THE CONCEPT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION ACCORDING TO IBN MISKAWAIH AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CHARACTER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract (In English). *This study aims to analyze the concept of moral education proposed by Ibn Miskawayh and its relevance to the development of character education in Indonesia. This research employs a qualitative approach using library research methods, focusing on a textual analysis of Ibn Miskawayh's principal work Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-Aʻrāq along with relevant secondary literature such as academic books and journal articles. The findings reveal that Ibn Miskawayh's concept of moral education is based on the cultivation of the soul through achieving balance among the rational, irascible, and appetitive faculties, which in turn forms major virtues such as wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. The process of character formation, according to him, is carried out through moral habituation, the exemplary role of educators, self-discipline training, and supportive social environments. This concept aligns significantly with the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) initiative in Indonesia, particularly in the implementation of value internalization through school culture, role-modeling, and continuous behavioral habituation. Therefore, Ibn Miskawayh's educational thought provides both philosophical foundations and practical guidance for designing holistic character education models oriented toward the comprehensive development of learners, encompassing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.*

Keywords*: Moral Education, Ibnu Miskawayh, Character Education, Moral Habituation, Spiritual Development.*

Abstract (In Bahasa). *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep pendidikan akhlak menurut Ibn Miskawaih serta relevansinya dalam pengembangan pendidikan karakter di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (library research) yang berfokus pada analisis teks karya utama Ibn Miskawaih Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-Aʻrāq serta literatur sekunder berupa jurnal dan buku yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan akhlak menurut Ibn Miskawaih bertumpu pada pembinaan jiwa melalui keseimbangan antara daya pikir, daya marah, dan daya syahwat, sehingga menghasilkan sifat-sifat utama seperti kebijaksanaan, keberanian, kesederhanaan, dan keadilan. Proses pembentukan akhlak dilakukan melalui pembiasaan moral, keteladanan pendidik, pengendalian diri, serta pembentukan lingkungan sosial yang*

mendukung internalisasi nilai. Konsep ini memiliki relevansi yang kuat dengan program Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK) di Indonesia, khususnya dalam aspek pembelajaran berbasis keteladanan, pembiasaan, dan budaya sekolah. Dengan demikian, pemikiran Ibn Miskawaih dapat dijadikan landasan filosofis dan praktis dalam merancang model pendidikan karakter yang holistik dan berorientasi pada pengembangan kepribadian peserta didik secara utuh, baik secara intelektual, emosional, maupun spiritual.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Akhlak, Ibn Miskawaih, Pendidikan Karakter, Pembiasaan Moral, Spiritualitas Pendidikan.*

A.   INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a strategic issue in the Indonesian education system, particularly amidst the challenges of globalization, the development of digital technology, and social transformations that are changing the behavior patterns of the younger generation. Phenomena such as the degradation of manners, instant culture, consumerism, cyberbullying, and weakened self-control indicate that moral aspects have not been firmly established in students. This suggests that education has not yet functioned optimally as a process of internalizing values that shape the overall personality[1].

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that the goal of education is to develop students' abilities and shape noble character and morals. This means that education is not solely oriented toward intellectual intelligence but also the formation of character and human values. However, in practice, schools often emphasize academic achievement over moral development, resulting in moral education tending to be cognitive in nature and failing to address the strengthening of spiritual dispositions[2].

From an Islamic perspective, moral education holds a central position because the primary goal of Islam is the perfection of human morality, as emphasized in the Prophet's saying that he was sent to perfect morality. Therefore, morality is not viewed as an external moral code, but as an inner state that produces spontaneous action. Moral education must instill good habits through daily practice and real-life experiences[3].

One of the main figures who discussed moral education philosophically was Ibn Miskawaih (d. 1030 CE). In his work, *Tahdzīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-A'rāq*[4], he asserted that morality is a state of the soul that drives actions without lengthy rational consideration. This shows that morality is the result of a process of repeated moral training, which becomes an ingrained trait. This view positions education as an effort to form habits and develop character gradually[5].

Ibn Miskawaih based his concept of moral education on the structure of the human soul, which consists of three faculties: reason, anger, and lust. The balance between these three creates a harmonious soul and fosters ethical

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[1] Amiruddin Amiruddin, "Urgensi Pendidikan Akhlak: Tinjauan Atas Nilai Dan Metode Perspektif Islam Di Era Disrupsi," *Journal of Islamic Education Policy* 6, no. 1 (2021).

[2] Kemdiktisaintek, "UNDANG-UNDANG REPUBLIK INDONESIA NOMOR 20 TAHUN 2003 TENTANGSISTEM PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL," 2003.

[3] Abuddin Nata, *Pemikiran Para Tokoh Pendidikan Islam* (RajaGrafindo Persada, 2000).

[4] Ibn Miskawaih, "Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq Wa Tathhir Al-A'raq," *Mesir: Al-Maktabat Al-Mishriyyah*, 1934.

[5] Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2013).

behavior. Thus, moral education aims to develop rational potential to control emotional impulses and desires, thus forming a morally mature personality[6].

In the context of modern education, this idea of moral balance finds relevance through the character education theory developed by Thomas Lickona[7]. Lickona states that good character consists of knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good. This means that character education must address the realms of knowledge, feelings, and actions, as Ibn Miskawaih's moral education emphasizes not only moral understanding but also habituation and exemplary behavior[8].

In Indonesia, the formal implementation of character education is carried out through the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) program, which emphasizes the internalization of values in learning, school culture, and habituation activities. However, many schools face obstacles, such as a lack of teacher role models, weak social supervision, and a lack of integration of values with students' real lives[9].

Based on this description, Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education needs to be reexamined to enrich the approach to character education in Indonesia. His thinking offers an integrative framework between spiritual strengthening, rational development, and self-control. Therefore, this study aims to analyze Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education and its relevance to the development of modern character education in Indonesia.

B.   METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. This approach was chosen because the object of study is Ibn Miskawaih's conceptual ideas on moral education, which are philosophical and normative in nature, thus requiring in-depth interpretation through literary sources, rather than through empirical field data collection. According to Zed[10], library research is a study conducted by utilizing library materials as the primary source to obtain data and develop scientific arguments. Thus, this research relies on textual review and conceptual analysis of relevant works.

The primary source of this research is Ibn Miskawaih's work entitled Tahdzīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-Aʻrāq, which serves as the basis for exploring thoughts on the nature of morality, the purpose of education, methods of character formation, and the position of educators in the moral education process. To strengthen the interpretation, this research also refers to secondary sources in the form of books, scientific journal articles, previous research results, and studies of Islamic

[6] Syafa'atul Jamal, "Konsep Akhlak Menurut Ibn Miskawaih," *Tasfiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. 1 (2017): 50–70.

[7] Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (Bantam, 1992).

[8] Hisan Mursalin, "Teori Pendidikan Ibn Miskawaih Dan Thomas Lickona," *Rayah Al-Islam* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1722–36.

[9] Rohmad Widodo and M. Mansur, "IMPLEMENTASI PENGUATAN PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER (PPK)SEBAGAI UPAYA MENYIAPKAN GENERASI EMASDI SMAN 1 KOTA MALANG," *Jurnal Civic Hukum* 7, no. 2 (2022): 183–92.

[10] Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

philosophy and education that discuss or interpret Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts in historical and contemporary contexts[11].

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, namely identifying, reading, recording, and selecting relevant literature according to the research focus. All data obtained were then analyzed using content analysis techniques, namely, an analysis that aims to interpret the meaning contained in the text through the process of categorizing concepts and interpreting the relationships between ideas[12]. This analysis allows researchers to systematically construct the conceptual structure of Ibn Miskawaih's moral education.

To ensure the validity of the interpretation, source triangulation was conducted by comparing the meanings derived from primary works with the views of the scholars who interpreted them. With this approach, the research yielded a comprehensive understanding of the relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education to character education in Indonesia.

C.   RESULTS

The results of the study indicate that Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education is rooted in his views on the nature of the human soul and the importance of character development through the habituation of moral attitudes and actions. In his work Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-Aʿrāq, Ibn Miskawaih explains that morality is a condition embedded in the soul that encourages a person to act spontaneously without the need for long rational consideration. This concept emphasizes that morality is not merely moral knowledge, but a character that has become integrated within oneself through a process of repeated moral practice and experience[13]. This understanding is in line with the opinion of Abuddin Nata[14], who stated that the formation of morality requires the internalization of values until they become habits or permanent traits.

Ibn Miskawaih divided the structure of the human soul into three powers, namely the power of thought (*al-quwwah al-nāṭiqah*), the power of anger (*al-quwwah al-ghaḍabiyyah*), and the power of lust (*al-quwwah al-shahwāniyyah*). The balance between these three forces is the basis for the formation of good morals. If reason is able to control emotional impulses and desires, then a person can achieve virtue. However, if reason is weak and dominated by lust, then despicable behavior is born. This ethical structure shows that the formation of morals requires strengthening the ability to control oneself[15]. This opinion is reinforced by Mahmud[16], who states that moral development must be directed at perfecting rational potential as a controller of desires.

According to Ibn Miskawaih, the ultimate goal of moral education is true happiness (al-saʿādah), the perfection of the soul achieved through consistent practice of virtue. True happiness is not determined by material pleasures, but by

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[11] Bunyamin Bunyamin, "Konsep Pendidikan Akhlak Menurut Ibn Miskawaih Dan Aristoteles (Studi Komparatif)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2018): 127–42.

[12] Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Sage publications, 2018).

[13] Miskawaih, "Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq Wa Tathhir Al-A'raq."

[14] Nata, *Pemikiran Para Tokoh Pendidikan Islam*.

[15] Jamal, "Konsep Akhlak Menurut Ibn Miskawaih."

[16] A Mahmud, "Akhlak Islam Menurut Ibnu Miskawaih. Aqidah-Ta: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah, 6 (1), 84–98," 2020.

the soul's ability to achieve harmony and closeness to God[17]. This demonstrates that moral education is transcendental with a spiritual orientation. Similarly, Sa'adah & Hariadi [18] state that Ibn Miskawaih's ethical thinking provides a metaphysical foundation for the development of character education, emphasizing the harmony between human moral and spiritual needs.

In terms of educational methods, Ibn Miskawaih emphasized habituation (*ta'wīd*) as the primary technique for character formation. Repeated moral behavior can foster stable personality dispositions. Furthermore, role models (*uswah*) are crucial because students learn primarily through imitation of teachers or moral figures around them. Advice (*mau'izhah*) is also crucial, but it must be delivered gently and rationally, not through coercion[19]. This approach closely aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which states that moral behavior is formed through observation and internalization of behavioral models[20].

In addition to methods, the role of teachers is crucial in Ibn Miskawaih's moral education system. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge, but also moral guides and role models. Teachers are required to possess integrity, spiritual maturity, and patience in guiding students. A positive emotional relationship between teachers and students is necessary to create a learning climate that supports the internalization of values. This aligns with the research findings of Musbaing, which explain that the effectiveness of character education is highly dependent on the quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students in the school environment[21].

The educational environment is also a crucial variable. Ibn Miskawaih believed that humans can only develop morally within positive social interactions. Therefore, families, schools, and communities must be spaces for personality development consistent with moral values. This concept is relevant to Indonesia's Character Education Strengthening (PPK) policy, which emphasizes an educational ecosystem based on school culture[22].

Thus, the research results indicate that Ibn Miskawaih's ideas on moral education are highly relevant to character education in Indonesia. The concepts of spiritual balance, moral habits, teacher role models, and the establishment of an educational ecosystem that supports moral values can serve as the basis for developing holistic, sustainable character education programs in schools.

D. DISCUSSION

Ibn Miskawaih's moral education ideas have significant relevance to the character education development agenda in Indonesia, particularly in the context of educational transformation that focuses not only on academic achievement but

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[17] Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*.

[18] Alimatus Sa'adah and M Farhan Hariadi, "Pemikiran Ibnu Miskawaih (Religius-Rasional) Tentang Pendidikan Dan Relevansinya Di Era Indsutri 4.0," *Jurnal Penelitian Keislaman* 16, no. 1 (2020): 16–30.

[19] Handal Pratama Putra and Solihah Hayeesama-ae, "Ibnu Miskawaih: Philosophical Thoughts on Moral Education and Its Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education," *POTENSIA: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2022): 77–85.

[20] Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*.

[21] Musbaing Musbaing, "Mengoptimalkan Dampak Pendidikan: Profil Kompetensi Kepribadian Penting Guru PAI Di Madrasah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Refleksi* 12, no. 3 (2023): 185–96.

[22] Siti Hanifah and M Yunus Abu Bakar, "Konsep Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Miskawaih: Implementasi Pada Pendidikan Modern," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 4 (2024): 5989–6000.

also on the development of students' personalities. The Strengthening of Character Education (PPK), developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture since 2016, emphasizes the importance of religious values, independence, cooperation, integrity, and nationalism as the core of student character formation. However, implementation in the field is often suboptimal due to a lack of integration between value systems, educator role models, and school culture[23]. This is where Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education can provide a comprehensive philosophical and strategic foundation[24].

In Ibn Miskawaih's thinking, morality is not merely knowledge or moral rules taught verbally, but rather a habitus, a trait that shapes a person's spontaneous reactions to moral situations. Therefore, moral education must be directed at consistent and planned moral habits. This habituation process is closely related to the concept of self-regulation in modern psychology, namely the ability to consciously manage thoughts, emotions, and actions based on believed value standards[25]. This demonstrates a conceptual meeting point between classical Islamic moral philosophy and contemporary character education theory.

Ibn Miskawaih also emphasized that the formation of moral character requires a balance among the powers of thought, anger, and lust. This balance produces moral virtues such as wisdom (hikmah), courage (shaja'ah), modesty (iffah), and justice ('adl). This structure reflects the virtue ethics model, which has recently been widely used in the development of character education, including by Lickona 26 and Ryan 27, and emphasizes that character develops through the formation of stable good traits within an individual.

In terms of methods, Ibn Miskawaih mentioned three main approaches to moral formation: habituation, role modeling, and self-control training (riyāḍah al-nafs). Habituation is achieved through repeating good actions until they become permanent habits. Modeling requires educators to demonstrate exemplary moral behavior. Meanwhile, self-control training is carried out through reflection and conscious efforts to control instinctive urges[26]. This approach aligns with the PPK strategy based on the school's moral ecosystem.

In the context of educational institutions, the quality of educators is crucial. Ibn Miskawaih placed teachers at the center of character formation. Teachers must possess moral integrity and spiritual depth, enabling them to serve as role models for students. Research by Suroso & Husin (2024) confirms that teacher role models are the most significant variable in the success of character education in schools. Therefore, teacher professional development cannot be limited to improving pedagogical competence alone but must also encompass personality development and teaching ethics.

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[23] Rahmadani Akbar and Rahmad Alkhadafi, "Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Akhlak:Analisis Pemikiran Ibnu Miskawaih Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Moral," *Advances In Education Journal* 1, no. 6 (2025): 576–89.

[24] Achmad Wahyu Dwinugroho et al., "Menerapkan Etika Ibn Miskawaih Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Indonesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2024): 283–98.

[25] Albert Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory of Moral Thought and Action," in *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development* (Psychology press, 2014), 45–103.

[26] Putra and Hayeesama-ae, "Ibnu Miskawaih: Philosophical Thoughts on Moral Education and Its Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education."

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Comparative Table of Moral Education Concepts

Aspect	Ibnu Miskawaih	Thomas Lickona	Relevance for Indonesia
Ethical Basis	Equanimity and Moral Purification	Humanistic Virtue Ethics	Spiritual and Personality Strengthening
Objective	Perfection of The Soul (SaʻĀdah)	Individual with Character & Democratic	Formation of Religious Character
Method	Habituation, Role Model, Spiritual Training	Moral knowing-feeling-doing	Habits at School, Character Parenting
The Role of Teachers	Role Model and Spiritual Guide	Moral Model & Reflection Facilitator	Teachers as Role Models & Motivators
Environment	Ethnic and Harmonious Community	School and Family Culture	PPK Ecosystem Based on School Culture

The table shows that Ibn Miskawayh's thoughts can serve as a philosophical basis for deepening the character education framework currently being developed in Indonesian schools.

Thus, Ibn Miskawayh's thoughts are not only historically relevant but also have strong applicability in curriculum development, teacher development, and the formation of a school culture as a moral environment. The integration of rational, emotional, and spiritual values makes his concept of moral education a holistic and adaptive model for character education to meet the challenges of the times.

E.   CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education stems from his views on the structure of the human soul and the process of its formation toward moral perfection. Morality is understood as a stable state of the soul that gives rise to spontaneous, uncoerced actions. Therefore, moral education must be directed toward cultivating moral habits through continuous practice. The ultimate goal of moral education is the achievement of true happiness (al-saʻādah), namely the perfection of the soul and human closeness to God. Thus, education not only develops intellectual intelligence but also strengthens the spiritual and emotional dimensions.

Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts have strong relevance to character education in Indonesia. The concept of spiritual balance, the importance of teacher role models, and the role of the social environment align with the principles of

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[27] Suroso Suroso and Farida Husin, "Analyzing Thomas Lickona's Ideas in Character Education (A Library Research)," in *7th FIRST 2023 International Conference on Global Innovations (FIRST-T3 2023)* (Atlantis Press, 2024), 39–47.

Strengthening Character Education (PPK) in the national curriculum. However, its implementation requires awareness and commitment from all elements of education, particularly in creating a school culture that supports the internalization of moral values. Integrating Ibn Miskawaih's concepts into character education can enrich pedagogical approaches while strengthening religious identity and national wisdom. Therefore, the development of character education in Indonesia needs to adopt a holistic approach that not only emphasizes moral knowledge, but also habituation, self-control, and spiritual strengthening as the main

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