

## ONTOLOGY AND AXIOLOGY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE PURPOSE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS

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### Abstract

*This study aims to examine the ontological and axiological foundations of Islamic Religious Education through a literature review of the goals of Islamic education. A major shortcoming in previous research is the lack of a comprehensive philosophical study of the foundations of ontology and axiology underlying the goals of Islamic education, especially in relation to contemporary contexts. Most studies focus on pedagogical and practical aspects, while basic philosophical aspects related to human nature and core values are often overlooked. Therefore, there is a conceptual vacuum that hinders the development of a complete and relevant Islamic education paradigm in facing the challenges of the times. This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of literature research that analyzes primary sources in the form of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as secondary sources in the form of classical scholarly works and contemporary academic literature on Islamic philosophy and education. Data analysis was carried out through a thematic and reflective-philosophical approach. The results of the study show that ontologically Islamic Religious Education is based on the Islamic worldview that views human beings as 'abd Allah and khalifatullāh, so that education is understood as the process of forming human existential consciousness. Axiologically, Islamic Religious Education is*

*intrinsic in value and oriented towards the formation of morals, moral integrity, and social responsibility. The goal of Islamic education cannot be reduced to cognitive and instrumental achievements, but rather directed at the formation of a whole human being (insān kāmil) that integrates spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions. This research contributes theoretically in strengthening the philosophical discourse of Islamic Religious Education by offering a conceptual framework for the goals of Islamic education based on ontology and axiology. These findings are relevant as a foundation in reorienting Islamic Religious Education to remain meaningful and valuable in the midst of contemporary educational challenges.*

**Keywords** : ontology, axiology, Islamic Religious Education

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an integral part of the national education system which is normatively directed to form students who have faith, piety, and noble character. However, in contemporary educational practice, PAI is often instrumentally positioned as a subject oriented towards the achievement of cognitive competence and normative compliance. This orientation indirectly reflects the shift in the paradigm of religious education from the philosophical realm to a technical and pragmatic approach, thus obscuring the ontological and axiological foundations that should be the main foundation of Islamic Religious Education (Sa'adillah SAP et al., 2020).

A number of studies on Islamic Religious Education have so far focused more on aspects of learning methodology, curriculum development, and evaluation of learning outcomes (Supratama et al., 2024). These studies make significant practical contributions, but they are relatively minimal in exploring the philosophical dimension of Islamic education, especially related to the fundamental questions of human nature, the essence of education, and what values should be the ultimate goal of Islamic Religious Education. As a result, the goals of Islamic education are often formulated normatively and operationally without a solid philosophical footing.

Ontology and axiology are two branches of philosophy that have a central role in building the conceptual framework of education. The ontology of education

discusses the nature of humans, reality, and knowledge that are the basis of educational assumptions, while the axiology of education is related to the values, goals, and orientation of the meaning of education. In the Islamic perspective, these two dimensions cannot be separated from the Islamic worldview which places Allah as the source of truth and value. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education is not value-neutral, but is loaded with ethical, spiritual, and social missions (Mansur, 2021).

However, systematic studies that specifically examine the ontology and axiology of Islamic Religious Education in relation to the objectives of Islamic education are still relatively limited, especially in the form of analytical and conceptual literature research. This limitation creates a theoretical gap (research gap) in the discourse of Islamic education, namely the lack of a comprehensive philosophical framework to explain why and in which direction Islamic Religious Education should be directed.

In addition, although some research has addressed methodological and evaluative aspects of Islamic education, studies of philosophical foundations such as ontology and axiology are still limited and receive little attention. In fact, an understanding of human nature and the main values that are the foundation of Islamic education is very important to ensure that the goals of education are not only pragmatic, but also transcendental and meaningful. Without adequate mastery of these philosophical dimensions, the risk of being trapped in a narrow understanding that is instrumental can weaken the identity and depth of the philosophy of Islamic education itself. Therefore, this study seeks to fill these shortcomings by critically and comprehensively tracing the concepts of ontology and axiology in the Islamic educational literature, so as to provide a solid and relevant framework of thinking in affirming the main goals of today's Islamic education.

Departing from these conditions, this study aims to examine in depth the ontological and axiological foundations of Islamic Religious Education through a literature review of the goals of Islamic education. This research is expected to

make a theoretical contribution in the form of strengthening the philosophical paradigm of Islamic Religious Education, as well as offering an alternative perspective in formulating the goals of Islamic education that is not only oriented to cognitive and instrumental achievements, but also to the formation of the whole human being (*insān kāmil*) based on values and meanings.

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research focuses on excavating, analyzing, and interpreting the ontological and axiological concepts of Islamic Religious Education as stated in literature sources, not on the measurement of empirical phenomena in the field.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories, namely primary sources and secondary sources (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2013). Primary sources include fundamental texts of Islamic education, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as works by Islamic education scholars and thinkers that explicitly discuss the nature of human beings, the value of education, and the purpose of Islamic education. Secondary sources include academic books, scientific journal articles, and other scholarly works relevant to the philosophy of education and Islamic Religious Education.

The data collection technique was carried out through a systematic literature search with inclusion criteria in the form of thematic relevance, authorial authority, and theoretical contribution to the study of ontology, axiology, and the purpose of Islamic education. The collected literature is then classified based on the main themes, such as the nature of the human being, the value of education, and the orientation of the goals of Islamic Religious Education.

Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan pendekatan analisis tematik dan reflektif-filosofis (Sugiyono, 2018). Thematic analysis is used to identify and group ontological and axiological concepts that appear in the literature. Furthermore, a reflective-philosophical analysis was carried out to interpret the relationship between these concepts and their implications for the formulation of the goals of

Islamic Religious Education. The analysis process is carried out repeatedly to ensure the depth and consistency of interpretation.

The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources, i.e. by comparing various views from classical and contemporary literature. In addition, researchers conduct critical and reflective reading to minimize subjective bias in the interpretation of the data. With this approach, the research is expected to be able to produce a comprehensive and argumentative conceptual understanding of the ontology and axiology of Islamic Religious Education in relation to the goals of Islamic education.

### **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **The Ontology of Islamic Religious Education: The Nature of Man and Education**

The results of the literature review show that the ontology of Islamic Religious Education departs from the Islamic worldview which places Allah as the main source of reality and knowledge (Fajar Dwi Mukti & Ayu Sholina, 2019). In this framework, humans are understood as multidimensional beings consisting of physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects. The concept of man as 'abd Allah emphasizes the orientation of servitude to God, while the concept of khalīfatullāh emphasizes man's responsibility in managing social life and the universe (Salminawati et al., 2024).

The concept of human beings as 'abd Allah emphasizes that human existence is basically the existence of servitude. Education in this perspective aims to foster a divine awareness that is reflected in attitudes, behaviors, and life orientations. Islamic religious education not only teaches knowledge about religion, but forms ontological awareness of man's position before God (Nurmayuli et al., 2023).

On the other hand, the concept of khalīfatullāh provides a social and cosmological dimension in the ontology of Islamic Religious Education. Humans are seen as moral subjects who have a responsibility to the social order and the sustainability of nature. Thus, Islamic Religious Education cannot be separated

from the social and ecological dimension, because education serves to prepare human beings to carry out the mandate of the caliphate ethically and responsibly (Dardiri, 2023).

These ontological implications suggest that Islamic Religious Education has a goal that goes far beyond short-term pedagogical interests. Education is understood as the process of forming human existential consciousness. Therefore, the purpose of Islamic Religious Education must be ontological based on an understanding of human nature and the purpose of its existence, not solely based on administrative demands or educational policies (Wijayanti & Sugianti, 2025).

Thus, the ontology of Islamic Religious Education emphasizes that education is the process of cultivating the meaning of life. This ontological framework is the basis for the formulation of Islamic educational goals that are oriented towards human integrity and the meaning of existence, as well as a critique of the fragmentary and utilitarian approach to education.

### **Axiology of Islamic Religious Education: Education as a Value Formation Process**

From an axiological perspective, the results of the study show that Islamic Religious Education is intrinsic to values and not morally neutral (Isval Maulana & Abdul Khobir, 2025). The values of monotheism, noble morals, justice, and social responsibility are the main orientations in the implementation of Islamic education. Education is not only directed at producing intellectually intelligent individuals, but also having moral integrity and spiritual awareness (Wijayanti & Sugianti, 2025).

In addition to the moral dimension, the axiology of Islamic Religious Education also includes the values of justice, social responsibility, and welfare (Fahmi et al., 2025). Education is directed to form individuals who have social concern and commitment to human values. In this context, Islamic Religious Education functions as a means of internalizing values that encourage the creation of a civilized society order (Afriandi et al., 2024).

The axiology of Islamic Religious Education also emphasizes the balance between the individual and social dimensions. Education is seen as a means of

internalizing values that allow students to play an active role in building a civilized society (Sholihah et al., 2019). In this context, the goal of Islamic education is not only oriented to personal interests, but also to the collective benefit. This statement emphasizes that values are at the core of the purpose of Islamic Religious Education (Madhar Amin, 2024).

### **The Purpose of Islamic Education in the Perspective of Ontology and Axiology**

The purpose of Islamic education is a direct reflection of the ontological and axiological foundations of Islamic Religious Education (Abd. Muqit & Shokhibul Mighfar, 2020). Ontology provides answers about who human beings are and what they are educated for, while axiology determines what values are to be realized through education. Therefore, the purpose of Islamic education cannot be formulated in a partial or pragmatic way (Fadlin, 2025).

The concept of *insān kāmil* is an ideal representation of the goals of Islamic education. This concept describes a human being who develops in a balanced manner in spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social aspects (El-Yunusi et al., 2023). Islamic religious education is directed to form human beings who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have a deep moral and spiritual awareness (Afriandi et al., 2024).

In this perspective, the goal of Islamic education is not solely oriented towards worldly success. Education also prepares humans for a spiritual life. This dual orientation shows that Islamic education has a wider horizon of goals than the secular education paradigm which tends to be worldly (Supratama et al., 2023).

The objectives of Islamic Religious Education also include the formation of social awareness and social responsibility. Education not only produces individuals who are personally pious, but also individuals who are able to contribute positively to society (Al Hadiq et al., 2023). This shows that the goal of Islamic education is integrative between the individual and social dimensions.

In addition, the purpose of Islamic education also serves as an evaluative framework for the practice of Islamic Religious Education. The goal based on Islamic ontology and axiology allows educational evaluation to be carried out more

comprehensively, not only based on cognitive indicators, but also moral and spiritual indicators.

Thus, the goal of Islamic Religious Education must be understood as a long-term goal oriented towards the formation of the whole human being. The formulation of this goal is the key to maintaining the identity and relevance of Islamic Religious Education in the midst of the dynamics of modern education.

### **The Relevance of PAI Ontology and Axiology in the Context of Contemporary Education**

In the context of contemporary education marked by globalization, secularization, and fragmentation of values, the study of the ontology and axiology of Islamic Religious Education is becoming increasingly significant. Modern education tends to separate the value dimension from the educational process, so that education loses its moral orientation and meaning (Solikhah Mawadati & M. Yunus Abu Bakar, 2025).

The Ontology of Islamic Religious Education offers an alternative understanding of the nature of education as a process of human formation, not just skill development. Education is understood as a means of building human existential consciousness in its relationship with God, fellow humans, and the universe (Munasir, 2022).

The axiology of Islamic Religious Education is also relevant in answering the value crisis faced by contemporary education. Islamic values provide an ethical framework that can be a guide in facing moral challenges in the modern era. Islamic religious education has the potential to be a source of value that balances the development of science and technology.

In addition, strengthening the ontology and axiology of Islamic Religious Education can contribute to formulating a more humanist and value-oriented education policy. Education is not only directed to meet economic needs, but also to form dignified and civilized human beings.

This relevance shows that Islamic Religious Education has a strategic role in the education system as a whole. Islamic religious education does not only

function as a subject, but as a philosophical framework that can enrich the national and global education paradigm.

Thus, strengthening the ontological and axiological dimensions of Islamic Religious Education is an urgent need in facing the challenges of contemporary education. This study confirms that Islamic Religious Education has great potential to offer a value-based educational paradigm and meaning that is relevant throughout the ages.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This research confirms that Islamic Religious Education has a strong philosophical foundation and cannot be understood narrowly as a purely pedagogical activity. The ontology of Islamic religious education is based on the Islamic worldview which views humans as multidimensional beings with an orientation of servitude to Allah ('abd Allah) and the responsibility of the caliphate (khalīfatullāh). This ontological understanding places education as a process of forming human existential consciousness, not just the transmission of religious knowledge.

From an axiological perspective, this study shows that Islamic Religious Education is intrinsic in value and oriented towards the formation of morals, moral integrity, and social responsibility. The values of monotheism, justice, and welfare are the main foundations in formulating the goals of Islamic education. Thus, Islamic Religious Education is not morally neutral, but is consciously directed to form dignified and civilized human beings.

This ontological and axiological study reveals that the goals of Islamic education cannot be reduced to cognitive achievements or instrumental competencies. The goal of Islamic education conceptually leads to the formation of a whole human being (insān kāmil), that is, a human being who is able to integrate spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions in real life. This goal orientation is also a criticism of the modern educational paradigm which tends to be pragmatic and utilitarian.

Theoretically, this research contributes to strengthening the philosophical discourse of Islamic Religious Education by offering a conceptual framework for the goals of Islamic education based on ontology and axiology. This framework can be a reference in curriculum development, education policy formulation, and follow-up studies that seek to reorient Islamic Religious Education to remain relevant to contemporary educational challenges without losing the identity of Islamic values.

As an implication, further research is suggested to develop a study of the ontology and axiology of Islamic Religious Education in an empirical context, such as curriculum analysis, educational policy, or learning practices in Islamic educational institutions. Thus, dialogue between philosophical foundations and educational practices can be built in a more integrative and sustainable manner.

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