

Integration of Islamic Values and Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory in The Moral Development of Students

Hilyatul Auliya¹, M. Yunus Abu Bakar²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

¹hilyatulauliyak11@gmail.com, ²elyunusy@uinsa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the integration between Islamic moral values and Kohlberg's theory of moral development in order to understand the process of students' moral formation within Islamic education. The research employed a qualitative approach using literature research, analyzing primary and secondary sources related to Islamic ethics and moral development theory. The findings indicate that Islamic moral values such as justice ('adl), honesty (sidq), and responsibility (amanah) can be conceptually aligned with the stages of moral development proposed by Kohlberg. This integration provides a more comprehensive framework for moral education that combines cognitive moral reasoning with spiritual and ethical principles derived from Islamic teachings. The study suggests that Islamic moral education should not only focus on the transmission of moral norms but also encourage reflective ethical reasoning and the internalization of spiritual values in students' character formation.

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Keywords:

Islamic Values,
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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education not only emphasizes cognitive aspects and religious rituals, but also focuses on shaping noble character. Morality in Islam is a reflection of faith that is internalized in daily behavior (Shihab, 1996). Within this framework, values such as honesty, justice, responsibility, and empathy become manifestations of tauhid, namely awareness of the relationship between humans and Allah SWT and with one another (Imam Al Ghazali, 2003). The ultimate goal of Islamic education is to produce *insan kamil*, or complete human beings who are spiritually, morally, and intellectually whole and capable of balancing reason and faith.

However, the reality of modern education shows that there are new challenges in shaping the morals of students. Amidst technological advances and the globalization of values, there has been a shift in moral orientation: goodness is measured pragmatically, and the spiritual dimension is often marginalized. Phenomena such as increasing intolerant behavior, misuse of digital media, and weak social responsibility among teenagers indicate the need for a moral approach that is not only normative but also capable of shaping reflective and rational ethical awareness.

In the field of Western moral psychology, Lawrence Kohlberg is a central figure who developed a theory of moral development based on the principles of justice and ethical reasoning. According to Kohlberg, human morality develops through six stages rooted in the cognitive ability to rationally assess right and wrong (Kohlberg, 1981). This theory emphasizes the importance of moral reasoning, which is how individuals weigh and decide on actions based on the principle of universal justice. This is where the relevance between Kohlberg's theory and Islamic education arises, as both place morality as a result of awareness and reflection, not merely obedience to external rules.

However, the relationship between morality in Islam and Kohlberg's theory is not automatically harmonious. Some researchers argue that Kohlberg's theory is too secular and individualistic, making it less compatible with the theocentric and collective value system of Islam (Yaqin, 2019).

Several studies that have been conducted have attempted to connect the theory of moral development with Islamic education. According to Ainul Yakin in his research entitled "Developing Moral Reasoning Theory Based on Islamic Education Perspective" discusses the development of moral reasoning theory from the perspective of Islamic education, with the argument that religious values can contribute to strengthening the framework of moral reasoning (Yaqin, 2019). Meanwhile, Afiful Ikhwan in his research entitled "Integration of Islamic Education (Islamic Values in Learning)" emphasized the importance of integrating Islamic values into the educational process to encourage the formation of students' character (Ikhwan, 2014). In another study, Aep Saepudin in his research entitled "Holistic Islamic Education: Assessing the Impact of Integrative Curricula on Moral and Spiritual Development in Secondary Schools" explored the implementation of comprehensive Islamic education through an integrated curriculum that aims to simultaneously foster the moral and spiritual awareness of students (Saepudin, 2024).

However, most of the existing research still places Islamic moral education in the normative realm alone, or discusses the theory of moral development separately from the Islamic value framework. Conceptual studies that systematically relate ethical principles in Islam to the six stages of moral development proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg are still relatively limited. In addition, the pedagogical consequences of the integration of these two perspectives in the framework of Islamic education have also not been studied in depth.

This research aims to examine how Islamic values can be integrated with the theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg and how this integration contributes to the formation of students' morals. In contrast to previous studies that generally focused on the normative foundations of Islamic moral education or on the psychological structure of moral reasoning separately, this study seeks to combine the two perspectives in an integrated conceptual framework. In particular, this study relates the main moral values in Islam, such as justice (*adl*), honesty (*sidq*), and responsibility (*amanah*), with the stages of moral development according to Kohlberg. This interconnectedness shows that the development of moral reasoning and the formation of spiritual values can be complementary. Through this

approach, this research is expected to contribute to the development of the study of Islamic education by offering an analytical framework that connects religious moral guidelines with psychological stages in the development of students' moral reasoning.

This integration aims to offer a more comprehensive approach to moral education, where students not only understand moral teachings, but also develop in-depth moral judgment abilities. Therefore, this research is not only important for Islamic education in Indonesia, but also for the broader discussion of the relationship between religion and human moral thought.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with the type of literature research. The approach was chosen to examine conceptually the relationship between moral values in Islam and the theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg in the context of moral development of students. Through literature research, researchers can examine various ideas, concepts, and theoretical perspectives contained in written sources such as books, academic journal articles, and other scientific publications. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the conceptual framework that underlies the integration between Islamic moral values and moral development theory. (Zed, 2014). With this approach, this study seeks to examine how Islamic moral principles can be interpreted within the framework of moral development theory.

The data sources in this study included primary and secondary references related to Islamic ethical teachings and moral development theory. Primary references included classical and contemporary works that discuss ethics in Islam and are based on the Qur'an, hadith, and philosophical thought in the Islamic scientific tradition. The secondary sources consist of articles from accredited journals, academic books, and university literature that examine the theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg, Islamic teachings, and ethical perspectives in the field of education. According to Snyder, literature research requires the systematic identification and selection of appropriate sources to ensure that research results are

based on reliable scientific knowledge from the field of higher education (Snyder, 2019).

The selection of citations in this study was carried out based on a number of specific criteria. First, the sources used must have clear academic credibility, such as articles in reputable scientific journals, academic books, or conference proceedings. Second, the selected literature should address at least one of several main topics, namely moral education in Islam, Islamic values in education, the theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg, or the relationship between religion and moral thought. Third, the references included need to make theoretical or conceptual contributions that are relevant to efforts to integrate Islamic ethical values with the theoretical framework of moral development.

The literature search in this study was carried out through various academic databases and digital archives, such as Google Scholar, an international scientific journal platform, and a national journal database. These sources were chosen because they provide broad access to scholarly publications related to Islamic education and the study of moral development, thus enabling researchers to obtain relevant and credible references to support the conceptual analysis in this study.

To analyze the references that have been collected, this study uses thematic content analysis techniques. This method aims to identify key themes, concepts, and arguments. Through this process of analysis, this study identifies the central Islamic ethical values, namely justice (*adl*), honesty (*sidq*), responsibility (*amanah*), and trust (*tauhid*), and explains their relevance to the stages of Kohlberg's moral development.

Based on the process of unification, this study formulates a theoretical framework that integrates Islamic ethical values with the theory of the stages of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg. Within this framework, Islamic values are positioned as the foundation of ethics that derive from divine revelation, whereas Kohlberg's theory provides a cognitive structure that explains how the process of moral reasoning develops in individuals. Through this integration, the research seeks to build a conceptual foundation to understand moral education in a more systematic Islamic education perspective.

RESULTS

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

The theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg is one of the most influential frameworks in developmental psychology to explain how individuals build moral reasoning abilities. According to Kohlberg, moral development is closely related to cognitive development and takes place gradually. In this process, individuals progressively develop increasingly complex forms of ethical reasoning when faced with various moral dilemmas.

By developing the framework of cognitive development previously introduced by Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg asserts that moral reasoning develops through structured stages, not simply as a result of the internalization process of social norms. Based on various empirical studies involving children and adolescents, he posits that individuals will move through a series of successive stages of moral reasoning. Each stage reflects an increasingly complex way of understanding and interpreting the concepts of justice, responsibility, and ethical obligations (Kohlberg, 1981).

In his longitudinal research in Chicago, Lawrence Kohlberg examined the moral reasoning of participants through a series of structured interviews based on hypothetical moral dilemmas. The interview is designed not only to find out whether a person judges an action as right or wrong, but especially to understand the reasons that the individual uses in justifying his or her moral judgment. Based on the analysis of these responses, Kohlberg formulated a model of moral development consisting of six stages that are composed of three main levels, namely pre-conventional morality, conventional morality, and post-conventional morality. This model describes the development of moral reasoning as a gradual process that moves from an orientation of self-interest to a more universal understanding of ethical principles (Duska & Whelan, 1975).

This stage-based model has been widely used in educational psychology research and moral education to analyze how individuals interpret social rules, moral obligations, and ethical principles in a variety of social contexts (Rest et al., 1999). In the context of education, Kohlberg's framework provides an important theoretical

foundation for understanding how students gradually develop the capacity to reason about moral issues through dialogue, reflection, and exposure to moral dilemmas.

Stages of Moral Development

According to Kohlberg's model, moral development develops through three hierarchical levels, each consisting of two stages that represent an increasingly complex form of ethical reasoning (Fatimah Ibda, 2023).

1. Pre-Conventional Level

The pre-conventional level represents the earliest stage of moral reasoning, typically observed in childhood. At this level, individuals interpret moral rules primarily in terms of the direct consequences of their actions rather than through internalized ethical principles.

Stage 1 is known as the punishment and obedience orientation, in which individuals obey rules primarily to avoid punishment. Moral judgment at this stage is externally controlled by authority figures, and actions are evaluated based on their immediate consequences.

Stage 2 is referred to as the instrumental or individualistic orientation, where individuals begin to recognize that different people have different interests. Moral decisions are guided by pragmatic considerations, such as reciprocal benefits or personal advantage.

2. Conventional Level

At the conventional level, individuals begin to internalize social norms and expectations. Moral reasoning becomes closely linked to maintaining social relationships and social order.

Stage 3, often called the good interpersonal relationships orientation, focuses on gaining social approval and maintaining harmonious relationships. Individuals evaluate actions based on whether they are perceived as good, kind, or socially acceptable by others.

Stage 4 is the law and order orientation, in which individuals emphasize obedience to authority, social rules, and the maintenance of social stability. Moral actions are justified based on their contribution to preserving the established social system.

3. Post-Conventional Level

The post-conventional level represents the most advanced form of moral reasoning in Kohlberg's framework. At this stage, individuals begin to evaluate moral rules based on broader ethical principles rather than simply accepting social norms.

Stage 5 is the social contract orientation, where individuals recognize that laws are social agreements designed to promote collective welfare. Rules may be questioned or modified when they fail to serve the broader interests of society.

Stage 6 is the universal ethical principles orientation, where moral judgments are guided by self-chosen ethical principles such as justice, equality, and respect for human dignity. Individuals at this stage act according to internal moral principles even when those principles conflict with established laws.

Moral Values in the Islamic Perspective

In the Islamic worldview, morality or *morality* is a fundamental dimension in human life that reflects faith and devotion to Allah. The concept of morality refers to the quality of character, attitudes, and ethical behaviors that originate from a person's inner spiritual state, so that outward actions are seen as a manifestation of the moral state and faith embedded in the individual (Al-Ghazali, 1982). Islamic moral teachings emphasize that moral behavior is not just a social agreement but a manifestation of obedience to the divine guidance revealed in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad affirm the importance of the formation of noble character as the foundation of human life. Within this framework, moral values such as justice (*al-'adl*), honesty (*sidq*), responsibility or trust (*amanah*), and compassion are seen as essential elements that shape the personality of a Muslim and guide his behavior in social life (Shihab, 1996). These values form the ethical foundation for Islamic education, which aims to develop intellectually capable, spiritually aware, and socially responsible individuals.

Scholars in the Islamic intellectual tradition also affirm the importance of moral education in the formation of human personality. Al-Ghazali explained that morality

is an established state of the soul, so that a person is able to do good deeds spontaneously without the need for long consideration. In his view, good morals are formed through a continuous process of coaching and habituation until these values become part of the character that settles in the individual (Al-Ghazali, 1982). Therefore, Islamic education not only emphasizes moral knowledge but also internalizes and habituates ethical values through worship, social interaction, and moral role models.

Moral comes from the Latin word "mores," the plural form of "mos," which means customs. In the Islamic perspective, morals (akhlak) are a reflection of a person's faith and piety towards Allah SWT. The term morals in Arabic is known as akhlaq (أَخْلَاق), which comes from the word khuluq, meaning "character," "behavior," or "nature." Akhlak is a manifestation of a person's faith (iman) and worship (ibadah) in their daily life (Fahdurrosi A.N.H & Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi, 2024). In moral philosophy, people's actions or behavior are generally divided into two categories, including: (Anieg, 2023)

1. A human act "actus humanus" is an act committed by a person consciously, with full knowledge of what is being done and with deliberate intent.
2. Human acts are acts performed without full awareness or intent.

Morality in Islam is not merely a social measure of good or bad behavior, but rather a value system that originates from divine revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah) and is oriented toward achieving the pleasure of Allah SWT. Thus, morality in Islam is not relative, but absolute and transcendental, because it is rooted in universal divine values. This is in line with the goal of Islamic education, which is to shape character and morals that can produce moral people with pure souls, as stated in the Qur'an and Hadith, namely.

1. Al Qur'an

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ۚ

Meaning: "Truly, you are of noble character."

2. Hadits

وَحَدَّثَنِي عَنْ مَالِكٍ: أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَلَغَهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ: بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ حُسْنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

Meaning: "As stated in the hadith of Malik: The Messenger of Allah SAW said: 'I was sent by Allah SWT solely to perfect good character.'" (HR. Malik)

3. Ijtihad and the Tradition of the Ulama

Moral values are also reinforced through the *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) of Islamic scholars and Islamic traditions that are contextual to the times, as long as they do not contradict the principles of Sharia law. This demonstrates the flexibility of Islamic moral values, which remain relevant in various social contexts.

Based on the foundations of the Qur'an, Hadith, and the *ijtihad* of the scholars above, it can be explained that moral education is very important in human life so that every action and deed is in accordance with the will of Allah SWT. Morals are also very important for humans to have material and guidelines in developing themselves to achieve a noble and honorable personality, which is the ultimate goal of Islamic education.

Normatively, moral values in Islam are rooted in several key principles that have direct implications for the formation of human character, including:

1. Tauhid

The principle of monotheism asserts that all human actions must be based on an awareness of the oneness of God. Moral values become meaningful because they are oriented toward servitude (*ubudiyyah*).

2. Justice (*al-adl*)

Islam places justice as the foundation of social morality. Allah commands humans to be fair even to those they hate. In the context of education, the principle of justice encourages objectivity, non-discrimination, and respect for differences.

3. Responsibility

Moral responsibility is a form of spiritual awareness of the trust given by God. Students who instill the value of trustworthiness will grow into disciplined, honest, and trustworthy individuals.

4. Honesty

Honesty is the key to forming strong morals. The Prophet SAW emphasized this.

According to Al-Ghazali, morality is a manifestation of a stable and settled state of mind, in which a person is able to act spontaneously without needing lengthy consideration. If such an inner state gives rise to actions that are in accordance with reason and the guidance of the Sharia, such as honesty, responsibility, and justice, then this is categorized as good character. Conversely, if what appears is behavior that contradicts the values of reason and sharia, such as lies, selfishness, and denial of the truth, then it is classified as bad morals. Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the assessment of the good or bad of morals and outward behavior must be based on two main instruments, namely reason and sharia. Thus, morality cannot be determined solely on the basis of human rationality or revelation separately, but must be through the integration of both. In his view, the inner strength of humans plays a fundamental role in the formation of morality, while morality itself is an integral aspect of human life that aims to lead individuals to true happiness (Firdasari & Bakar, 2025).

In the context of modern education, there is a main approach to moral values education that encompasses three dimensions that must work synergistically and reinforce each other to produce comprehensive and sustainable moral transformation. The first dimension is the development of cognitive aspects, namely efforts to provide a deep conceptual understanding of moral values, including the philosophical, theological, and practical foundations of each value taught. The second dimension involves the internalization of values, which is the process of instilling and internalizing moral values into the belief systems, attitudes, and personalities of students through various affective approaches, such as self-reflection, moral discussions, and sharing real experiences. Furthermore, the third dimension is practice and habit formation, which provides space for students to implement moral values in real actions through learning activities, social projects, and participation in community activities (Khoirul Umam Addzaky & Clara Apriyanti, 2025).

The application of these three dimensions shapes students who think correctly (knowing the good), feel correctly (feeling the good), and act correctly (doing the good). This implication shows that Islamic-based moral values education not only

fosters rational ethical awareness as in Kohlberg's theory, but also develops spiritual and social awareness based on faith and piety.

Comparative Moral Framework between Kohlberg's Theory and Islamic Moral Values

To understand how moral reasoning can be enriched through the integration of psychological and religious perspectives, it is important to examine the relationship between the stages of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg and the ethical principles emphasized in Islamic teachings. Kohlberg's theoretical framework focuses on the cognitive structures that underlie the process of individual moral reasoning, whereas moral philosophy in Islam places the spiritual and theological dimensions as the primary foundation of ethical behavior. The integration of these two perspectives opens up a more comprehensive understanding of the formation of human morality.

In Islamic thought, morality is not only understood as the result of rational reflection, but also as a manifestation of spiritual awareness and obedience to divine direction. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali explained that moral character is formed through the process of purification of the soul and the cultivation of good habits based on the combination of reason and revelation. Therefore, when analyzed simultaneously, the stages of moral reasoning put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg and the principles of ethics in Islam can be understood as two complementary perspectives in explaining the various dimensions of human moral development.

The theory put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg explains how individuals gradually develop moral reasoning abilities. Meanwhile, moral teachings in Islam provide normative guidelines regarding the standards of behavior that are considered good and right. By combining these two perspectives, moral education can be understood as a process that integrates rational ethical reasoning skills with spiritual values based on divine guidance. This integration allows for the formation of morals that are not only based on logical considerations, but also on religious commitments that guide human actions.

The conceptual relationship between these two perspectives can be illustrated in the following framework.

Tabel 1. The conceptual relationship between Kohlberg's Theory and Islamic Moral Values perspectives

Kohlberg Stage	Moral Reasoning Characteristics	Relevant Islamic Values	Educational Implications
Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment Orientation	Moral behavior is based on avoiding punishment and obeying authority	Obedience to Allah and respect for moral rules	Moral education introduces basic moral rules through guidance, discipline, and religious instruction
Stage 2: Instrumental Relativist Orientation	Individuals act based on personal interests and reciprocal benefits	Justice ('adl) and fairness in social interaction	Students are taught fairness, mutual respect, and responsibility in interpersonal relationships
Stage 3: Interpersonal Concordance	Moral actions aim to gain approval and maintain good relationships	Compassion (rahmah), honesty (sidq), and good character (akhlaq karimah)	Moral education emphasizes empathy, cooperation, and social harmony
Stage 4: Law and Order Orientation	Individuals obey laws and social norms to maintain social order	Responsibility (amanah) and commitment to social justice	Students are encouraged to understand moral responsibility toward society

Stage 5: Social Contract Orientation	Moral reasoning recognizes universal human rights and social agreements	Justice ('adl), human dignity (karamah insaniyyah), and social responsibility	Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking about ethical issues in society
Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles	Moral decisions are based on universal ethical principles and conscience	Taqwa, sincerity (ikhlas), and moral integrity	Moral education emphasizes spiritual awareness and internal moral commitment

DISCUSSION

Integration of Islamic Values and Kohlberg's Theory in the Moral Development of Students

The integration of Islamic moral values with the theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg provides a more comprehensive perspective in understanding the formation of moral character of students. Kohlberg's framework explains how individuals develop moral reasoning abilities through stages of cognitive development, while Islamic moral teachings affirm the spiritual and theological foundations underlying ethical behavior. Therefore, the merging of these two perspectives allows moral education to be understood as a process that includes both cognitive and spiritual dimensions in human development.

The theoretical framework developed by Lawrence Kohlberg has been widely recognized in developmental psychology as a model that explains how individuals move from a form of moral reasoning that relies on external control to a more independent ethical judgment. In his theory, Kohlberg explains that moral reasoning develops through structured stages, in which individuals gradually improve their ability to assess moral dilemmas based on increasingly complex principles of justice (Kohlberg, 1981). However, some scholars consider that the model tends to focus on

the rational dimension of moral reasoning, while attention to other factors such as spirituality, cultural context, and religious beliefs in the formation of moral behavior is still relatively limited (Rest et al., 1999).

From an Islamic perspective, moral development is closely related to the concept of *taqwa*, which is a deep awareness of God's presence that guides human attitudes and behaviors. Islamic ethics affirm that moral behavior is not only born from the process of rational reflection, but also from spiritual awareness and obedience to the divine guidance contained in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali explain that the formation of moral character occurs through the process of purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the habituation of good behavior based on the combination of reason and revelation. Thus, in the tradition of Islamic thought, moral development is understood as a process that brings together the rational, spiritual, and praxian dimensions in the formation of human personality (Al-Ghazali, 1982).

Limitations of Kohlberg's Theory from an Islamic Perspective

Although the theory of moral development put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg provides an important analytical framework for understanding the process of moral reasoning, a number of limitations begin to be seen when the theory is viewed from the point of view of moral philosophy in Islam. The perspective of Islamic ethics places the spiritual dimension, revelation, and divine consciousness as the main foundation of moral behavior, so that an approach that places too much emphasis on cognitive rationality is seen as not fully encompassing all aspects of human moral formation.

First, the model developed by Lawrence Kohlberg primarily emphasizes the cognitive reasoning aspect of moral development. Meanwhile, moral education in Islam emphasizes the integration between intellectual understanding, spiritual awareness, and character building. In this perspective, moral values are not understood simply as the result of social agreements, but as ethical principles that derive from the divine revelation contained in the Qur'an and are accompanied by man's spiritual responsibility before God (Asror et al., 2023).

Second, the theory put forward by Lawrence Kohlberg tends to depart from the assumption that the pinnacle of moral development lies in the ability of individuals

to formulate universal ethical principles through human reasoning. In contrast, in the perspective of Islamic ethics, universal moral principles are understood as something that derives from divine guidance. These guidelines are reflected in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which provide a normative foundation for ethical behavior that transcends cultural and time boundaries (Halstead, 2007).

Third, the framework developed by Lawrence Kohlberg is often criticized for reflecting a more individualistic perspective of morality in the Western tradition. In contrast, moral philosophy in Islam emphasizes a balance between individual responsibility and social harmony. Within this framework, moral actions are not only judged on the basis of personal rights or interests, but are also seen in relation to the principles of social justice, compassion, and responsibility towards fellow human beings (Al-Attas, 1980).

Pedagogical Implications for Moral Education

Despite its limitations, Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development still makes an important contribution to the study of moral education when interpreted within a broader ethical framework. When associated with spiritual values in Islam, the framework can enrich understanding of the moral formation process of learners.

Through the integration between the development of cognitive moral reasoning and Islamic spiritual values, educators can design learning processes that not only encourage the ability to think rationally, but also form solid moral character. This approach allows moral education to take place more comprehensively by combining intellectual, spiritual, and behavioral dimensions in the formation of students' personalities.

In the pre-conventional stage, moral education was directed at the formation of basic moral awareness through clear guidance, the application of discipline, and the reinforcement of behavior that is considered right. In this phase, students are still greatly influenced by direct consequences such as rewards and punishments, so the educational process needs to provide concrete and consistent direction. In the context of Islamic education, this stage can be filled with the introduction of fundamental moral values such as honesty, respect, and obedience to parents and teachers taught in the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad. The cultivation of these

basic values is the initial foundation for the development of students' moral awareness at the next stage.

At the conventional stage, students begin to internalize social norms and moral expectations that apply in the surrounding environment. In this phase, moral development is no longer driven solely by external consequences, but also by the desire to be accepted and meet social standards that are considered correct within the framework of the stages of moral development described by Lawrence Kohlberg. In Islamic moral education, this stage is directed at strengthening social virtues such as justice (*al-'adl*), trust or responsibility (*amanah*), and concern for social life. The process of internalizing these values can be strengthened through example, positive social interaction, and cooperative learning activities that encourage students to learn to work together, respect others, and practice moral values in life together.

In the post-conventional stage, the process of moral education can be directed to encourage students to engage in reflective ethical reasoning and critically evaluate various moral dilemmas. At this stage, individuals begin to consider more universal ethical principles in moral decision-making as described in the theory of moral development by Lawrence Kohlberg. In Islamic education, this stage can be enriched through the strengthening of spiritual awareness, the practice of ethical reflection, and the understanding of human moral responsibility before God as taught in the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, students not only view moral values as a social obligation, but also as a form of faith and devotion to Allah.

Through this integrated approach, moral development can be understood as a multidimensional process that involves cognitive reasoning skills, character building, and strengthening spiritual awareness. Within this framework, the stages of moral reasoning described by Lawrence Kohlberg are enriched with a foundation of values sourced from the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The approach provides an opportunity for educators to form individuals who are not only capable of thinking ethically critically, but also have strong moral commitments. Thus, the educational process can produce a person who is morally responsible while adhering to the ethical principles taught in Islam.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the conceptual integration between Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Islamic moral values provides a framework for understanding students' moral formation in Islamic education. The results of the analysis show that Kohlberg's theory provides an explanation of the cognitive stages in the development of moral reasoning, while Islamic moral teachings provide a spiritual and ethical foundation that guides human behavior. Thus, the merging of the two perspectives presents a more comprehensive approach in moral education, since it not only pays attention to the development of ethical thinking skills, but also emphasizes the spiritual dimension and moral values that are the basis for character formation.

This integrative framework plays a role in strengthening the formation of students' character by linking the development of moral reasoning with the internalization of Islamic values, such as responsibility, justice, and sincerity. In educational practice, this approach allows educators to not only develop students' ability to analyze and evaluate moral dilemmas, as described in the theory of moral development by Lawrence Kohlberg, but also foster a commitment to ethical behavior based on the principles of Islamic teachings derived from the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

However, this study has limitations because it is conceptual and is only based on a literature analysis without empirical validation in the field. Therefore, further research is needed to examine how an integrative model that links Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development with Islamic ethical values can be applied and evaluated in educational practices in Islamic schools. Empirical studies in real educational contexts will be very important to assess the extent to which the approach is effective in strengthening moral reasoning skills while supporting the formation of students' character in a sustainable manner.

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