



THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRILOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to formulate a theoretical framework for Islamic education management based on the integration of ontology, epistemology and axiology as a deep philosophical foundation. Islamic education management theory often adopts a secular approach that prioritizes material efficiency without considering spiritual and moral values in the Islamic context. Therefore, this research proposes a theocentric approach that emphasizes the importance of monotheism in ontology, the integration of revelation and empirical knowledge in epistemology, and the application of *maslahah* values in axiology. By using a descriptive-analytic qualitative approach through literature study, this research examines how these three dimensions can be integrated with each other to produce Islamic education management theory that is relevant to contemporary challenges. The research results show that the integration of ontology, epistemology and axiology in Islamic education management not only provides practical solutions, but also enriches the spiritual, moral and social dimensions in the management of educational institutions. It is hoped that the resulting theory can be a new contribution to the Islamic education management literature with an applicable approach but still maintaining the authenticity of Islamic values.

Keyword: Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology, Management of Islamic Education



A. Introduction

In the dynamics of Islamic education, the development of management theory is still often influenced by secular approaches that emphasize material efficiency and productivity. This approach tends to ignore the transcendental dimension which is the core of Islamic education, namely the formation of human beings who are noble and have spiritual awareness (Abdullah, 2003). Meanwhile, Islamic education does not only aim to produce individuals who are intellectually competent but also have high moral integrity (Al-Attas, 1980). Therefore, it is important to re-explore philosophical foundations, such as ontology, epistemology, and axiology, which can be the basis for the development of Islamic education management theory to be more in line with Islamic values (Kamali, 2003).

A review of the literature shows that Islamic education management theories often only adopt conventional management concepts with little modification in the aspect of Islamic values (Kamali, 2003). Previous studies tend to focus on practical application without providing a deep philosophical foundation. Nashr (1996) states that this creates a gap in the literature that requires new research to fully integrate Islamic philosophical concepts into educational management theory. Thus, a more holistic and philosophical approach is needed to bridge the theoretical and practical needs of Islamic education in the modern era.

This research stems from the assumption that Islamic education management theory should be based on the integration of ontology, epistemology, and axiology as a basic framework (Nashr, 1996). In contrast to previous research that is more pragmatic, this research proposes that the value of tawhid as the core ontology of Islamic education can be the main foundation in designing a theocentric management theory. In addition, the epistemological approach that combines revelation and empirical knowledge and the axiology that focuses on *maslahah* are important steps to make this theory contemporarily relevant without compromising Islamic values (Al-Ghazali, 1992).

Various previous studies have shown significant perspectives in integrating Islamic values into educational management theory, including the Firdaus study emphasizing the principle of tawhid as the main philosophical basis in building a spirituality-based management system, emphasizing that Islamic values must be the foundation in management practices, not just a complement (2014). Then Budiman's study in his research cites that Abdullah Saeed, who is a contemporary Islamic thinker, proposes an epistemological approach that combines revelation and reason as a source of knowledge to strengthen the relevance of Islamic education management (2024). Furthermore, Rusydi's study explores *maqashid* sharia as an important principle in creating a balance between spiritual and material goals, which is the essence in the management of Islamic educational institutions (2023). However, Har in his study identified a significant obstacle in

the form of the dominance of a secular paradigm that often obscures Islamic values in education management practices (2004). Meanwhile, the Bonang study highlights the importance of a *maslahah*-oriented axiological model to ensure that any management decisions reflect the collective interest and are in accordance with Islamic ethics. Overall, these studies confirm the importance of a holistic approach rooted in Islamic values to strengthen educational management theory in the contemporary context (2019).

This research aims to formulate a theoretical framework for Islamic education management that not only provides practical solutions, but also philosophically deep by integrating the dimensions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. This framework is expected to make a new contribution to the Islamic education management literature by prioritizing an applicable theocentric approach. Thus, this research not only offers a theoretical foundation but also practical relevance for the management of Islamic educational institutions in facing global challenges.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytic method in the form of a literature study (library research) to examine the concepts of ontology, epistemology, and axiology in Islamic education management. The main data sources are the Qur'an and related academic literature. The data collection process begins with selecting appropriate literature to identify the basic concepts of ontology as a theocentric foundation, epistemology as a method of knowledge development, and axiology as an ethical value in Islamic education management theory. The collected data were then analysed using content analysis techniques to interpret the main themes and values underlying the theory. This approach allows the research to integrate Islamic values with modern management science, resulting in a theoretical framework that is contemporarily relevant yet authentic in Islamic values.

B. Ontology: The Essential Basis for the Construction of Islamic Education Management Theory

According to Sumarwan (2020), ontology is an essential basis in the construction of Islamic education management theory because it allows the development of management models that not only prioritize efficiency and productivity, but also harmonize every managerial process with Islamic values. This approach is based on the principle of *tawhid*, which emphasizes the oneness of God and the unity of educational goals as a manifestation of worship to Him. In a secular management framework, organizational goals are often oriented towards material productivity, efficiency and profit. This kind of structure ignores the transcendent dimension that is the main goal of education in Islam, namely the creation of human beings who have noble morals and awareness of their spiritual role before God. Harahap (2022) adds that criticism of secular management

structures is important because this secular approach limits education to worldly goals, while in Islamic education, worldly and spiritual goals must be integrated.

The new ontological framework based on tawhid provides a theocentric foundation for Islamic education, where all aspects of management are directed towards achieving Allah's pleasure. According to Benny and others (2018), this concept demands changes in the organizational structure of Islamic education so as to create a model that is responsive to the theocentric vision. For example, in a tawhid-based structure, leadership is not only based on technical competence, but also on high moral and spiritual values, where a leader is expected to be a moral example and uphold the values of trust and justice. In terms of policy, Islamic education management must focus on the benefit of the people and the moral welfare of all stakeholders, not limited to material achievements alone. In addition, according to Murdianto (2024), the principle of tawhid also encourages the application of transparency and accountability that is not only limited to humans, but also to God, which encourages every member of the organization to carry out their duties with full responsibility and sincerity. This theocentric goal-responsive Islamic education management process not only aims to produce intellectually skilled individuals, but also highly moral ones.

According to Mansur (2020), planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating in Islamic education management must be designed to have a positive impact on the moral and spiritual development of students and staff. In practice, theocentric goal-oriented planning includes a curriculum that integrates science and Islamic values, and programs that support Islamic character building. According to Hamzah and Nurdin (2022), human resource development (HRD) in Islamic educational institutions also needs to prioritize spiritual and moral values, where every individual in the organization is encouraged to develop good morals. Evaluation and assessment should also include ethical and spiritual dimensions, by measuring success not only based on academic results or financial performance, but also on its impact on character and morals.

C. Epistemology: Foundations of Knowledge in the Formation of Islamic Education Management Theory

According to Mulyana (2019), the epistemology of Islamic education is rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith as the main sources of knowledge, which provide moral foundations and basic values in the education management system. These two sources establish universal principles such as justice, trust, and morals that must be used as the main footing in every aspect of education. With this foundation, the epistemology of Islamic education directs the development of educational science that has theocentric goals, namely bringing humans closer to God and forming noble characters. However, according to Abdullah (2021) to develop a theory of Islamic education management that is relevant in the modern

context, a methodological approach is needed that allows integration between revelation knowledge and empirical knowledge. This integration serves to adapt the principles of Islamic education in the context of modern management science without compromising fundamental Islamic values.

Idris (2021) underlines those empirical approaches in education management, such as data analysis, organizational theory, and evidence-based decision-making methods, provide a scientific framework that strengthens the implementation of Islamic principles in education. For example, quantitative methods can be used to understand the real dynamics and challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions in achieving their theocentric goals, while qualitative methods, such as *grounded theory*, are able to explore in depth how Islamic values are reflected in organizational behaviour and culture. This approach enables the creation of an Islamic education management theory that is value-authentic and responsive to contemporary challenges.

By utilizing structured empirical methods, the resulting theory is able to strengthen the relevance of Qur'anic and Hadith principles in the context of modern management, making the theory more adaptive while remaining bound to Islamic values. According to Jasnain (2022), the use of information technology and data management in education can be seen as a means of supporting the strengthening of Islamic values, allowing Islamic educational institutions to provide a more holistic education, which fosters scientific and spiritual knowledge in a balanced manner. Meanwhile, Idris (2021) asserts that the integration of Islamic education management, which is based on revelation but refined by empirical methods, can answer the needs of Muslim communities living in the era of technology and globalization, without neglecting the main mission of Islamic education, namely character building based on tawhid.

D. Axiology: Ethical Values and Goals in Islamic Education Management Theory

According to Sari (2024) in the framework of Islamic education management theory, axiology not only refers to the application of basic values such as justice, honesty, and trustworthiness, but includes a deeper understanding of how these values form an assessment instrument in the context of managerial performance and the ultimate goal of Islamic education. Thus, axiology in Islamic education management does not simply set moral guidelines, but also includes ethical values that must be operationalized in the form of measurable indicators of success, directing management theory to be in accordance with more fundamental Islamic values and principles. This is in line with Al-Qaradawi's thinking (2021) which states that the concept of *maslahah* or general benefit is an important axiological element that is relevant to deepening understanding of the ethical values and objectives of Islamic education management. *Maslahah* emphasizes

long-term welfare and social balance involving the educational community and environment, so that every managerial decision and policy must consider its impact on collective welfare.

Within the framework of management theory, Nurdin (2022) emphasizes that *maslahah* can be operationalized into performance indicators that focus on improving the holistic quality of life, encompassing the physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of all individuals involved in education. This axiological study also involves developing a framework that includes Islamic values-based indicators of success. For example, indicators such as the moral improvement of learners, the integrity and professionalism of teaching staff, and the positive contribution of educational institutions to the improvement of the moral values of society are concrete measures that reflect the ethical goals of Islamic education. This is in line with Mulyana's (2019) statement that success indicators built from *maslahah* values are the basis for evaluating the extent to which educational institutions have carried out their functions in accordance with ethical values oriented towards the public good.

By integrating axiological values into performance assessment, Islamic education management theory acquires a comprehensive evaluative dimension. According to Hasan (2018), this enables the assessment of success not only in terms of technical or administrative aspects, but also in terms of achieving deeper moral values. Therefore, axiology in Islamic education management provides an ethical foundation that shapes the ultimate goal of education as a collective effort to improve moral, spiritual and social qualities in society in accordance with Islamic principles.

E. An Integrative Approach to Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology in Islamic Education Management Theory

Islamic education management, as a discipline integrated with Islamic values, requires a multidimensional approach that combines aspects of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Each of these dimensions is interconnected to create a theoretical framework that not only addresses the practical challenges of managing educational institutions but also fulfills the moral and spiritual goals of Islamic education.

1. Ontology and Epistemology (From Philosophical Basis to Knowledge Development Process)

The relationship between ontology and epistemology is very close, because ontology underlies the understanding of the nature of education as a process of forming a *kamil* person who is subject to the will of Allah and carries out the function as *khalifah fil ardh*. The epistemology of Islamic education, which is derived from revelation, reason, and empirical experience, serves to bridge

ontological goals with practical applications in educational management. For example, Ali Mazrui (2017) emphasizes the importance of revelation as a source of knowledge, which should be combined with modern analysis to produce relevant educational theories. Mohammad Hashim Kamali (2018) also suggests that epistemological methods in Islamic education should be based on Islamic moral values, such as deliberation (*shura*), and reinforced by empirical data that provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of education.

This integration ensures that the methods used in education management are not only contextually relevant but also value-authentic. For example, research could explore how the ontological insight of justice as an attribute of Allah (Surah An-Nisa: 58) translates into a meritocracy-based educator recruitment system tailored to Islamic values.

2. Interaction of Epistemology and Axiology (Ethical Value-Based Empirical Assessment)

According to Al-Shaykh (2019) Islamic epistemology provides a methodology for generating knowledge, while Hasan (2021) asserts that axiology establishes ethical values as the ultimate goal of any management process. The interaction of the two creates a need for measurement tools that not only evaluate performance technically but also ensure the achievement of Islamic ethical values. For example, epistemology can be used to design surveys that evaluate the application of the values of trustworthiness and justice in the management of educational institutions. Al-Mansour (2019) states that this survey is complemented by axiological indicators, such as the moral improvement of learners and the positive impact of the institution on the community. Thus, as emphasized by Noor (2021), epistemology provides the analytical framework while axiology provides the normative direction for evaluating managerial success.

This interactional framework is important to ensure that the management of Islamic education is not only oriented towards academic outcomes, but also towards spiritual and social achievements. For example, educational institutions can be evaluated based on the extent to which their curriculum encourages learners to internalize Islamic values, such as *ihsan* and *takwa*, as advocated in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177.

3. Synergy of Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology

According to Bakar (2020), the synergy between these three dimensions creates a holistic Islamic education management model. Ontology provides a basic framework for the purpose of the existence of educational institutions, epistemology offers a methodology for achieving these goals, and axiology determines indicators of success based on Islamic ethical values.

For example (Amin, 2022), this synergy-based education management model could include:

- a. Ontological Vision: Education is designed to produce individuals who understand their function as *khalifah* and *'abd*.
- b. Epistemological Process: Institutional management uses methods based on revelation, reason, and empirical experience, such as structured and data-driven deliberation.
- c. Axiological Evaluation: Success is measured based on spiritual indicators, such as the level of internalization of the value of tawhid, as well as social indicators, such as the institution's contribution to the welfare of society.

F. Contextualization of Qur'anic Teachings in Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology for the Development of Islamic Education Management Theory

According to Al-Khawaja (2021), contextualizing the teachings of the Qur'an in the philosophy of ontology, epistemology, and axiology is an important step in developing Islamic education management theory that is relevant to the needs of the times, without abandoning the basic principles of Islam. This approach allows integration between Islamic normative values and the reality of contemporary management, creating a theoretical framework that is not only theocentric but also applicable in practice.

Muhammad (2020) notes that the teachings of the Qur'an provide an ontological foundation that views education as an integral part of worship to Allah. In Surah Al-Dzariyat verse 56, Allah says: "*I did not create jinn and humans but that they may worship Me.*" Thus, education in Islam is a form of devotion that aims to form humans who recognize and devote themselves to Allah. In the context of education management, this principle emphasizes that every managerial activity from planning to evaluation must be directed to support the vision of education as a process of forming a *kamil human being* (Al-Shaikh, 2023). Contextualizing this value requires adaptation to the organizational structure of education. For example, educational institutions need to develop policies and systems that instill the value of tawhid in all their activities, such as the preparation of a curriculum based on spiritual values and the establishment of an organizational culture that supports the moral development of students and educators.

In epistemology, as stated by Nasution (2021) that the Qur'an directs humans to utilize revelation as the main source of knowledge, but also recognizes the role of reason and experience in understanding the world. In Surah Al-Alaq verses 1-5 Allah emphasizes the importance of reading, understanding, and seeking knowledge in order to serve Allah. According to Rahman (2022), the contextualization of epistemology in Islamic education management theory includes the development of managerial methods that are based on revelation but remain adaptive to the challenges of the times. For example, the *shura*

(deliberation) approach mentioned in Surah Ash-Shura verse 38 can be applied in managerial decision making. As explained by Khalil (2023), this can be adapted by using modern tools such as survey techniques, SWOT analysis, or focus group discussions that maintain the principles of shura. Thus, Islamic education management not only utilizes empirical methods but also ensures that every managerial step is in accordance with Islamic values.

According to Zarkasyi (2022) axiology in the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of ethical values such as justice, trust, *ihsan*, and compassion in every aspect of life, including in education. The Qur'an in Surah An-Nisa verse 58 emphasizes the importance of fulfilling trust and being fair, which are the main principles in management. Abidah (2023) also states that this axiological approach also enables the development of Islamic value-based measurement tools, such as surveys of learners' spiritual satisfaction or evaluations of the moral impact of educational institutions on their social environment.

G. Conclusion

This research shows that ontology, epistemology, and axiology have a very important role in the development of Islamic education management theory. Ontology leads to an understanding of the reality of education in Islam that touches on the essence of man, education, and its purpose. Epistemology in this context provides the foundation for ways of acquiring and validating relevant knowledge in Islamic education, which underlies effective managerial principles. Axiology, on the other hand, emphasizes the moral and ethical values that must be integrated in every managerial aspect of Islamic education, so that education not only fulfils cognitive aspects but also builds character in accordance with Islamic teachings. Overall, a deep understanding of these three philosophical concepts is very influential on the development of sustainable Islamic education management theory that is relevant to the needs of the times.

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