Journal of Innovative and Creativity
Journal Homepage: https://joecy.org/index.php/joecy
e-mail: journaljoecy@gmail.com

Faculty of Education
University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai
ISSN 2775-771X (Online)
ISSN 2962-570X **(Printed)**
5 (2) 2025, Page: 2334-2344

Epistemology of Value Education: Cultivating Humanist Character in Students from a Contemporary Education Perspective

Ayu Rizkia Silviana[1], Mukh Nursikin[2]
[1,2]Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga, Indonesia
Corresponding Author: Ayu Rizkia Silviana; ayusilviana53@gmail.com

Published: May, 2025

ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental aspect that plays a significant role in the change and progress of a society. As a strategic element in creating a more dignified civilization, education not only functions as a transfer of knowledge but also as a means to instill character values and build noble morals in students. This research aims to examine the implementation of value education epistemology in the context of contemporary Islamic education, with an emphasis on instilling humanist character in students. This research uses a qualitative method with the type of library research by analyzing written literature in the form of books and scientific journals related to the research theme. The results show that humanist character education in Islam requires educators as role models in fostering noble values, such as compassion, social responsibility, and religious awareness. The method used in instilling character values involves the strategies of moral knowing, moral modeling, moral feeling, moral acting, and giving advice and habituation. Value education in Islam aims to create people who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have noble character and are responsible for their role in the world. In facing the challenges of modernization and globalization, Islamic education must respond to these needs by integrating spiritual, moral, and social aspects while contributing to developing a moral civilization. This study concludes that to build a complete human being (Insan Kamil), humanist character education needs to be applied holistically in everyday life in schools, families, and communities.

Keywords: Educational Epistemology, Value Education, Humanist Character, Contemporary Islamic Education

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INTRODUCTION

Education is essential to bring about greater social change. Education is the primary social factor determining whether a civilization or culture increases or decreases in quality. Only countries that value education strategically have been able to thrive and dominate the world throughout history (Abas, 2022, p. 79). A strong epistemological foundation is essential for educational initiatives to be successful, and one way to achieve this is by aligning educational goals and strategies with desired outcomes. Based on the previous line of thought, it can be concluded that epistemology, a subfield of philosophy, serves as a measure of the extent to which human understanding is based on reality and its purpose and the underlying conceptual and theoretical framework (Ali, 2011, p. 47), regarding the truth and accuracy of scientific knowledge built on human ideas and actions, as well as regarding the truth and accuracy of scientific knowledge about its origins, theoretical basis, conceptual framework, and foundation (Lorens, 2005).

Epistemology comes from the Greek episteme, which means knowledge, and Logos, which means science. On the other hand, epistemology is the philosophical study of how, what, and where knowledge comes from and its behavior and various forms. According to Maftukhah and Nursikhin (2023: 591), epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with studying human knowledge and its foundations and the duties and obligations of those who seek to understand and apply that knowledge. Inductive, deductive, contemplative, positivist, and dialectical methods are among the processes that lead to this understanding through human reason and perception (Rizal, 2022, p. 50). Humans have an innate need to seek knowledge or act as interpreters of life's realities, and as a result, epistemology is constantly evolving to accommodate theoretical and practical considerations. All sciences related to education, including but not limited to their respective sources, methods, components, and objectives, will fall under the purview of educational epistemology. According to Maghfiroh and Nursikhin, educational epistemology is a philosophical strategy for understanding education. Life values education is essential to the educational initiative to help students identify, understand, appreciate, and fulfill their life purpose. As a result, they will be better able to live an authentic life by human standards (Maghfiroh & Nursikhin, 2024, p. 157). Values, according to Mulyana, are references and beliefs when making decisions. It is favored to motivate action (Mulyana, 2004, p. 11). Frankel states that values consist of standards of behavior, beauty, justice, truth, and effects that bind humans and must be implemented and maintained (Kartawisastra: 1980).

Today's technological growth is increasingly fast. Various villages and even foreign countries in Indonesia are also affected by the rampant development of technology. This technological development affects people's attitudes and actions, both positive and negative. All parties involved in the education system see their interactions, behaviors, and perspectives shaped by these shifts (Rahmadani et al., 2021, p. 508). This has led to several problems in the field of education, such as the increase in violence in schools, the decline in student morals and ethics, the rise of lawsuits related to the curriculum, and last but not least, the government's goal of instilling life values in students has led to the increase of lawsuits. Thus, exemplary behavior from teachers, parents, and communities is needed to instill life values in children. These values are inculcated at school and in the family and community environment. With role models and education, the values of life will be realized and implemented correctly.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a type of library research commonly referred to as (library research). In this research, the author collects data in the form of scientific papers which aim to collect literature data. The discussion to solve a problem is supported by a critical and in-depth discussion of appropriate library data so that the data used comes from literature in the form of

articles, books, and other scientific sources (Rahman & Nasrullah, 2022, p. 608). This means that research is carried out by analyzing written literature in books and scientific journals as the primary sources. Then, the method used in this research is to use the descriptive analysis method (Usiono, 2020, p. 52) to seek in-depth information about the epistemology of value education with the cultivation of humanist character in students from the perspective of contemporary education. In the current era of Islamic education, there is a demand to be a reformer for other education to build a noble civilization with value education and modern society.

This research was conducted using a qualitative method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, which is used to research natural object conditions, in other words, the opposite of experiments. The research is carried out by collecting various sources related to the epistemology of value education and cultivating humanist character in students from the perspective of contemporary education. Processing techniques and content analysis are systematic, in-depth discussions of the content.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Epistemology of Value Education

Epistemology comes from the Greek word "epistem," which means knowledge or science. While "logos" also means knowledge. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that discusses science, including various scopes, sources, characters, and human truth (Elvira R. et al., 2021). According to Maftukhah and Nursikhin (2023: 591), the theory of knowledge or epistemology is defined as the study of how we gain knowledge. From an etymological perspective, epistemology is usually considered a reliable theory of knowledge; however, when translated into Indonesian, the term is known as the doctrine of knowledge. However, from a terminological perspective, epistemology becomes the philosophy of knowledge or the study of how we know the world. An important part of epistemology is its description of humans as lovers of knowledge and how it relates to scientific inquiry. Knowledge in epistemology is defined as the value of human understanding of a topic that can distinguish various disciplines (Surajiyo, 2008, p. 53).

According to Kohlberg in Djahiri (1992: 27), value education is the application of a plan to improve and develop various timeless life experiences; these values can also be seen as a collection of moral and normative principles embedded in the character of each person. A more effective way to convey moral principles and spread normative values is the goal of these principles, which aim to strengthen communication. In addition, value education is defined by Dahlan (2007:5) as a methodical process that aims to create individuals with firm cognitive, spiritual, and action commitments motivated by religion. According to Hecht et al. (2023), education aims to help students develop good character, improve their knowledge, and internalize universal values such as Respect, responsibility,

honesty, and integrity. Value education aims to help students develop and improve their interpersonal and solidarity skills for a better future. If these goals are consistent with the rules, ideas, and principles of education, they will be easy to achieve. Therefore, educators must instill values in their students and teach them about the relationship between goals and strategies. The more specific and in-depth the objectives of the educational process about values education, the better. Asia and The Pacific Program of Education Innovation for Development (APEID) aims to teach students about object values, help them develop attitudes that reflect those values, and empower them to take actions that reflect those values (Maftukhah & Nursikhin, 2023). Based on various theories, it is established that the purpose of value education is a process that increases people's moral awareness and encourages them to demonstrate valuable behavior.

The Concept of Humanism in Islamic Education

Humanism in the Big Indonesian Dictionary has several meanings; in general, "human" means humane, humane (good, noble, etc.). Specifically, a "humanist" believes that humans are the most important thing in the universe, is committed to helping fellow humans, and seeks to improve society by advocating for a more human-centered approach. The word humanism comes from the term "humanism," which can mean a variety of things: a philosophy of education that aims to improve social relations and promote the idea of humanity; an ideology that views humans as the primary focus of study; a philosophical movement during the Renaissance that viewed classical literature as the foundation for all human activities; and finally, humanity itself. Being humanistic means developing compassion for others and a sense of humanity. Derived from another word, "*humanization*" means the development of feelings unique to human beings. According to Nurcholish Madjid (Abdullah & Nurhaeni, 2020), humanism is a set of ideas stemming from humans' ability to identify and adhere to basic principles that guide their daily lives. Therefore, *humanism* can be interpreted as an ideology that places humans above all else, including the values attached to themselves and their social position.

In the context of humanistic education, the term humanistic is more of an adjective describing a particular teaching approach. The humanistic approach to teaching and learning is humanistic education (Abdul Munir, 2002, p. 95). The humanist perspective aspires to help humans realize their full potential by encouraging them to reflect on and use their strengths and talents best. According to humanists, humans are created in the image of God and have certain inherent qualities that must be nurtured to their full potential. Only by teaching people to value themselves as individuals can these human qualities be developed (humanist education). Islam views humanist education as a teaching of Islam that requires individuals to uphold their values. The teachings of Islam, known as rahmatan lil 'alamin, show humans the path to perfection. Islamic teachings on education as a path to enlightenment and salvation for human life are needed as a solid foundation, an unobstructed path,

and an end. By adhering to this framework, the principles of Islamic education outlined in the Qur'an and Hadith are believed to consistently raise the level of human intelligence, religiosity, and devotion. The Islamic education system must change to raise a generation facing the material, moral, intellectual, and spiritual challenges of modern life and the workplace (Supriyanto, 2009, p. 10). Everyone exhibits this dynamic to some extent; it is in our nature to seek knowledge of the unknown.

The central concept of humanistic education thought, according to Mangunwijaya, is *"Respect for human dignity. The fundamental thing in humanistic education is realizing a learning environment that frees students from great competition, high discipline, and fear of failure"* (Mangunwijaya, 2001, p. 160). According to humanistic education, students are unique individuals with different capacities and potentials. Consequently, from this perspective, teachers play the role of guides and conversation partners, and students play the role of subjects and objects of learning. According to the humanist perspective on education, people are active agents with agency and agency over their own lives. Humanist education, on the other hand, takes intellectual and cognitive growth seriously (Amirudin, 2017). While most people would agree that teaching students to manage their emotions is paramount, humanist educators argue that students' intellectual or cognitive development is equally important. In this regard, humanist education emphasizes human values and culture in the classroom, primarily focusing on human development. As a result, humanistic education aims to produce people who care deeply about others and the world around them; they are self-aware, autonomous, and responsible but do not base their actions on objective reality. According to Bahruddin and Moh Makin, humans have a moral responsibility to their environment in the form of a calling to devote themselves to the benefit of society. Humanist education plays an important role in humanizing people through education that prioritizes human values; this is important to give context to diversity as a social fact that everyone must acknowledge.

Cultivating Humanist Character in Students

Education does not only include learning facts and figures; it also includes shaping one's personality, acquiring the ability to learn from mistakes, and acquiring marketable skills. According to Noor Amirudin, humanist education is essential to produce better people. The reason is simple: Islamic educational doctrine has not solved all its complicated problems. The problem is that Muslims often have a dualistic and polarized view of the world, historically focusing on religious and general knowledge, students' lack of self-confidence, and the fact that getting a diploma is the only goal (Amirudin, 2017). These problems are common in the field of Islamic education. Several potential solutions cannot be applied immediately. According to Bahruddin and Moh Makin, humans have a

moral responsibility to their environment in the form of a calling to devote themselves to the benefit of society:

1. Educator Aspect

   Educators play an important role in the learning process. The role of educators in guiding students toward the expected educational goals is vital. Educators are responsible for meeting their students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs in this situation. Any educator has three fundamental requirements: subject matter expertise, enthusiasm, and commitment to the classroom. According to the principles of Islamic education, educators in the Islamic education system are responsible for the physical and spiritual growth of students towards maturity, which will enable them to carry out their humanitarian duties (as *Khalifah fi al-ardh*) educating in a way that is unique in its pedagogical principles and subjects, and in a way that involves the person (personification of the educator). The first step in developing intelligence as a teacher is to have the mindset that each student is unique, with various skills and potential. The humanist view of education prohibits teachers from developing personal feelings towards their students or talents and focusing solely on them. Students' self-confidence can be enhanced through developing their abilities and strengthening their skills. When practiced, teaching entails a series of procedures that habituate, model, punish, and encourage. Being holy entails social, religious, and environmental responsibilities teachers instill in their students. Here, the role of the educator is more than just conveying facts and moral principles to the class. Nonetheless, accountability is fostered and achieved through such procedures. Consequently, the teacher's words, attitudes, and actions aim to mold students into ideal human beings in harmony with secular progress and religious beliefs.

2. Method Aspect

   Methodology, as an academic discipline, has its roots in the broader family of fields. There is a methodology in the field of educational science known as educational methodology. An appropriate strategy is needed to steer the educational process in humanist education toward the desired goal. The reason is that without a proper strategy to direct its implementation, even the most comprehensive and high-quality curriculum will not be effective. To develop social sensitivity, teachers must take an approach that encourages creativity, sharpens students' conscience, and enhances religious observance. Approaches considered educational and teaching are essentially what is meant by methods in education. Islamic education aims to educate individuals who have attained basic capabilities, which is why this is the case. If ignored, things that must be considered can lead to poor results, the innate abilities of students not maturing organically, or contradicting the decree of Allah. veryone must know who they are in order to understand people as they are. The truth about God, themselves, and the cosmos will become clear to them.

In humanist education, students are more important in their relationship with their teachers. The central concept in humanist education is understanding, approaching, and developing students as unique individuals with the potential to be khalifas and exceptional abilities as creatures of Allah, known as *Ahsan taqw*a. To encourage student growth and development, this approach to education aims to instill necessary character traits in children. This humanist approach to teaching aims to help each student become an independent learner by fostering their natural curiosity, creativity, resilience, and sense of purpose. Consequently, the primary goal of humanist education in Islam is to help students grow spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

In the realm of value education, of course, an educator is not only effective in teaching and learning activities in the classroom (*transfer of knowledge*) but more in his relationships and "*modeling*" *(transfer of attitude and values*), both to students and all members of the school community. In his article, Heri Cahyono explained how value education strategies can be implemented through intracurricular and extracurricular activities. This allows madrasahs or teachers to use a holistic approach that emphasizes learning materials, examples from teachers, advice, and daily habits when interacting with students, other teachers, and each other.

First, moral knowing strategy. *The moral knowing* strategy provides sound knowledge to students by the rules of value education. Parents should explain to them why specific values are important as part of their role in helping children develop a moral worldview. Therefore, the method of value clarification can be utilized, which allows the moral knowledge strategy to be applied in its practical application. Children can work on explaining the values associated with what they see in these activities. Discussion, viewing, and analysis of certain movies all demonstrate this tactic in action. Teachers seek to help their students develop a moral sense by instilling in them the ability to recognize right from wrong in terms of values; moreover, they seek to equip their students with the knowledge necessary to evaluate the impact of their values, both positively and negatively, so that they can make more informed moral decisions. Moreover, once they leave school, students will be more receptive to the moral dilemmas they face in the real world.

Second. Moral Modeling Strategy. *Moral modeling* is a strategy in which the teacher becomes a source of value that is *hidden curriculum* as the primary reference source for students... If implemented, the authoritative approach to value education will significantly impact the individual's personality. Of course, students with good character will not be self-grown or fully committed from the start. As such, the actions of adolescents can be influenced by the adults in their lives. Ultimately, moral teachings play a significant role in shaping one's character. This means that students will be more likely to emulate their teachers' good, disciplined, and friendly behavior, who should be role models in society. So, students in school can be seen as soft clay; the society around them will mold the soil to their liking. Whoever builds the soil will shape its appearance.

Third. Moral Feeling and Loving Strategy. The birth of *moral loving* starts from the *mindset*. A positive mindset towards the value of goodness will feel the benefits of good behavior. After realizing the importance of altruism, love and dedication will flourish. Contemplating and understanding something rationally will foster a sense of love and devotion. This form of love and affection for goodness can trigger a deep desire to act altruistically, beyond mere obligation, even at the cost of life and property. This strategy is implemented through an action-oriented approach, allowing students to engage in actions they deem worthwhile.

Fourth. Moral acting strategy. Moral behavior is realized through direct action; after students learn, observe, and internalize the meaning of a particular value, they will act according to their understanding of the value, which ultimately forms their character. Actions informed by knowledge, awareness, autonomy, emotion, and love will greatly impact individuals. These deposits will be stored in the individual's subconscious, leading to the development of the desired character. The frequency with which individuals engage in certain behaviors increases the likelihood of character formation; however, if their daily actions do not have a foundation of love, they need not last long.

Fifth. Traditional strategy (advice). Traditional strategies, called advice strategies, involve guiding students on what is considered beneficial and harmful. This strategy involves educators offering guidance, feedback, and direction while encouraging students to progress toward a mutually achievable goal. Through physical interaction, students can understand the importance of a commendable reputation that will ultimately shape their lives. During implementation, try to remember the children and reflect on their presence to reaffirm the purpose and intent of their visit to the madrasa while reminding them of their status as students of religion or other disciplines.

Sixth. Punishment strategy. Without punishment for violators, it will not be obeyed and will instead lead to chaos or disorder because punishment and enforcement are an integral part of education. Failing to discipline children may be considered less educated and may reduce their grades. Punishment aims to strictly enforce rules while preventing individuals from straying towards offense and encouraging adherence to integrity.

Seventh. Habituation Strategy Action-oriented strategies are effective for educators in instilling values in their students. This strategy facilitates a gradual process for children, culminating in transmitting their espoused values. For example, they cultivate the habit of obeying rules, practice praying before learning, and improve their discipline in personal presentation, among other behaviors. New traditions can develop into characteristics if individuals enthusiastically engage and practice them. Habits include not only behaviors but also positive thoughts and emotions.

Value Education from a Contemporary Education Perspective

The epistemology of value education emerges as a platform to address complex philosophical questions that remain unsolved in the scientific realm, as science typically relies on the sanctity of scientific values and serves as a conduit for their propagation. As a result, *epistemology* can also be considered as a framework derived from processes that produce practical or rational results in addition to results that present challenges. Muhaimin, as cited in Fauzi (2015: 161), asserts that *epistemological* discourse in education centers on the evolution of human potential, intrinsic nature, cultural heritage, and the interaction between potential and culture. Statements regarding *epistemology* in education mainly focus on initiatives aimed at enhancing the significance of education in terms of the basic concepts and methodologies of Islamic education. In Islamic education, important modifications to the *epistemology of* value education are necessary to provide quality and relevant education that enables the current generation to understand science and technology. If value *epistemology* is prioritized in Islamic education learning, it will produce graduates who are scholars, inventors, or researchers with wisdom and integrity. Value education aims to foster sound, good morals so that individuals can live freely and be responsible to others and God. In addition, value education plays an important role in fostering a strong mindset in individuals so that they are not easily affected by changing situations. The relevance of contemporary Islamic education lies within the framework of modernization and globalization, which is very important for its practical and dynamic operation (Fauzi, 2015, p. 155). The intellectual capacity of a contemporary Muslim is strictly determined by the sharpness of his understanding, especially with the support of sophisticated technology. This is complicated by the need to uphold a balanced religious perspective by prioritizing and implementing value-based education. The rearrangement of the education system, especially concerning comprehensive value education, aims to realize the expected intelligent and moral Islamic education.

In the field of education, Maftukah and Nursikhin argue that the notion of contemporary Islamic education can be derived from a framework that integrates spiritual, cognitive, and ethical dimensions in the educational process. This suggests that the preferred pedagogical approach is creative and innovative, considering the diverse circumstances of students or pupils. The methodology for incorporating Islamic principles is based on multidisciplinary science. The purpose of Islamic education is to cultivate individuals through teaching, training, guidance, supervision, and the provision of exemplary models, thereby encouraging the development of individuals as religious or spiritual beings (Maftukhah & Nursikhin, 2023: 599). Implementing comprehensive Islamic education and value education will facilitate realizing the individual as a spiritual being of God. Allah's virtuous and permissible creation signifies awareness of its role on earth as a servant of Allah. It is positioned alongside the *Khalifah fi al-ardh*, fulfilling divine commands and avoiding prohibitions.

CONCLUSION

Education serves to impart knowledge and encompasses a broader process that includes instilling character values, moral guidance, developing life skills, and maximizing students' full potential. In contemporary Islamic education, humanist character building is essential to address some fundamental issues, including the separation of religious knowledge from general knowledge, students' lack of self-confidence, and the practical focus of education that prioritizes the achievement of diplomas.

Humanist education in Islam requires the involvement of educators who act as teachers and spiritual, moral, and social mentors. Educators must master the content, show enthusiasm for it, and demonstrate empathy for it, all essential for fostering self-confidence, independence, and an awareness of social and religious responsibility. In this context, educators serve as important role models who embody Islamic values in their speech, behavior, and attitudes.

The importance of value education in a humanist framework is achieved through various strategies, including moral instruction, ethical behavior, counseling, punitive measures, and habituation. Each strategy significantly increases awareness of values, fosters a love of goodness, encourages actions rooted in noble principles, and nurtures a strong and sustainable character. Effective value education requires a comprehensive approach that includes internal and external activities and fosters a positive school culture. From the point of view of educational *epistemology*, efforts to instill values are seen as initiatives to raise awareness of basic human capabilities, cultural traditions, and the harmonious relationship between individual potential and social reality. The notion of values education in Islam goes beyond mere intelligence development; it encompasses the development of a virtuous character and understanding one's duty as a steward and servant on earth. In the era of modernization and globalization, Islamic education must actively foster a generation capable of integrating religious knowledge with intellectual prowess while contributing to developing a highly moral and civilized culture. Therefore, the teaching of humanist principles from an Islamic perspective must continue, thus demanding a revitalization *of the epistemology of* value education that aims to produce human beings who excel not only in science and technology but also in spiritual, ethical, and humanitarian aspects.

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