

Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Character and Noble Morals From the Perspective of Ibn Miskawaih

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the phenomenon of moral degradation among the younger generation amid rapid advances in digital technology that are not balanced by adequate character development, while the practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in many educational institutions still tends to focus on the transfer of cognitive knowledge and has not yet been grounded in a solid philosophical framework for shaping students' moral dispositions. This study aims to analyze the concept of moral education according to Ibn Miskawaih and to formulate its relevance for the development of PAI in shaping character and noble moral conduct. The study employs a qualitative, library-based research approach, using the book **Tahdzib al-Akhlaq** as the primary data source and related journal articles as secondary data sources, which were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The results of the study indicate that Ibn Miskawaih views ethics as a disposition of the soul (hai'ah) arising from the balance of three faculties of the soul: the rational faculty (an-nafs an-natiqah), the emotional faculty (al-ghadabiyyah), and the appetitive faculty (al-bahimiyyah), which are shaped through natural processes, habituation, practice, and exemplary behavior, leading to the attainment of the four cardinal virtues and true happiness (as-sa'adah). Further analysis shows that this philosophical framework provides an epistemological basis for Islamic Education (PAI) to shift from a cognitive-verbal approach toward an approach based on habit formation and exemplary behavior, oriented toward the continuous development of students' inner dispositions. This study recommends integrating Ibn Miskawaih's doctrine of the middle path (al-wasath) into the PAI curriculum design as an indigenous philosophical foundation for character education based on Islamic values in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education; Character Education; Noble Morals; Ibn Miskawaih; Islamic Ethical Philosophy*

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Introduction

On the one hand, advances in digital technology have opened up broad access to information and knowledge for the younger generation; on the other hand, they have also created new spaces for the emergence of increasingly complex moral issues. Hidayat and Subando (2024) note that the torrent of information in the digital age has shifted the value orientation of some students toward permissive behavior, thereby requiring character education to develop more context-specific strategies so as not to merely describe the phenomenon of moral decline without offering a concrete framework for resolution. This situation underscores that advances in science and technology do not automatically correlate with moral progress—a paradox that is, in fact, not a new phenomenon in the history of human civilization.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is projected to be one of the strategic instruments for addressing this paradox. Afif and Ningrum (2024) emphasize that PAI plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually outstanding but also possesses noble character and an Islamic worldview amid digital disruption. In line with this, Akip (2024) explains that the implementation of Islamic education, by its very nature, cannot be separated from the goal of instilling moral values as the core of the educational process itself—not merely as a supplement to the curriculum. Thus, noble character should serve as a measure of PAI's success that is equal to, or even more important than, cognitive achievements alone.

However, the implementation of Islamic Education (PAI) in the field still presents a number of fundamental issues. Salisah et al. (2024), through a literature review of various studies on the role of PAI in the digital age, found that most PAI learning approaches still rely on lectures and the transfer of normative knowledge, while the dimensions of habit formation and exemplary behavior—which should be at the core of character development—have not yet been given an adequate theoretical foundation. This problem is exacerbated by the tendency of some character education studies in Indonesia to borrow theoretical frameworks from the Western tradition of moral psychology—such as Kohlberg's theory of moral development or Lickona's character education—without first delving deeply into the treasure trove of classical Islamic ethical philosophy, which had actually formulated systematic theories of moral formation long before the discourse on modern character education emerged in the Western world (Mainuddin et al., 2023).

Among the Muslim philosophers who systematically formulated theories of ethics was Abu Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ya'qub Miskawaih, who lived from 320–421 AH (932–1030 CE) under the Buwayhid Dynasty. Ibn Miskawaih is known as the “Father of Islamic Ethical Philosophy” for his contribution to systematizing ethical thought through his monumental work **Tahdzib al-Akhlaq wa Tathhir al-A'raq**, which specifically addresses the nature of the soul, the classification of virtues, and methods for shaping human character (Akbar & Alkhadafi, 2025; Alim, 2020). Interestingly, Ibn Miskawaih's thought emerged precisely from his unease regarding the realities of his time: the political and scientific advancements during the reign of 'Adhud al-Daulah were not accompanied by a corresponding elevation in the moral standards of society, but were instead marked by moral decline across various sectors—a condition that structurally resembles the problem of technological advancement without moral maturity currently faced by contemporary education.

Studies on the thought of Ibn Miskawaih are by no means a new phenomenon. A number of previous studies have examined Ibn Miskawaih's concept of moral education from various perspectives, ranging from philosophical-historical analyses (Mulia, 2019) to its relevance to modern-day education (Huda & Prilia, 2021), to comparisons with other educational figures such as Al-Ghazali, Kohlberg, and Lickona (Mursalin & Suparto, 2023; Mainuddin et al., 2023). However, the majority of these studies have remained at the stage of

conceptual description and general mapping of relevance; few have specifically analyzed how the structure of Ibn Miskawaih's theory of the three faculties of the soul and the four virtues can be positioned as an epistemological framework for evaluating and redesigning the methodological orientation of Islamic Education (PAI) in responding to contemporary problems, particularly moral degradation in the digital age. It is this research gap that this study seeks to address.

The significance of this study lies not merely in its contribution to the body of research on Ibn Miskawaih, but in a more fundamental epistemological urgency. The tendency of most discourse on character education in Indonesia to rely predominantly on Western moral psychology frameworks—as criticized by Mainuddin et al. (2023)—implies a lack of elaboration on the body of classical Islamic ethical philosophy as an equally valid theoretical source, even though this body of knowledge actually contains a conceptual structure that is no less systematic. If this situation is allowed to continue, Islamic Education (PAI) risks losing its authentic epistemological foundation and transforming into merely an “Islamic version” of secular character education theory, lacking the ontological-spiritual foundation that should be its distinguishing feature and strength. By treating Ibn Miskawaih's thought as an analytical tool—rather than merely a descriptive object—this study seeks to contribute to strengthening the epistemological autonomy of PAI while offering a philosophically sound conceptual framework to address the moral crisis facing today's youth..

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to: (1) philosophically analyze the concepts of ethics, the soul, and the goals of education according to Ibn Miskawaih; and (2) formulate the relevance and analytical contribution of these concepts to the development of the goals, content, and methods of Islamic Religious Education in shaping the character and noble ethics of students within the context of contemporary Indonesian education. With these objectives, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution in the form of an indigenous philosophical foundation for Islamic education to support the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as well as a practical contribution in the form of learning policy directions that are more oriented toward the formation of inner dispositions, rather than merely the transfer of religious knowledge.

Literature Review

2.1. Main Theoretical Framework: Ibn Miskawaih's Philosophy of Ethics

In the book **Tahdzib al-Akhlaq**, Ibn Miskawaih (1994) defines character (*al-khuluq*) as a state of the soul (*hai'ah li an-nafs*) that drives a person to perform an action without the need for prior thought or deliberation. This definition carries an important implication: character is not merely knowledge of right and wrong, but rather an inner disposition that has become so ingrained that good deeds are performed spontaneously, naturally, and consistently. Ibn Miskawaih distinguishes between two types of character: innate character (*thab'i*) and character acquired through habit (*'adah*); however, he emphasizes that both types of character can essentially be guided and shaped through education and instruction.

(Ridwan & Aisyah, 2022). It is this premise that forms the basis of Ibn Miskawaih's pedagogical optimism: if character is entirely natural and unchangeable, then moral education is futile; but since character can be shaped, moral education is a necessity.

The metaphysical foundation of Ibn Miskawaih's ethical theory lies in his conception of the soul (*al-nafs*). The soul is understood as a spiritual substance (*jauhar ruhani*) that does not perish with the death of the body, cannot be perceived by the five senses, and holds a more exalted status than material substance (Daniyarti, 2022). Following the Platonic tradition of philosophical psychology, which had been Islamized by earlier Muslim philosophers such as al-Kindi and al-Farabi, Ibn Miskawaih defined the human soul in terms of three hierarchically ordered faculties (Akbar & Alkhadafi, 2025; Alim, 2020):

- a. The appetitive faculty (al-nafs al-bahimiyyah), which is the faculty of desire oriented toward the fulfillment of physical needs such as eating, drinking, and sexual desire. This faculty is the lowest level of faculty, shared with animals and plants.
- b. The emotional faculty (al-nafs al-ghadabiyyah/as-sabu'iyah), which manifests itself in anger, courage, self-respect, and the desire for power. This faculty occupies a middle position and is shared with wild animals.
- c. The rational faculty (al-nafs an-natiqah)—that is, the faculty of thought that constitutes the essential distinction between humans and other creatures—serves to weigh good and evil and to guide the two faculties beneath it. The greater the dominance of this faculty within a person, the higher their degree of humanity..

Based on this tripartite structure of the soul, Ibn Miskawaih formulated the doctrine of the middle way (al-wasath/al-i'tidal) as his normative ethical principle: virtue (al-fadhilah) always lies in the middle between two extreme tendencies, namely excess (ifrath) and deficiency (tafrith). From this doctrine emerged the four principal virtues (al-fadhail al-arba'ah), namely al-hikmah (wisdom, the middle ground between cunning and stupidity, representing the virtue of the rational faculty), al-'iffah (self-restraint, the middle ground between excessive passion and emotional numbness, representing the virtue of the appetitive faculty), al-syaja'ah (courage, the middle ground between recklessness and cowardice, a virtue of the emotional faculty), and al-'adalah (justice, namely the harmony and balance of all three faculties of the soul) (Ramli & Zamzami, 2022; Salim et al., 2022). These four virtues subsequently serve as the overarching framework for all their derivative virtues.

According to Ibn Miskawaih, the ultimate goal of moral education is the attainment of happiness (as-sa'adah), which he understood in stages: temporary, physical-worldly happiness, and true spiritual happiness, which is intrinsic because it relates to the perfection of rational faculties and closeness to the Creator (Hariyanto & Muzammil, 2023). To achieve this goal, Ibn Miskawaih formulated several interconnected methods of moral education, namely the natural method (thab'i), which takes into account the sequence of psychological development from an early age; the method of habituation ('adah), through the consistent repetition of good deeds until they become second nature (malakah); the method of practice (riyadhah), which is more disciplined and structured; and the method of exemplary role models (uswah), which positions teachers and moral figures as behavioral references (Mulia, 2019; Huda & Prilia, 2021). These five theoretical elements—the concept of akhlak as a disposition of the soul, the tripartite structure of the soul, the doctrine of the middle path, the four virtues, and the methods of akhlak education—serve as the analytical framework in this study for interpreting and evaluating contemporary PAI practices.

2.2. Previous Research

To establish the academic context of this study, a review of relevant prior research is necessary to identify both achievements and remaining gaps. Table 1 presents a summary of prior research that directly addresses Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts on moral education.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Research

No	Researcher (Year)	Research Focus	Key Findings
1	Mulia (2019)	A General Analysis of Ibn Miskawaih's Thoughts on Character Education	A General Analysis of Ibn Miskawaih's Thoughts on Character Education:

			Ibn Miskawaih's character education centers on achieving moral excellence through the development of inner attitudes that encourage the spontaneous performance of good deeds
2	Huda dan Prilia (2021)	The Relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's Character Education to Modern Education	The five core values identified by Ibn Miskawaih (including wisdom) remain relevant to contemporary approaches to character education
3	Maula (2021)	A Philosophical Analysis of Character Education in the Book *Tahdzibul Akhlak*	According to Ibn Miskawaih, character education in Islam is based on the purification of the soul as a prerequisite for the development of noble character
4	Ramli dan Zamzami (2022)	The Concept of Moral Education in the Book *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq*	Ibn Miskawaih's moral education emphasizes a balance between natural disposition and character formed through habit as the foundation for moral development. Ibn Miskawaih's moral education emphasizes a balance between natural disposition and character formed through habit as the foundation for moral development.
5	Ridwan dan	The Concept of	Moral

	Aisyah (2022)	Moral Education in the Book *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq*	education is based on the doctrine of the middle way; the purification of the soul is a prerequisite for the easy cultivation of good morals
6	Salim, Siregar, dan Mulyo (2022)	The Reconstruction of Character Education in the Age of Globalization Based on the Thought of Ibn Miskawaih	Ibn Miskawaih's concept of virtue can be reconstructed as a response to the challenges of globalization that threaten moral values
7	Sari (2023)	Ibn Miskawaih's Character Education in the Context of the Society 5.0 Era	Ibn Miskawaih's ideas are considered well-suited to addressing the challenges of character education in the Society 5.0 era
8	Rizqi (2023)	Ibn Miskawaih's Conceptual Proposal for Strengthening Character Education (PPK) Toward a Golden Indonesia	Ibn Miskawaih's four virtues are proposed as a complementary value framework for Indonesia's Character Education Strengthening policy
9	Mursalin dan Suparto (2023)	A Comparison of the Educational Theories of Ibn Miskawaih and Thomas Lickona	There is a common ground between Ibn Miskawaih's theory of the soul and Lickona's "knowing-feeling-acting" theory, even though their metaphysical foundations differ
10	Mainuddin, Tobroni, dan Nurhakim (2023)	A Comparison of the Character Education Theories of Al-Ghazali, Kohlberg, and Lickona	Classical Islamic moral theory has a conceptual structure that can be compared to modern Western theories of moral development

11	Hanifah dan Bakar (2024)	The Implementation of Ibn Miskawaih's Concept of Character Education in Modern Education	Ibn Miskawaih's methods of habit formation, leading by example, and philosophical dialogue can be integrated into the curriculum and practices of modern schools
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Based on the overview in Table 1, it can be concluded that previous studies generally still revolve around two trends, namely: (1) the independent description and exploration of Ibn Miskawaih's philosophical concepts (Mulia, 2019; Maula, 2021; Ramli & Zamzami, 2022; Ridwan & Aisyah, 2022), and (2) mapping the relevance or making general comparisons with contemporary educational issues or other figures (Huda & Prilia, 2021; Salim et al., 2022; Sari, 2023; Rizqi, 2023; Mursalin & Suparto, 2023; Mainuddin et al., 2023; Hanifah & Bakar, 2024). Based on the literature review conducted, no study has been found that explicitly uses Ibn Miskawaih's tripartite structure of the soul and his doctrine of the four virtues as an analytical tool to critically examine the methodological orientation of Islamic Education (PAI) in Indonesia in response to the problem of moral degradation in the digital age—an issue identified by contemporary studies such as those by Hidayat and Subando (2024) and Salisah et al. (2024). This study aims to fill this gap by treating Ibn Miskawaih's theoretical framework not merely as an object of historical description, but as an evaluative-analytical instrument for the development of Islamic Education (PAI).

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research. This research method was chosen based on the characteristics of the subject matter—namely, the thought of classical figures whose primary sources are texts (written works)—so that data were not obtained through field observations or interviews but rather through the search, reading, and interpretation of written documents, as has also been done in several similar studies on the thought of Ibn Miskawaih (Akbar & Alkhadafi, 2025; Triandana et al., 2024).

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories. First, primary data sources, namely Ibn Miskawaih's original work, **Tahdzib al-Akhlaq wa Tathhir al-A'raq**, which was used in its Indonesian translation titled **Menuju Kesempurnaan Akhlak** (Miskawaih, 1994). Second, secondary data sources, namely scholarly journal articles—both those that directly discuss Ibn Miskawaih's thought and those that address the issues of character education and Islamic religious education in general—which serve to enrich, confirm, and provide an analytical comparison to the interpretation of the primary source.

Data collection was conducted through a literature review, which involved searching for, collecting, and recording textual data relevant to the research focus from the various sources cited. The data analysis technique employed content analysis conducted thematically, following these steps:

- Data reduction, which involves sorting and selecting text passages relevant to the three main research focuses (the concepts of character and the soul, the goals of education, and methods of character education)
- Thematic categorization, which involves grouping data based on the theoretical framework formulated in the literature review

- c. Interpretation and synthesis, which involves interpreting the relationships between categories and linking them to the findings of previous research and the context of contemporary Islamic Education (PAI) issues
- d. Drawing conclusions, which involves formulating analytical generalizations based on the patterns of relationships identified in the previous stage.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this study employed source triangulation that is, comparing and confirming interpretations of Ibn Miskawaih's thought drawn from several different academic studies (see Table 1) to avoid the bias of a single interpretation. In addition, periodic re-readings of the primary sources were conducted to ensure consistency between the analyzed concepts and the original text as contained in the translation used.

Results

The Based on a literature review of Generation Z, religious moderation, teacher pedagogy, and pesantren curriculum innovation, four main findings were identified. These findings are not the result of field observation, but rather a conceptual synthesis of academic literature.

4.1. Character as a Disposition of the Soul: Implications for a Paradigm Shift in Islamic Education

Ibn Miskawaih's conception of *akhlak as hai'ah li an-nafs* a state of the soul that drives action without the need for repeated deliberation contains a relevant epistemological critique of the PAI paradigm that remains dominant today. If morality is understood as a crystallized inner disposition, then the success of PAI should not be measured by students' ability to verbally explain concepts such as honesty or justice, but rather by the consistency of honest and just actions performed without momentary calculation. The findings of Salisah et al. (2024), which reveal the dominance of lecture-based methods and the transfer of normative knowledge in PAI instruction, can be interpreted through Miskawaih's framework as an indication that PAI has thus far focused more on the cognitive level of ethics (*'ilm al-akhlaq*) rather than on shaping ethics itself (*al-akhlaq*). In Ibn Miskawaih's view, these are two distinct matters: knowledge of virtue does not automatically give rise to virtue, for virtue is born only through a process of habituation that transforms knowledge into character (*malakah*). Consequently, the evaluation of PAI learning needs to shift away from a reliance on cognitive written tests toward assessment tools capable of capturing consistent behavior over an extended period, such as attitude portfolios and behavioral observation.

4.2. The Tripartite Structure of the Soul and the Holistic Aim of Islamic Religious Education (PAI): Points of Convergence and Divergence with Western Theories

A comparative analysis of the structure of Ibn Miskawaih's three faculties of the soul—rational, emotional, and appetitive—reveals a structural parallel with the “knowing, feeling/loving, and acting” model developed by Thomas Lickona, as demonstrated by Mursalin and Suparto (2023). The rational faculty can be linked to the “knowing” dimension, the emotional faculty to the “feeling” dimension, and the appetitive faculty to the impulses that must be controlled so that they manifest in good “acting.” However, the fundamental difference lies in their metaphysical foundations: for both Lickona and Kohlberg, the structure of human morality is explained in psychological-empirical terms as the result of cognitive and social development (Mainuddin et al., 2023), whereas for Ibn Miskawaih, the structure of the soul is ontological—the soul is an eternal spiritual substance—and good character is the path to human existential perfection, not merely social adaptation. This difference is not merely a technical one but has implications for the ultimate orientation of education: while Western-style character education is oriented toward the

individual's proper social function (good citizenship), Miskawaih's approach to moral education is oriented toward existential-spiritual perfection (*al-insan al-kamil*), the ultimate goal of which is eternal happiness. For PAI, this common ground can be strategically leveraged: Miskawaih's tripartite structure provides a psychological framework compatible with modern theories for instructional design, while its spiritual-ontological dimension gives PAI a theological uniqueness that no secular theory possesses; thus, PAI need not be merely an Islamic version of Western character education, but can stand on its own philosophical foundation.

4.3. Four Virtues as a Value Framework: Correlation with Religious Moderation and the Profile of Pancasila Students

The doctrine of the middle path (*al-wasath*), which gives rise to the four virtues of wisdom (*hikmah*), chastity (*iffah*), courage (*syaja'ah*), and justice (*'adalah*), has strong conceptual resonance with the policy of religious moderation currently being promoted in Islamic education in Indonesia. If religious moderation rejects extremism whether in the form of fanaticism or unbridled liberalism then the principle that "virtue always lies in the middle between two extremes," as formulated by Salim et al. (2022) offers a philosophical argument that is both older and deeper than a mere policy slogan: moderation, in Miskawaih's terms, is not a compromising and weak middle ground, but rather the position of virtue itself, which demands the strength of character to avoid veering in either direction. When mapped against the values of the Pancasila Student Profile, *al-hikmah* can be correlated with the dimension of critical thinking, *al-iffah* with the dimensions of independence and self-control, *al-syaja'ah* with moral courage within the dimension of mutual cooperation when facing group pressure, while *al-'adalah* is an integrative virtue that encompasses all these dimensions. Nevertheless, it should be critically noted that Miskawaih's framework of the four virtues which emerged from the context of medieval individual-philosophical ethics does not explicitly address the dimension of global diversity or issues of sociocultural diversity, which constitute one of the pillars of the Pancasila Student Profile; thus, the integration of the two requires further elaboration, rather than direct adoption without adaptation.

4.4. Ibn Miskawaih's Method of Moral Education: A Critique of Verbalistic Practices in Islamic Education

Ibn Miskawaih's framework for moral education which consists of natural development, habituation, practice, and setting a good example offers a concrete methodological framework for correcting the tendency toward verbalism in Islamic Education. The findings of Hanifah and Bakar (2024) that Ibn Miskawaih's method can be implemented through group activities, ethical discussions, and the cultivation of positive values indicate that this classical framework is, in fact, compatible with the active learning approach championed in contemporary educational curricula. However, a critical analysis must be applied to the original context of Ibn Miskawaih's thought: the methods of exemplary conduct and philosophical dialogue that he formulated were initially intended for the educated elite within the Buwaihi court (*thalib*, advanced students), not for elementary-school-aged children, who are the primary target of formal PAI in Indonesia. Therefore, the application of these methods in the context of contemporary PAI requires pedagogical adaptation, particularly at the elementary level, where natural methods and habit formation must take precedence before moving on to the stage of philosophical-rational dialogue, which

demands a higher level of cognitive maturity. This adaptation aligns with Ibn Miskawaih's own principle that the appetitive and emotional faculties develop before the rational faculties; thus, early childhood moral education must, by internal logic, be based on habit formation rather than conceptual lectures.

4.5. The Relevance of Buwaihi's Diagnosis of the Moral Crisis to Moral Decline in the Digital Age

One of the interesting analytical findings from an examination of the historical context surrounding the emergence of **Tahdzib al-Akhlaq** is the structural similarity between the background of the work's composition and contemporary moral issues. Ibn Miskawaih formulated his theory amid the political and scholarly advancements of the Buwayhid Dynasty, which were not accompanied by a corresponding elevation in the moral standards of society (Hariyanto & Muzammil, 2023), a pattern that is structurally identical to the diagnosis by Hidayat and Subando (2024) regarding the rapid advancement of digital technology that is not accompanied by adequate character development. This similarity is not merely a historical coincidence but indicates a general pattern: every acceleration of a civilization's intellectual and material progress has the potential to create a moral gap if it is not accompanied by the strengthening of rational faculties to regulate appetitive and emotional drives. In this context, Ibn Miskawaih's proposal that the rational faculty should always maintain control over the two faculties beneath it finds a new, more concrete relevance: self-control over the immediate impulses triggered by social media notifications, smartphone addiction, or the consumption of negative content is, in essence, a matter of reinforcing the supremacy of the rational faculty over the appetitive faculty—as formulated eight centuries before the digital revolution took place. Thus, PAI can adopt this framework as the basis for digital literacy from an ethical perspective, rather than merely technical and security-oriented digital literacy.

4.6. Limitations of the Miskawaih Framework and Critical Notes

Although Ibn Miskawaih's framework offers rich theoretical contributions, several limitations must be honestly acknowledged. First, the dominant emphasis on rational faculties as the primary governing force risks reducing the affective-spiritual dimension—which, in the Sufi tradition, is actually placed at the center of the purification of the soul (qalbu). Therefore, integrating Miskawaih's framework with the spiritual-emotional dimensions of the Sufi tradition must be considered to ensure that moral education is not reduced to dry moral rationalism. Second, as a literature review, this study is conceptual-analytical in nature and has not yet been empirically tested in the context of actual Islamic Education (PAI) instruction in schools or madrasahs; thus, the propositions formulated remain theoretical hypotheses that require further verification through field research, whether quantitative or qualitative case-study-based. Third, as previously mentioned, Miskawaih's framework of the four virtues requires further elaboration to address contemporary issues absent from the medieval horizon, such as digital literacy, global diversity, and environmental sustainability. These critical notes are not intended to undermine the relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's thought, but rather to emphasize that its application to contemporary Islamic Education must be contextual and integrative, rather than an ahistorical, textual adoption.

4.7. Practical Implications: A Synthesis for the Design and Evaluation of Islamic Education Curricula

When synthesized, the six analytical findings above lead to one central proposition: Ibn Miskawaih's contribution to Islamic Education does not lie in providing new teaching materials, but rather in a paradigmatic shift regarding what is meant by the "success" of moral education itself. The first implication concerns the design of learning objectives, which should no longer be formulated solely in the format of "students are able to explain," but rather enriched with dispositional indicators such as "students demonstrate consistent behavior" that can be observed over a specific period of time, in line with the critique of the verbalistic orientation of PAI identified by Salisah et al. (2024). The second implication concerns the sequencing of instructional material across educational levels: following the logic of psychological development formulated by Ibn Miskawaih, habit formation and exemplary behavior should ideally dominate the moral education curriculum at the elementary level, while philosophical-rational dialogue on the nature of virtue can be introduced more intensively at the secondary and higher education levels when students' rational capacities have matured—a sequencing principle consistent with the findings of Hanifah and Bakar (2024) regarding the compatibility of Miskawaih's method with modern school practices, but it requires a tiered adaptation that has not yet been explicitly addressed in the PAI curriculum. The third implication relates to assessment instruments. As long as PAI assessment remains dominated by cognitive-oriented written tests, the achievement of "noble character" as an inner disposition will be difficult to measure validly. This study recommends the development of authentic assessment instruments that integrate behavioral observation, attitude portfolios, and peer assessment over a period of one semester or more, as a concrete operationalization of the concept of *akhlak as hai'ah*—which, by definition, can only be recognized through repeated actions, not through answers given at a single moment during an exam. The fourth implication, in line with Rizqi's (2023) proposal regarding the strengthening of character education toward a "Golden Indonesia," is that Miskawaih's framework of the four virtues can be adapted into an attitude assessment rubric that is philosophically richer than generic rubrics, which often merely list values without a theoretical framework explaining the interconnections among them. With these four implications, Ibn Miskawaih's framework functions not as supplementary material in the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum, but rather as an epistemological lens that can reorganize the goals, processes, and evaluation of moral education in a more coherent manner.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Ibn Miskawaih formulated a systematic and coherent theory of ethics, based on the conception of ethics as a disposition of the soul (*hai'ah*) that arises from the balance of the three faculties—rational, emotional, and appetitive—and is guided through the doctrine of the middle path toward the four cardinal virtues (*hikmah*, *iffah*, *syaja'ah*, and *'adalah*) as the path to true happiness (*as-sa'adah*). The cultivation of such ethics is achieved through four complementary methods—namely, the natural method, habituation, practice, and exemplary conduct—with an emphasis on the fact that knowledge of goodness does not automatically lead to goodness without a process of habituation that transforms it into character.

An analysis of the relevance of this framework to Islamic Religious Education reveals at least three significant contributions. First, epistemologically, Ibn Miskawaih's theory emphasizes the need for Islamic Religious Education to shift from a verbalistic cognitive paradigm toward a paradigm of inner disposition formation oriented toward long-term habit formation and exemplary behavior. Second, structurally, the theory of the three faculties of the soul provides a psychological-philosophical framework compatible with modern character education theories (such as those of Lickona and Kohlberg), while also providing Islamic Religious Education with a spiritual ontological foundation that serves as its distinguishing identity. Third, from an axiological perspective, the doctrine of the four virtues and the Middle Way provides an indigenous philosophical foundation that can strengthen policies on religious moderation and certain dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, although it requires contextual elaboration to address issues not present within the intellectual horizon of the Middle Ages.

Thus, this study recommends that the development of the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum and instructional design in Indonesia integrate Ibn Miskawaih's ethical philosophy framework as an authentic theoretical foundation rooted in the Islamic intellectual tradition, while also placing it in a dialogical relationship with modern character education theories and the contextual needs of today's students. In practical terms, the evaluation of PAI's success must include indicators of long-term behavioral consistency, rather than merely cognitive mastery of concepts. Given that this study is literature-based and conceptual in nature, further research based on field studies—whether through classroom action research, implementation case studies, or larger-scale quantitative research—is essential to empirically test the effectiveness of integrating Ibn Miskawaih's framework into PAI practices across various levels and educational institutions in Indonesia

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