

A Holistic Conceptual Model of Hamka's Contemporary Islamic Educational Thought

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Abstract

This study presents an integrative–critical narrative literature review of Hamka's educational thought. It maps dominant elements across the literature, clarifies relationships among conceptual components, and identifies areas that remain insufficiently connected. Using an integrative critical narrative review approach, the study analyzes 14 selected articles (2020–2025) that discuss Hamka's educational ideas from multiple thematic angles. The findings show that scholarship most consistently foregrounds *akhlak*/character/ethics as the central educational aim, supported by foundational elements *tawhid*/creed (*aqidah*) and *tasawuf* that orient values and cultivate the inner life. Moreover, the literature outlines Islamic educational processes through the frameworks of *ta'lim–tarbiyah–ta'dib* and knowledge–practice–ethics, while extending the discussion through educational values derived from Tafsir Al-Azhar and socio-cultural dimensions such as nationalism and the integration of Nusantara culture. Despite its thematic breadth, however, the literature remains largely fragmented and has not yet produced a unified framework linking value foundations, educational processes, moral aims, and contextual grounding. In sum, this review offers a holistic conceptual map that systematizes relationships among the dimensions of Hamka's educational thought and highlights the need for further research that is more operational and context-sensitive.

INTRODUCTION

Buya Hamka's educational thought has regained urgency as contemporary Islamic education confronts rapid social change, accelerating digitalization, and a growing disorientation of values in everyday teaching and learning (Mukhlis et al., 2026; Suratin et al., 2024; Syam et al., 2025). Existing studies emphasize that Hamka did not treat education as mere knowledge transmission; instead, he framed it as the formation of the whole person, grounded in *akhlak*, ethical awareness, and social responsibility. This emphasis matters because modern education often privileges cognitive attainment and technical skills, while moral and character formation is frequently marginalized in practice (Gozali et al., 2022; Syam et al., 2025; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023; Zahra et al., 2022).

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Importantly, Hamka's character-centered approach is also considered pertinent to twenty-first-century learning and the digital era. Values such as honesty, sincerity, and cooperation can function as "moral compasses" when knowledge and technology evolve rapidly (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). In a similar vein, Hamka's moral vision is seen as responsive to the pressures of Education 4.0, which may deepen ethical crises if education loses its moral and spiritual foundations (Zahra et al., 2022). At the practical level, digital Islamic education learning is not assumed to diminish values by default; rather, it requires a strong *akblaq* foundation so that technology becomes a vehicle for value internalization rather than merely an information channel (Prayitno & Mubarak, 2022).

Consistent with this, Hamka is often portrayed as rejecting rote learning that suppresses reasoning and advocating character development and critical thinking as central to meaningful learning (Stark & Huszka, 2025). Hence, revisiting Hamka's educational thought is not intellectual nostalgia but an attempt to recover a robust value-pedagogical framework that can remain resilient amid increasingly complex educational change. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to articulate Hamka's educational thought as a conceptual model that clarifies its components, explains their interrelations, and identifies gaps in existing scholarship that remain insufficiently integrated.

Nevertheless, although the literature is thematically rich, it tends to proceed in disconnected fragments. Consequently, Hamka's educational thought often appears as a set of separate topics rather than an integrated conceptual architecture. For example, tawhid-based family education is commonly positioned as a basis for character formation and inner steadfastness; however, discussion remains largely confined to the family sphere and is rarely connected systematically to formal educational structures (Fajri & Saepudin, 2023). Likewise, Hamka's *tasawuf* is framed as a holistic approach integrating spirituality, morality, and intelligence, yet studies frequently remain at the conceptual level and do not specify how *tasawuf* informs formal educational design in concrete terms (Syam et al., 2025).

More broadly, Hamka is often read through a framework emphasizing the integration of knowledge–practice–ethics as the essence of education. However, the implications of this framework are typically presented normatively rather than through a coherent mapping of relations among its elements (Khoir et al., 2025; Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025). On the social dimension, nationalism in Hamka's Islamic education is interpreted as compatible with Islam and as part of social responsibility, yet it is seldom operationalized as a principle linked to other value pillars within the educational system (Gozali et al., 2022). On the cultural dimension, the integration of Islamic values and Nusantara culture indicates that Hamka viewed local culture as a medium for contextualizing values. Meanwhile, a tradition–modernity hermeneutic highlights Hamka's selective engagement with modernization without compromising *aqidah* and *akblaq*. Even so, these discussions are still rarely synthesized into a single structure encompassing educational aims, methods, and evaluation (Arianto et al., 2025; Febriyani et al., 2024).

In addition, educational values are traced from Tafsir Al-Azhar including theological, ecological, and humanistic dimensions alongside rational-contextual interpretations of eschatological themes such as "heaven," which convey educational messages about human God and human–human relations. Yet this strand is often pursued separately from discussions of pedagogy and the overall architecture of Hamka's educational thought (Parwanto et al., 2023). Even when

studies offer more applied illustrations such as transforming Hamka's ethical values through history learning these contributions commonly remain isolated from the foundational pillars of *tawhid*, *tasawuf*, and Hamka's broader educational framework (Lestari et al., 2020; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023).

Taken together, the literature suggests that the key contribution of this study is not to add new themes, but to refine the “conceptual stitching” among existing ones so that Hamka's educational thought can be read as a coherent system. This need is sharpened by the digital era and Education 4.0, which demand a clear value framework rather than a mere inventory of moral ideals (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). In short, this study builds directly on prior findings and consolidates them into a holistic conceptual model that has remained fragmented across the literature.

Accordingly, the study entitled A Holistic Conceptual Model of Hamka's Educational Thought for Contemporary Islamic Education addresses an urgent theoretical task: transforming partial readings into a unified and conceptually accountable framework. This is necessary because, although scholarship affirms Hamka's relevance to modern education whether in character education, the moral stakes of digital learning, or critiques of rote pedagogy it has not yet provided a single conceptual map integrating value foundations, educational processes, and educational aims into one system (Prayitno & Mubarok, 2022; Stark & Huszka, 2025; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). More specifically, this study positions *tawhid* as the foundational value that orders life orientation, *tasawuf* as the reinforcement of inner formation that guides social praxis (Syam et al., 2025), *akhlak* as the value-oriented educational end manifested in conduct (Zahra et al., 2022), and a value-laden pedagogy anti-rote and pro critical thinking as the means of forming an ethically grounded and civilized person (Stark & Huszka, 2025).

In addition, nationalism and Nusantara culture are treated as socio-cultural contexts that clarify how Hamka's educational values are grounded in collective life, ensuring that education does not end at personal piety alone (Gozali et al., 2022). Finally, values derived from Tafsir Al-Azhar enrich theological, ecological, and humanistic horizons, positioning Hamka's framework as not merely moralistic but relational attuned to human God, human–human, and human–nature relations (Parwanto et al., 2023).

Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop a holistic conceptual model of Hamka's educational thought by mapping its main elements, explaining relationships among components, and identifying areas of scholarship that remain weakly connected (Febriyani et al., 2024; Khoir et al., 2025). By employing an integrative–critical narrative literature review approach, this study is expected to produce a focused conceptual synthesis: not only asserting Hamka's relevance, but also demonstrating systematically and coherently why and how his educational thought can be read as a holistic framework that remains useful for contemporary Islamic education discourse.

METHODS

This study employs an integrative–critical narrative literature review design to construct a coherent conceptual understanding of Hamka's educational thought. Beyond mapping dominant thematic patterns, the review also examines relationships among conceptual components and identifies points where the literature remains loose, fragmented, or insufficiently connected. Accordingly, the unit of analysis is not a “site” or a “case,” but the concepts, arguments, and idea

structures developed by previous authors when interpreting education through Hamka's perspective.

The data sources consist of 14 articles that address Hamka's educational thought from diverse angles. These include studies on character formation and critiques of education (Stark & Huszka, 2025; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023), *tasawuf* as a foundation for holistic education (Syam et al., 2025), *tawhid* as the basis of family education (Fajri & Saepudin, 2023), educational values derived from Quranic exegesis (Parwanto et al., 2023), *akhlak* and morality in the context of digital learning/Education 4.0 (Prayitno & Mubarok, 2022; Zahra et al., 2022), nationalism in Islamic education (Gozali et al., 2022), Hamka's Islamic education framework emphasizing knowledge–practice–morals (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025), and the integration of Islamic values with Nusantara culture within a tradition–modernity dialectic (Arianto et al., 2025; Febriyani et al., 2024). The article also includes a study positioning Hamka's ethical thought as a resource for character strengthening through history learning (Lestari, 2020), as well as a conceptual study highlighting *ta'lim–tarbiyah–ta'dib* as a framework for forming the human person (*insan*) (Khoir et al., 2025).

In this review, “sample characteristics” refer to the characteristics of the document set rather than human respondents, since all data are textual. The 14 articles fall within the 2020–2025 period and predominantly use library research, conceptual analysis, or descriptive analysis to develop their arguments, although several incorporate historical, hermeneutic, or work-based analyses (Stark & Huszka, 2025; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023).

This variation is treated as contextual information supporting a critical reading: studies emphasizing Hamka's overarching Islamic educational concepts (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025) provide a macro-level framework, whereas thematic studies such as family-based *tawhid* educational *tasawuf*, nationalism, and *akhlak*/morality in the digital/Education 4.0 era contribute the conceptual components to be assembled. Meanwhile, tafsir-based analyses and studies on Nusantara cultural integration serve as entry points for examining how Hamka's educational values are articulated across media (tafsir works, socio-cultural argumentation, and normative discourse) (Febriyani et al., 2024; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023).

The main data collection instruments were an extraction sheet and a synthesis matrix, both designed to standardize reading and documentation. The extraction matrix included, at minimum, the following elements: document identity (title, author, year), focus/insight, key concepts, the author's approach/method, main findings/arguments concerning Hamka's educational thought, stated limitations, and the relevance of each finding to constructing a holistic conceptual model. This format supports replicability because other researchers can populate the same fields for the same corpus and assess whether the extracted results are consistent.

Data collection proceeded in four stages. First, each article was compiled and assigned a document code (D1–D14) to maintain a clear audit trail. Second, a rapid scan (skimming) was conducted to confirm that each document met inclusion criteria. Third, full close reading was performed to identify text segments containing conceptual definitions, claims about relationships among concepts, and normative or philosophical justifications. Fourth, relevant segments were transferred into the extraction matrix as “units of evidence” supporting responses to the research questions. Throughout this process, brief analytic memos were written after

completing each document (e.g., “*tawhid* as foundation,” “*akhlaq* as the axis of praxis,” “critique of rote learning and intellectual freedom,” and “cultural integration as contextualization”).

Data analysis followed qualitative content analysis through thematic coding and relational synthesis to build a holistic conceptual model of Hamka’s educational thought. First, open coding identified substantive concepts recurring across multiple documents, including character education and critiques of rote learning (Albshkar et al., 2025; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Busral et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2025; Kassymova et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025; Stark & Huszka, 2025; Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023), *tawhid* as the foundation of values and educational orientation (Fajri & Saepudin, 2023), *tasawuf* as a basis for cultivating inner ethical-spiritual consciousness (Syam et al., 2025), *akhlaq* and morality as the core of human formation, nationalism as social responsibility in Islamic education, Islam–Nusantara cultural integration and the tradition–modernity dialectic, and educational values derived from tafsir (Parwanto et al., 2023).

Second, axial coding tested relationships among codes for example, how *tawhid* provides ontological grounding, *tasawuf* deepens the spiritual-ethical dimension, *akhlaq* becomes the axis of praxis through habituation and exemplarity, and *ta’lim–tarbiyah–ta’dib* supplies a processual structure for Islamic education (Khoir et al., 2025). Third, selective coding established the core category needed to produce an integrated framework, namely how these elements can be assembled into a coherent system of aims–content–process–values; thus, the response to RQ2 moves beyond listing elements and instead specifies the conceptual mechanism that links them. Fourth, gap analysis compared dominant themes with themes that rarely appear or appear without being systematically connected reflecting the literature’s tendency toward thematic and partial treatments rather than a consolidated conceptual architecture.

To ensure replicability, all coding decisions were documented (audit trail), brief operational definitions were written for each code, and every synthetic claim was traced back to its corresponding unit of evidence in the extraction matrix. With this procedure, the method produces not merely a literature summary but a defensible conceptual map that integratively addresses RQ1 (dominant elements), RQ2 (relationships among elements as a unified framework), and RQ3 (under-discussed or weakly connected aspects).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Core Components of Hamka’s Educational Thought

Across the reviewed literature, Hamka’s educational thought is consistently framed as an integrative Islamic educational vision that goes beyond knowledge transmission. Education is repeatedly described as the formation of the whole person through the integration of spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions, rather than the pursuit of cognitive achievement alone. This integrative orientation appears in discussions of character education as the foundation that shapes how knowledge and technology are used responsibly (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023), as well as in moral–philosophical analyses emphasizing that Education 4.0 may intensify ethical crises when technological disruption outpaces moral readiness (Zahra et al., 2022). In addition, the framework of *ta’lim–tarbiyah–ta’dib* is frequently invoked to indicate that Islamic education aims at cultivating character, *adab*, and mature human development (Khoir et al., 2025). Several studies further emphasize that

spirituality is not peripheral but functions as ethical energy that prevents education from becoming mechanistic (Syam et al., 2025). Finally, some works broaden the source base by extracting educational values from Tafsir Al-Azhar particularly theological, ecological, and humanistic dimensions showing that Hamka's educational values also emerge through exegetical discourse rather than only explicitly "educational" texts. When synthesized, these strands converge on one central proposition: values (*tawhid-akhlak-spirituality*) orient knowledge and reason so that they culminate in amal with social significance.

Akhlak/Character as the Central Axis

The most dominant component is *akhlak*/character, which functions as the animating core across themes and domains. Studies consistently foreground values such as honesty, sincerity, cooperation, and *adab* as defining features of Hamka's educational vision and as a moral filter for the use of knowledge and technology (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). This moral emphasis is repeatedly positioned as a corrective to modern education's tendency to produce competence without an ethical compass, particularly within rapidly changing and increasingly digital learning ecosystems (Zahra et al., 2022). Importantly, implementation-oriented studies also suggest that these values can be translated into subject-based learning for instance, through history instruction to strengthen students' character in practice (Lestari et al., 2020). Within Islamic education discourse, the configuration of knowledge–practice–ethics is presented as a formative triad, implying that morality is not supplementary but constitutes a substantive educational end (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025). Similarly, debates on Islamic education learning in the digital era are not primarily about the permissibility of technology, but about ensuring that technological mediation remains governed by moral values so that *akhlak* substance is preserved. Taken together, the literature places *akhlak*/character at the center of gravity in the contemporary reception of Hamka's educational thought.

Tawhid as the Foundational Value Orientation

A second frequently recurring component is tawhid as the normative foundation and value orientation of education. Family education studies present tawhid as a formative value that shapes character and inner steadfastness, positioning the family as an initial locus of moral-spiritual formation (Fajri & Saepudin, 2023). In a complementary way, the *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* framework implies tawhid as an underlying horizon because ta'dib presupposes *adab* grounded in faith and God-consciousness (Khoir et al., 2025). Tafsir-based studies further reinforce this orientation by extracting theological values that direct learners toward reliance on God as a source of moral strength. Moreover, interpretations of the theme of "heaven" in Hamka's tafsir emphasize relational educational messages human–God and human–human that can be read as rooted in a tawhid orientation (Parwanto et al., 2023). In the mapped literature, therefore, tawhid functions less as a discrete topic and more as a justificatory root for educational aims and ethics.

Tasawuf/ Spirituality as a Mechanism of Inner Formation

A third major component is *tasawuf*/spirituality, frequently described as the mechanism of inner cultivation that sustains moral formation. Studies argue that Hamka's *tasawuf* integrates spirituality, morality, and intelligence, framing it as a holistic Islamic educational approach (Syam et al., 2025). Within this view, spirituality is not social withdrawal; rather, it energizes ethical engagement and strengthens moral resilience. As such, *tasawuf* conceptually bridges tawhid

(foundation) and *akhlaq* (visible educational outcome) by providing the “inner work” through which values are stabilized as dispositions. This emphasis also resonates with broader critiques that modern education over-prioritizes technical competence while neglecting existential depth and thereby contributes to moral crises. Its relevance becomes more explicit when the literature frames digital-era challenges as simultaneously technological and moral-spiritual, requiring endurance and inner stability (Prayitno & Mubarok, 2022).

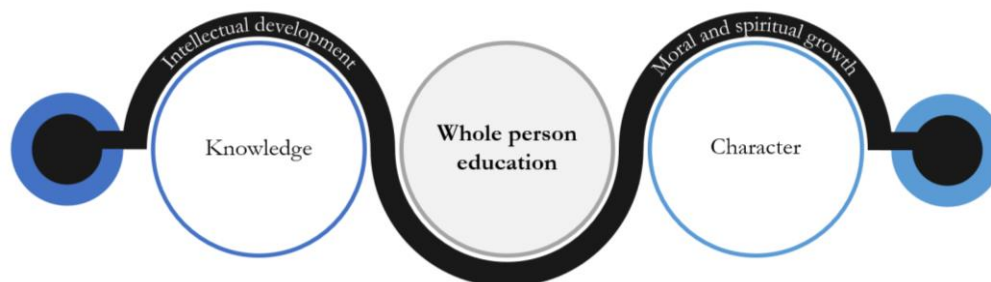


Fig 1. The synergy of holistic education

Epistemology and Pedagogy: Anti-Rote Learning and Critical Reasoning

Beyond value foundations, the literature highlights an epistemological–pedagogical strand centered on critiques of rote learning and the promotion of critical thinking. Hamka is portrayed as rejecting memorization-driven pedagogy and insisting that education must involve active reasoning alongside character formation (Stark & Huszka, 2025). In parallel, character education studies stress habituation and teacher exemplarity, positioning educational processes as value practice rather than information transmission (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). The *ta’lim–tarbiyah–ta’dib* framework reinforces this processual orientation by implying that learning designs should cultivate moral experience and *adab*, not merely cognitive accumulation. Practical illustrations, such as embedding Hamka’s ethical values within history learning, further suggest that subjects and methods can function as vehicles of value internalization (Lestari, 2020).

Relationships Among Components: A Foundation–Process–Aim Configuration

Although not always stated explicitly, the literature allows inter-component relations to be reconstructed through a foundation–process–aim configuration. The foundation is most often tawhid, which forms life orientation and ensures that education is not value-neutral. This foundation is deepened through spirituality/*tasawuf* as an inner formation process that integrates spiritual awareness, morality, and intelligence, making ethical action a product of cultivated dispositions rather than mere exhortation (Syam et al., 2025). The aim is then articulated as *akhlaq*/character forming morally grounded persons who treat knowledge as an *amanah* rather than an instrument of ambition (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). The process dimension is reinforced by *ta’lim–tarbiyah–ta’dib*, which frames education as nurturing and *adab* formation, requiring pedagogies that carry moral content (Khoir et al., 2025). Finally, the epistemological critique of rote learning clarifies that intellectual agency (critical thinking) is integral to wholeness, but must remain guided by moral orientation. In synthesis, the framework can be read as follows: tawhid orders orientation, *tasawuf* stabilizes the inner life, pedagogy activates reason, and *akhlaq* becomes the observable outcome.

A second relational pathway is articulated through the tradition–modernity

dialectic. Here, Hamka is depicted as neither rejecting progress nor accepting it uncritically; rather, progress is morally governed so that modern knowledge remains within ethical boundaries. Education 4.0 is consequently framed as risky when modernization proceeds without moral foundations. Hermeneutic studies emphasize selective modernization based on value compatibility, thereby preventing modernity from being absorbed “as is” (Febriyani et al., 2024). This logic also informs digital Islamic education learning, where technology is treated as a tool for *akblaq* internalization only when moral grounding and exemplarity are retained. In this configuration, value foundations (*tamhid-akblaq*) constitute the substance, modernity provides the challenge context, and pedagogy functions as the bridge of enactment.

A third relational pathway is socio-cultural. Nationalism studies suggest that education must produce not only personal piety but also civic responsibility, orienting morality toward social unity and shared progress. Studies on Islam–Nusantara integration further show that local cultural practices (e.g., community cooperation and consultation) can serve as media for grounding values in everyday life (Arianto et al., 2025), consistent with tradition–modernity hermeneutics that supports contextualization without losing *aqidah* and *akblaq*. Tafsir-oriented studies also reinforce education’s social dimension through humanistic values emphasizing empathy and harmony, while eschatological readings maintain a relational focus on human–God and human–human commitments. Thus, the “whole person” implied by the literature is not only morally formed individually but also ethically present in social space.

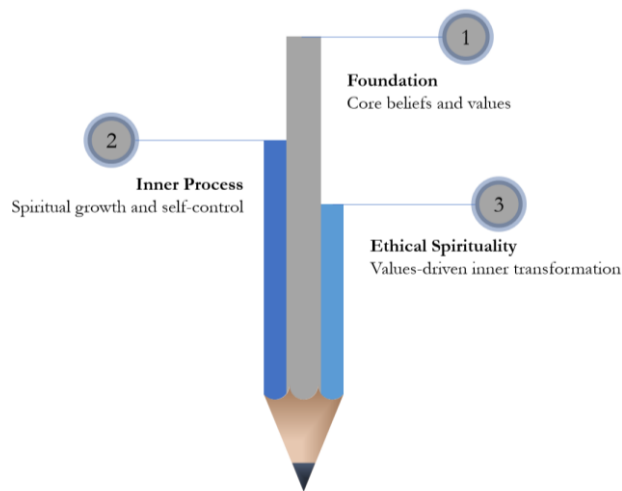


Fig 2. The synergy of character and knowledge in education

Integration and Operationalization: Identified Gaps and What Needs to Be Unified

While the literature is rich in themes, it repeatedly signals gaps at the level of integration and operationalization. Many studies affirm Hamka’s relevance but acknowledge limitations in practical detailing or empirical testing, leaving Hamka’s educational thought predominantly conceptual. For example, digital-era character education studies often note insufficient technological specificity, so the link between Hamka’s character values and educational technology design remains underdeveloped (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). Similarly, studies on value internalization in digital-era Islamic education indicate that implementation strategies in digital learning spaces are not discussed systematically. Nationalism

studies also tend to affirm civic values without translating them into contemporary educational design. Tradition–modernity and Nusantara cultural integration works likewise highlight limited empirical verification and measurable formal implementation, leaving cultural integration largely at the level of discourse. Even holistic *tasawuf* studies identify limited attention to how tasawuf can be taught as a structured approach to character formation. In short, the persistent gap is not the absence of values, but the lack of systematic articulation of how values are assembled into a coherent system and translated into consistent educational strategies.

A second gap concerns fragmentation across dimensions. Tawhid studies tend to remain within the family sphere and are not consistently connected to formal education and broader social dynamics. Tafsir-based values are often not bridged to pedagogical structures, making value sources and educational mechanisms appear as parallel tracks (Parwanto et al., 2023). Anti-rote and pro-critical thinking discussions are not always anchored back to tawhid and spirituality as guiding foundations for reason. Meanwhile, knowledge–practice–character is not consistently translated into a detailed analytic map linking foundations, processes, and aims. Nationalism and Nusantara culture are also rarely framed explicitly as implementation contexts with methodological implications for instance, how gotong royong might be operationalized through specific learning strategies. Even applied illustrations (e.g., history learning) are not integrated with digital themes, *tawhid*, *tasawuf*, and broader Islamic educational architecture. Hence, the literature offers abundant material, but its “conceptual stitching” remains loose.

To close this gap in line with RQ3, the literature implies the need for unification at three interrelated levels. First, unification is needed at the value-foundation level: clarifying how tawhid provides educational orientation and how *tasawuf* functions as inner cultivation that stabilizes *akblaq* (Syam et al., 2025). Second, unification is required at the process level: linking anti-rote and pro-critical thinking pedagogy with habituation and exemplarity, so that character formation is explained as a layered mechanism rather than a general ideal (Stark & Huszka, 2025). Third, unification is needed at the level of context and value sources: positioning tafsir-derived values (theological–ecological–humanistic) as an ethical reservoir and connecting them to Nusantara culture and nationalism as the social spaces of enactment (Arianto et al., 2025). Tradition–modernity hermeneutics offers conceptual safeguards so that this unification avoids romanticizing tradition or celebrating modernity uncritically, and instead rests on rational and responsible value selection. Finally, Education 4.0 and digital-era character education studies underscore urgency, while implementation examples such as history learning clarify that unification must culminate in observable educational practices rather than remaining at the level of value.

This integrative–critical narrative review suggests that scholarship on Hamka’s educational thought has grown thematically rich, yet it still tends to develop in parallel clusters rather than converging into a single consolidated framework. One cluster consistently centers *akblaq*/character/ethics across modern, digital, and subject-based learning contexts (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). Another cluster advances foundational pillars (*tawhid* and *tasawuf*) and process structures of Islamic education (e.g., *ta’lim–tarbiyah–ta’dib* and knowledge–practice–morals), but these are frequently treated as self-contained discussions rather than being systematically linked to pedagogy, socio-cultural grounding, or tafsir-based

value reservoirs (Fajri & Saepudin, 2023). As a result, the literature often implies a holistic architecture without explicitly assembling it. This matters for contemporary Islamic education because pressures associated with modernization and digitalization require frameworks that connect values, processes, and contexts not merely assertions about the importance of moral formation (Prayitno & Mubarak, 2022; Zahra et al., 2022).

Regarding RQ1, the most stable finding is the centrality of *akhlak*/character/ethics as the explicit educational aim in Hamka-oriented scholarship. Studies of character education repeatedly highlight honesty, sincerity, and cooperation as concrete moral content needed to sustain integrity in increasingly digital learning ecosystems (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). In a more macro argument, Hamka's moral philosophy is positioned as especially relevant to Education 4.0, where technological acceleration can generate competence without adequate moral direction. In digital-era Islamic education, *akhlak* appears not as an abstract add-on but as behavioral guidance for educators and learners, with the additional claim that online learning does not necessarily dilute value substance when designs preserve exemplarity and habituation. The same point becomes more concrete in subject-based implementation: ethical values associated with Hamka can be translated into learning experiences for example through history education rather than remaining as normative declarations. Even in broader accounts of Hamka's educational theory, education is framed as character development alongside critical thinking, accompanied by critique of memorization-centered pedagogy. In effect, *akhlak*/character/ethics functions as the literature's anchor: other elements tend to be interpreted as supports that stabilize, enact, or contextualize this moral aim.

At the same time, the corpus indicates several other recurring elements that shape the "support system" around *akhlak*. Family-oriented works foreground *tawhid/aqidah* as the basic orientation from which moral and spiritual formation begins. Process-focused studies offer structural language through *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* and knowledge-practice-morals, framing education as knowledge transmission plus nurturing and *adab* formation, with an expectation that knowledge should culminate in action and tested character (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025). Meanwhile, *tasawuf* is frequently framed as an inner-formation mechanism integrating spirituality, morality, and intelligence; in this view, spirituality does not distract from social life but strengthens ethical engagement and resilience. Socio-cultural extensions widen the educational horizon further: nationalism appears as a civic dimension within Islamic education, and Nusantara cultural practices such as community cooperation and consultation are discussed as media through which values can be grounded in everyday life. Hermeneutic discussion of tradition-modernity reinforces that modernization is to be received selectively, governed by the integration of *aqidah*, *akhlak*, and knowledge rather than absorbed uncritically. Tafsir-based readings add another layer by presenting theological-ecological-humanistic values in Tafsir Al-Azhar as educational resources extending moral formation toward human-God, human-nature, and human-human relations (Parwanto et al., 2023). In short, the literature supplies a relatively stable "component map," even though it rarely presents these components in one unified architecture.

For RQ2, the relationships among components are most plausibly reconstructed as a set of linked pathways rather than a single linear chain. One

recurring pathway is foundational: tawhid provides the normative horizon that directs educational orientation from the outset. A second pathway is formative: *tasawuf* deepens inner cultivation so that ethical conduct becomes disposition-based rather than merely rule-based. A third pathway is processual: *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* and knowledge–practice–morals describe how education works moving from learning to nurturing to *adab* formation, and from knowledge to action to character (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025). A fourth pathway is pedagogical: Hamka's critique of rote learning and the emphasis on critical thinking suggests that intellectual agency is part of whole-person education, but it is expected to remain morally guided (Stark & Huszka, 2025). These pathways become more visible in applied discussions: digital-era Islamic education argues for designs that preserve *akhlak* substance, and history learning illustrates curricular integration of ethical values. In this sense, the literature supports a holistic reading through both a “trajectory” (foundation → formation → process → outcome) and a “network” in which theological, moral, pedagogical, and socio-cultural dimensions mutually reinforce one another.

RQ3, however, highlights that the strongest limitation of existing scholarship is not the absence of themes, but inconsistent integration and uneven operationalization. Many studies emphasize a single dimension family tawhid, holistic *tasawuf*, nationalism, or Nusantara cultural integration without systematically connecting these discussions to process structures such as *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* or knowledge–practice–morals. Digital-era character and Islamic education studies also tend to affirm relevance while acknowledging limited detail on technology-specific instructional design (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). Tafsir-based work provides a rich reservoir of values but is less often extended into an explicit pedagogical architecture that could guide teaching strategies or curricular sequencing (Parwanto et al., 2023). This is why the literature can feel “complete in parts” but incomplete as a unified system.

On that basis, what the field most needs consistent with the evidence summarized here is integration at three interlocking levels. At the level of foundations, *tawhid* (orientation) should be connected more explicitly to *tasawuf* (inner cultivation) to clarify how normative commitments become stable ethical dispositions. At the level of process, *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* and knowledge–practice–morals can serve as the axis for relating character formation to critical reasoning and value-laden pedagogy, thereby avoiding purely slogan-like formulations. At the level of context and value sources, tafsir-derived values (theological–ecological–humanistic) can be treated as a normative reservoir that is grounded through nationalism and Nusantara culture and examined under contemporary especially digital conditions (Gozali et al., 2022).

Tradition–modernity hermeneutics strengthens this orientation by treating modernity as a space of value selection rather than the erasure of tradition (Febriyani et al., 2024). Finally, applied examples in history and science learning show that such integration is feasible when values are embedded into subject practices rather than added as abstract moral lessons. In sum, the present synthesis does not merely restate that Hamka is relevant; it clarifies how Hamka's educational thought can be read as a system with foundations, processes, aims, and contexts, while also indicating where the literature still needs more systematic integration.

The main scholarly contribution of this study is to propose a holistic conceptual model of Hamka's educational thought by synthesizing findings that

have largely been discussed in separate thematic clusters. In the reviewed literature, *akhlak*/character consistently appears as the explicit educational aim (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023), whereas *tawhid* and *tasawuf* function as foundational and inner-formative pillars that stabilize moral development. At the level of process, Islamic educational structures *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* and knowledge–practice–morals provide a theoretical “scaffold” that makes it possible to connect foundations to aims through a readable architecture of educational formation (Rahmawati & Wahyuningsih, 2025). The model is then expanded through socio-cultural dimensions, in which nationalism and Nusantara cultural integration function as the social field where values are enacted rather than treated as private morality alone. Finally, tafsir-based studies broaden the value horizon through theological–ecological–humanistic orientations, strengthening the claim that Hamka's educational vision extends toward relational responsibility across human–God–nature–human relations. By bringing these dimensions into a single map, this study helps shift the discussion from “parallel conversations” into a more integrated conceptual reading of Hamka.

Theoretically, this synthesis provides a clearer basis for future scholarship that aims to develop Hamka-oriented Islamic education frameworks without collapsing them into a single theme. For instance, research focusing on digital learning can situate *akhlak* in the digital context within a process structure (*ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib*) that specifies how values are cultivated through educational mechanisms, rather than treating moral formation as an abstract add-on (Khoir et al., 2025). Likewise, studies emphasizing character values in contemporary learning environments can be read alongside Education 4.0 moral concerns to clarify why moral orientation is not optional under technological acceleration (Zahra et al., 2022). The model also prevents an overly narrow interpretation of Hamka as “merely moralistic,” because the corpus contains not only normative claims but also process structures, tafsir-derived value reservoirs, and socio-cultural contextualization that together form a more complete educational theory. In this sense, the theoretical implication is not only conceptual clarity, but also a more robust analytic vocabulary for linking foundations (value and spirituality), processes (pedagogical structure), and contexts (social-cultural enactment) within Hamka-based educational studies.

The practical implications mainly concern value-integrated curriculum development and learning design in contemporary Islamic education. The literature provides concrete value content honesty, sincerity, cooperation, and *adab* that can be integrated into science learning and other subjects, including within digital environments. It also offers a clear warning that online learning should not be treated as a mere platform shift; instead, digital-era Islamic education must preserve the substance of *akhlak* through design choices that maintain exemplarity and habituation (Prayitno & Mubarak, 2022). In addition, Hamka's critique of rote learning and emphasis on critical reasoning imply that pedagogical strategies should foreground dialogue, reflection, and moral reasoning so that character formation occurs through lived learning experiences rather than one-directional instruction.

Subject-based implementation examples further illustrate workable pathways: history learning can serve as a medium for transforming ethical values into curricular practice, while nationalism and Nusantara cultural practices can be positioned as resources for grounding values in collective life such as embedding community cooperation and consultation into learning activities and school culture.

Tafsir-derived theological–ecological–humanistic values also provide space for educational programs attentive to social responsibility and environmental ethics in everyday life. Finally, Education 4.0 discussions reinforce the urgency of designing learning that treats moral strengthening as central, so that digital competence develops within ethical direction rather than operating without a compass (Zahra et al., 2022). Overall, the practical implication is not to add “more moral lessons,” but to integrate values into both content and process across subjects and learning modalities.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Hamka’s Islamic educational thought consistently places *akhlak* at the core of educational objectives. *Akhlak* is understood not only as a moral dimension but also as a foundation of character that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects. Thus, the research objective of mapping the dominant and fundamental elements in Hamka’s thought has been achieved through the identification of core values such as *tawhid*, *tasawwuf*, and an Islamic educational structure oriented toward the cultivation of *adab*.

Furthermore, this study successfully organized the relationships between the foundations, processes, objectives, and contexts of education within a more comprehensive conceptual framework. The resulting holistic model demonstrates that Hamka’s thought is not merely a collection of values but a comprehensive system. This addresses the research objective of developing a conceptual framework capable of integrating previous literature findings, which were previously fragmented and thematic.

The findings of this study also open up possibilities for practical applications in the development of value-based curricula and learning strategies. Hamka’s conceptual model can serve as a foundation for designing cross-curricular learning that continues to prioritize moral character as its primary goal, while remaining relevant to the challenges of the digital age and the need for character education across various socio-cultural contexts. Thus, this study makes a tangible contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic education.

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Author contribution

Defriyanto: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Oki Dermawan**: conceptualization, methodology, **Satria Adi Pradana**: visualization, **Khadijah**: editing, analysis.

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