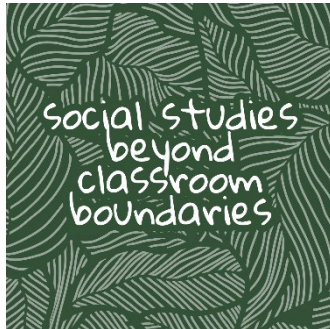


From Classical ‘*Adab* to Contemporary Character Building: The Pedagogical Tradition of KH. Hasyīm Ash’ārī and Its Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education



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ABSTRAK

Kemerosotan moral yang terlihat pada siswa di era digital telah membangkitkan kembali minat akademis terhadap pemikiran pedagogis Islam klasik. Artikel ini mengkaji filosofi moral KH Hasyim Asy'ari. Karakter beliau, sebagaimana tercermin dalam karya-karya utamanya-khususnya *Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* dan *al-Tanbīhāt al-Wājibāt* - dapat menjadi landasan bagi pedagogi karakter Islam dan, dengan demikian, bagi kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan di era saat ini. Studi ini menggunakan desain tinjauan pustaka sistematis kualitatif untuk menyintesis sumber tekstual primer dan kajian sekunder guna mengidentifikasi tiga pilar filosofis yang saling terkait dalam pemikiran Hasyim Asy'ari, yaitu: fitrah manusia sebagai anugerah Ilahi (*fiṭrah*), akal yang diarahkan oleh nilai-nilai Ilahi (*'aql muwajjah bi'l-qiyam al-ilāhiyyah*), dan adab (*adab*) sebagai kerangka yang menaungi seluruh aktivitas pendidikan. Pilar-pilar ini menghasilkan pedagogi karakter yang berbasis pada keteladanan (*uswah*), ketulusan (*ikhlaṣ*), kedisiplinan, dan orientasi ilmu pengetahuan demi kemaslahatan umum (*maṣlaḥah*). Analisis komparatif antara kerangka kerja ini dan kajian pendidikan karakter kontemporer menunjukkan adanya konvergensi yang kuat dengan sebelas prinsip pendidikan karakter Lickona serta penelitian pembelajaran sosial-emosional; pada saat yang sama, hal ini menawarkan landasan epistemologis yang khas Islam, yang sering kali kurang mendapat perhatian dalam diskursus pendidikan karakter pasca-sekuler. Artikel ini menegaskan bahwa pedagogi Hasyim Asy'ari tidak hanya memiliki nilai historis, tetapi juga merupakan model yang layak diterapkan untuk pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan yang holistik dan berlandaskan moral di sekolah-sekolah Islam modern.

KATA KUNCI: ‘*adab*; Pendidikan Karakter; Pendidikan Islam; KH. Hasyīm Ash’ārī.

ABSTRACT

The moral decline that is seen in students in the digital era has renewed the academic interest in classical Islamic pedagogical thought as a resource for character education in the present. This article examines the moral philosophy of KH. The character of Hasyīm Ash’ārī as reflected in his major writings, especially *Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* and *al-Tanbīhāt al-Wājibāt*, can be the basis of Islamic character pedagogy and thus, the advancement of knowledge in the present era. The study employs a qualitative systematic literature review design to synthesize primary textual sources and secondary scholarship to identify three interlocking philosophical pillars in Hasyīm Ash’ārī's thought namely, the divinely endowed human nature (*fiṭrah*), reason directed by divine values (*'aql mūawwaj bi'l-qīam al-ilāhiyyah*) and ‘*adab* as the governing frame of all educational activity. These pillars produce a character pedagogy based on exemplary conduct (*usūwah*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), discipline, and the orientation of knowledge to public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). A cross-reading of this framework with contemporary character education scholarship shows strong convergence with Lickona's eleven principles of character education and with social-emotional learning research, while at the same time offering a distinctively Islamic epistemological grounding often lacking in post-secular character education discourse. The article claims that the pedagogy of Hasyīm Ash’ārī is not only of historical importance, but a viable model for holistic and morally grounded knowledge development in modern Islamic schools.

KEYWORDS: ‘*adab*; Character Education; Islamic Education; KH. Hasyīm Ash’ārī.

A. Introduction

The paradox of modern education is becoming sharper: the faster the growth of knowledge, the more evident is the erosion of moral and characterological formation. The issue of moral degradation among students in Indonesia, including declining respect for teachers and elders, acceptance of dishonesty, and the proliferation of harmful digital content, has been a persistent concern for teachers, policymakers, and religious scholars throughout Indonesian society (Subaidi, 2020). This problem is not simply cultural. It reveals a structural problem in educational systems that have prioritized cognitive achievement while seeing moral formation as secondary or ornamental. This imbalance is exactly what Thomas Lickona in his seminal work on character education identifies as the root cause of what he calls “ten troubling trends” of moral decline. He argues that schools must become caring moral communities in which character and knowledge are developed in indivisible union (Lickona, 1996).

In the Islamic educational tradition this union has always been compulsory. The concept of *‘ilm* (knowledge) in classical scholarship is intrinsically linked to *‘amal* (practice) and *akhlāq* (moral character). KH. This inseparability was articulated by Hasyīm Ash’ārī (1871-1947), the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama and one of the most influential Islamic scholars Indonesia has produced, with exceptional rigor and practical detail. In his magnum opus on educational ethics, *Adab al-‘Ālim wa al-Muta’allim* (The Conduct of the Scholar and the Student), he proved that the development of moral character is not only a prerequisite for learning, but is in itself the highest purpose of education. Rizkiyah (2025) examined his thesis work and concluded that Hasyīm Ash’ārī identified *‘adab*, which includes moral propriety, courtesy, and spiritual discipline, as the overarching principle of every facet of educational life, ranging from the inner disposition of the student to the institutional culture of the school.

However, the scholarship on Hasyīm Ash’ārī’s educational thought has been confined mostly to normative theological commentary or national-curriculum relevance studies. Hardly any systematic studies have connected his moral philosophy to the wider discourse of Islamic character pedagogy as a grounded framework for contemporary knowledge development. Sahin (2018) has shown that as a new interdisciplinary field, Islamic Education Studies suffers from conceptual confusion that often reduces Islamic pedagogy to either a traditionalist replication or an uncritical adoption of Western secular models. This means that classical resources, such as the thought of Hasyīm Ash’ārī, are under-utilized in the very debates in which they have most to offer.

This article seeks to fill that gap by pursuing three interrelated aims: (1) identifying the philosophical pillars of Hasyīm Ash’ārī’s educational thought and their pedagogical implications; (2) analyzing how these pillars constitute an Islamic character pedagogy that combines moral formation with intellectual development; and (3) demonstrating the relevance of this pedagogy to the contemporary demand for holistic knowledge grounded in ethical purpose. In this way, it offers Hasyīm Ash’ārī not as a reverential object but as a thinker to be engaged, one whose insights into the teacher-student relationship, the ethics of knowledge-seeking, and the social duties of the educated individual speak with unusual directness to issues that post-industrial education has yet to resolve.

The argument is constructed in five steps. After outlining the approach and sources, it contextualizes Hasyīm Ash’ārī’s thought within the discourse of Islamic character education and contemporary moral education theory to establish the theoretical framework. It then reconstructs his

philosophical underpinnings by close reading of primary texts. The main analytical part deals in detail with his character pedagogy and its four defining competency domains and the institutional contexts within which they operate. The article ends with a discussion on the convergences and distinctive contributions of this pedagogy for contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia and elsewhere.

The article employs a qualitative approach in the form of a systematic literature review (SLR), an appropriate design for research that seeks to synthesize, assess and interpret a body of literature to respond to a defined research question (Hakam, 2018; Mas'ud et al., 2019). The research question is: how the moral philosophy of KH. 1. How can Hasyīm Ash'ārī be framed as a framework for pedagogy of Islamic character? 2. What is the relevance of the development of knowledge in the contemporary period?

Literature was identified thru two routes. The main sources are the written works of Hasyīm Ashari, namely *Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*, *al-Tanbīhāt al-Wājibāt*, *Muqaddimah Qānūn Asāsī Nahdlatul Ulama*, *Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, and *al-Nūr al-Mubīn fī Maḥabbat Sayyid al-Mursalīn*. The secondary sources were obtained from Google Scholar and Publish or Perish by using the key terms "adab", "KH Hasyīm Ash'ārī", "Islamic character pedagogy", "moral education Islam", and "character education Indonesia". Priority was given to those articles published in Scopus indexed journals. Reference management was done using Mendeley.

In the beginning it is necessary to state three limitations. First, the article is a conceptual study based on library research and does not report primary empirical data from classrooms or institutions; propositions about implementation would require separate field research. Second, the translation of Hasyīm Ash'ārī's Arabic and Javanese concepts into contemporary pedagogical language involves interpretive choices, which are made explicit throughout. Third, although the article argues for the broad applicability of his framework, it does not claim that the framework is culturally or institutionally universal. Its immediate contexts are Indonesian Islamic schools and *pesantren*, but its principles address challenges that extend beyond those settings. This article is based on the first author's bachelor's thesis (Rizkiyah, 2025) and is a considerably revised, theoretically developed, and independently argued reworking of that material.

B. Conceptual Framework

This article is located at the intersection of three areas of scholarship: Islamic Education Studies as an academic field; contemporary character education theorizing; and the history of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Within Islamic Education Studies, Sahin (2018) demonstrated that there is an uncritical bifurcation that plagues the field: it either equates tarbiyah with religious instruction, which reduces Islamic education to doctrinal transmission, or it uncritically adopts Western pedagogical models, thereby losing its theological specificity. Instead, Sahin proposes that Islamic Education Studies be established as an interdisciplinary empirical and scholarly inquiry that can engage with "diverse historical and contemporary Islamic cultural, intellectual, political, theological and spiritual traditions" (Sahin, 2018, p. 335). This article operationalizes that proposal: it treats Hasyīm Ash'ārī's corpus as an intellectual resource to be critically engaged, rather than quoted for the sake of religious authority

alone; and it reads his pedagogy against the grain of contemporary educational research, rather than separate from it.

Modern scholarship on character education is the comparative lens. Lickona's (1996) eleven principles of effective character education remain some of the most widely used frameworks in the field; his core argument-that good character is constituted by moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action and that all three must be cultivated simultaneously-closely parallels the Hasyīm Ash'ārī triad of *'aql*, *qalb* and *jawāriḥ* (intellect, heart and limbs). Importantly, Lickona argues that character education should not be an add-on but should permeate the entire life of the school - its curriculum, its classroom relationships and its culture. This view echoes Hasyīm Ash'ārī's insistence that *'adab* governs the learning environment from the student's bodily posture to the social atmosphere of the institution.

Research on social-emotional learning (SEL) makes a parallel contribution. A meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs, involving over 270,000 students, by Durlak et al. (2011) found that programs that integrated social and emotional skills with academic content yielded an eleven-percentile-point increase in academic achievement and significant gains in prosocial behavior. This result provides a quantitative grounding for the intuition underlying Hasyīm Ash'ārī's classical pedagogy: that the moral and emotional formation is meant to add to rather than compete with intellectual development.

Mas'ud et al. (2019) provide the broader institutional context in their study of the evolution and orientation of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia within the history of Indonesian Islamic education. Their analysis shows that the growth of Islamic education in Indonesia followed a uniquely integrative path influenced by the colonial encounter and the nationalist movement, whereby religious and general sciences became increasingly linked rather than separated. In this trajectory, a landmark moment is Hasyīm Ash'ārī's own curricular experiments at *Pesantren* Tebuireng, introducing mathematics, history and Dutch alongside classical religious subjects. A recent study by Jenuri et al. (2025) of Al-Ghazālī's human concepts in Islamic religious education learning models provides a comparative classical-to-contemporary bridge, demonstrating that premodern Islamic scholarly frameworks remain not only historically relevant but pedagogically generative in contemporary school settings.

These frameworks collectively serve as the scaffolding for the current analysis. Sahin (2018) provides the disciplinary frame, Lickona (1996) and Durlak et al. (2011) offer the comparative character-education benchmarks, Mas'ud et al. (2019) supply the historical context, and Jenuri et al. (2025) demonstrate the translatability of classical Islamic thought into contemporary pedagogy. The main analytical resource is Hasyīm Ash'ārī's own writings.

Hasyīm Ash'ārī's educational philosophy is based on an integrated anthropology which defines the human being in terms of three capacities that simultaneously constitute the goals of education, namely: *fiṭrah* (natural disposition), *'aql* (reason) and *'adab* (moral propriety). They are not successive phases but simultaneous dimensions of human nature that education has to nurture in concert.

For Hasyīm Ash'ārī *fiṭrah* is the primordial moral and spiritual disposition with which every human being is created-the innate orientation toward goodness, truth, and God that constitutes the deepest layer of personhood. More than anything else, education must first save and develop this

disposition, instead of repressing or bypassing it in the hurry toward cognitive achievement. This view has a very important pedagogical implication: students should be treated as intrinsically moral subjects, not as cognitive containers to be filled. The teacher who does not respect the student's *fiṭrah*-by shaming, undue pressure or by making learning a matter of examination performance-undermines the very foundation upon which knowledge can be meaningfully built.

This understanding of *fiṭrah* places Hasyīm Ash'ārī's thought within the framework of a broader Islamic philosophical anthropology where human beings are both '*abd Allāh*' (servants of God) and *khalifah* (stewards of the earth) and education is a process of consciously inhabiting these roles, instead of merely assuming them. It is important to point out that this is in line with contemporary developmental psychology's focus on the child's holistic development - the simultaneous and intertwined processes of cognitive, social, emotional and moral development - that the ontological foundation is quite different (Durlak et al., 2011). Developmental psychology begins with empirical observations of human behavior, whereas Hasyīm Ash'ārī begins with a theological account of human nature that gives an absolute, rather than merely instrumental, priority to moral formation.

In Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework, reason is neither autonomous nor neutral. It is the faculty through which the human being distinguishes between truth and falsehood, chooses between possible courses of action, and restrains the appetitive self (*nafs*). But reason without ethical principle, and divine orientation, is not only insufficient but dangerous, he believes. It produces cleverness without wisdom, knowledge without conscience. Education, therefore, must develop the intellectual capacity of the students and guide that capacity to the divine values enshrined in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. This is not obscurantism, but a philosophical claim that knowing and being responsible are structurally related- a claim that has close analogs in contemporary virtue epistemology and character education, both of which insist that intellectual excellence cannot be isolated from moral excellence (Lickona, 1996).

In fact, Hasyīm Ash'ārī's approach to '*aqī*' calls for learning environments that foster analytical capacity along with ethical deliberation, the capacity to weigh the consequences for self and community, and the humility to recognize the limits of one's knowledge. His famous injunction that a teacher, when asked about something he does not understand, must have the honesty to say "I do not know" (*lā adriy*) is not only a rule of intellectual honesty, but an instance of the deeper principle that right reason requires self-awareness and moral courage.

The most extensive and structurally core concept in Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogy is the concept of '*adab*'. Conventionally translated as 'manners' or 'politeness', '*adab*' in the classical Islamic educational tradition signifies something closer to the integrated moral order of the self in relationship-the proper disposition of a person toward God, toward knowledge, toward teachers, toward fellow students, and toward the world. *Ilm* without '*adab*', Hasyīm Ash'ārī argues, is not only ineffective; it is in fact injurious. A knowledgeable person without '*adab*' is more dangerous than an ignorant one, for knowledge magnifies whatever moral orientation it serves.

This privileging of '*adab*' over knowledge per se is Hasyīm Ash'ārī's most radical pedagogical claim, with direct implications for curriculum, assessment, and teacher formation. If '*adab*' is the governing frame of education, then a curriculum that only measures knowledge acquisition and problem-solving skill-no matter how technically sophisticated-is measuring the wrong things.

Assessment is about disposition, relational quality and the use to which knowledge is put. This convergence with the Lickona's critique of the "bag of virtues" approach, which treats character education as a list of abstract values to be taught rather than an integrated mode of being to be cultivated, is striking (Lickona, 1996). Both insist that character is not something to be transferred but something to be formed.

Manshur (2020) provides a useful comparative perspective in his study of the literary works of the *pesantren* as vehicles for the teaching of righteousness in cultural transformation. The function of the '*adab*'-formation in the tradition of the *pesantren* is not only normative instruction, but also the shaping of a habitual moral self-thru immersive communal practice. This process has been rediscovered by contemporary character education theory under the concept of "the caring school community" (Lickona, 1996). Thus, the three pillars of *fiṭrah*, '*aql*', and '*adab*' are not sequential or separable; they are mutually constitutive dimensions of one educational vision in which knowledge, reason, and moral character constitute an indivisible whole.

A useful comparative point of reference is the classical moral psychology of al-Ghazālī who similarly argued that the cultivation of the self had to be addressed simultaneously in terms of reason ('*aql*'), the heart (*qalb*), and outward conduct (*jawāriḥ*). The parallel is not accidental: Hasyīm Ash'ārī was heavily molded in the Ash'ārī theological and Shāfi'ī jurisprudential traditions of Al-Ghazālī, and his pedagogy can be read as a contextualized instantiation of Al-Ghazālī's moral psychology in the domain of formal education. In the same way that Jenuri et al. (2025) showed that Al-Ghazālī's anthropology can be a fertile source for the learning model of Islamic religious education today, so Hasyīm Ash'ārī's that can be so for the same structural reasons. Both insist on the unity of moral and intellectual formation; both locate learning within a vision of human flourishing (*falāḥ*) which is at once worldly and eschatological; and both argue that the institution of education must itself be a moral community, not simply an instructional system. This suggests an important implication for school design: an institutional culture that embodies '*adab*' in its everyday social norms and relational practices is not ancillary to the curriculum but is itself a form of curriculum-what contemporary educational sociology refers to as the hidden curriculum, and what Hasyīm Ash'ārī refers to as the formation of the learning environment (*bi'ah al-ta'līm*).

C. Islamic character education in KH. Hasyīm Ash'ari (Works)

The philosophical foundations outlined above are operationalized in Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogical writings into concrete specifications of teacher character and conduct, student discipline and ethics, and the relational dynamics of the learning community. This chapter examines four key domains of character pedagogy and their institutional implications, focusing primarily on *Adab al-Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*, but contextualized within the broader corpus.

Perhaps the most distinctive pedagogical contribution of Hasyīm Ash'ārī is his treatment of the teacher figure. In his framework, the teacher is not primarily a transmitter of information but a moral exemplar (*usūwah*), in whom students encounter not just knowledge but a living embodiment of its proper use. This focus on the teacher as a role model is older than and in some ways anticipates current research on 'teacher modeling' in social learning theory: the most effective instruction is not thru explicit teaching of values but thru students' observation and internalization of their teachers' habitual conduct (Mujahid, 2021).

Hasyīm Ash'ārī's description of the exemplary teacher underscores three qualities. First, *tawāḍu'* (humility): when a teacher teaches from a position of social superiority rather than moral service, the learning relation is corrupted and the teacher models the wrong priorities. Second, *ikhḷāṣ* (sincerity): if teaching is motivated by social prestige, financial gain or institutional status, then that faculty member is fundamentally misoriented, and will create students misoriented toward the wrong ends. Third, *muḥāsabah* (self-accountability): Teachers are to constantly reflect on their own moral condition, not preach virtues they do not practice. These are not marginal issues, but structural demands, because the teacher's personality is the main pedagogical tool.

This analysis converges productively with Subaidi (2020) who finds that the most successful schools in developing student character are those in which teachers themselves exemplify the values they teach, and leadership is oriented toward moral community rather than institutional reputation. Teacher character is not a personal virtue but a systemic educational resource in classical and modern accounts alike.

The teacher-student relationship within Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework is best described as a pedagogical covenant. It is a structured reciprocal relationship in which both parties accept particular moral obligations, the fulfillment of which constitutes the educational act itself. The pedagogical covenant is based on the virtue of each party rather than the compliance of either, as opposed to contractual relations in which defined goods are exchanged between parties under specifiable conditions. A teacher who teaches out of vanity has broken the covenant, tho their instruction be true; a student who listens respectfully for social advantage has similarly broken it. In this sense the educational relationship is irreducibly moral: its success cannot be measured by cognitive outcomes alone, for its purpose goes beyond them. This perspective provides a critique of the purely outcome-based accountability systems in education that Hasyīm Ash'ārī does not express explicitly but that is implicit in his premises: a school that assesses success purely in terms of examination results and graduation rates has adopted an accountability framework that is unable to capture the most important things it is meant to be doing.

Hasyīm Ash'ārī pays a lot of attention to the moral obligations of the student. The obligations are spelled out in unusual detail. The student must purify intention before beginning study, preferring the seeking of God's pleasure to personal advancement or social status; must choose teachers for their moral integrity and scholarly depth rather than their institutional prestige; must display respectful attentiveness in ways that extend to bodily posture; and must take collective responsibility for fellow students' understanding, since learning is not a competitive but a cooperative enterprise.

His writings list a number of character virtues. *Ikhḷāṣ* (sincerity of intention) is necessary at the point of entry into study, *qanā'ah* (contentment) allows the student to pursue knowledge without the distraction of material ambition, *wira'ī* (spiritual vigilance) guards the purity of the self so that the heart remains receptive, and *tawāḍu'* (humility) prevents the accumulation of knowledge from becoming a source of arrogance. The student's relationship to time is also governed by morality: punctuality and not procrastinating are ethical as well as practical virtues, for to waste time in the pursuit of knowledge is a failure of stewardship.

The conduct duties that Hasyīm Ash'ārī lays out for students are not externally imposed on an otherwise free subject of learning, but the conditions of the real learning itself. The student who

approaches a text with arrogance has already determined what it means. The student who approaches a teacher with impatience cannot receive what is offered. The student who is preoccupied with self-advancement cannot attend to the knowledge before him. In each case, a moral failure generates an epistemic failure. This is not a theological flourish added to a predominantly secular pedagogical program; rather it is the core premise of Hasyīm Ash'ārī's epistemology: that the morality of the learner determines the morality of what is learned, for knowledge is not a neutral commodity to be passively received but a living reality to be actively inhabited. The modern literature in educational psychology on "growth mindset" and "intellectual virtue" suggests the same insight by a secular route: dispositional openness, epistemic humility, and persistence are not simply personality traits but constitutive features of effective learning.

Hakam's (2018) survey of the implementation of value education in Indonesian primary schools shows that the transmission approach thru the methods of modeling, training, conditioning and habituation remains dominant in Indonesian schools, precisely the methods that Hasyīm Ash'ārī theorizes classically. This historical continuity is not a coincidence, but rather a manifestation of the deep roots of *pesantren*-based moral pedagogy in Indonesian educational culture (Manshur, 2020).

One of the most philosophically sophisticated aspects of Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogy is his account of the teacher-student relationship. This relationship is characterized by a set of mutual obligations that are neither hierarchically dominant nor equalitarian but what might be termed *madīnah 'ilm* - a covenanted community of learning. The teacher owes real engagement, authentic concern for growth, tolerance of differences of background and ability to the student. The student owes the teacher respect and attention and obedience within the limits of the moral law.

The relational frame is also extended to the student's duties to other students: mutual aid, non-humiliation, and the active cultivation of a collaborative, rather than competitive, atmosphere. Here Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogy is very much in line with contemporary research on the social climate of schools. Mujahid (2021) shows that modern *pesantren* that succeed in nurturing moderate character in their students do so less thru formal instruction and more thru fostering a communal moral culture-the very relational ecosystem described by Hasyīm Ash'ārī. This is structurally parallel to Lickona's (1996) sixth principle- "create a democratic school community"-but the Islamic basis of *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood/sisterhood) and *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance) makes this community explicitly theological.

D. Pedagogical Competences The framework of a modern teacher

A unique feature of *Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* is the formulation of concrete pedagogical strategies which, while being framed classically, are aligned with the competency domains set out in Indonesia's national education legislation (Law No. 14, 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers and Law No. 20, 2003 on the National Education System). The following table synthesizes this mapping and shows how each of the contemporary competency domains is either anticipated or enriched by the classical prescriptions of Hasyīm Ash'ārī:

Pedagogic Competency Domain (UU No. 20/2003)	Indicator	Pedagogical Strategy in KH. Hasyīm Ash'ārī's Thought
Understanding the student	Ability to comprehend student characteristics and needs	Attend to all students with genuine care and compassion (kasih sayang); treat students without discrimination; maintain tolerant stance toward students from different backgrounds.
Planning learning	Ability to design meaningful learning experiences	Open sessions with basmalah and close with hamdalah; plan instruction sequentially, moving from the simpler to the more complex, ensuring each step is consolidated before the next is introduced.
Implementing learning	Ability to execute instruction effectively	Regulate voice to maintain audibility and clarity; manage the learning environment; use language the learners can genuinely understand; demonstrate seriousness and full attention in the act of teaching; teach within one's established area of expertise.
Evaluating learning	Ability to assess student outcomes equitably	Conduct periodic formative evaluation; acknowledge openly when a question exceeds one's knowledge ("lā adriy"), since false confidence in teaching produces false understanding in learning.

Table 1. Mapping of KH. Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogical strategies to contemporary teacher competency domains.

Several observations arise from this mapping. First, the pedagogical strategies in Hasyīm Ash'ārī's that are not narrow instructional ones but relational and dispositional: even planning and evaluation are framed as moral acts, not merely technical operations. Second, the emphasis on honest self-assessment ("I do not know") as a central pedagogical practice foreshadows the insistence of contemporary educational psychology on intellectual humility as a component of effective teaching. Third, the injunction to "teach within one's expertise" is not a mere professional boundary rule. It is rather an expression of the deeper principle that authentic teaching requires integrity between one's knowledge, one's being and one's communication.

The preceding analysis outlines Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogical framework in its classical terms. This section discusses its relevance to three important issues in contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia: the integration of religious and general knowledge; the development of a moral epistemology appropriate for the digital age; and the cultivation of teachers as exemplars of character in an era of professional professionalization.

The tension between religious knowledge and modern scientific and social knowledge has been a continuing challenge for Indonesian Islamic education. Hasyīm Ash'ārī's response to this challenge was not theoretical but practical. In the early twentieth century, he reformed *Pesantren* Tebuireng to include mathematics, geography and history in its curriculum along with classical Islamic sciences, decades before it became national policy. His philosophical rationale was simply this: all knowledge, when rightly guided by divine values, exists for the sake of human flourishing and the

glory of God; therefore, there is no principled reason to separate religious from general learning. This division is administrative rather than ontological.

It is important to emphasize the epistemological foundation of this incorporation, which separates the position of Hasyīm Ash'ārī from both religious essentialism and secular pluralism. He does not argue that Islamic knowledge is superior to scientific knowledge and that the latter should be subordinate to the former. He does not argue that all knowledge is equally valid and that religion is just one among many epistemological traditions. Rather, he maintains, all true knowledge, regardless of its domain, shares in one truth grounded in divine creation, and the moral quality of the knower, shaped by *'adab*, is the organ thru which such participation is made possible. The mathematician who does equations without moral formation is not thereby getting a piece of divine truth but a technical skill that has been severed from its epistemological context. This is a bold claim with bold implications: it demands that every teacher, not just in Islamic studies but in mathematics, history, or biology, take account of the moral formation of students, and that every curriculum be shaped with the question of human flourishing as an explicit, not simply implicit, educational aim.

This integrated epistemology has been rediscovered independently by modern Muslim educationists. In the case of Indonesia, Mas'ud et al. (2019) discuss the evolution of Islamic education, which is unique among Muslim countries, to a model of curricular integration that prepares students for the various professional domains while maintaining the religious formation. This model is rooted in the tradition of the *pesantren*, as exemplified by Hasyīm Ash'ārī. The relevance is structural: Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework not only allows for knowledge integration, but also demands it, on the basis that any knowledge pursued with *'adab* and sincere intention is meritorious in religious terms.

The ethical difficulties of knowledge-seeking are compounded in the digital era by the media environment of distraction, competition and the valorization of surface over depth. The students who have internalized a social media habitus where attention is the primary currency and virality the measure of significance are not naturally inclined toward sustained, disciplined and humble engagement with knowledge as Hasyīm Ash'ārī depicts.

His idea of *wira'ī*-spiritual vigilance that protects the self from the distractions that threaten learning-has a modern analog in what might be called "attentional ethics": the cultivation of the capacity for sustained focus and resistant to the economy of distraction. Likewise, his insistence that knowledge must be pursued for *mahlaḥah* (public welfare) and not for personal gain provides an ethical standard to judge research, media content, and artificial intelligence applications, a standard that contemporary secular discourse has yet to provide with similar clarity.

Jenuri et al. (2025) make a closely parallel argument concerning Al-Ghazālī's concepts of human formation, arguing that the classical Islamic scholars' understanding of the person as *jāwidān-khirad* (ever-living wisdom) provides resources for addressing the "spiritual emptiness" that characterizes student experience in a hyper-connected but meaning-poor digital environment. The same is true of Hasyīm Ash'ārī: his insistence that moral formation and intellectual development are one is not a conservative constraint on the search for knowledge, but a corrective to its fragmentation. In an age of much knowledge and little wisdom, his insistence on placing *'adab* over mere *ilm* is arguably more urgent than when he wrote.

The practical implications for the development of teachers are profound. According to Subaidi's (2020) research on the implementation of character education in Indonesian madrasahs, the

most consistent predictors of successful character development in students are the quality of relationships between teachers and students and the moral credibility of teachers in the eyes of students. This finding is consistent with Durlak et al.'s (2011) meta-analytic finding that the effectiveness of SEL programs is critically dependent on implementation fidelity, which is in turn dependent on teacher commitment and relational skill.

Hasyīm Ash'ārī translates this finding into an educational philosophy. The teacher is not just a technician implementing a curriculum, the teacher is a *murabbī* (character cultivator), *murshid* (moral guide), and *mudīniy* (community builder). Each of these positions requires a different sort of competence: the *murabbī* must be sensitive to the student's moral development over time; the *murshid* must serve as a credible model; the *mudīniy* must promote institutional culture. Contemporary teacher formation that reduces the teacher to an instructional technician does not develop any of these competencies and yields teachers who are professionally skilled but morally unprepared for the character-formation dimension of their work.

This has direct implications for teacher education programs especially in Indonesian Islamic universities. A truly Hasyīm Ash'ārī-inspired reform of teacher preparation would reorient teacher formation away from knowledge transmission and toward character cultivation, emphasizing *tawādu'*, *ikhilāṣ*, and *muḥāsabah* as professional virtues as well as pedagogical skill, drawing on classical Islamic pedagogy and consistent with modern evidence on teacher effectiveness in character education (Mujahid, 2021; Subaidi, 2020).

E. Discussion and Conclusion

The present article has argued that KH. Hasyim Ash'ari's pedagogical thought presents a coherent, philosophically grounded, historically significant, and contemporarily relevant framework for Islamic character pedagogy. Three contributions can be singled out.

Firstly, the article has demonstrated that Hasyīm Ash'ārī's three-pillar anthropology of *fiṭrah*, *'aql* and *'adab* offers a structural basis for an integrative pedagogy that neither reduces Islamic education to doctrinal transmission, nor dissolves it into secular competence-formation. In this way, it responds to the disciplinary confusion identified by Sahin (2018) by showing that close reading of classical Islamic educational thought already embodies the interdisciplinary and humanistic orientation that scholars of Islamic Education Studies are calling for.

Second, the analysis of Hasyīm Ash'ārī's teaching methodologies based on contemporary teacher competency areas confirms that his classical system not only fits present educational demands but in many cases offers a more complete picture. Contemporary competency frameworks tend to define teaching as a set of instructional skills, while Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework defines teaching as an integrated moral and intellectual vocation. This resonates with Lickona's (1996) character-education principles and Durlak et al.'s (2011) SEL findings, suggesting that the convergence between classical Islamic pedagogy and contemporary character education is structural, not superficial.

Third, the study of Hasyīm Ash'ārī's relevance to the current problems, namely knowledge integration, moral epistemology of the digital era, and teacher formation, demonstrates that his framework is not a mere historical artifact, but a living resource. Mas'ud et al. (2019) note that the

trajectory of Islamic education in Indonesia has always tended to integration. The thought of Hasyīm Ash'ārī provides the deepest theoretical justification for that trajectory.

There are some limitations and future research directions. The analysis has been conceptual, establishing what Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework entails, not whether schools that claim to implement it do so or what effects such implementation has on students. Ethnographic and longitudinal empirical studies are required to follow the institutional life of this pedagogy in contemporary Islamic schools and to test if the convergences with contemporary character education theory noted here are borne out in practice. The instruments and frameworks for assessment needed to measure *'adab* and the formation of character alongside cognitive achievement are still underdeveloped. It is a priority for the field to develop these instruments with rigor and cultural sensitivity (Hakam, 2018).

The larger implication of this analysis is simple but important: Islamic education has resources to respond to the crisis of moral formation in the knowledge society that secular educational theory does not have, if it draws on the depth of its own intellectual tradition. The problem is not to make Hasyīm Ash'ārī an icon of traditionalism, but to engage him as a rigorous thinker whose pedagogy of *'adab*, reason and *fiṭrah* speaks with uncommon clarity to the demands of an era that has more knowledge than wisdom, and more information than character.

At the institutional level, Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework implies a specific set of curricular and organizational priorities that are very different from the purely doctrinal *pesantren* model and the secular competency driven school model. Curricula based on his thinking would not regard character education as a separate subject to be scheduled but as a dimension of all learning-embedded in the relational norms of the classroom, the culture of the school, and the standards by which teachers are selected, evaluated, and supported. The evaluation would broaden to encompass not just cognitive performance, but markers of moral development, including the quality of student relationships, the sincerity of their motivation, and the congruence between professed values and exhibited behavior. This is exactly what Lickona (1996) has argued for in that effective character education requires a "comprehensive, intentional approach" that permeates the entire life of the school rather than only a few lessons or programs.

One specific dimension that needs to be paid particular attention to by any institutional translation of this framework is gender. Hasyīm Ash'ārī's texts are addressed mainly to male scholars within the tradition of classical Islamic jurisprudence and written within a particular socio-historical context. Any contemporary application must confront the question of how his pedagogical principles relate to female students and teachers, and whether the relational norms he specifies, including the student-teacher hierarchy, require adaptation in co-educational and gender-diverse contexts. This is not a marginal but a structural concern, for a character pedagogy that is not inclusive cannot deliver the social formation that it promises. In many ways, contemporary Indonesian Islamic schools have moved beyond the gendered assumptions of the classical texts, and scholarship on this subject must engage with this evolution rather than treat classical formulations as permanently normative.

One final point concerns the relation between Hasyīm Ash'ārī's framework and the Indonesian national character education program (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter, PPK). The five main values of PPK namely religiosity, nationalism, independence, integrity and mutual cooperation (gotong royong) structurally are convergent with the values developed by Hasyīm Ash'ārī namely religiosity (*akhlāq terhadap Allāh*), integrity (*ikhhlāṣ and amanah*) and mutual cooperation (*ta'āwun*)

The implementation of PPK values in Indonesian Islamic schools is more successful when based on religious frameworks rather than civic ones, as shown by Subaidi (2020) and Hakam (2018). Hasyīm Ash'ārī's pedagogy provides just such a framework: it gives the PPK's civic values a theological depth that makes them not only legally mandated, but spiritually compelling, not only memorized, but enacted. This is the defining contribution of an Islamic character pedagogy based on classical 'adab: it does not merely inculcate values but is rather the human formation that makes values transformative.

F. Statements

Language editing and structural reorganization of this manuscript were performed using artificial intelligence tools. All analytical claims, interpretive decisions and scholarly citations are the responsibility of the authors.

G. References

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