the Quran, and he frequently participates in religious activities across different locations, making him a respected figure in his local religious circles.

**Nur Azizah**, born in Cirebon on May 19, 2000, and residing in Buntet, is a devoted and religious individual who completed her education at MAN 3 Cirebon. She has a deep love for religious studies, particularly in the field of tafsir (interpretation), and enjoys continuously seeking knowledge from various sources. Known for her piety and dedication, she also places great importance on helping others, making service and kindness central aspects of her daily life.